

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Work Session
Monday, April 10, 2006

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Monday, April 10, 2006, in the State College Municipal Building's Council Chambers, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Ms. Dauler called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Bill Welch, Mayor
Catherine G. Dauler, President of Council
Thomas E. Daubert
Ronald L. Filippelli
Elizabeth A. Goreham
Donald M. Hahn
Craig R. Humphrey
Jeffrey R. Kern

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Carl Hess, Planning Director; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Borough Manager; Amy R. Miller, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public Hour. There were no comments from the public.

C-NET Coverage at Evening Work Sessions. C-NET coverage at the evening work sessions was suggested to allow the public to hear discussions among Council members on important subjects. Cindy Hahn, Director of C-NET, presented two options for consideration. Option 1 was to tape the work session to air at a later time. Option 2 would be a live broadcast but would move the Planning Commission rebroadcast. Both options included rebroadcast of the meeting on Thursday afternoon at 2 pm, Sunday at midnight, Sunday afternoon at 4 pm and Monday morning (one week later) at 5 am. Ms. Hahn said taping could begin at the May 8 work session; however, C-Net is unavailable on June 12 because of the State College Area School District Board Meeting, Harris Township Meeting and the Bellefonte High School graduation.

Ms. Goreham asked how much notice C-Net required for taping a meeting; Ms. Hahn replied C-Net's daytime producer, Stephanie Yeager, has offered to tape the evening work session. For planning purposes two weeks notice would be necessary.

Mr. Filippelli suggested including noon work sessions as well. Council disagreed; Friday meetings should be informal and not taped. Council chose Option 2, the live taping and agreed to reevaluate the tapings at the end of summer for viewer appropriateness. The vote will take place at Council's next regular meeting on April 17.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments. Mr. Fountaine said the State College Area School District (SCASD) requested Council hold a public hearing to amend four sections of the zoning ordinance which are needed to facilitate the high school reconstruction and renovation project. Mr. Fountaine said no changes in permitted use were intended for community field. Mr. Hess explained the proposed amendments which included (1) adding schools as a permitted use in the planned office (PO) zoning district; the school project cannot proceed without the change, (2) increasing maximum building height from 35 to 55 feet for churches and schools (with exceptions), (3) modifying the parking lot design standards to eliminate placement of islands and landscaped material in a portion of the parking areas at schools to accommodate band practice, and (4) increasing the number of curb cuts for larger projects from 2 to 4 on arterial streets.

Mr. Hess said the school's plan is designed to meet the zoning requirements. In addition the off-street parking regulations allow for up to a 50 percent reduction. He noted that the curb cut issue will be addressed in an ordinance on April 17. Mr. Hess said to accommodate drop off and pick-up of students, pull-offs are planned to eliminate traffic congestion on Westerly Parkway.

Mr. Filippelli asked how much parking the school requires. Ed Poprik, Director of the SCASD Physical Plant, said the school district currently has almost 700 parking spaces; Borough ordinance requires an additional 400. Mr. Fountaine said the planned parking capacity can only be reduced if the school district applies for an exception; Mr. Poprik said the School Board may consider asking for an exception. Mr. Filippelli said he would like to see the school district reduce parking capacity. He was also concerned with traffic congestion resulting from student drop-offs on Gill Street and suggested the school district look into obstacles that would deter parents from dropping off students on Gill Street.

Mr. Kern said citizens are concerned about the impact of the total project and the increased traffic on Prospect Avenue, Gill Street and Hamilton Avenues. He felt allowing more parking will only encourage more students driving to school, aiding in traffic congestion. Mr. Fountaine said Mr. Kern's issues were very important, but not the direct topic of the zoning ordinance. Mr. Kern

understood but said his vote will be political and based on citizens' concern on the impact of the school project.

Ms. Dauler said citizens are concerned with driving speed when islands are not present. Mr. Hess said the South Building parking lot is currently designed as such and speed has not been an issue.

Rich O'Donald from L. Robert Kimball & Associates, Architects and Engineers, presented three-dimensional views of the planned renovations.

Dan Rowland, 230 South Gill Street, commented he read a demographic study anticipating a decline in the number of students in grades K-12 but the school renovations are being planned for the current number of students.

Roberts Martin, 715 Westerly Parkway, expressed his concern for stormwater management. Ms. Dauler said Council understood his concerns. However, stormwater was previously discussed and will be adequately addressed during the renovations.

David Paterno, 923 South Sparks Street, asked Council to consider a limit on parking as much as possible and look more closely at traffic on Westerly Parkway, including safety issues in addition to counts.

Mary Marino, 720 South Sparks Street, asked Council to include additional streets in the traffic study.

Mr. Hahn was concerned with allowing band practices adjacent to an R2 neighborhood.

Ms. Goreham asked for confirmation that Council does not have the authority to reduce parking. Mr. Fontaine confirmed the school plans were submitted under existing ordinance and the only way for the school district to change the requirements is to ask the Borough for a waiver.

Urban Village Revitalization Plan Revised Scope of Work and Timetable. Given that Ferguson Township will no longer partner with the Borough in the Urban Village (UV) Revitalization plan, Council discussed a revised work plan that would be scaled back and delayed a month.

Mr. Hess explained the goal of the UV plan remains unchanged. Phase I involves building consensus on how to revitalize the UV area of town. Phase II would consider what tools are needed to prepare and implement the plan. Phase III would implement the plan. Mr. Hess said at the end of each phase an evaluation would be conducted to decide if proceeding to the next phase was appropriate. He said with the change of partnership the scope of the area is smaller; areas include west campus up to the Ferguson Township line and south to Highland Alley. Mr. Hess indicated even with the delay not much would be changed in the overall revitalization plan.

Mr. Daubert felt discouraged because the project continues to be delayed. Mr. Fontaine said the change in partners resulted in a delay of one month. The scope calls for submission of the plan on April 28; then the implementation plan can begin.

Mr. Hahn was also concerned with the time involved with the UV project. Mr. Kern agreed and said it is important to support this process and proceed.

Mr. Humphrey asked what developers would be considered. Mr. Fontaine answered that a request for proposals (RFP) would be in the implementation phase to solicit potential developers.

Ms. Goreham asked what the possibility was in asking Ferguson to include funding for the Houts property. Mr. Fontaine said the Borough wants to include the Houts property but cannot include it at this time; the Borough should not count on this funding. Mr. Fontaine explained Ferguson Township did not budget for the UV project this year, but may consider the UV project next year.

John Simbeck, 601 West College Avenue and a stakeholder in the Urban Village, suggested changing the Urban Village name for a new perspective on the project.

Dan Rowland, 230 South Gill Street, urged Council to poll the residents in the Urban Village to ask what is important to them. Mr. Hahn agreed and suggested Council keep an open mind.

Mr. Daubert hoped the Borough would not turn the project over to a developer who is only out to make a profit; the Borough can do much of the work at a lower cost and make the UV neighborhood more viable than it is today. Mr. Fontaine responded that each phase must be completed before some important questions can be answered, and that is part of the planning process.

Items of Information. Mr. Daubert asked why "Items of Information" have been removed from agendas. Ms. Dauler responded that Council members wrote suggestions as to what would be discussed on future agendas. Mr. Fontaine said Council members can ask for any item to be included on an agenda.

Mr. Fontaine said two Council members need to be appointed to the CRPA Advisory Committee at the next regular meeting. Mr. Kern and Ms. Goreham volunteered to serve.

There being no further business Council adjourned to an executive session at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary