

WILSON BOROUGH
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA
January 22, 2024

The second meeting of January of the Council of The Borough of Wilson was held in the Guy B. Tomaino Public Safety Building at 2040 Hay Terrace, Easton, PA. Council President John Burke called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Roll call followed.

PRESENT:

Scott Palinkas	Susan Allen	Kimberlee Muzac
John Burke	Justin Woodring	
Shaun Gable	Jeffrey Bracken	

ABSENT:

Russell Lipari

Also present were Solicitor Stanley Margle, Borough Manager Jill Garcia, Fire Chief Joseph Sipel, Police Chief Christian Meehan and Public Works Supervisor Eric Flowers.

APPOINTMENT OF OPEN COUNCIL SEAT

Ms. Garcia advised there was one letter of interested received, from Mr. Charles Wacik, for the open Council seat. A motion to approve Mr. Wacik to fill the empty seat made by Mr. Palinkas. Second by Mr. Woodring. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with a 7-0 vote. Mr. Wacik was sworn in by Mayor Barrett and took his council seat.

READING OF THE MINUTES:

A motion by Ms. Gable to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2024, meeting. Second by Mr. Wacik. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

GUEST:

Ms. Claudia Robinson and Mr. Neil Griffin representing the investment team for the Dixie site, presented Council with preliminary plans for the redevelopment of the Dixie building. The building has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places and redevelopment will use the existing structures. It will house 405 apartments, approximately 76% 1-bedroom and 24% 2-bedrooms. The redevelopment meets the Borough parking requirements and would only be requesting a variance to reduce landscape buffers on the North, East and South sides of the building allowing access to the fire lanes. A traffic study has been conducted and the only recommendation was to adjust the timing of the traffic light at 25th and Butler Streets. It was noted this redevelopment will require both Zoning Hearing Board approval and Land Development approval from the Borough.

COMMENT PERIOD FOR RESIDENTS AND TAXPAYERS RE: DIXIE REDEVELOPMENT

Mr. Michael Shannon of 2230 Fox Run questioned if the plans had been presented to the County? Solicitor Margle advised there is some involvement with the County however there is no LERTA or a TIF.

Mr. Kenneth Wells of 2220 4th St. wanted to know how many stories the buildings would be. Ms. Robinson advised there are currently four stories and there will be no changes made.

Mr. James Bundro of 1844 Fairview Ave. asked who the new owner is and was advised by Council Solicitor that ownership has not changed.

Mr. Rodney Nace of 807 Balata St. questioned parking issues with the new development. Parking requirements have been met.

Mr. Arrmando Mortiz-Chapelliquen of 1945 Lehigh St. asked if the lounge, pool, and exercise facilities will be just for residents. Ms. Robinson said yes.

Mr. Carl Cooke 2330 Front St. said a traffic light should be added at 24th and Butler Sts. Solicitor Margle advised a traffic study has been completed and potential buyers will review the results. The Borough will have the opportunity to review the traffic study as part of the land development approval process.

PRP AMENDMENT

Borough Engineer, Ms. Monica Wall advised the Borough is required to have a DEP permit for the storm sewer systems. The Borough drains to two water systems; Northern half drains to Bushkill River and Southern half drains to the Lehigh River. In 2018 the Borough came up with a plan to reduce the sediment drain into the Lehigh River by 10%. This plan is referred to as the Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP). The PRP needs to be revised and DEP requires a public comment period. A motion to advertise the PRP for a public comment period of 30 days was made by Mr. Woodring. Second by Mr. Wacik. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

NONE

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

NONE

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR:

NONE

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE BOROUGH MANAGER:

NONE

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT:

NONE

POLICE:

Chief Meehan requested a Caucus.

FIRE:

Chief Sipel requested Council's permission to hire Part-Time Fire Fighter Mr. Kevin Cooper. Motion to approve made by Mr. Wacik. Seconded by Mr. Woodring. A roll call vote followed. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

Chief Sipel requested Council's permission to hire Part-time Fire Fighter Mr. Daniel Tillman. Motion to approve made by Mr. Woodring. Seconded by Mr. Wacik. A roll call vote followed. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Flowers advised Lehigh Drive has been closed as recommended by Borough engineers, due to the existing/deteriorating bridge conditions.

PARKS:

NONE

CODE COMMITTEE:

NONE

CELEBRATION COMMITTEE:

NONE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

Mr. Woodring advised the Comprehensive Plan Committee met with the Borough Engineers and he is awaiting a cost estimate for creating a new Comprehensive Plan.

CODE DEPARTMENT/ZONING/LAND DEVELOPMENT:

818 S 25th St. is a tract of land consisting of two parcels located in the C1 (local/commercial) District. The two parcels will be consolidated, and a portion of the existing building will be removed. Upon completion the building will be 6,200 square feet, 17 parking spaces: 15 standard and 2 ADA. The application was granted the following variances by the Wilson Borough Zoning Hearing Board: E-10 Service station use, rear setback of 0 feet, side yard setback of 0 feet, allow less than 1 acre lot for an E-10 use, allow E-10 use to be located on a marginal access street, no requirement of a 20-foot soft buffer abutting a residential district, allowing 17 parking spaces where 28 were required and not to require screening along the parking perimeter.

The applicant is requesting two waivers, to allow preliminary/final approval simultaneously and to not comply with the requirement to show all existing features within 500 feet beyond the tract. Borough Council requests sidewalks along the property frontage.

A motion to allow preliminary/final approval simultaneously made by Ms. Gable. Second by Mr. Woodring. A roll call vote followed. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

A motion to grant a waiver requiring all existing features within 500 feet of the tract be shown on the preliminary/final plans with the following requirements; existing gas lateral, tie in location of existing sanitary lateral to the main line on Edelman Street, existing sanitary and water laterals tying into proposed building, existing storm structures and pipes within 100 feet of the site including pipe size, pipe material, pipe inverts and if applicable provide cleanouts every 50 feet along the sanitary lateral by Mr. Woodring. Seconded by Ms. Gable. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

A fence is proposed along the rear property line. A motion to have the Borough Engineer reach out to residential property owners that abut the rear of the building on 818 S 25th Street to offer a softening buffer of arborvitae to be located on abutting residential properties at developer's expense by Ms. Gable. Seconded by Mr. Woodring. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

A motion for a conditional preliminary/final approval of the applicant's plans subject to compliance with the Borough Engineers review letter dated January 22, 2024, made by Ms. Gable. Seconded by Mr. Wacik. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

ATTORNEY:

NONE

MECAB:

NONE

OLD BUSINESS:

NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

NONE

ORDINANCES:

A motion to approve Ordinance #814 Zoning Fee amendment made by Mr. Woodring. Seconded by Ms. Muzac. A roll call vote followed. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. No Vote cast by Mr. Palinkas. Motion passed with a 7-1 vote.

RESOLUTIONS:

A motion to approve Resolution #1284-Emergency Operations Plan Update made by Ms. Gable. Seconded by Mr. Wacik. A roll call vote followed. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

A motion to approve Resolution #1285-Disposition of Records was made by Mr. Woodring. Seconded by Ms. Gable. A roll call vote followed. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS:

Bills were in the amount of \$367,401.07. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Wacik. Seconded by Mr. Woodring. A roll call vote followed. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

PRESENTATION OF MATTERS BY RESIDENTS AND TAXPAYERS:

Mr. James Bundro of 1844 Fairview Ave. advised he receives two sewer/garbage bills. He is no longer renting the apartment and it is no longer registered with the Borough as a rental. He doesn't want to pay for two sewer/garbage bills. The office as well as Council advised Mr. Bundro of his options; 1. He can have a second water meter placed on the property which will prove no usage in one of the apartments or 2. Mr. Bundro can change the residential units with the County from 2 units to 1. Mr. Bundro became irate and had to be removed from Council chambers.

Mr. Rodney Nace of 807 Balata St commented about rental properties and how rentals work in the Borough.

CAUCUS:

Entered caucus at 8:42pm
Returned from caucus at 9:35pm

A motion by Mr. Palinkas to authorize Solicitor Margle to take all steps necessary to institute the filing of a claim under the eminent domain a statue and serve it upon the landowner in a certain dispute. Second by Mr. Wacik. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

A motion made by Mr. Wacik to have the Borough Manager consult with the Borough Solicitor regarding communication from employee #1 dated 1/9/2024. Borough solicitor to advise how Borough manager is to respond. Second by Ms. Gable. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

A motion made by Ms. Gable to resolve the issue of an interpretation of prior resolution adopted by Council and to resolve that interpretation in a manner which results in the payment of certain monies to employee #2, which will be specially outlined by the Borough Manger. Seconded by Mr. Woodring. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Ms. Gable, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Wacik, and Mr. Woodring. No votes cast by Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke and Mr. Palinkas. Motion passed with a 5-3 vote.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Wacik made a Motion to adjourn at 9:45pm. Seconded by Ms. Gable and Council concurred.

STEPHANIE N. JONES
CLERK/TREASURER