

NARBERTH BOROUGH COUNCIL CAUCUS MEETING

March 9, 2016 –8pm

Minutes

1. **Call to Order** – The caucus meeting of the Narberth Borough Council was called to order in the Municipal Building, 100 Conway Avenue, Narberth, PA on Wednesday, March 9, 2016 at 8:00PM by Council President Aaron Muderick.

2. **Roll Call**

Aaron Muderick, President (present)	Bob Wegbreit (present)
Gigi Tevlin-Moffat, Vice President (present)	Bob Weisbord (present)
Richard Diaz (absent)	Tom Grady, Mayor (present)
Marlene Richmond (present)	Sean Metrick, Borough Manager (present)
Charles Silio (present)	Matt West, Dir. of Civic Technology (present)

3. **Interview of Candidates for Boards and Commission**

- A. **Zoning Hearing Board Alternate (1 vacancy)**

Council received five applications for the Zoning Hearing Board Alternate: Katie Skeen, Jen Prior, Joshua Willis, Deborah Lonsdorf, and William Martin. Brief statements were given by three of the applicants who were in attendance: Katie Skeen, Jen Prior, and William Martin.

- B. **Shade Tree Commission (2 vacancies)**

Council received five applications for the two vacancies on the Shade Tree Commission: Robert McGreevy, Peter Grove, Rick Tralies, Martin Harrell, Lorraine Harper. Brief statements were given by all three applicants who were in attendance: Robert McGreevy, Peter Grove, and Rick Tralies. Mr. Silio provided a brief background on behalf of Lorraine Harper.

Mr. Muderick stated that the motions to appoint the Zoning Hearing Board Alternate and two members to the Shade Tree Commission would occur at the Business Meeting on March 14, 2016.

4. **Committee Reports**

- A. **Finance & Administration Committee (Silio- Chair, Tevlin-Moffat, Wegbreit)**

Mr. Silio stated that the committee has a meeting coming up on Monday March 14, 2016. Mr. Silio then asked Mr. Sean Metrick, Borough Manager, to provide an overview on the functions of the Borough's administrative office over the past three months. Mr. Metrick provided details on existing conditions, as well as a framework for future organizational needs. Mr. Metrick's report included project specific time allocations for administrative staff as a way to begin to identify ways to make the office function more efficiently.

Mr. Silio stated that the committee will further discuss the details of Mr. Metrick's information at its next meeting. He then encouraged all the other committees to do the same. Mr. Silio also brought to Council's attention the staff hours spent on code administration, and suggested that Council consider outsourcing the Zoning Officer as a way to free up office staff to devote more time for project management.

- B. **Public Safety Committee (Tevlin-Moffat- Chair, Diaz, Richmond)**

Ms. Tevlin-Moffat stated that the committee was asked by the Borough's administrative office to review two chapters of the Borough code: Chapter 109 – Snow and Ice Removal; and Chapter 112 –

Streets and Sidewalks. She stated that upon review by the committee, Chapter 109 does not require any revisions at this time.

Ms. Tevlin-Moffat stated that Chapter 112 does require an update. She continued by saying that it is the recommendation of the committee that Council approve forwarding Chapter 112 to the Borough's solicitor to review and recommend updated language. Those recommended updates would be presented to Council for adoption at a future Council business meeting.

Ms. Richmond asked if it would be more cost effective to copy and paste language from the PA Association of Boroughs and forward that to the Borough's solicitor. She continued by stating that she would be willing to email the language to the administrative office so that it could be forwarded to the Borough's solicitor.

Ms. Tevlin-Moffat then provided a brief update on the committee's review of the Civil Service Commission, and stated that more information will be forthcoming.

C. Public Works Committee (Wegbreit, Chair, Richmond, Silio)

Mr. Wegbreit began by stating that the committee met in February and are continuing to monitor the status of several projects. He continued by saying that the committee continues to be concerned about communicating with Lower Merion Township regarding the pedestrian crossing at Wynnewood Avenue. He also said that the committee is looking at updating the painting in the pedestrian crosswalks within the Borough. He stated that the committee continues to gather more data from the "Your Speed" signs.

Mr. Wegbreit explained that the committee asked the Borough Administration office to write a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) pertaining to a parking study. The draft RFP was circulated amongst the committee as well as members of Council, with very little revisions made to the document. He stated that the committee would like to advertise the RFP in hopes of attracting a handful of responses from quality firms. He stated that he believes the Borough needs a parking plan and asked Council to support the advertising of the RFP.

Members of Council discussed specifics of the RFP including: potential timeframe for completion of the study; future implementation of study recommendations; how Borough administration, Planning Commission, and other Council committees should be involved; and next steps. Mr. Wegbreit asked that Council consider putting forth a Resolution at its next Business Meeting to advertise the RFP.

Mr. Wegbreit concluded by announcing the next meeting of the committee will at 6:30PM on Wednesday, March 16, 2016.

D. Property Committee (Diaz, Chair, Weisbord, Silio)

Mr. Weisbord, Vice-Chair, announced that the committee did not meet last month, and asked Mr. Metrick to provide an update on current projects. Mr. Metrick stated that the library terrace construction should begin in the next 7-10 days with an anticipated completion date of July 1, 2016. Working with Brawer, Associates and Yerkes, Associates on the project management aspects.

Mr. Metrick continued by providing details regarding the construction of the elevator at 201 Sabine Avenue. He stated that the Borough continues to transition the management responsibilities over to Yentis.

Mr. Metrick asked the committee to consider developing a space and use policy for Borough properties, and asked that discussions begin at the next meeting.

E. Building & Zoning (Weisbord Chair, Wegbreit, Tevlin-Moffat)

Mr. Muderick began by stating that he expects that most members of the public in attendance were present on account of the discussion of the proposed Form Based Code. He continued by saying that no vote would occur at this meeting, and that public comment would be taken at the end of the committee reports, after members of Council were given the opportunity to discuss their concerns.

Mr. Weisbord stated that the committee met on February 26, 2016. He said that the committee asked the Borough administrative office to present the new FEMA floodplain information and organize the Borough's required response to this Federal action. He then asked Mr. Metrick to provide a brief update on the program.

Mr. Metrick provided details regarding the FEMA floodplain conservation district and how it relates to the FEMA flood insurance requirements. He asked that Council consider making a motion to introduce the floodplain conservation district Ordinance, so that the Borough would remain in compliance with the Federal regulations. Mr. Weisbord stated that he would be making a motion to introduce the Ordinance later in the meeting, under Action Items.

Mr. Weisbord continued by explaining that the committee is reviewing Chapter 50 – Building Construction of the Borough code, and will be providing more specific recommended updates. He also stated that the committee reviewed the draft Parking RFP, and recommends that the Narberth Planning Commission be included in the review process.

Mr. Weisbord said that the committee reviewed pages 5 and 12 of the draft Form Based Code, but agreed that any suggested updates be made in the presence of full Council. Therefore, the version in front of Council this evening is the same version as brought forward by Narberth Planning Commission, and Montgomery County Planning Commission. He stated that he asked the Borough's planner, Lauren Van Pelt, to document all the changes that have been made since the initial version, and all future changes will be also be tracked.

Mr. Silio followed-up on his earlier comments regarding Code Administration and asked if the committee would work with the Borough office on crafting an RFP for Zoning Officer services. Council concurred, and asked that the Borough office work on the RFP with the expectation of at least three firms being interviewed for the position. Council would then vote on the recommendations of the committee at a future Business Meeting.

Mr. Muderick then began a discussion on the Form Based Zoning Code, and gave each member of Council the opportunity to present their views on the proposed Code. He stated that he has asked each Council member to present any "show stopper" issues with the proposed Code, or those issues that would prevent a Council member from voting in-favor of the Code.

Ms. Tevlin-Moffat stated that she appreciates the amount of time and effort that has gone into the Code, and does not have any "show stopper" issues. She stated that she would prefer the final Code include a set of standards regarding the enclosing of porches instead of restricting all enclosed porches. She also suggested that the proposed Code also include definitions of minimum sizes for dwelling units.

Mr. Silio stated that he, too, does not have any "show stopper" issues, and that he looks at the final draft Code as a rather conservative document. He said that he has some issues that he is uncomfortable with, but that they wouldn't prevent him from voting in-favor of the Code. The first issue relates to parking. He said he is not comfortable with the inclusion of minimum of off-street parking, particularly those that are still use-based. He stated that minimums, instead of maximums, would work to prevent adaptive reuse of spaces. He stated that the proposed Parking RFP should work to address these issues and is encouraged that his concerns could be identified and corrected during that process.

Mr. Silio continued by stating that he was uncomfortable with the use-restrictions outside of the Commercial areas, as that would also work to prevent adaptive reuse of spaces. More specifically, Mr. Silio was not comfortable with the restrictions of number employees for home-based businesses, and that they restrict employees to only those who live in the residence.

Mr. Silio stated that, in his opinion, the proposed Code is not a strict Form Based Code, but more of a hybrid Code. He stated that the proposed Code is far better than what is currently on the books, and would be willing to adopt it as-is, so long as the opportunities exist for future “tweaks” to refine the Code.

Ms. Richmond stated that she agrees with much of what has already been said, and that the issues that have been raised are not “show stoppers” in her view. She said that she is not a fan of mandatory pitched roofs, but that is not a “show stopper”. She stated that the “show stopper” in her view has to do with the commercialization on the South Side, which would allow greater commercial density.

Mr. Wegbreit stated that he is a fan of Form Based Code. He continued by saying that he has a few “show stoppers”, but said that he believed that some minor revisions to the Code could be made to address the issues.

Mr. Wegbreit stated that he believes that a parking study needs to be conducted and the results be able to be connected to the final Code. He stated that he also had an issue with the apartment buildings on S. Narberth Avenue, and he suggested that a change to the proposed zoning map be made. He said that he would also recommend changing the definition of Professional Office to include employees per square foot that would be allowable. Mr. Wegbreit concluded by saying that he believes that the final Code is close to being in a state where it could be adopted.

Mr. Weisbord began by stating that he favors this draft because it follows the recommendation of the Narberth Planning Commission. He believes that this Code is far superior to the existing code, and that it will be easier to manage any future adjustments that should arise. He continued by saying that the proposed Code will work to retain the character of Narberth’s neighborhoods.

Mr. Weisbord continued by stating that he believes the current Borough administration will better manage parking, and that he doesn’t believe it needs to be attached to the proposed Code.

Mr. Muderick stated that if any substantive changes are made to the Code, that a review period would be triggered. He continued that he believes that the Code is close to a point where a vote to adopt could happen. He continued by stating that making any major changes at this point would be disingenuous to the those involved in the process to get the Code to its current state. He then provided a potential timeframe for adoption, including public hearing and vote for adoption. Mr. Muderick then facilitated a discussion with Council to come to an agreement on any “show stoppers” so that the process to adopt the Code could go forward.

Mr. Muderick closed the discussion on the Form Based Code and asked the office to work with the Borough’s planner to develop various build-out scenarios to get a better idea what potential results could look like. He stated that he hoped that Council would be able to make a decision based on this data and that a public hearing to advertise the proposed Code would be forthcoming.

F. Economic Development (Richmond, Chair, Diaz, Weisbord)

Ms. Richmond provided an update on a number of upcoming events in the Borough. She also spoke about a possible new event, “open streets Sunday”, which would close streets to vehicular traffic, as experienced during the Pope’s Visit last summer. She stated that the committee briefly discussed changing the color of street lighting to blue, as well as raised pedestrian crossings.

