

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
June 11, 2007

The State College Borough Council met in a work session meeting on Monday, June 11, 2007, in the State College Municipal Building Room 220, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Ms. Dauler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Manager; Carl R. Hess, Planning Director; Herman L. Slaybaugh, Zoning Officer/Planner; Michael S. Groff, Finance Director; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Norma J. Crater, Accounting Supervisor; Amy J. Story, Borough Engineer; Arthur Caccavale, Parking Manager; Cynthia S. Hanscom and Sheila Lubold, Recording Secretaries; members of the media; and other interested members of the public.

Capital Improvement Plan Work Session. Mr. Fountaine explained that this was Council's opportunity to initiate ideas for the 2008-2012 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and discuss how possible projects fit with the priorities of Council. He said staff would use these ideas and priorities of Council as input when developing the proposed CIP for 2008-2012.

Mr. Whitfield presented an update on the projects from the 2007-2011 CIP either already completed or expected to be completed in 2007 and a list of projects in the current 5-year plan proposed to be completed in 2008. He also identified several new projects that would require Council's input.

Mr. Daubert asked if the 2008 projects included money for the Borough's portion of the anticipated reconstruction of the Welch and Park Forest pools. Mr. Fountaine noted that the aquatics project would include the Borough's contribution for the Park Forest pool renovations, the first of the two projects.

Ms. Dauler asked about the municipal building improvements included in the new projects list. Mr. Fountaine explained that it would include part of the 2,500 square foot unfinished space on the third floor for a possible meeting room as well as improvements to the lobby in the form of a central desk/welcome station and a message board for events scheduled in the building.

Mr. Filippelli asked about the proposal to bring some public works projects in house. He asked if that would require adding additional personnel. Mr. Whitfield replied, "Yes." He added that there were currently two people dedicated to the sanitary sewer fund and they were able to perform minor maintenance. Because the sewer system and pipes are getting older and need to be replaced, he believed that maintenance projects for the sanitary sewer, curb replacement and sidewalk replacement could be done by staff with a possible cost savings.

Ms. Goreham asked about grants for some of the projects. Mr. Whitfield explained that some of the grant applications have not yet been submitted to the state because the project design is not far enough along.

Ms. Goreham commented that she believed the pedestrian crossing at Atherton Street was an important project. She encouraged staff to continue looking for a neighborhood crossing between Beaver and Hamilton Avenues.

Ms. Goreham also encouraged staff to continue adding funds for traffic mitigation. Mr. Whitfield said he hoped to be able to have a street classification system in place where improvements are made when a street reaches a certain threshold.

Ms. Goreham also commented that there were proposals in place to continue with improved street lighting but said she believed that there were ways to manage the intensity of lighting, especially in residential areas. Mr. Whitfield said converting the existing lights to induction fluorescents would be costly. Ms. Goreham suggested contacting the fraternities to see if they would be interested in helping to fund a lighting project.

Ms. Goreham also commented that it was important to include funding for West End improvements. Mr. Fountaine said he expected to see some kind of an addendum for the Capital Improvement Plan once the implementation process for the West End Revitalization has begun.

Mr. Hahn questioned the cost effectiveness of the elevators and lighting in the garages in relation to the deficit in the parking fund. Mr. Fountaine indicated that some of the amenities, such as better lighting and faster elevators, are considered as providing a better customer service. Improvements may actually increase the usage of the garages.

Mr. Humphrey asked about the increase of \$170,000 for parks in 2008. Mr. Whitfield said it was for improvements in Central Parklet and sealcoating of the basketball courts.

Mr. Daubert commented that he would not want to see an entrance from Allen Street as proposed for the Allen Street metered lot. Mr. Fontaine said he hoped to approach improvements to the Allen Street lot incrementally and in the least costly manner. The initial step would be to utilize the wayfinding system to improve the use of the lot. He noted the first problem with the lot is that people do not know how to get to the lot. The second problem was that people think it is for municipal use. The second step would be to advertise the availability of parking in the lot. The last approach would be to create an entrance off of Allen Street. Mr. Daubert said this Council wanted to create a uniform streetscape on Allen Street with minimal curb cuts. He added that part of the garden adjacent to the sidewalk would have to be removed to create the entrance.

Mr. Daubert also said he would be opposed to revising the adoption schedule for the Capital Improvement Plan to July, which is when some Council members are out of town for vacations. Mr. Fontaine explained the current review process for the Capital Improvement Plan and operating budget overlap which created a problem for staff. He believed a schedule could be developed that would allow Council the full opportunity to review the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Whitfield explained having the review earlier in the year would also allow for engineering staff to prepare plans for projects that should be bid early in the year so that construction can be done over the summer.

In summary, Council raised the following issues:

- Additional funding for Welch Pool reconstruction
- Additional funding for traffic mitigation
- Manage intensity of lighting, especially in residential areas
- Additional funding for West End improvements
- Review cost benefit of elevator and lights in parking garages
- Process for adopting the Capital Improvement Plan earlier in the year (but not in July or August).

Mr. Fontaine asked Council members to get any additional suggestions to staff by June 29.

Council recessed at 7:00 p.m. and reconvened at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Public Hour. Larry Kuhns, 601 Ridge Avenue, spoke to Council asking for permission to close a portion of Clarence Avenue on Friday, June 22, 2007 to have a graduation party. Mr. Kuhns was given the proper paperwork to complete and return for approval.

Open Agenda. Mr. Daubert questioned what the "Stable Neighborhoods Chapter" is in regards to the State College Area Plan. Mr. Hess explained the State College Area Plan Steering Committee is reviewing each chapter of the plan individually and this is the next chapter to be reviewed.

Mr. Daubert requested that Council discuss the future planning of policy changes and look ahead to plan for potential policy issues.

Mr. Filippelli requested a report and discussion time regarding Mr. Fontaine's and Mr. King's meeting with the Liquor Control Board. Mr. Fontaine stated he and Mr. King had a preliminary meeting with LCB Executive Director Joe Conti and would be meeting with him again later this year. Mr. Fontaine thought there would be more information available after the second meeting and suggested reporting to Council then.

Projects Report. Mr. Daubert questioned the Bradley/Garner Drainage Swale project. Mr. Whitfield explained during heavy rainfalls the water overflows the curb and this project will reroute the water flow.

Report from Design Review Board. Kevin Gombotz, chair of the Design Review Board, attended the meeting to review the Board's work and revisit the 2007 work program. Mr. Gombotz reported work has continued on the Design Guide and the Board has reviewed and revised 75% of the text. An intern has been hired to start working on the layout design and will begin that work in August. The Board plans to have a draft of the Design Guide completed for Council's review by the end of 2007. Mr. Gombotz added that some of the design guidelines will overlap into other areas and the entire Borough cannot be covered by one design standard.

Ms. Goreham questioned the coordination of the Design Review Board's work with the Urban Village Revitalization Plan. Mr. Hess stated Keith Weaver with EDSA will be working on the Urban Village and would like to have a coordinating set of guidelines and be aware of the Design Review Board's efforts.

Report from the Planning Commission. Commission Chair Ron Madrid attended the meeting and updated Council on the work of the Commission over the last six months.

Some of the work has included revisions of zoning amendments based on the Downtown Vision and Strategic Plan, finalization of the amendment to the mixed use overlay, and preparation of an amendment to the pedestrian oriented use ordinance. The Commission has spent a lot of time reviewing the renovation project for the State College High School as well as spending time reviewing the plans to rebuild the property at 700 West College Avenue. The Commission will

continue working to find ways to make the Calder Way infrastructure more functional for both pedestrians and traffic.

Mr. Madrid added his thoughts on the value of having a Council member attend the Commission's meetings. He understands one member cannot speak for the entire Council but it does provide guidance for the Commission during meetings. Ms. Dauler added she appreciates all the work of the Commissions and watches the meetings on C-NET but she felt the dialogue during the meetings are more open than if a Council member would attend.

Mr. Humphrey questioned the plans and procedure for the Sowers Street project. Mr. Fontaine stated the zoning requests as well as the application for conditional use will be presented to Council for public hearings, Council consideration and possible approval. He added Council will have the opportunity to see the land development plan for the building but the final approval of this plan is a staff responsibility.

Council also discussed the revisions made to the ordinance amendment for the mixed use overlay district, and, in particular, the hours of operation for businesses in the district. Mr. Hess clarified this only applies to the hours the business can be open to the public and does not restrict how late the owner would be able to work.

Mr. Daubert questioned some of the permitted locations listed in the proposed ordinance. Mr. Madrid stated the idea is to preserve these areas and not have entire areas become more student housing.

