

State College Borough Council
Work Session
October 22, 2004

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, October 22, 2004 in the Council Room (Room 304) of the State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, State College, Pennsylvania. Mr. Daubert called the meeting to order at 12:12 p.m.

Present: Thomas E. Daubert
Elizabeth A. Goreham
Craig R. Humphrey
Jeffrey R. Kern
James H. Meyer

Absent: Catherine G. Dauler
Janet K. Knauer

Also present: Thomas J. Fontaine, Borough Manager; Michele Nicolas, Director of Human Resources; Michael S. Groff, Finance Director; Timothy Grattan, Director of Information Systems; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Amy J. Story, Borough Engineer; Herman L. Slaybaugh, Zoning Officer/Planner; John P. Marchek, Finance Assistant; Cynthia S. Hanscom, Recording Secretary; members of the media and other interested observers.

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

2005-2009 Capital Improvement Program

Sanitary Sewer. Mr. Meyer asked if improvement projects drive rate increases. Mr. Whitfield replied the rate increases are driven by treatment costs. He did not have the figures from the University Area Joint Authority for 2005.

Parking Fund. Mr. Daubert asked about the parking lot to be constructed at 235 South Allen Street. Mr. Fontaine explained the eviction case was still in court so the tenant remains. Staff is talking about setting up a temporary parking lot behind the building.

Mr. Daubert asked why the parking garages would need a central recording location. Mr. Fountain explained the purpose is to have access to the recorded tapes. Mr. Grattan explained that, rather than have recording units in each of the garages video feed will bring it into one recording device. This would be more efficient and reduce the cost of having multiple sets of recording equipment.

Ms. Goreham asked about the electronic pay machines proposed for the Beaver Avenue garage. Mr. Fontaine noted that Council would receive information on staff's proposal next month. The equipment will need to be installed when the garage is opened so a decision will need to be made soon. Ms. Goreham stressed the importance of having a coordinated system. Mr. Fontaine agreed and said he hoped to convert the entire system. Mr. Daubert indicated that it seemed to be very expensive to upgrade a system that was not very old. Mr. Holmes said, other than the pay station which was placed in 1999, the system was upgraded in 1993 and 1994.

Ms. Goreham asked about information technology required for installing the way-finding system. Mr. Fontaine indicated the downtown vision plan recommended an electronic way-finding system be proposed that displayed parking availability in the downtown. There is some expense to that system and staff is looking into the system before making any recommendation to Council. Ms. Goreham asked how the way-finding system was linked to current software. Mr. Marchek indicated the software package being used was intended to provide data; however, the implementation did not go smoothly and staff had to analyze the data to determine if the information was accurate. Mr. Marchek explained more reliable reports are being collected but improvement is needed. It is important to note that the software links the information from both garages. Mr. Grattan

explained the vendor dropped the ball during the installation process but has been working with the Information Systems staff to iron out the problems.

Mr. Meyer asked that next year's CIP include a page for the sanitary sewer and parking fund telling Council what is in the capital account and any future expansion needs.

Parking Fund. Mr. Daubert believed there should be an estimate listed on the cost of the Intermodal Transportation Center. Mr. Fontaine said staff does not know how much it will cost at this point. Once the project is solidified, realistic numbers will be available.

Mr. Daubert asked about the satellite parking project. This had never been discussed by Council. Mr. Fontaine noted it had been listed in previous CIPs. Mr. Humphrey believed the concept of providing parking in the downtown and constructing a satellite parking lot are contradictory in policy. Mr. Meyer suggested the project be removed. Mr. Kern disagreed, stating the Westerly Parkway shopping center would be an ideal location for a satellite parking lot. There are too many cars downtown, and he believed many people would use the satellite parking lot. CATA could provide a jitney service to a central location downtown. Mr. Daubert suggested the project remain in the CIP for now.

Mr. Daubert referred to the projects that had been deleted, as shown on Page 6 of the CIP. He asked Council if there were projects that should be put back into the plan.

Mr. Kern asked about the zoning ordinance rewrite delay. Mr. Fontaine explained the delay was for financial reasons. Mr. Kern noted the ordinance was a patchwork and asked if the process could start in 2005. Mr. Fontaine noted that there was \$10,000 in the budget for 2005 to start scoping this project. Ms. Goreham questioned the need for this project and wondered whether or not an outside agency charged with rewriting the zoning ordinance would be able to address the needs of the community. Mr. Fontaine noted that a comprehensive rewrite will be very controversial and divisive. Mr. Kern felt this project should be funded; it was listed as Council's top goal.

Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) October 26 Agenda

Extended Aquatics Feasibility Study. Mr. Daubert reported there was extensive discussion among members of the COG Executive Committee on the Aquatics Feasibility Study. The COG Parks and Recreation ad hoc Committee is proposing five scenarios; COG General Forum will look at the proposals on October 26 and delete those locations that are inappropriate. Mr. Humphrey noted the property owners of a possible location on Waupelani Drive have indicated their willingness to discuss selling the land.

Building Fee Waiver. Mr. Daubert informed Council that the State Theatre project requested building code fees be waived (this was done for the Schlow Memorial Library). The Executive Committee voted 2 in favor and 3 opposed. Mr. Kern indicated the Code Committee heard this request and sent it to the General Forum because they did not want to set a precedent. It was envisioned that every other non-profit would submit a similar request. Mr. Kern said the Code Committee suggested the Executive Committee come up with a policy for future requests. Mr. Daubert noted the Executive Committee was not asked to come up with a policy. He suggested Mr. Kern raise this issue at the October 26 meeting. Mr. Fontaine added the State Theatre project has asked that other fees be waived, such as the real estate transfer tax, but the Borough denied their request.

Any Other Matter

Courtesy Parking Program. Mr. Kern noted there had been considerable discussion about the courtesy parking program. Mr. Fontaine said staff was in the process of developing programs to collect data. The only data collected at this point is from the summer program with regard to the number of tickets issued. More complete data will be collected for the holiday season so that Council will be able to decide whether or not this is a worthy program in 2005. Mr. Kern said he did not believe the Borough can afford to conduct this program or any other subsidized parking program. Mr. Fontaine noted the problem is that the revenue loss of \$25,000 is based on a 4-week period in July. The

holiday parking may be different because there would be fewer students benefiting from the program. Mr. Daubert disagreed, commenting that Penn State classes will be in session until December 18. Mr. Fontaine stressed the importance of conducting the courtesy parking program if for no other reason than to collect data. The concern over the summer courtesy program was whether or not the money was well spent. Council realizes the importance of improving the business climate downtown but understands the need to insure that the money is being spent on effective programs. Mr. Kern asked this be placed on Council's November 1 agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Natalie
Assistant Borough Secretary