**State College Borough Council**
**Work Session**
**February 4, 2005**

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, February 4, 2005, in the State College Municipal Building's Council Chambers, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Mr. Daubert called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

Present: Bill Welch, Mayor
Thomas E. Daubert, President of Council
Catherine G. Dauler
Elizabeth A. Goreham
Craig R. Humphrey
Jeffrey R. Kern
Janet K. Knauer
James H. Meyer

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Ronald A. Davis, Assistant Borough Manager; Michele Nicolas, Director of Human Resources; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Mark Whitfield, Public Works Director; Mike Groff, Finance Director; Edward C. Holmes, Parking/Facilities Coordinator; Alan S. Sam, Arborist; Cynthia S. Hanscom, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

PUBLIC HOUR: There were no comments made by members of the public.

**Walnut Springs Park Management Study**. Mr. Fountaine noted representatives from the consultant team of Skelly and Loy were present to respond to questions on the Management Study for Walnut Springs Park. He reminded Council that the firm was awarded a contract to update the Master Plan for Walnut Springs Park, and, if approved by Council, to design a wetland in the Park. The consultant was guided in the development of the report by an ad hoc committee made up of residents, environmental experts, Borough staff and others. In addition to evaluating the 1991 Master Plan, the consultants recommended some improvements based on current use trends and increased demands on the Park generated by development of surrounding properties. Following review of the plan, Council would decide whether to approve the plan and authorize the consultant to proceed with the next phase, wetland design.

Mr. Sam presented a brief background on the update of the plan and introduced Tom Johnson and Rick Johnson.

Tom Johnson presented an overview of the plan. He indicated the short-term or immediate needs for the park included repair of sections of the trail system, removal of many of the invasive species (such as honeysuckle and wild grape vines), and stabilizing the banks of the stream where it has been eroded. Long-term improvements included continued removal of invasive species and maintenance of the existing trails.

Mr. Johnson indicated a major purpose for the park was to create a wetland to alleviate storm water problems in the Borough. The wetland could be constructed in the McCormick Avenue side of the stream at the lower end of the park. This would be an off-channel system about one acre in size. The wetland could also serve as a showcase for wildlife habitat.

Ms. Goreham questioned the removal of the invasive species, particularly the honeysuckle. Ms. Knauer noted residents believed the bushes were "lovely." Mr. Johnson explained the honeysuckle was not indigenous to the area and would spread, killing the natural plants. Ms. Goreham expressed concern about the use of herbicides to remove the brush, and added that many of the local residents shared her concern. Mr. Johnson explained removing the brush would be difficult without chemical treatment. Mr. Sam noted that fauna indigenous to this area would be replanted following removal of invasive species. He suggested an information kiosk could be installed in the park before and during removal to explain the process and outline the consequences if the invasive species were not removed.

Ms. Dauler urged Council to move forward with this project. Mr. Humphrey agreed.

Mr. Fountaine indicated the plan would be placed on Council's March 7 agenda for approval.

**Intercity Bus Facility**. Mr. Fountaine noted that in 2004, Penn State University advised the Borough of State College of its intent to relocate the bus station, currently on Atherton Street near downtown State College, to make way for PSU development plans on west campus. Penn State University had agreed to organize a steering committee of representative stakeholders to explore site possibilities for such relocation. The University also engaged Synergy Real Estate Corporation to facilitate the site selection process. Ms. Goreham introduced Allen Wampler and Mark Smith from Synergy, and Robert Finley, Assistant Vice President of Finance and Business with Penn State University.

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Mr. Smith said about 25 people had served on the Intermodal Transportation Committee. A scope of the project had been developed over the course of several meetings with the committee. This involved setting return goals for the project, establishing site selection criteria, identifying potential sites for evaluation and ranking, and developing a capital budget and list of potential funding sources. Initially, 17 potential sites had been identified, then further evaluated and narrowed to four. Mr. Wampler explained that budgeting and analysis had been conducted on those four sites and a net present value had been calculated for each, as follows:

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| High Street and College Avenue | $ 107,671 |
| Atherton Street and College Avenue | $ 1,278,054 |
| Garner Street and Beaver Avenue | $ 4,087,883 |
| White Course Drive | $(1,403,728) |

In addition to the economic analysis, each of the four sites was evaluated based on qualitative factors established by the committee. Factors included location proximate to the student population and CATA service. The ranking according to both quantitative and qualitative factors was as follows:

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| 1st | Garner Street and Beaver Avenue |
| 2nd | Atherton Street and College Avenue |
| 3rd | High Street and College Avenue |
| 4th | White Course Drive |

Mr. Daubert asked if the effects of increased traffic were taken into consideration when ranking these sites. Mr. Wampler replied that no traffic studies had been done but he observed that with an average of seven buses a day, the impact would be minimal.

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Mr. Daubert also asked about the economic analysis and Mr. Wampler explained residential development was used to determine maximum value because it was highest and best use of the property. Mr. Daubert commented the highest use may not be the best use. Mr. Smith noted the ranking based on both qualitative and quantitative analyses were almost in the same ranking order. Mr. Daubert believed the ranking was slanted heavily toward the financial aspects of the property. Mr. Fountaine noted that economic development of the downtown was one of the qualitative factors identified by the committee as important in ranking the properties.

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Council discussed the qualitative analysis and the impact different sites would have on the neighborhood. Ms. Goreham noted that neighborhood representatives had been included in the make-up of the committee so their concerns were considered.

Mr. Meyer asked if the analysis was based on the cost of an indoor facility. Mr. Smith replied, "Yes," and added an indoor facility would be more expensive. Mr. Meyer asked if the analysis had factored in the effects of change of business around the site. Mr. Smith replied that only those businesses within the site were considered.

Mr. Meyer asked about time constraints for relocation of the bus facility. Mr. Finley explained there was some urgency because of the University hoped to break ground in 2007. However, the University wanted to insure the best site for relocation was selected.

Mr. Meyer asked about funding available for this project. Mr. Findley responded funding was difficult but there may be some available sources.

Mr. Humphrey asked Synergy's involvement now that the study had been completed. Mr. Smith said they could continue to provide their expertise to negotiate the purchase of the site. Mr. Meyer asked who had paid for the study, and Mr. Smith replied the consultant's fees had been paid by the University. Mr. Meyer asked if the University had interest in continuing to work on the project, and Mr. Finley responded that it would depend on the findings of the study and today's discussion.

Mr. Fountaine suggested Council review the study and discuss its position further during the work session scheduled for February 14.

**Fraser Street Redevelopment Plan**. Mr. Fountaine said Council needed to reach consensus on the preferred approach to redevelopment of the Fraser Street property owned by the Borough. Council had focused on two alternatives for the redevelopment activity. The first model involved the creation of a State College Redevelopment Authority (RDA). Under this model, the Borough would create a redevelopment authority and the Mayor, in consultation with Council, would appoint the Board of Directors for the authority. The Borough, the State College Planning Commission, the RDA and the Downtown Improvement District (DID) would all be involved in the review process, but the RDA would be the agency ultimately responsible for completing the project. Under the second model, the DID would act as a redevelopment agency. Using its status as a 501(c)3 agency organized to carry out a variety of missions, including economic development, the DID would be the responsible agency for selecting a developer and overseeing the redevelopment project. The DID and the Borough would work together to identify the development objectives and agree on the critical elements of the redevelopment plan before the Borough would convey property to the DID. Once there is a clear consensus on Council as to which model the Borough will employ for this project, the necessary documents would be prepared for approval at a future meeting.

Mr. Daubert noted a letter had been received from the DID outlining how they would proceed with this project.

Ms. Dauler, who serves as Council's representative on the DID Board, indicated she favored moving ahead with the DID managing this project. Ms. Dauler felt the DID Board had a good working relationship with both the Borough and the downtown businesses. Ms. Goreham agreed and stated she felt very comfortable working with the DID on this project.

Mr. Humphrey asked if the RDA would be eligible for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) loans. Mr. Fountaine said he did not know. Ms. Sparacino explained that, if market rate housing is the goal, there would not be a need for HUD funding. Section 108 allows for money to be borrowed from future years' allocations of CDBG funds.

Mr. Welch said he had no preference but believed an RDA should be formed at some point to coordinate other projects as needed in the future.

Ms. Knauer asked, and Ms. Sparacino confirmed, that any project would follow development guidelines and involve the Borough's ABCs in the review process.

Mr. Fountaine noted there seemed to be a consensus among Council to move forward with working with the DID on this project. Ms. Knauer added that this would put the Borough and the DID at a whole new level of cooperation.

Mr. Meyer suggested a resolution indicating Council's intent to enter into an agreement with the DID be placed on Council's agenda for March 7. He felt this was a positive step for the community and the public should be informed.

**Schlow Memorial Library Renaming**. Council discussed the proposal by the Library Board to rename the library to reflect its regional impact.

Ms. Dauler noted it would be the decision of the Library Board, and not this Council, on whether or not to rename the library. It was not within the purview of this Council to comment. When asked if it would be appropriate for Council to talk with the Borough's two representatives on the Library Board, Ms. Knauer said she would feel uncomfortable telling someone how they should vote. Mr. Fountaine stated that Council, as a group, could make a statement but should not instruct the Borough's representatives how to vote.

Mr. Welch did not see any reason for renaming the library. The library will serve the region regardless of the name. He felt it was "slap in the face," especially to those contributors who had donated funds for the "Schlow" Library.

Ms. Goreham commented that getting the library built has been a decade-long project. The Library Board had worked very hard on this project. The Schlow name has generated such good will and she did not believe that anything should be done to create bad feelings. The goal of this Council should be to ensure successful completion of the library project.

Council members agreed to attend the Library Board's public meeting on February 9, 2005. At that meeting, any Council member who wanted to make a comment as a citizen could do so.

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

Respectfully submitted by:

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Thomas J. Fountaine, II
Borough Secretary