

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Work Session
March 30, 2007

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, March 30, 2007, in the State College Municipal Building's Room 304, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Ms. Dauler called the meeting to order at 12:05 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 S. Kurtz, Assistant Borough Manager; Carl R. Hess, Planning Director; Amy R. Miller, Recording Secretary; Mark Whitfield, Public Works Director; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public Hour. Jim Meyer, 1327 Old Boalsburg Road, said he attended a Zoning Hearing Board meeting earlier in the week where the property at 1306 South Atherton requested a variance to allow a storage shed to remain behind the building on the property. Mr. Meyer asked Council to consider amending the zoning ordinance to allow the shed to remain because it would not be aesthetically pleasing to have the shed out in the open. He added that across South Atherton Street another business also has a need for a storage shed due to lack of storage space. If they cannot have a shed, they will park a truck behind their building for extra storage which would also be an eyesore. Mr. Meyer asked Council to discuss rear yard setbacks in the CP-2 zoning district to see if lessening the setback is an option.

Ms. Dauler said she will refer Mr. Meyer's questions to Mr. Slaybaugh, the Borough's Zoning Officer.

Report on Greenhouse Gases and Global Warming. In October, 2006, Dr. Brent Yarnal addressed Council on local efforts to monitor and mitigate greenhouse-gas emissions. As part of a student project, Council agreed to participate in a greenhouse gas inventory for State College Borough. Dr. Yarnal's Penn State students updated Council on the project.

Greg Armbrecht began and said the goals of the project are promoting community outreach, developing innovative strategies and improving existing regional programs. In addition the project serves an excellent training tool for students. He added that lower scale targets (such as communities and counties) are an effective starting point in an attempt to lower greenhouse gases.

Daniel Hellmann explained the greenhouse gas effect and the global and local efforts to reduce greenhouse gases.

Ron Feingold gave details on how gases are measured and their effect on the environment. He said the leading emitter of gases is the transportation sector followed by electricity generation and fuel consumption.

Matthew Gibson highlighted the effects of greenhouse gases from the electrical sector and O'Shannon Burns talked about the fuel sector.

Andrew Young explained the next steps toward the project which are to inform the public, identify local experts who can help, conduct focus group discussions, and identify mitigation options. Mr. Young said through the focus groups achievable targets will be set and the most efficient ways of approach will be determined. He stated the future goals of the project are to create a mitigation plan that satisfies the Borough, implement the plan and monitor and adopt the plan as needed. Mr. Young added that information on the Greenhouse Gas Inventory project can be obtained by visiting the website at www.cira.psu.edu.

Mr. Humphrey said the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) has the largest fleet of buses powered by natural gas. He asked what the results of the mitigation would be if all the buses were diesel. Mr. Feingold answered that CATA provided the results but because of the time restraints data on diesel usage was not currently available. However, the data could be presented at a later time.

Ms. Goreham requested a copy of the students' presentation. Ms. Burns said when the report is finalized towards the end of semester it will be posted on their website. In addition, Mr. Kurtz asked for a hard copy to present to Council.

Ms. Goreham added that if citizens wanted to partake in the focus groups, they should contact the students via their website.

West End/Urban Village Revitalization Plan. Mr. Kurtz stated that Council would receive the draft final plan for the West End Revitalization Plan after the presentation from the Steering Committee and consulting team. He added that Rich Kalin, Steering Committee Chair; Keith Weaver, Associate Principal with EDSA, Inc.; and Karen Dickinson and Troy Truax from Delta Development would present an overview of the findings and recommendations of the plan.

Mr. Kalin said the Steering Committee was a diverse group but worked well together. He described the Committee as happy and optimistic but initially doubtful and fearful. He said although the time frame was tight, it worked to the Committee's advantage. Mr. Kalin thanked the Committee members for serving on the Committee. He added the public meetings drew excellent input from the public.

Ms. Dickinson noted that from over the course of study and input from residents, the Committee determined the revitalization plan should include a new image for the West End/Urban Village, green spaces, diverse housing and a mixed use neighborhood that would include pedestrian and bicycle usage and retail development.

Mr. Weaver then spoke on the key elements of the physical plan. He said one major goal is to create new community open spaces with a park commons and pocket parks. He added other main objectives of the plan are to create a pedestrian focused environment, improve vehicular traffic and improve the parking in the West End. Mr. Weaver noted that preserving and promoting the West End's historic character and instituting diversified housing is a major objective of the plan.

Mr. Weaver said developing a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote and advertise the community as well as to promote a new district name would be essential to establish the new identity of the West End. In addition, Mr. Weaver said working with Ferguson Township and Penn State University will be a key factor to creating a cohesive urban environment.

Mr. Truax spoke next on how Borough staff could help in carrying out the revitalization plan. He suggested implementing the desired land use through new regulations, strengthening the property code monitoring and establishing the leadership and commitment for implementation through the Redevelopment Authority. Mr. Truax added that through the Redevelopment Authority, zoning, public/private partnerships and public funding opportunities, the plan could take effect.

Ms. Dauler thanked the team for their presentation and said the West End plan is scheduled for review at Council's meeting on April 9. Mr. Daubert reminded Council members to take their individual copies of the written report for review and study.

Other Business. Council recognized Michele Nicolas who is retiring from her position as Human Resource Director.

There being no further business Council adjourned at 1:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary