

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Work Session
September 22, 2006

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, September 22, 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 11:38 p.m.

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

Absent: Ronald L. Filippelli

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Borough Manager; Carl R. Hess, Planning Director; Mark A. Whitfield, Public Works Director; Michael Groff, Finance Director; Amy Story, Borough Engineer; Amy R. Miller, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public hour. There were no comments from the public.

2007-2011 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Mr. Whitfield said the main purpose for the presentation was to seek Council's decisions on four questions:

- o Does the proposed CIP concur with Council's goals and objectives?
- o Are the changes, new projects, and deleted projects proposed acceptable?
- o Are there other projects that Council wants to include in the CIP?
- o Is the funding strategy proposed acceptable?

Mr. Whitfield summarized the Streets, Storm Water, and Other Projects as listed in the proposed 2007-2011 (CIP). One change from the 2006 CIP is the completed construction of West Park Avenue. Projects not included in the new plan are the Beaver Avenue extension, the commuter multi-space meters, and the neighborhood name street signs. Proposed projects include street and alley resurfacing and curb replacement, residential and central business district street lighting, bike facility improvements, neighborhood traffic mitigation, traffic signal improvements, realignment of Fraser Street and Beaver Avenue, Urban Village improvements, intersection improvements and the East-West pedestrian/bicycle connection. Mr. Whitfield said he hopes that the Whitehall Road improvements will be funded in part by PennDOT.

Mr. Humphrey questioned the benefit of the proposed roundabouts on Easterly Parkway. Mr. Whitfield said the roundabouts allow traffic to keep moving which eliminates traffic delays even with single lane traffic.

Ms. Goreham referred to the new lights in the central business district (CBD) and requested a cost analysis for the Borough taking over ownership of the lights. Mr. Whitfield said the Borough already owns the lights in the CBD.

Mr. Daubert opposed Council's change in the review process for the CIP. Mr. Kern disagreed and felt the new review process was helpful and an important change because in the past when staff reports were given the interruptions from questions derailed discussions and then review time expired.

Mr. Whitfield reviewed storm water projects. He said the Westerly Parkway flood control project was completed. The Calder Way storm sewer rehabilitation project was a new project in the plan but the Highland Alley drainage project was not included. Proposed projects include the Memorial Field drainage study, the Westerly Parkway storm basin improvements as well as various alley storm water improvements.

Other Projects section was summarized next. New projects proposed are Municipal building improvements, the need for additional vehicles, portable radio replacements, a debris storage area at the Service Facility, improvements to the Compost facility and the food waste study that was discussed at a previous work session. Projects completed include funding for the State Theatre renovations and the Alpha Ambulance Service headquarters.

Mr. Daubert said he assumed when approving the new CIP the previous years' projects were final and current and futures year's projects were up for discussion. Mr. Fountaine explained when a five year plan is in place, projects are approved and included. However, changes can occur, but it is staff's assumption if a project is included in the five year plan, the projects are also approved.

Mr. Daubert questioned the resurfacing of Calder Way after 15 years when most other streets are scheduled for resurfacing after some 30 years. Mr. Whitfield said Calder Way has taken much abuse from delivery trucks with heavy weight loads which have torn the street apart.

Mr. Daubert then questioned the pedestrian nodes proposed at McAllister Street and Locust Lane intersections with College Avenue. McAllister Street is wider than Locust Lane. A pedestrian node on Locust Lane would make the street too narrow for two-way traffic and parking. Mr. Whitfield said the pedestrian node would not affect traffic or parking.

Mr. Daubert said he does not agree with bicycle lanes on major arterial streets such as the Parkway. The Parkway would become narrow and dangerous. Mr. Whitfield said the Parkway is a main access point that connects other bikeways such as Walnut Springs, Orchard Park, and Ferguson Township bikeways. A center turn lane is not needed the length of the Parkway which may give room to the bikeway. Mr. Daubert said he had additional questions that he would like answered at a later time.

Mr. Kern inquired about storm water on Westerly Parkway and how close the Borough is to working with the State College Area School District (SCASD). Mr. Whitfield said at this time discussions are preliminary and it is difficult to begin serious discussion until the SCASD High School project is further along.

