

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Regular Meeting/Work Session
Monday, July 19, 2010
7:30 p.m.

The State College Borough Council met on Monday, July 19, 2010, in the State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Ms. Goreham called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

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

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, Borough Manager; Terry J. Williams, Borough Solicitor; Sharon K. Ergler, Assistant Borough Secretary; Carl R. Hess, Planning Director; Herman Slaybaugh, Zoning Officer; Amy Story, Borough Engineer; Michael S. Groff, Finance Director; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Charles DeBow, Parking Manager; and Jinghao Lu, Administration Intern; members of the media and other interested observers.

Ms. Goreham began with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hour.

Tyler Wentz, a Freshmen living on campus at South Halls, said he and fellow classmates are attending their first Council meeting and hope to gather a lot of valuable information.

Consent Items. Mr. Hahn moved and Ms. Lawrence seconded the motion to approve the following consent items. The motion passed unanimously

- Approve vouchers for the month of June in the amount of \$2,340,149.17.
- Approve minutes for all meetings held in May and June.
- Accept the resignation of Albert Guber, with regret, from the Water Authority, effective immediately.

General Policy and Administration

2010 Holiday Courtesy Parking Program. Staff said Downtown State College Improvement District (DSCID) made a request to continue the holiday parking program as it has been done in previous years, as well as the holiday courtesy parking program. The holiday parking program would include free parking at all municipal lots and garages from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and at all parking garages on Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., from November 29, 2010, through January 1, 2011.

Mr. Hahn moved and Ms. Lafer seconded the motion to approve the holiday parking program and the holiday courtesy parking program.

Mr. Rosenberger asked if data is available stating that the parking program brings people downtown during this time. Staff responded no, there is no data available.

Jody Alessandrine, Director of the DSCID, said the downtown businesses are dealing with serious competition, not just in the mall and outlying shopping centers, but online shopping as well. He added that anything that can be done to encourage people to come downtown is beneficial.

The motion passed unanimously to approve the holiday parking program and the holiday courtesy parking program.

Support of Webster's Bookstore Café. Staff gave a brief history of Mr. Joel Solkoff's request for Council to issue a resolution in support for Webster's Bookstore, which has been ordered to vacate their present location by July 31. Council members asked Mr. Solkoff to draft a resolution for their review. Staff added that an alternate resolution has also been drafted by staff, which Mayor Goreham read.

Ms. Lafer moved and Mr. Morris seconded a motion to approve the alternate resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Planning and Zoning

Campus Development Standards. Council previously held a public hearing on this amendment and no citizens wished to provide input.

This amendment was written to correct an oversight in the University Planned District (UPD) regulations, which are void development standards for campus lots held in separate ownership from Penn State. A rooming house use prohibition was previously included in this amendment but that part was removed following Council's vote at the May 3, 2010 meeting. Staff recommended Council enact the ordinance, which creates development standards on campus.

Mr. Daubert moved and Mr. Hahn seconded a motion to enact the ordinance, which creates development standards on campus. The motion passed unanimously.

Official Reports and Correspondence (10 minutes)

Mayor's Report. The Mayor met with students who are working on an interesting incubator program for students, called InnoBlue.

Regional Liaison Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Mr. Filippelli said the Executive Committee will meet tomorrow to plan the agenda for the next General Forum.

Finance Committee – Mr. Hahn reported that the Finance Committee met to discuss the COG program plan as well as the CIP program currently under development.

Public Services & Environmental Committee – Mr. Morris said the Committee received a presentation from Alan Sam on the Greenhouse Gas Project. The Committee also discussed a Recycling Rebate which was spent on recycling containers in the parks as well as returning money to the Solid Waste Authority for their endowment fund.

Parks Capital Committee – Mr. Rosenberger reported that the Committee met jointly with the Centre Region Recreation Authority and discussed the Hess Field Complex, the Whitehall Road Draft Master Plan, as well as the Visitors Bureau user fees.

Staff Reports

Staff reported that Purchasing Director, Ernie Dabiero, was working on an Energy Procurement with lead agencies in establishing a consortium for Electric power as there is no savings or advantage in staying with Centre County. The Borough has signed with Premiere Power Solutions, an energy broker, and are hoping for a 4.9% savings for the Borough's electric contracts for 30 months.

Staffs also reported that the Centre County Tax Collection Committee signed their joint contract and expect the MOU to be approved in the near future.

Finance and Monthly Budget Report. Staff presented highlights of the June 2010 Budget Report.

Financial Trend Monitoring Report. Staff presented the 2010 Financial Trend Monitoring System report, which is the third year utilizing this report in an effort to improve Borough financial planning. This system provides a red flag when the Borough should be concerned with an issue providing ample time to react.

Council commented and asked questions in regard to mileage rates, homestead exclusion, and income loss from University owned land. Council concurred that the financial projections are not good. Mr. Filippelli added that the Borough's only solution is redevelopment unless taxes are raised; he asked Council to keep the West End development and affordable housing in mind and encourage redevelopment. Ms. Lafer added that one way to increase the tax base is to encourage younger families with small children to move into the Borough.

Staff said that the Borough has good financial strength and is in better financial shape than many other municipalities. However, the Borough must be vigilant, because the Borough could return to the poor financial situation as a few years back when expenditures exceeded revenues.

Council recessed the regular meeting and reconvened to a work session to discuss the following:

Reports

Fraser Centre Presentation. Jack Kay, President and Chief Executive Officer from Susquehanna Real Estate, along with Tim Fulton, Manager of the Fraser Centre Project, presented an update and overview of the proposed changes of the Fraser Centre project. Changes reflect the difficulties in financing as well as the economy. Changes include:

- Modifications to the upper floor plans
- Addition of office space
- Addition of 50 hotel rooms
- Eliminated some balconies
- Addition of a connecting bridge across Beaver Avenue to the municipal garage

Mr. Kay added that having the connecting bridge ensures a higher utilization of the Beaver Avenue garage and would be a safe and convenient aspect of the building.

Mr. Fulton gave a history of the timeline for the Fraser Centre and the obstacles incurred during this time period.

Council Members had numerous comments. Some Council Members were not happy with the idea of the pedestrian bridge. Additionally, some members were pleased with the additional office space planned.

Council thanked Mr. Kay and Mr. Fulton for updating Council and their continued support working with the project.

James Meashey, 10 Vairo Blvd. and Manager of Café 210 West, added that once the hotel is in place, the hotel would be eligible for a hotel/liquor license.

Planning and Zoning

Future Land Use Map. Eric Vorwald from the Centre Regional Planning Agency presented Council with the most recent revisions to the future land use map for the State College Borough. Mr. Vorwald asked Council to review the map and provide comments. Mr. Vorwald noted that the map relates more closely to the zoning that is already in place.

Mr. Hahn felt the zoning proposed is not consistent to his memory. Mr. Vorwald responded that the map is for land use and not zoning and added that one cannot determine development purposes from the land use map.

Council agreed the map was confusing and requested clarification on the map key.

Council then questioned the overall purpose of the map. Mr. Vorwald said the map is intended for use in developing goals and policies that could be used to write a new zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, as the ordinance should be amended on a regular basis.

Council concurred that the land use map discourages single family and multi-family homes, encouraging high density. Mr. Vorwald explained the land use map is just to show possible uses.

Council agreed to continue discussion of the future land use map at a future work session.

West End Zoning. Staff stated that Council received the West End Zoning ordinance and changes in the subdivision regulations on July 12, and Council requested additional discussion time. Additionally, staff said they prepared a West End zoning matrix outlining the permitted uses and development standards with revised heights. Staff asked Council how they wished to proceed.

Mr. Filippelli said he did not want to delay the ordinance; however, Mr. Hahn said the ordinance should be discussed further. He suggested a hearing for input, but not for adoption. Staff confirmed the hearing would be for public comment, not for adoption.

Staff provided Council with the projected timeframe for the process of ordinance adoption.

Mr. Daubert said the design guidelines are too prescriptive. Staff explained that the zoning is more detailed than typical zoning ordinances. Staff added that Form Based Zoning is not negotiable, and developers are familiar with it as Form Based Zoning is common around the country. Staff said that Council could invite developers to speak about their concerns.

Mr. Hahn said the issue of Form Based Zoning would be much more difficult to deal with in regard to redevelopment rather than new development.

Next Council discussed including Ferguson Township officials in the West End Zoning discussions. Staff noted that the Redevelopment Authority plans to meet with Ferguson Township officials soon.

Staff also indicated there was strong support from Penn State University on the West End Zoning.

The consensus from Council was to proceed with the Form Based Zoning, with Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Hahn in disagreement with the decision.

Mr. Hahn added there are four main concerns with the ordinance that Council must consider:

1. Required Use on Corner Lots
2. Density
3. Affordable Housing
4. Building Height

Mr. Daubert questioned the Design Review Board's (DRB) thoughts on the ordinance. Staff responded the DRB prefers an incentive approach to zoning. Staff also indicated that the DRB will also review the final ordinance.

Staff suggested postponing a public hearing until Council comes to a consensus on the ordinance. Additionally, Staff suggested a two hour noon meeting with the Planning Commission to discuss the ordinance further. Council agreed to hold a special meeting in the near future with the Planning Commission.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon K. Ergler
Assistant Borough Secretary