

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
August 9, 2010

The State College Borough Council met on Monday, August 9, 2010, in the State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, Room 304, State College, PA. Council President Filippelli called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

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

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Roger A. Dunlap, Assistant Manager for Budget and Administration; Carl R. Hess, Director of Planning; Amy R. Miller, Recording Secretary; Lu Hoover, Senior Planner; Thomas King, Chief of Police; Beth Johnston, Human Resource Director; members of the media; and other interested observers.

PUBLIC HOUR.

Scott Carter, Addison Court resident, addressed Council on the dangers of skateboarders and bicyclists on the sidewalks around Addison Court. He is concerned for the elderly and disabled seniors that cannot move out of the way quickly. He also wanted Council to be aware of a hazardous sidewalk on the southeast corner of Garner Street and Foster Avenue. Lastly, he said that the management at Addison Court changed the locks on all the doors, and residents no longer have entry through the back door and asked Council's assistance with regaining use of the back entry at Addison Court.

Staff responded that the Public Works Department will examine the condition of said sidewalk, and the Police Department will do their best to patrol for bikes and skateboards on the sidewalks more efficiently. As for the issue of the keys, Addison Court is not owned or managed by the Borough. However, staff will communicate with Addison Court management to intervene.

Student Council Member Proposal. Christian Ragland, President of the Penn State University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA), presented Council with a proposal for a non-voting student representative to sit on council. The proposal consisted of a three-phase process which includes becoming visible, establishing a voice and fulfilling a role. The end objective is to have a non-voting student member serve on Council.

Collectively Council decided that students should become more active serving on the Borough ABCs. Council also encourages students to attend Council meetings; however, Council is against a student serving as a non-voting member because Council members are elected officials. Council suggests rather than a non-voting member, a liaison or subcommittee would be the more appropriate. Council agreed the liaison should be a resident of the State College Borough. Council also agreed to continue discussion of this issue at a later work session.

ABC REPORT

Review the Charge of the Human Relations Commission. In May 2009, Council member Peter Morris requested Council consider expanding the charge of the Human Relations Commission. Staff began with a review of the history of the Human Relations Commission.

Charles Dumas, 516 N. Atherton Street and Chair of the State College Borough Human Relations Commission (HRC), stated that he has been on the Commission for the past couple of years. The HRC has heard no cases at this time; the HRC charge is to adjudicate employment issue. He added that the HRC is not trying to create additional work, but rather hold occasional information meetings where invited participants could speak about diversity issues.

With the exception of Peter Morris, Council agreed with Staff's recommendation that the HRC should work together with the Advisory Group to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and Penn State's Community Diversity Group and discuss the role of each organization; working collectively for positive development.

GENERAL POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

ABC Member Recruitment. Staff briefed Council on a draft proposal to guide recruitment and appointments to the various Borough Authorities, Boards and Commissions much earlier in the year; as well as to develop additional comprehensive community outreach to establish a pool of volunteers from which Council may make appointments.

Mr. Daubert said recruitment for ABCs should be done by Council. Other members of Council agreed with staff's proposal to expand recruiting efforts; Council stated they do not have the time to devote to recruitment efforts and appreciates staff's work.

Fair Housing/Anti Discrimination Ordinance. Staff explained that the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance was enacted in December 2007 and the Fair Housing Ordinance was enacted in March 1993; neither of which has been revised or updated since enacted. To achieve greater consistency between ordinances, staff recommends minor changes to both ordinances to include public accommodations and residential real estate-related transactions. Additionally, staff recommends minor changes to the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance to provide consistency with the Fair Housing Ordinance.

After questions from Council, staff indicated that the Borough is not creating new laws, but updating the ordinances to coincide with state and federal laws.

Council received an email from Joanne Tosti-Vasey, President of the Pennsylvania National Organization for Women, questioning the definition of family as it relates to these ordinances. She believes the change would be a step backwards. Staff clarified that the change is not an attempt to define family, but rather define familial status which is the same definition that appears in the fair housing act. The change would greatly expand the original definition.

Council indicated the proposed changes included in the agenda were confusing. Staff agreed to prepare a clearer comparison of the ordinances and include this item on a future work session for further discussion.

ITEMS OF INFORMATION

Mr. Filippelli asked if any Council members planned to attend the Foxdale Village Expansion Groundbreaking Ceremony; Council members Lafer and Rosenberger said they would attend.

Mr. Filippelli then announced that Council would hold an Executive Session following this meeting to discuss personnel matters.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon K. Ergler
Assistant Borough Secretary