Mr. Kern then questioned the CBD sidewalk widening and asked if the project was possible because College Avenue is almost higher than the sidewalk. Mr. Whitfield said the project would require two-thirds of the roadway to be reconstructed and would be very expensive; therefore, the project is dependent upon receipt of state funding.

Mr. Kern also observed that most downtown bike racks are being used, which is great. However, he is concerned with the two-way bike traffic on Calder Way. In one regard the cyclists should be ticketed, but he said he can also see their point of view. Mr. Kern said he is in favor of an east-west bike lane, but asked if a bike path in Calder Way was possible. Mr. Whitfield replied that a bike lane in Calder Way is not feasible because the alley is used by delivery vehicles, postal trucks and cars stopping unlawfully. However, when buildings are being torn down the Borough could acquire the right-of-way or easement to work towards a bike lane; but that would be many years in the future. Mr. Hess added that PennDOT states that if bikes are allowed to travel two ways on a one-way street, the Borough would assume all liability for accidents even if the street was properly signed as a bike path.

Mr. Humphrey asked if the Fraser Street realignment would be done at the same time the Fraser Centre condos are constructed. Mr. Fontaine replied the anticipated schedule indicates the condos would be completed before the street realignment. If not, the schedule may need to be readjusted. The Fraser Street realignment is expected to begin in June 2008 after the completion of the Fraser Center.

Ms. Goreham requested an explanation of the realignment costs. Mr. Marchek explained the funds have already been borrowed and over time will be paid back. Mr. Marchek added that it takes longer to pay off debt services than the 5 years that is shown in the CIP. Mr. Fontaine said Council has not made a decision as to how the proceeds from the sale of the properties will be allocated; therefore the proceeds are not shown in the CIP. Ms. Goreham asked how much of the medical arts property will be used; Mr. Whitfield answered about 15 percent of the property will be utilized. Mr. Fontaine added the Borough requisitioned the entire medical arts property in order to acquire the area needed for the realignment. Council can reallocate the unused property. Ms. Goreham requested additional time at a later date for questions on the budget.

Ms. Dauler asked why keyless entry was once again in the CIP plan. Mr. Whitfield said keyless entry records data as to who enters the building and at what time. There are a number of internal doors that should have the keyless entry system such as the non-public stairwells.

Ms. Dauler felt the new approach for reviewing the CIP is important because the approach makes better use of time. Mr. Kern suggested Council prepare specific questions and distribute copies; staff would then prepare answers. Mr. Fontaine said if Council has specific questions on projects they could address the questions at this time.

Mr. Hahn said the Solicitor suggested eliminating discussions via email but rather address staff directly. He also feels policy questions should be handled through a Council meeting, not through email. Mayor Welch said the use of email is like the old use of memos and believes email is a great tool as long as information is being shared. Mr. Kern said email should be used to share information but not for decision making.

Ms. Goreham questioned the number of facility maintenance vehicles. Mr. Whitfield said there are 76 vehicles, but the large trucks (such as the dump trucks) cannot be used for general use and the Borough pickup trucks are almost always on the road. Currently there is no vehicle available for the maintenance crew to transport equipment to the garages, Bellaire court, the bus terminal or the service building. Employees have access to three sedans at

the building and oftentimes vehicles are not available for use when needed. Ms. Goreham asked if an analysis could be done to determine the cost effectiveness of employees to use their own vehicles and be reimbursed. Mr. Fontaine said many employees already use their own vehicles, but would not recommend a personal vehicle for everyday maintenance use. Mr. Whitfield said a vehicle suited more adequately to the maintenance needs is essential. Ms. Goreham suggested the Borough look into a hybrid for economic and environmental benefits. Mr. Whitfield said the Borough is looking in to a roll-off truck which has interchangeable bodies for various uses. There may be occasions when pieces would not be used and there would be a need for evaluations to determine efficiency. He added that the Borough replaces vehicles only when needed, not based on age of a vehicle.

Mr. Hahn thanked staff for all the hard work that goes in to the CIP plan.

