

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
October 20, 2006

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, October 20, 2006, in the State College Municipal Building Council Room, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Ms. Dauler called the meeting to order at noon.

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

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Borough Manager; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Michael S. Groff, Finance Director; Norma J. Crater, Accounting Supervisor; Carl R. Hess, Planning Director; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Sheila Lubold, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested members of the public.

Public Hour – John Simbeck, 601 W. College Avenue, spoke about the flooding that occurred the evening before near Clark Motor Company along College Avenue. Mr. Simbeck stated College Township and the State have been unresponsive to this problem. Mr. Simbeck hoped that since the Act 537 plan is a regional plan, the Borough could coordinate efforts to help have this problem resolved. Mr. Fountaine informed Mr. Simbeck the Act 537 Plan is a sanitary sewerage plan and not does include storm water runoff. Mr. Whitfield also added the pipe under the Your Building Center entrance driveway is too small and is the cause for the flooding. The issue with having this resolved is who will pay to have the pipe replaced.

Renewal of Downtown State College Improvement District. Council received an update on the renewal of the Downtown State College Improvement District (DID) as the 45-day comment period was coming to a close. Mr. Kurtz reported there has been an opposing response received from three property owners to date but those responses only represent 2% of the total. Forty percent opposition is needed to overturn the renewal of the DID. As of the time of the work session, it appeared the DID would receive enough support to be renewed but staff will wait until receiving the mail on Monday to make sure there are no other opposing responses. Mr. Fountaine added as long as the 40% threshold is not met, an ordinance will be prepared and presented to Council in November.

Mr. Hahn questioned why there was only a minimal response received. Mr. Kurtz explained a response is only required if the property owners are opposing the renewal. Mr. Humphrey questioned what the cost of the DID is. Mr. Kurtz stated the assessments are equivalent to five mills of tax.

Progress Report on the Urban Village Revitalization Plan. At the September 18, 2006 Council meeting, Delta/EDSA consultants presented a preliminary schedule for the Urban Village Revitalization Plan. After consulting with Council and staff a final project schedule was prepared by Delta/EDSA and was presented to Council by Karen Dickinson. Ms. Dickinson noted the schedule highlighted the main tasks and a kickoff meeting for the Steering Committee scheduled for October 30, 2006.

Council had no questions or comments on this matter.

Street Light Policy. Mr. Fountaine noted the Planning Commission prepared the Street Light Policy report about a year ago and Council received the report at their meeting on June 5, 2006. Council has reviewed the plan and should discuss how they wish for staff to proceed.

Mr. Hess explained the main issue for the Street Light Policy is to provide lighting that will make the Borough safer and allow for protection for the public. The Planning Commission recommended that Council also try to minimize the adverse effects the lights could have on the privacy of residents and prevent the lights from becoming a nuisance. The Planning Commission recognized that people still enjoy looking at the nighttime sky and they encourage trying to protect the "dark sky".

Mr. Hess stated the Planning Commission recommends selecting lighting fixtures that are energy efficient and have photometric controls to prevent glare and will force the lighting down. The lighting should also be complementary to the purpose of each neighborhood and area. Based on research done by the Commission, they suggested using white light sources in the areas with high pedestrian traffic.

Mr. Hess encouraged Council to consider the type of fixtures and light sources. It is important to have an even amount of light distribution and not just pockets of light.

Mr. Hess stated staff has started to compile a map and a database including all of the lighting fixtures in town. The project is being done to use as a guide to show what the current lighting status is and to learn where improvements are needed. It was also suggested that the same type of lighting should be used downtown as is on the edge of campus. The same light fixtures do not have to be used but the same lighting, yellow or white lighting, should be used.

Council was also provided with a handout to use as a reference and guideline in helping to determine a lighting hierarchy. In developing the Street Light Policy, the Planning Commission felt it is important to start with a purpose statement, and then provide general guidelines with the final result being a plan and program. The Planning Commission would like feedback from Council if this is the right direction for the purpose statement and the Street Lighting Policy.

Ms. Goreham suggested when choosing a lighting source the energy efficiency and the disposal of the used lights should be a consideration. Mr. Hess stated each type of lighting would have environmental issues to consider and different waste cycles. Ms. Goreham would like the purpose statement to include the need for high efficiency and environmentally friendly lighting as well as protecting the residential neighborhoods. Mr. Hahn agreed that something should be included in the purpose statement addressing the need for lighting to have a low impact on the environment.

Ms. Dauler acknowledged the many hours the Planning Commission has worked on this policy. She questioned whether the University would be required to abide by the current lighting ordinance in the interface between the campus and the downtown area. Mr. Hess stated the current ordinance does not address requirements for the color of light or the lighting fixtures and Council may want to consider updating the ordinance. He also added that some people think of the downtown area and the university as a community rather than individual areas. The Planning Commission feels this policy may be a way to tie the communities together and have a sense of uniformity. Discussions could be held with Penn State in hopes of finding a solution that will compliment each other.

Rebecca Hirsch, South Gill Street, stated she was in favor of the purpose statement and felt it was a good balance between public safety and preventing a nuisance. She has been trying to get shields on the lights near her home to minimize the nuisance but also understands there are safety issues to consider. Ms. Hirsch was hopeful this policy would address both issues.

Review Items on the October 23, 2006 COG General Forum Agenda. Council reviewed items on the COG agenda General Forum meeting agenda for October 23. The two main issues on the COG General Forum agenda will be the annual budget and the Act 537 Plan.

The COG General Forum will consider the adoption of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Resolution and Emergency Management Coordinator Steven Abrams will attend the meeting to answer any questions. Mr. Fontaine added the Centre Region municipalities are in compliance with NIMS.

On the COG General Forum agenda is also a public hearing and plan adoption of Act 537. Mr. Fontaine explained there will be one last chance for comments from the public and the CRPA staff will review and respond to the public comments that were previously received. The General Forum will then recess for a short period and each municipality will call to order an official meeting and take action to adopt the 2006 Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan. Bob Crum will act as secretary for Borough Council.

Ms. Dauler questioned the review and discussion of the plan for managing septic systems. Mr. Fontaine stated sewage management is part of the 537 Plan and includes a region wide plan with minor variations for some municipalities. Council's concerns have been included and addressed in the 537 Plan. A change from previous plans will be the involvement of the University Area Joint Authority in sewage management.

Ms. Dauler also noted the agenda specifically highlighted five proposals for the 2007 COG Budget and suggested Council review the items and be aware of the proposals.

Mr. Groff provided Council with a memorandum regarding the 2007 COG Budget. He explained the proposed budget reflects a 15% increase which can be attributed in part to the new COG pay plan and health costs. There are also notable increases for the renovation of the Central Fire Station office space, the establishment of the Emergency Management Contingency Fund, and increases to the Regional Parks Fund and Pools Capital Funds. Mr. Groff explained the increases to the COG Budget have resulted in a 12% increase to the Borough's contribution. Over the last five years the Borough's proportion for the COG Budget has increased nearly 30% and he anticipates that trend to continue as COG continues to grow. Mr. Groff advised Council to be aware of these figures as COG discusses new programs.

Mr. Humphrey questioned if problems were anticipated with covering the pool capital expenditures. Mr. Fontaine stated there has been some concern expressed in regards to the costs but the region is in agreement and supports the pool projects.

Mr. Fontaine noted the COG meeting on Monday night will be to receive the budget and forward the budget to the municipalities to review.

Agenda Items for the Borough/University Liaison Meeting on November 7, 2006. Council was asked to submit items to be discussed at the Borough/University Liaison meeting scheduled for November 7. Agenda items will be submitted to Penn State for preparation of the B/U meeting agenda.

Mr. Filippelli questioned if Council was still planning to meet with the Penn State Office of Judicial Affairs. Mr. Fontaine stated a meeting would be held early next year. Mr. Filippelli felt this item could wait until that meeting but asked that it be mentioned the student behavior has gotten much worse in the Highlands. Mr. Humphrey also felt it was important to continue the discussion of student behavior.

Ms. Goreham stated the trend of large freshman classes is permanent and felt it would be beneficial to discuss how both the Borough and the University can work together to make this adjustment go smoothly. She also suggested receiving an update on the status of the law school and the incoming law class.

Ms. Dauler would like to discuss having recycling bins placed next to the garbage cans on campus and also receive an update on the Smith property on North Atherton Street and the bus station relocation.

Mr. Filippelli inquired about the status of the HUB concert shell project. Mr. Humphrey stated it is his understanding the project is on hold because of funding issues.

Ms. Dauler questioned if Mr. Hahn and Mr. Humphrey would be available to attend the meeting on November 7. Mr. Hahn stated he would not be able to attend. Mr. Humphrey said he would be available. Ms. Dauler stated she would check the availability of other Council members.

Mr. Fontaine stated Mr. Daubert would like to know which members of Council would be attending the ABC/Council recruiting meeting on Tuesday, October 24. Ms. Goreham and Mr. Humphrey stated they plan to attend.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:13.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary