

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Work Session
Monday, December 14, 2009

The State College Borough Council met on Monday, December 14, 2009, in the State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, Room 304, State College, PA. Elizabeth Goreham called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Elizabeth A. Goreham, President of Council
Donald M. Hahn
Theresa D. Lafer
Silvi Lawrence
Peter Morris
James L. Rosenberger
Ronald L. Filippelli

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Roger A. Dunlap, Assistant Manager for Budget and Administration; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Manager for Community Services; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Michael S. Groff, Finance Director; Carl R. Hess, Planning Director; Beth A. Johnston, Human Resources Director; Norma J. Crater, Accounting Supervisor; Charles J. DeBow, Parking Manager; Sheila Carl, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public Hour. Council President announced that Council had met in an executive session prior to the work session to discuss personnel matters.

State College Land Area Plan Future Land Use Map. Council was asked to consider whether or not to accept the State College Area Land Plan (SCLAP), including the future land use map, as these documents will guide the preparation of a set of new land development regulations.

James May, CRPA Planning Director, attended the meeting and provided Council with a revised future land use map showing areas to preserve and maintain stable neighborhoods. Mr. May explained this map is only one piece of the puzzle that will help guide growth as this is a 30 year plan.

Eric Vorwald, CRPA Senior Planner, also attended the meeting and reviewed with Council the changes to the map and indicated areas that would be key for redevelopment.

Council had numerous questions for Mr. May and Mr. Vorwald and were concerned how new land development regulations would change the Borough neighborhoods and not protect the historic districts. Council was concerned that some of the changes would allow for too much density in certain areas.

John Lowe, 614 S. Fraser Street, spoke and also expressed concerns about zoning changes. He has lived in the Borough for 40 years and has relied on the protection of various zoning regulations. Mr. Lowe stated the changes are a balancing act and one needs to always be observant. Council did not accept the plan and map.

West End Zoning. Council was asked to provide direction to staff on how it wishes to proceed on the West End Zoning.

Council President Goreham provided the other members of Council with a hand out outlining her thoughts and ideas for changes of this amendment including ways to develop work force housing.

Council shared their thoughts and ideas on ways to improve the West End. Some included ways to keep the historic nature of the area; developing an interface between campus and the West End; preserving the train station; and a linear park.

John Simbeck, 601 West College Avenue, shared that four years ago he did not know the West End would be heading in this direction. He feels there are good intentions with developing the West End but changing zoning is not the way to deal with this area.

Mr. Fontaine stated Council's comments along with this amendment would be sent back to the Planning Commission.

2010 Operating Budget. Council continued to discuss the 2010 Operating Budget. Staff provided Council with a summary of outstanding issues and asked for Council's direction.

Staff explained that sewer rates would be increased during 2010 and would be done using a phased approach with the rate increasing each quarter. Council expressed some concerns regarding the increase but agreed the increase is necessary.

Council also talked about the possibility of a ½ mill tax increase and after discussion agreed this would not be appropriate for the 2010 budget.

Council discussed the proposed grants for the State Theatre and First Night.

There being no further comments, Council adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon K. Ergler
Assistant Borough Secretary