Liquor License Transfer. Mr. Fontaine explained that Jack Sapia requested approval of a liquor license transfer from Patton Township to the Borough. If approved, the license transfer would consolidate liquor licenses at the three Pugh Street establishments operated by Mr. Sapia and his sons. Mr. Sapia said the purpose of the transfer is to consolidate the licenses in the Borough so that he can begin to transfer the businesses to his two sons who currently operate the establishments. Mr. Sapia and his attorney, Francis X. O'Brien, requested a discussion with Council to informally discuss the transfer and receive feedback before formally filing an application for transfer.

Mr. O'Brien said Mr. Sapia's request was unique in that this is the first type of request for such a transfer. He added the Sapia family is not proposing to increase square footage for the purpose of serving more alcohol, but rather to break down the three business that share one license. Mr. O'Brien asked Council for their questions.

Mr. Hahn asked if restrictions could be implemented with the transfer.

Mr. O'Brien said the same restrictions would apply because the establishments are not restaurants. He added that redefining the businesses to make them restaurants is not appropriate.

Mr. Fontaine said the request for transferring the license is unlike previous transfers because no food is involved. Mayor Welch said Council can choose to put restrictions on future liquor license transfers. Mr. Fontaine said another question Council should consider is what happens to the existing liquor license.

Mr. Hahn suggested obtaining recommendations from the Borough Solicitor. Mr. O'Brien said the request is unique in that this is a family liquor license transfer at the same location which would not increase square footage of the establishments. Mr. O'Brien thanked Council for their time.

Urban Village Steering Committee. Council continued discussion on appointments to the Urban Village Steering Committee and stakeholder interviews. Mr. Fontaine said based on Council's previous discussion 15 members are suggested for the committee with representatives from the faith-based community, affordable housing authority, the redevelopment authority and commercial property owners. Ms. Dauler agreed and said the churches are very anxious to be part of this committee and have offered space for meetings.

Mr. Fontaine recommended that for groups to feel part of a consensus building process they should have the opportunity to choose who will represent them on the steering committee. These groups include Ferguson Township, the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood Association, Penn State University, the College West Real Estate Association, the Off-Campus Student Union, the faith-based community and affordable housing community. Mr. Daubert disagreed and said individuals identified by Council that would work for the betterment of the community should be on the Steering Committee. Some folks on the prospective list have negative views; Council should appoint positive people. He added that the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood Association only has three members; two of whom are married to one another. Mr. Daubert felt owners of multiple properties should serve on the committee, versus owners of single properties. He also said parochial interests should not be considered.

Mr. Hahn agreed with Mr. Daubert's comments but reminds Council that it is important to appoint people based on confidence and not based on who Council likes best. Council should make the decisions as to who serves from the faith-based and affordable housing communities and redevelopment authority. Mr. Fontaine suggests contacting the commercial property owners to ask who is interested in serving and then choose from there; as well as approaching each identified group.

Mayor Welch suggested a representative from the DID because of the relationship with Penn State. Mr. Fontaine said the DID is outside the UV district.

Mr. Fontaine added that many residents are skeptical because the project has been in the works for over the past ten years and building neighborhood consensus among these

residents is important. Mr. Daubert said the Holmes-Foster neighborhood is not part of the Urban Village; there may be other active neighborhood members that are a better choice.

Ms. Goreham disagreed with Mr. Daubert and felt the organizations should appoint members themselves; organizations such as Ferguson Township and Penn State. Appointees should be knowledgeable and seasoned.

Ms. Dauler suggested Council consider appointing steering committee members the way they were appointed for the Downtown Vision and Strategic Plan in 2000. She also reviewed the August 21 minutes where the contract was awarded to Delta Development and reminded Council the motion passed with an amendment that Council would establish the membership and size of the Steering Committee.

Mr. Fontaine suggested the steering committee members could be chosen in an executive session after the next work session. Stakeholder lists should be given to Mr. Hess before that time.

Mr. Fontaine spoke on Council's schedule for the next two months and said there is an immediate need to discuss Council ideas for the budget for next year. Therefore, Council will meet at 6:00 pm on October 9 with dinner served at 5:30 pm. Mr. Fontaine added that members of the Interfraternity Council (IFC) would address Council at their next work session. Ms. Dauler asked for a list of IFC officers and their positions prior to the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned to an executive session at 1:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary