

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Work Session
September 21, 2007

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, September 21, 2007, in the State College Municipal Building Room 304, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Ms. Dauler called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

Present: Catherine G. Dauler, President of Council
Thomas E. Daubert
Ronald L. Filippelli
Elizabeth A. Goreham
Donald M. Hahn
Craig R. Humphrey
Absent: Jeffrey R. Kern

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Borough Manager; Carl R. Hess, Planning Director; Amy R. Miller, Recording Secretary; Arthur Caccavale, Parking Manager; Beth Johnston, Human Resource Director; Timothy Grattan, Information Technology; Michael Groff, Finance Director; Norma Crater, Accounting Supervisor; Amy Story, Borough Engineer; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Mark Whitfield, Public Works Directors; Alan Sam, Arborist; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public hour. There were no comments from the public

Storm Water Curb Extension. Eliza Pennypacker, Professor of Landscape Architecture at PSU, described a proposed demonstration project to be funded entirely by a grant. She said their curb extension proposal could bring to the community recommendations for making aesthetic street improvements while addressing storm water issues. She added that their innovations would enhance State College's status as a Tree City USA while managing storm water in addition to calming traffic and showing commitment to the betterment of the community.

Stuart Echols, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at PSU, said that the idea was not their original idea but came from a visit to Portland, Oregon. He said if implemented, their proposal would address storm water, beautify the streetscape, calm traffic and make the statement of the community commitment to enhance the quality of life in the Borough. He added that the curbs could be removed if, at a later time, it was determined they were not conducive to the neighborhood. Mr. Echols said, however, they found that neighborhoods in Portland were requesting the streetscape changes after seeing them in place in nearby areas.

Alexander Duran, Land Use and Development Specialist with the Pennsylvania Housing Research Center and Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

at PSU, explained the plan for the proposed curb extensions and showed slides of streetscapes in Portland. In addition Mr. Duran explained the proposed design of the curbs and showed possible locations in the Borough where the curbs could be installed.

Mr. Duran said letters of support for the project were received from Clearwater Conservancy and Mark Whitfield, the Director of Public Works for the Borough. He added that the PSU team is not asking for funds but wished to demonstrate how storm water could better be managed.

Mr. Daubert said there are a lot of streets in the Borough that have 3 lanes and thought residents would not want every street to be done this way. He added that trash and leaf collection would be hindered.

Mr. Hahn said he is most interested in the projected cost for the project as well as Borough staff's response to this project. He added that the proposal looks very fascinating, and he said he is interested in pursuing the project.

Mr. Whitfield said the Holmes Foster neighborhood would be an excellent location to start because stormwater pipes are old and too small. He added that the Greentree neighborhood has wide streets and would also be a good location to start with narrowing the streets in an effort to begin this project.

Beaver/Allen Streetscape Improvements. Mr. Fontaine said since the completion of the new Schlow Library, Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) and Library staffs have been discussing the possibility of improving the Beaver Avenue facade or streetscape. He said in the past year Borough staff was also included in these discussions.

He noted that CATA hired Landscape Architect Dan Jones to develop a new streetscape design for this area which CATA, Schlow and the Borough have agreed to provide funding to complete the project. Mr. Fontaine added the Beaver/Allen Streetscape Improvements are included in the 2008-2012 Capital Improvement Program (ST082) where project costs are specified. The Borough's primary responsibility would be for streetlight improvements, trees, and landscaping.

Mr. Jones said he first determined the site's needs and usage. He noted that the location is one of the major bus stops and should be maintained as such. He noted that the visual appeal of the area is also essential. Mr. Jones said he evaluated the specific site elements and determined with certain small changes, such as replacement of benches and integrating art work into the project as well as adding other street furnishings such as a kiosk, clock or bollard, would improve the overall aesthetic of the area. He noted that some residents said the architectural aspects of the library were unlike the other buildings surrounding it.

He said a new sign for CATA to indicate bus arrivals as well as a library sign to identify the building on Beaver Avenue is proposed. The overall cost estimate for all modifications to improve the function and visual appearances of the area is \$93,500.

Mr. Filippelli said he thought the improvements were positive and added that installing a kiosk to house community announcements would also be a good idea as well as hanging banners to announce shows. Mr. Jones said he agreed, but the library staff prefers not to be responsible for displaying the information.

Mr. Daubert said the space is clearly not being used to its full potential and asked why the design of the space was made useless initially. Mr. Daubert also asked why the library would not be responsible for the cost of planting trees when residents are normally charged for the trees. Mr. Whitfield said new trees are generally billed to the property owner, but because these trees would be replacement trees the Borough would assume the costs as it does with other properties.

Capital Improvement Program. Mr. Fontaine said Council received the 2008-2012 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) at their meeting of August 20, 2007. He said Council discussed the program at their meetings of September 10 and 17, and held a public hearing to receive comments on the plan at the September 17 meeting. Mr. Fontaine asked Council to review the memo included with the agenda to determine if all their questions were addressed. He added that approval of the plan is scheduled for Council's regular meeting of October 1.

Mr. Daubert said he felt there was not a significant cost savings with the public works staff taking on a lot of the work that contractors would normally do. Mr. Whitfield said Council should keep in mind that much of the needed equipment to do the work is already owned by the Borough. He said additionally staff would not spend the large amount of time currently spent on preparing bid documents; staff's time would be better utilized in the field. Mr. Fontaine said utilizing the Borough's staff would be more efficient and would provide flexibility in work schedules when needed.

Mr. Hahn asked if the Borough crews would be active year round. Mr. Fontaine said yes, most work would continue year round whenever possible. Mr. Whitfield added that there has been no case when Borough crews have run out of work.

Mr. Filippelli said without being able to substantiate a large savings, he is concerned the Borough would lose money. Mr. Fontaine said he understood Mr. Filippelli's concerns, but also said there would be a level of commitment to the Borough with regard to workload. Mr. Whitfield said there is a rotation of work that will always need to be completed.

Mr. Fontaine noted that with regard to the Pugh/Beaver Turn Lane, staff recommends no revisions to this line item.

Mr. Fontaine continued and said staff proposes \$25,000 per year for Intersection Safety Improvements. He added that the first step is to define the major problems and pedestrian safety needed in the improvements. Ms. Goreham asked if bicycle safety was also included in the pedestrian safety. Mr. Whitfield said both pedestrian and bicycle safety were incorporated in the improvements.

Mr. Fontaine said intersections included for safety improvements include South Atherton Street/Allen Street as well as improvements on the Foster Avenue/Atherton Street bike and pedestrian crossing.

In regard to buildings and parks, Mr. Daubert said he feels no Borough park should be used as a dog park. Mr. Fontaine said it was Council's decision, but staff recommends no revisions to the item.

Mr. Fontaine said in regard to Enterprise funds, staff recommends no revisions at this time. He added that he mistakenly spoke of the wrong meters at the McAllister lot. The system proposed is a revenue controlled system which is similar to the pay-on-foot pay stations. He added that staff can provide information on the system to Council by the end of the year or first quarter of 2008.

Mr. Fontaine said he would make the suggested changes in the CIP for Council's consideration and approval on October 1.

Colorado Town/Gown Report. Mr. Fontaine said that a State College/PSU team participated in a field study trip to Ft. Collins and Boulder Colorado for the purpose of examining leading practices in the two "college towns" related to neighborhood programs in mixed student/non-student areas near campus, high risk drinking initiatives and other town-gown relations programs. He indicated that Ft. Collins and Boulder were identified for the study trip as communities that have addressed town-gown issues effectively. Mr. Fontaine said the written report distributed to Council at the meeting provided details on the Team's work; He then briefed Council on some of the major highlights.

Mr. Fontaine said both Ft. Collins and Boulder have a strong town/gown relationship. Each community has a welcome pack that is hand distributed to new residents and teams spoke to residents about issues such as getting to know your neighbors and educating students and non-students on ways to be good neighbors.

He said also in Boulder the team met with the university/town liaison group. He said this was not a typical meeting, but was one where the State College/Penn State team could ask questions on how things are handled in Boulder.

Mr. Fontaine said both schools have conflict resolution programs that are geared toward first time offenders and are designed to prevent repeat occurrences. He added that in regard to noise violations, Ft. Collins offers the option of attending a

two hour educational class in lieu of paying a substantially higher fine of \$1,000. Mr. Fountaine said Ft. Collins officials have found a high success rate with the program.

He noted that the overall site visit was very useful in learning about the schools' cooperative programs and where we can do a better job locally.

Mr. Filippelli asked what the typical fine is in State College. Chief King said typically the fine is \$100 but can be up to \$300, but additionally there are also court costs which are about \$100. Mr. Fountaine added that the higher fines issued in Ft. Collins are used to cover the educational programs.

Mr. Filippelli said neither university nor borough officials have a say in the fines issued in State College. Mr. Fountaine agreed and said the district justice sets the fines. Mr. Filippelli encouraged working with the district justices to implement similar programs and raising fines.

Review the COG General Forum Agenda. Council reviewed the COG General Forum agenda for the September 24 meeting.

Ms. Dauler said there were changes to the Property Maintenance Code to be presented at the meeting. Mr. Fountaine said the changes suggested were mainly administrative in nature, specifically in regard to rental housing. Mr. Daubert said some townships feel the height limit for window egress without an exit stairway should be raised above the current 20 feet. He said he strongly recommended against any changes.

Mr. Fountaine said the Borough has submitted a Development of Regional Impact Report for review by COG for the changes Council has proposed for zoning in the east end of town.

Mr. Whitfield added that the Water Authority passed a resolution to change the regulations for sprinklers so that the standards are the same as in the statewide code and sprinklers become more affordable.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary