

BOROUGH OF KENNETT SQUARE
BOUROUGH COUNCIL OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 11, 2024

ROLL CALL

Present: *President Bob Norris*
 Vice President Kathleen Caccamo
 Councilmember Elea McDonnell Feit
 Councilmember Julie Hamilton
 Councilmember Joel Sprick

Mayor Matthew W. Fetick
 Borough Manager, Kyle Coleman

Absent: *Councilmember Timothy Kerver*
 Councilmember Samantha Ferraro

CALL TO ORDER

President Norris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, he asked for a moment of silence in remembrance and reflection of the tragic events of September 11, 2001. He then called for a motion to approve the agenda and asked Council for the flexibility to change the order of items to accommodate scheduled speakers.

Councilmember Hamilton motioned to approve the meeting agenda with flexibility in the order of items; seconded by Councilmember Sprick. The motion was approved unanimously.

PROCLAMATION

President Norris invited Roz Fenton, Community Programs Manager and Daniel Embree, Executive Director of Kennett Collaborative (KC) to the dais to receive a proclamation celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Kennett Square Farmers Market.

Mayor Fetick commented that if you have not had the opportunity to visit the Kennett Square Farmers Market, to do so, because it is a treat to have right here in the Borough. KC has created a phenomenal Farmers Market and a fun way to kick off the weekend on Friday afternoons. He noted the Farmers Market supports local businesses and start-ups, which makes it a fantastic place to spend money. He shared his pleasure in presenting the proclamation commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Kennett Square Farmers Market and those who organize and provide the various goods for sale, noting the group effort by Kennett Collaborative to put on the Farmers Market every Friday afternoon. On behalf of the community, Mayor Fetick thanked Ms. Fenton and Mr. Embree for their dedication to the Borough and for the organization of the year-round Kennett Square Farmers Market.

LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATIONS- REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINA SAPPEY

President Norris commented we have two (2) legislators with us this evening to provide an update on their legislative priorities, how they support the Borough o Kennett Square and how we can help them in their work. He

introduced Representative Christina Sappey, noting that she serves our area, the 158th District in Chester County, and sits on the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, serves as Secretary for the Subcommittee on Arts and Entertainment, serves as Secretary for the Local Government Commission and sits on the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. Rep. Sappey's local office is located just north of route 82 in the Willowdale Town Center. She has been very supportive of the Borough and has assisted in securing funding for a number of projects including storm water, sewer utilities, parks, trails and the renovation of the police station in this building, for which we are very thankful. Most recently, Rep. Sappey hosted a public input hearing on the proposed PECO rate hikes, attended our National Night Out event a couple of weeks ago, and is a regular at the Kennett Farmers Market on Friday afternoons.

Representative Sappey thanked everyone for inviting her to update the community this evening. She shared she was appointed to the Local Government Commission and really enjoys working with her local municipalities and her constituents, which are her biggest priority. She noted that most of her time is spent here locally, as she is only in Harrisburg during session dates which begin towards the end of September. One of her priorities is to improve our infrastructure, which admittedly is an uphill battle to which she is committed. She shared that she and her colleagues have formed a Southeast Task Force to address the way PennDOT is funded and how workers are paid, with an effort to regionalize the funding and pay scales. She noted southeastern Pennsylvania is an economic engine for the whole state and it is incredibly important to maintain our infrastructure to keep businesses here, draw more businesses to the area, create more jobs and keep people working.

Rep. Sappey shared her other priorities, including childcare for working women, stressing the importance of early childhood education, small businesses and main street, staying in touch with municipalities, and updating our outdated codes. She noted she has a great team who love what they do and really care about their constituents.

Discussion ensued on various topics including the Chester Water Authority (CWA) and Fire and EMS funding. Rep. Sappey shared the CWA is a solvent Water Authority that she and her colleagues would like to see remain public and independent, noting that a buyout of the CWA will not fix the city of Chester. In regard to Fire and EMS, she noted this has been a huge topic of discussion because there are few paid firefighters outside of the cities and what the state can do is enact enabling legislation to make it more affordable. She noted that everyone will have to "own" a piece of emergency response in Pennsylvania and grants are made available to help.

LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATION – SENATOR JOHN KANE

President Norris introduced Senator Kane, noting he serves the 9th Senatorial District, which includes parts of Chester and Delaware counties. He serves as the minority Chair of the Labor and Industry Committee, sits the Communication and Technology Committee, the Transportation, Veteran Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committees. Senator Kane hosts satellite office hours at the Kennett Library on the 3rd Wednesday of each month and he recently announced grant awards through the Emergency Food Assistance Program for two (2) area Food Banks, one of which was awarded to Kennett Area Community Services (KACS) in the amount of \$26,650. President Norris shared that Senator Kane played a collaborative role helping secure funding for the new Kennett Library, for the new Kennett Square Police Department here at 600 S. Broad Street, and with other grants as well.

Senator Kane shared he is not a politician, just a regular blue-collar tradesman who ran a business and a union, and when he saw what was happening to working-class people with the scourge of opioid epidemic, the overdoses and deaths, that is when and why he got into politics, to help people. He has survived his own addiction, survived cancer, and he likes to fight a good fight for what is right for the people in his district. He is working to keep the CWA as a public authority, or in some type of partnership, rather than selling it to a private entity like Aqua. He commented that we have upcoming elections and the last day to register to vote is October 21st, and the last day to request a mail-in ballot is October 29th. Discussion ensued regarding the costs of affordable housing and childcare, the CWA, property tax and rent rebates for senior citizens and the fact that Pennsylvania is a closed primary state.

Mayor Fetick thanked Senator Kane and Representative Sappey for coming this evening. He noted their offices are very responsive, send out grant opportunities when they arise, respond to our calls for help, and he cannot think of a major Borough project in the last several years in which both Senator Kane and Representative Sappey were not instrumental in the efforts. He thanked them for their support of the Borough of Kennett Square.

2023 AUDIT PRESENTATION – ZELENOWSKA AXELROD (ZA)

Tim Mirra, ZA, presented the highlights of the 2023 Audit, which is available on the Borough's website. He explained the Audit, ZA's responsibilities and Council's responsibilities, noting it is ZA's responsibility to issue an opinion on the various financial statements pursuant to an audit that is conducted in generally accepted US auditing standards. He noted ZA is also responsible for ensuring that the financial statements are presented in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. He shared that ZA gains an understanding of internal controls over financial reporting and compliance and conducts tests on the internal controls as needed. He shared that if they find problems, they issue a findings list or a recommendation of what they feel is necessary to change. Mr. Mirra stated he is pleased to share that again for 2023, the Borough has received unmodified opinions on the financial statements, a clean opinion with no management comments, which is the highest level of assurance a CPA can provide. He shared there are no findings and ZA did not have recommendations because they found that everything is in order, which is very commendable. Mr. Mirra noted there is the possibility of a single audit for next year which is triggered by the threshold of spending \$750 million of federal funds due to the Borough's spending of the ARPA funds. Mr. Mirra commented that it is not a big deal, the auditor will do compliance testing and additional reporting, but since the Borough records are so clean, he does not expect there to be any issues.

President Norris thanked Mr. Mirra for his presentation of the results of the Borough's 2023 Audit and thank Mr. Baccino for his management of the Borough's finances.

CONSENT ITEMS

Councilmember Feit motioned to approve the Consent agenda; seconded by Vice President Caccamo. The motion was approved unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

ANSON B. NIXON PARK TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

Solicitor Rongaus commented in regards to the outstanding issue from Monday, his team reviewed the final packet and recommend that if Council is in agreement with it, they are able approve the project to expand the gateway trail plan connection for Anson B. Nixon Park, subject to the payments for the project by the Kennett Trails Alliance, and subject to attaining all the necessary easements and permits associated with the same. Then we can move forward and review to make sure there are no additional permits, work with the surrounding property owners and make sure both temporary and permanent easements are in place so that the trail can be completed.

Councilmember Hamilton motioned to approve the project to expand the Gateway Trails Plan Connection for Anson B. Nixon Park, subject to payments for the project by the Kennett Trails Alliance and subject to obtaining all easements and permits associated with the same; seconded by Vice President Caccamo.

Borough Manager Coleman explained the project is to pave a path from the State Street crosswalk near the YMCA straight into Anson B. Nixon Park, paid for by the Kennett Trails Alliance. He noted it is a two (2) step process; to pave the trail, we must make sure we are putting it on land where we have permission from the landowners to do so, therefore step one is to secure the easements, and we are confident we will receive the necessary permissions and easements. Borough Manager Coleman explained that step two (2) is to ensure that we have the correct offsets in the permitting process, which we are confident we will have.

John Thomas, 406 S. Broad Street commented he thought the original trail was on Borough property. Borough Manager Coleman noted that the original trail was placed on private property which subsequently sold and a new home was built on the property, so that trail is no longer useable.

Sandy D'Antonio asked if the project was reviewed by experts like the Brandywine Red Clay Alliance. Borough Manager Coleman explained the project will go through our normal review process, which includes the Borough's engineers.

President Norris called for the vote

The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Councilmember Feit commented for Louise Rossi of 600 W. Linden Street, who was unable to make the meeting tonight. Ms. Rossi shared she has a lot of concern about traffic on W. Linden Street, as construction vehicles are parking there and the cars drive at high rates of speed.

Charla Watson, 523 Magnolia Street, suggested that student representatives of the future should be sworn in by the student leaving the office and they should participate in all procedural things that Council does. She is concerned that we have allowed the Friends Home to build to the rear setback and now their delivery trucks park on Linden Street all the time. In regard to the chickens, she suggested that people read the Daily Local articles about chickens in the Borough in 2020-2021 and we cannot let one person be the exception to the law.

John Thomas, 406 S. Broad Street, commented that the apartment complex on W. State Street is a mess and should be watched closer, because the builder has created a safety hazard and is taking advantage of the Borough. He commented on chickens, advising people to research the information and the diseases and rats chickens bring.

WEDNESDAY WORKSHOP

PARRISH TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE

President Norris shared that the last item on the agenda this evening is a workshop on the Parrish Trail Master Plan. He introduced Anita Davidson for her presentation and interactive session.

Anita Davidson, Director of Trail Development, Kennett Trails Alliance, thanked Council and attendees and introduced her colleagues, Christina Norland and Natalia Santiago Vasquez. She explained she is here to talk about the draft Master Plan of the Parrish parcel, which sits along the Kennett Greenway. She shared that in order to complete the draft, we need feedback from the public to make sure to correctly understand the priorities of the various community members and stakeholders, and she will lead the attendees through a priority-setting interactive session. Ms. Davidson noted the Master Plan is being done in collaboration with our partners, the Borough, Kennett Township, Brandywine Red Clay Alliance and Green Roots Landscape and Architectural Design. She shared the site overview, noting the Parrish property is approximately a 37-acre parcel located in Kennett Township and owned by the Borough, bound by W. South Street to the north and Scarlett Avenue to the west, Hillendale Road to the south and the west branch of the Red Cay Creek. She noted earlier this year, with the support of the Brandywine Conservancy and the Trails Alliance, we were able to support the engineering design of this section of the creek restoration and with one more grant for the match, we will move closer to the implementation of the restoration.

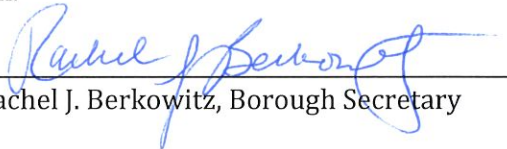
Ms. Davidson shared that the next step is to look at the diverse needs of the area's population, and the stakeholders of the parcel. The parcel is home to various environments (woodlands, wet woodlands, meadows, wet meadows, wetlands and the creek) that are home to many different species of important plants, birds and animals.

These differing environments determine what opportunities can exist on the parcel, with one amenity already existing, which is the Kennett Bike Park that opened in the summer. She indicated the various opportunities for fishing and creek access, possibly a pavilion, picnic and seating areas and possibly an expanded bike park. The activity for tonight is a planning activity that will take into account the constraints of the parcel, for example a pavilion has a heavy infrastructure, so it cannot be located in a wetland. She noted other opportunities to consider such as expanded and accessible parking at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the possibility of a raised boardwalk to admire the habitat in the wooded wetlands, among others. She asked people to take about ten (10) minutes to share ideas for the parcel at various stations around the room with the goal of choosing three (3) to five (5) out of the big list of opportunities. Ms. Davidson also shared that people can always reach out with ideas after the meeting as you think over this project. The interactive activity commenced and was briefly discussed with the top favorite ideas being an open plaza/gathering space, a fishing area, a raised trail loop, a welcoming wildflower area towards the entrance, bike parking, water fountain, pet waste area, safety and low-lighting needs, and nature playscapes for kids. The critical issue of maintenance was discussed as it must be a collaborative process that can endure for years.

President Norris thanked Ms. Davidson for her presentation and thanked Square Roots Collective for the support they give in our area.

ADJOURNMENT

President Norris adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.



Rachel J. Berkowitz, Borough Secretary