

WILSON BOROUGH
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA
June 10, 2024

The first meeting of June 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:

Susan Allen	Kimberlee Muzac	Justin Woodring
Jeffrey Bracken	Charlie Wacik	Shaun Gable
John Burke	Scott Palinkas	Russell Lipari via phone

ABSENT:

NONE

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

READING OF THE MINUTES:

A motion by Mr. Wacik to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2024, meeting. Second by Mr. Woodring. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with a 9-0 vote.

GUEST:

A Public hearing for a Planned Residential Development (PRD) application for the "1921 at Dixie". The applicant is seeking tentative approval of a proposed development that includes 405 apartments and a restaurant at 12 S. 24th Street with improvements to existing parking lot at the intersection of Washington Boulevard and S. 22nd Street. Rent will be market rate with approximately seventy-five percent one bedroom and twenty-five percent two bedroom only. Target market for the apartments is middle income with no school aged children. A traffic study was completed, there is no expectation of an uptick in traffic.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL:

Mr. Palinkas asked if the traffic study was submitted to the Department of Transportation and approved. Mr. Griffin advised it was submitted. Mr. Margle advised approval from the Department of Transportation is not required; the Engineer reviews the traffic study and there will be compliance with the Engineer's recommendations.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Mr. Chris Doklan of 2471 Freemansburg Ave. expressed concern with increased traffic on 24th Street.

Ms. Holly Waugh of 2138 Hay Street expressed concerns about increased traffic during drop-off and pick-up times during the school year.

Mr. Armando Moritz-Chappelliquen of 1945 Lehigh St. requested the bike path be connected to the north side of the Dixie Property.

A motion granting the tentative approval of the Planned Residential Development (PRD) with compliance to any and all comments from the Borough Engineer, mandates of the Wilson Borough Zoning Hearing Board and all federal state and local rules, regulations and laws, made by Mr. Gable. Seconded by Mr. Bracken. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. No vote cast by Mr. Palinkas. Motion passed with an 8-1 vote.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

Ms. Hope Hurd requested the 1800 block of Fairview Ave. be closed for the annual block party on July 4, 2024, from 7 am to 10 pm. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Woodring. Seconded by Mr. Wacik. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with a 9-0 vote.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

NONE

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR:

Mayor Barrett advised he attended the Northampton County Council meeting and spoke on behalf of the Borough advising Northampton County Council that Wilson Borough Council did not approve, nor has Borough Council reviewed the TIF plan for the Dixie property.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE BOROUGH MANAGER:

Ms. Garcia advised she has begun to order equipment for traffic light replacements through grants. The first one will be at the Meuser Library intersection.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT:

NONE

PROTECTION TO PERSONS & PROPERTY

Ms. Gable asked what the status of the Balata Street building is. Solicitor Margle advised of some property issues that the seller has resolved, and he has a tentative meeting scheduled with seller's Attorney Benner on June 13, 2024.

POLICE:

NONE

FIRE:

Chief Sipel requested Council's permission to hire Mr. Scott VanWhy as a part-time Fire Fighter. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Wacik. Seconded by Ms. Gable. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with a 9-0 vote.

Chief Sipel requested Council's permission to hire Mr. Richard Reisling Jr. as a part-time Fire Fighter. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Gable. Seconded by Ms. Wacik. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with a 9-0 vote.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Mr. Bracken requested a motion to hire Mr. Zachary Schneepli for summer help. A motion to hire was made by Mr. Wacik. Seconded by Ms. Gable. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Palinkas, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with a 9-0 vote.

PARKS:

NONE

CODE COMMITTEE:

NONE

CELEBRATION COMMITTEE:

Movies in the park will be held on June 15, 2024.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

NONE

CODE DEPARTMENT/ZONING/LAND DEVELOPMENT:

NONE

ATTORNEY:

Solicitor Margle anticipates an appraisal of the property on Lehigh Drive to come in very shortly.

Solicitor Margle advised he appeared at the Northampton County Council meeting on June 6, 2024. Solicitor Margle advised he was shocked when reading the agenda implying that Wilson Borough and Wilson School District had already reviewed, voted and approved the TIF for the Dixie Property.

Solicitor Margle advised the Borough garbage provider LMR Disposal has been acquired by a larger company. Under the contract there is an assignment of rights and responsibility, the new buyer of which is bound by the current contract with the Borough. Ms. Garcia advised the new owner will be keeping the same staff. Mr. Woodring asked if the Borough is obligated to the contract and Solicitor Margle advised yes.

Solicitor Margle advised he received communication from Chief Meehan on Friday June 7, 2024, regarding an incident where the Wilson Borough Police were called to an alleged disturbance between a resident of the Borough and a Borough Councilman. The incident was caught on body camera. Chief Meehan sent a copy of the body camera footage to Solicitor Margle, and he felt it deserved the attention of Borough Council. Solicitor Margle drafted a letter to Borough Council and the Mayor. Solicitor Margle states the footage speaks of the impropriety of an elected official and feels Borough Council should be aware of it. Solicitor Margle advised Borough Council need to be open and upfront with regard to any incidents involving someone within Council's control and bring it to the public, make the information available to the public and speak about it publicly. Solicitor Margle advised he researched whether this incident qualifies for an executive session and in good conscience Solicitor Margle issue an opinion that this could not be discussed in a private setting. Ms. Allen requested to view the footage. Solicitor Margle advised yes; it is public record.

Mr. Palinkas commented that he was leaving the Council meeting and felt he should have been shown the video before the meeting. Mr. Palinkas advised it is a civil matter between himself and his neighbor. Mayor Barrett stepped out before the video was played and stated he had already seen it and was disturbed by it. Chief Meehan played the body camera video stating under Pennsylvania Act 22 nearly all body cameras are releasable to the public. There are very few exceptions, and this incident is not one of them.

A motion for a Vote of No Confidence against Mr. Palinkas was made by Ms. Gable. Seconded by Ms. Allen. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

A motion to have Solicitor Margle draft a letter on behalf of all Council members to the PSAB, State Ethic Board and MECAB explaining the conduct of Mr. Palinkas made by Ms. Gable. Seconded by Ms. Allen. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

MECAB:

NONE

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Lipari asked what the status of the pickle ball courts is? Ms. Garcia advised work could begin as early as this summer.

NEW BUSINESS:

NONE

ORDINANCES:

NONE

RESOLUTIONS:

A motion to approve Resolution #1288- Consenting to the Assignment of the January 2, 2023 Contract with LMR Disposal, LLC for refuse collection and disposal and recycling services, to Casella Major Account Services, LLC made by Mr. Woodring. Seconded by Mr. Bracken. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS:

Bills were in the amount of \$272,559.25 A motion to approve was made by Ms. Lipari. Seconded by Mr. Bracken. A roll call vote followed. Yes votes cast by Ms. Allen, Mr. Bracken, Mr. Burke, Ms. Gable, Mr. Lipari, Ms. Muzac, Mr. Wacik and Mr. Woodring. Motion passed with an 8-0 vote.

PRESENTATION OF MATTERS BY RESIDENTS AND TAXPAYERS:

Khloud, Khaled & Amir Assan of Majestic Auto at 1639 Washington Blvd. expressed concerns with J & K Auto located at 205 S. 16th St. They have witnessed spray painting of cars and fixing cars in public streets, leaving toxic fluids in the driveway and parking lot. Ms. Jones advised the Code Officer is aware of the situation however the working on cars in street would need to be handled by the Police.

CAUCUS:

NONE

NONE

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Wacik made a Motion to adjourn at 8:45 pm. Seconded by Mr. Woodring and Council concurred.

STEPHANIE N. JONES
CLERK/TREASURER