Council had a short discussion regarding the future plans and development of Calder Way. Mr. Madrid stated when considering possibilities for Calder Way the area needs to be looked at as a whole rather than developing a plan for each block of Calder Way.

Council also briefly discussed the suggested building heights for the proposed Herlocher project near Garner and Hiester Streets. Mr. Madrid stated there is some concern regarding the frontage along College Avenue and Calder Way.

Parking Business Plan. During previous meetings Council received a report and proposed business plan for the parking system as well as recommended amendments from the Transportation Commission.

Mr. Fontaine stated it is staff's goal to have the plan approved at the next Council meeting and have the plan implemented before the students return for classes in the fall.

Arthur Caccavale, Parking Manager, explained the parking system needs to be treated as a business and small changes made over time will help revenue growth. The plan also calls for the consolidation of the entire parking department including parking enforcement.

Mr. Caccavale said he spoke with citizens in the local business community and it was mutually agreed the Borough and Downtown State College would conduct a specific study before implementing meter enforcement from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. The study is being planned for September 2007.

Ms. Dauler stated she understood the Transportation Commission was considering eliminating the 30 minute half-price period given with meter violation tickets and she would be reluctant to see that changed. Mr. Caccavale said he appreciated the thought process of being friendly and extending this courtesy; however, this courtesy has been violated often by repeat offenders. And, he said, this has also caused the Borough to lose over \$10,000 in the amount of fines collected.

Mr. Hahn agreed with Ms. Dauler's comment and also suggested adjusting the amounts for the parking violations. He added some of the practices done when the availability of parking was limited should not be continued since ample parking is available; for example, limiting people to a two hour limit for downtown parking meters. This practice could discourage shopping and doing business in the Borough. Mr. Hahn also stated he was not certain that increasing the price for meter parking would have more people move to parking garages and this could have adverse affects. Mr. Caccavale stated there is still a high demand for street parking especially while Penn State is in session and turning over the parking spaces also helps retailers. People wishing to park for longer than two hours should use the parking garages, he stated.

Ms. Goreham stated the Borough needs to find a balance to make parking more welcoming while still being able to pay for the parking provided. She suggested offering monthly parking permits for designated parking spaces in Beaver Avenue garage as well as restricting commuter parking in an effort to move people to the parking garages. Mr. Caccavale said he favored promoting parking in the garages and has been working with the parking staff to improve customer service and make parking a good experience.

Mr. Daubert requested more of a break down for the figures used to determine the parking fund deficit. He also added he is not against eliminating fractional rates in the parking garages but felt some type of grace period be figured into the system. Mr. Caccavale said he is not against building a grace period into the system and anticipated this would be done.

Mr. Daubert also felt that free overnight parking should not be eliminated and eliminating such parking could be a safety concern. Mr. Fontaine stated this was a suggestion made by the Transportation Commission and Council's thoughts could be shared with the commission.

Mr. Caccavale acknowledged the parking system is a sensitive system and adjustments will need to be made as the plan is implemented. He added the perception citizens have about limited parking in the Borough needs to be changed and can be done with advertising and working with the Borough merchants.

Mr. Fontaine stated staff is recommending Council approve the parking plan with the exception of the change to enforce on street meter parking from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. and with a larger increase in the Sparks Street parking lot fee. Staff will monitor the plan and fine tune the plan along the way. For this plan to be successful quick reactions are needed and changes will need to be made faster than they are being made now. Mr. Fontaine stated staff will need the ability to make minor adjustments with Council approving more permanent adjustments. Some Council members expressed concerns that staff would be able to change Council's decisions.

Ms. Dauler pointed out that Mr. Caccavale was hired to develop this parking plan but the plan needs to be considered as whole rather than picking apart segments of the plan. If adjustments are needed they can be consider as they are needed.

Mr. Hahn agreed with authorizing changes in the parking garages, decks, and lots but thought changes to the on-street parking would require an amendment to the ordinance. Mr. Fontaine stated the changes to the fee schedule would require amending the ordinance but staff could start marketing the changes in the interim.

Patrick Daugherty, a Downtown Business operator, said he is concerned the change to enforce street meters from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. will cause confusion for the citizens. If the change will not be beneficial to the Borough, the Downtown Business Members would be hesitant to encourage the change.

Michael Desmond, also a Downtown Business operator, stated his appreciation to Council for listening to the community's thoughts and concerns regarding the changes to parking.

Mr. Fontaine added staff is still considering some changes and suggestions and would like to test different options to determine how to proceed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary