

BOROUGH OF KENNETT SQUARE
OFFICIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
April 1, 2024

ROLL CALL

Present: *President Bob Norris*
 Vice President Kathleen Caccamo
 Councilmember Elea McDonnell Feit
 Councilmember Samantha Ferraro
 Councilmember Julie Hamilton
 Councilmember Timothy Kerver
 Councilmember Joel Sprick
 Jr. Councilmember Juan Tafolla

Mayor Matthew W. Fetick
Borough Manager, Kyle Coleman

CALL TO ORDER

President Norris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated that an executive session was held on April 1, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss personnel and legal matters with the Solicitor. He called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Vice President Caccamo motioned to accept the meeting agenda as presented; seconded by Councilmember Ferraro. The motion was approved unanimously.

REPORTS

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT

Borough Manager Coleman shared that we received notice from the federal government that we have received a little over \$900,000 towards a sewer plant expansion. He thanked Mr. Moran, Director of Public Works, Ms. Rodriguez, Assistant Director of Public Works and Mr. Greco, Deputy Borough Manager for their work.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Holdsworth shared that his March 2024 activity report was sent out electronically today due to the month end being yesterday.

President Norris noted that a Migrants Renters Rights Forum will be held here on April 11th at 6:00 p.m. Chief Holdsworth shared that he was invited to last year's forum and noted there was a lot of information sharing, mostly to dispel misinformation.

President Norris shared that Chief Holdsworth was involved in touring the Chester County Prison to better understand their internal operations and asked if changes are being made. Chief Holdsworth noted his involvement with the Prison is limited to central booking, but shared the prison is making monumental changes. He likened it to a little city in the middle of Chester County and commented they are working on staff training and retention.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Norris noted two follow-up items from last month's affordable housing workshop. The Planning Commission was asked to review zoning rules for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and provide recommendations to Council. Also, Borough properties are to be reviewed to see if any can support affordable housing.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Councilmember Sprick, Chair, shared the Committee met on March 21st with Lorenzo Merino from True Access Capital, who presented on the Revolving Loan Fund which has been dormant for a few years. He noted the Committee is catching up on the rules and regulations involved and how to get the fund running again to benefit the community. Councilmember Sprick stated the bills were reviewed and recommended for Council approval. He also commented that the Committee reviewed the 2023 year-end financials which were slightly better than anticipated and noted that the 2024 financial are on track year-to-date.

DEVELOPMENT - PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)

Vice President Caccamo shared that the Planning Commission met, approved a new member, Doug Doerfler, and reorganized. She noted that Council tasked the PC to look at several projects including the parking rules, ADUs, and updates to State Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Councilmember Hamilton shared this group met for the first time and members include Borough Manager Coleman, Lexi Gambs, Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement Manager, Joe Nowak, Planning and Zoning Coordinator, Daniel Embree, Executive Director of Kennett Collaborative and Christina Norland, Square Roots Collective. The Committee will start with a State Street Revitalization Project and will partner with a local landscape architect to define five (5) locations in and around State Street to create little walkable moments. She noted they are in the process of applying for a grant that will help fund the landscape architect and then plan partner with local companies to support the funding of the projects.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mayor Fetick noted the Public Safety Committee met on Tuesday, March 19th and meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The Committee reviewed a special event application, up for discussion tonight, and discussed the best way to track long term projects/issues, manage and report back on them. He noted we will review our emergency planning document for updates at the next Public Safety Committee meeting.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS and COMMUNICATIONS

Councilmember Hamilton noted they are making progress.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

President Norris shared this is a new Committee that met for the first time on March 19th, with the purpose to oversee the capital budget, a very large portion of the Borough's budget and our investment in the future. The Committee consists of Councilmember Feit, Mr. Moran, Director of Public Works, Ms. Rodriguez, Assistant Director of Public Works, Ms. Gambs, Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement Manager, Borough Manager Coleman, Patrick McKenna and Nick Perigo. He noted the public is always welcome to attend.

STAFF SUPPORT and DEVELOPMENT

Councilmember Ferraro shared this Committee, formerly known as the Personnel Committee, met on March 14th to discuss updating employee evaluation forms in the effort to create a larger development plan for current staff.

JUAN TAFOLLA, JR. COUNCILMEMBER UPDATE

Jr. Councilmember Tafolla shared that he has spent the past six (6) months in the city of Toluca, in the state of Mexico, working on behalf of Mexican residents living in the Borough and Kennett area communities in the effort to build bridges between the localities. He shared the city of Toluca is one of the highest cities in the country at 2,600 meters above sea level with a population of 910,608. He noted according to the Mexican government, an estimated 200,000 Mexicans live in Pennsylvania, 60,000 from the State of Mexico, including Toluca, and 800 of those people live in the Kennett area. Considering the number of people from the Toluca area now residing in Kennett Square, it was suggested that a sister city agreement be created between Toluca and Kennett Square for an interexchange of culture to benefit both communities. The development of a Mexican Plaza in the Borough was discussed, as a gathering place for the community where food and products from Toluca and across Mexico could be sold, bringing tourism to the Borough and helping Mexican-owned businesses thrive in the Borough. Jr. Councilmember Tafolla also shared he met with the Secretary of Ethics and the Secretary of Migrant Affairs for one of Mexico's political parties, PRI (Party of Revolutionary Institution) about ways to help Mexicans living in different countries exercise their right to vote while living outside of Mexico, especially in the United States. He noted a program called the Electronic Court which helps Mexicans living in the United States attend to their legal matters in Mexico, due to their immigration status. Lastly, he noted he had the honor of sharing the history of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania with high school students and many showed interest in an exchange program.

PUBLIC COMMENT on REPORTS

Sonia Muckley, 524 Lafayette Street, shared her concern over speeding on South Street. She asked that more speed limit signage be installed and new crosswalks. She commented that the crosswalks were eliminated for sewer repair work which was completed a year ago and noted there is still no crosswalks on South Street at the intersections at Harvey Circle, Center Street, or Lafayette Street and all are big intersections. She also complained about the broken-down cars parked on Harvey's Circle with flat tires and no one seems to know the vehicle owners.

Chief Holdsworth commented that he will look into the broken-down vehicles parked on Harvey's Circle.

Rob Moran, Director of Public Works shared that crosswalks will be installed on South Street with the painting and striping through the PennDOT Safer Routes program. He noted the PennDOT approved program does not include a crosswalk at Center Street or Harvey's Circle. He explained that any time we install a crosswalk it must be ADA compliant, but the new sidewalks put in on W. South Street are not, therefore it will take some time.

Anna Young, W. Mulberry Street, asked for the results of the speed test on Mulberry Street and for a parking update on her block of Mulberry Street.

Chief Holdsworth noted the speed test results came in showing there is just over one per cent speeding on recorded on Mulberry Street and that the majority of cars are traveling at or below the speed limit. The study does not show the effect on parking.

Kendall King, 421 W. Mulberry Street, is a homeowner and reiterated that parking is an issue on her street, as the homes are duplexes with little parking on the north side. He noted there is speeding on the street and suggested the installation of speed bumps.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

POLICE DEPARTMENT

AUCTION of TWO POLICE VEHICLES

Chief Holdsworth explained that two (2) vehicles (a 2017 Dodge Charger and a 2015 Ford Explorer) were taken out of rotation, decommissioned and replaced this year. He is looking for approval to proceed with the auction.

President Norris asked Council for any objection to moving this item to the consent agenda at Wednesday's Council Voting meeting. There were no objections.

PUBLIC WORKS

TEMPORARY and PERMANENT EASEMENT AGREEMENTS

Rob Moran, Director of Public works, shared we need a number of temporary construction easements for properties on Birch and Willow Streets to install the new sidewalks. He noted workers will encroach on private property to install the sidewalks, but the sidewalks will not be on private property. He also shared we need a few temporary and permanent easements from the Willow Street properties in order to install ADA compliant ramps.

President Norris asked Council for any objection to moving this item to the consent agenda at Wednesday's Council Voting meeting. There were no objections.

ADMINISTRATION

BIRCH STREET RECONSTRUCTION GROUNDBREAKING & BLOCK PARTY

Mayor Fetick shared there were a few questions from the Public Safety Committee meeting which have all been resolved and the Committee recommends this event for approval.

Luke Zubrod, Square Roots Collective, spoke in support of celebrating the groundbreaking of the Birch Street Improvement Project. He noted the event will include a family-themed block party immediately following the official groundbreaking ceremony. Partners involved in the celebration include the Borough itself, Kennett Trails Alliance, Braeloch Brewery, West Branch Distillery and the Creamery, (part of Square Roots Collective), all in support of the vision to build upon Birch Street's rich history by enhancing it as a place for art, culture and community. He stated that alcohol sales will be contained to each entity's property and defined by a "consumption area". It was also noted that the Borough would be named as additionally insured on the Creamery's insurance.

President Norris asked Council for any objection to moving this item to the consent agenda at Wednesday's Council Voting meeting. There were no objections.

GARAGE PARKING WAIVER for the KENNETT RUN on MAY 4, 2024

Bob Merkle, The Kennett Run, requested waiving the garage parking fee for the Kennett Run from the beginning of the race until 1:00 p.m., which he believes will encourage people to attend the Cinco de Mayo festival.

Chief Holdsworth explained he does not have the ability to raise and lower the gates in the middle of the day, it is a function that is set up ahead of time. Mayor Fetick commented that the current cost to have a no parking charge in the garage is \$400 per day. He noted it would make the most sense to team up with the Cinco de Mayo event and split the cost for the day of free parking.

President Norris commented that the precedent is to pay for garage parking for events. He suggested moving this item to further discussion on Wednesday and asked Mr. Markle to attend with any updates to share.

PERSONNEL MANUAL

President Norris asked for this item be moved forward to the May Council meetings so that everyone has time to review the document. There were no objections.

YMCA LEASE AMENDMENT AGREEMENT

Borough Solicitor Crotty shared that earlier this year we approved amendments to the ground lease and sent them to the YMCA. Shortly after our last meeting, the YMCA sent revisions to that document. The main changes are minor, and nothing affects the leasing for this year. He noted the YMCA has asked for a little flexibility in setting the rates for future years based on operational costs, although they still have to receive Council approval for updated rates and budget information by specific dates.

President Norris suggested a few additions to the agreement including a definition of a community pool and a definition of “reasonable adjustments” in regard to pool hours. President Norris suggested moving this item to further discussion on Wednesday. There were no objections.

UPDATED KENNETT PARK AUTHORITY AGREEMENT

Borough Solicitor Crotty noted this agreement establishes our current funding rate for 2024 at \$35,000 and the anticipated contribution level increase of four percent (4%) each year for the next five (5) years, subject to Council’s approval each year. He commented this is more of a visioning document to get us all on the same page, rather than one where someone would sue for breaking the contract if we did not provide the 4% increase.

Minor changes were suggested to Borough Solicitor Crotty and accepted. President Norris suggested moving this item to further discussion on Wednesday. There were no objections.

VOLUNTEER APPOINTMENTS to INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

President Norris noted that Nick Perigo and Patrick McKenna have both volunteered to serve on the Infrastructure Committee. He shared that Mr. Perigo was a former Councilmember who is very involved in town and in the construction industry. Mr. McKenna is an engineer who gave valuable input at the first meeting.

President Norris asked Council for any objection to moving this item to the consent agenda at Wednesday’s Council Voting meeting. There were no objections.

VOLUNTEER APPOINTMENT to the ZONING HEARING BOARD

President Norris commented that David Eldreth applied to become an alternate on the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Eldreth shared that he has lived in the Borough for 25 years on W. Cypress Street and has always wanted to get involved in public service and applied for this volunteer position when he saw the advertisement.

President Norris and Councilmembers thanked Mr. Eldreth for his willingness to serve the community. He asked Council for any objection moving this item to the consent agenda at Wednesday’s Council Voting meeting. There were no objections.

APPROVAL OF BILLS PAID

Councilmember Sprick, Chair of the Finance Committee, shared the bills are recommended for approval by the Committee to be paid through March 21, 2024, in the total amount of \$908,455.16.

President Norris asked Council for any objection to moving this item to the consent agenda at Wednesday's Council Voting meeting. There were no objections.

APPROVAL of COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 4 & 6, 2024

President Norris asked Council for any objection to moving the March Council meeting minutes to the consent agenda at Wednesday's Council Voting meeting. Aside from noting two minor type-o's which will be corrected by Wednesday's meeting, there were no objections.

RESOLUTION to FORMALLY NAME THE RED CLAY PARK

Natalia Santiago, Kennett Trails Alliance, shared they reached out to the community via flyers and a survey in Spanish and English to receive ideas for the new name for the Red Clay Park Demonstration Project. Criteria were developed for the naming process, and they received a lot of community response. The advisory group then chose the top three names from which the community chose the final name. Cypress Beach was the ultimate choice, unveiled at the Three Kings Day celebration. She noted over 700 people attended this event which was a great success with a lot of diversity.

President Norris thanked Ms. Santiago and Ms. Norland for all the work they put into this project and asked Council for any objection to moving this item to the consent agenda at Wednesday's Council Voting meeting. There were no objections.

ADDENDUM to the BOROUGH MANAGER EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

President Norris shared the addendum to the Borough Manager's contract changes the salary from \$137,001 to \$145,000 effective May 1, which is a \$7,846 increase. He noted two (2) reasons for this change, one, getting and keeping good, high-quality professionals amongst all of our staff is certainly a primary objective and two, to make sure they are paid fairly; when we looked at other local communities, that was not the case.

President Norris asked Council for any objection to moving this item to the consent agenda at Wednesday's Council Voting meeting. There were no objections.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Charla Watson, 523 Magnolia Street, commented that Councilmembers have been elected to do financially responsible things and she does not think that is being done. She feels the 600 S. Broad Street building is a bad situation and noted that residents never saw a presentation on the future of the building. She feels that people cannot afford to live in the Borough anymore. She suggested we talk more about price points of housing.

Sandy D'Antonio, 220 N. Broad Street, commented that at the street crossing at Broad and State and S. Union at State Street, there is not enough time for people to cross the street. Chief Holdsworth agreed and will look into the issue of the light timing.

Ms. D'Antonio asked if she is permitted to submit comments to the Planning Commission on the ADU issue. Borough Manager Coleman shared anyone may send comments on any topic to help@kennettsq.org.

Rick Buchansky, 403 Chestnut Street, asked for clarification on the tax bill regarding the library. President Norris commented that tax payor dollars help to fund the library via a referendum that passed for a 2% tax directed to the library. Mr. Buchansky also asked if right and wrong is subjective, morally. Borough Manager Coleman suggested discussions like this can be had at another time.

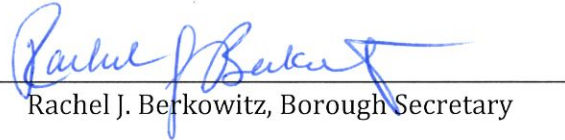
Ken Edwards, 412 Meredith Street, thanked the individuals that removed the trees that were knocked down during the storm. He noted there are dead or dying trees on his street that should be removed.

COUNCIL, MANAGER and MAYOR COMMENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no further comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Caccamo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m.; seconded by Councilmember Feit. The motion was approved unanimously.


Rachel J. Berkowitz, Borough Secretary