G. Ad hoc Succession Planning (Wegbreit - Chair, Tevlin-Moffat, Muderick)

No report.

5. Announcements

Mr. Muderick announced that he was asked by the Narberth Civic Association to make residents aware of a book titled, "Citizenville". He continued by saying that it is available in bookstores, as well as the library, and to see Georgette DuBois for more information.

6. Public Comment

- A. Alexandra Tyng, 117 Woodside Avenue: *Asked questions about what was discussed by Council regarding the Form Based Code, and provided feedback on what she believes should be incorporated into the proposed Code.*
- B. Peter Grove, 25 Narbrook Park: *Stated that he is from England and Narberth is more a village than any he has seen. He stated that he doesn't believe anyone should be in a hurry to change zoning all at once.*
- C. Rick Tralies, 123 Woodside Avenue: *Provided comments about the proposed Form Based Code, specifically regarding apartment buildings. He stated that restricting apartment buildings would not be a sound move, as those who live in apartment buildings play an integral part in the community.*
- D. Sue Witte, 414 Dudley: *Stated that she and her husband have lived in the Borough for a very long time, and represent the "old Narberth". She used the example of the house that was built next door to her as why Narberth should restrict new development. She appreciates all the information that she has received on the Form Based Code, and encouraged Council act on this type of redevelopment soon.*
- E. Georgette DuBois, 111 Price Avenue: *Read a response from a member of the Planning Commission she received via email regarding comments she had made at a previous Council meeting regarding projects in the Borough and whether or not Commission members have received financial compensation. She then read her response to that email, and stated that Jim Cornwell had responded but left it up to him to decide whether or not to read his response.
Councilman Weisbord stated he feels as though Ms. DuBois was allowed to again slander a volunteer member of the Planning Commission and that it is unacceptable.*
- F. Robin Berenholz, 212 Merion Avenue: *Stated that the current real estate market in the Borough has increased the interest of developers to come in to redevelop and that the Borough needs to act quickly to make sure the existing character of the Borough is retained.*
- G. Terri Fox, 104 Maple Avenue: *Spoke in favor of including enclosed porches in the proposed Form Based Code. She continued by stating that she is also in favor of restricting re-development by prohibiting knock-down and re-build. She then provided suggestions to modify the proposed Form Based Code. She also commented on the demolition permit application submitted by the owner of the Elmwood Avenue church.*
- H. Barbara Fortner, 415 Conway Avenue: *She spoke in favor of Council acting quickly to adopt a zoning code that will restrict re-development, and stated that she would like to see the new Code adopted as soon as possible. She implored Council to not delay the voting on the proposed Code.*
- I. Katie Skeen, 227 Hampden Avenue: *Spoke about the heart of Narberth, the train station, and the areas directly surrounding it, and provided a brief history of the founding of the Borough. She continued by stating that the railroad track need to be viewed as a uniting line instead of a diving line, and encouraged all residents to work together as a unified Borough.*
- J. Jim Speer, 321 Grayling: *Stated that he has enjoyed the discussion this evening, and that he is a strong advocate of the proposed Code, and asked Council to act quickly to adopt it.*

- K. Frank Brandolisio, 314 N. Essex Avenue: *Stated that he appreciated Mr. Muderick setting up a series of informational meetings about the proposed Code. He continued by stating that he would support a phased adoption of the Code. He expressed his concerns with the parking regulations included in the proposed Code. He then provided comments about his concerns regarding the proposed Code, and asked if individual property owners were allowed to opt-out of the new Code. Mr. Muderick stated that he reviewed that question with the Borough's solicitor and that the answer is "no", and that he would be willing to sit down to discuss at a later time.*
- L. Kim Bezak, 237 Dudley Avenue: *Began by thanking Council for the time they spend on Borough business. She provided background on why she and her family decided to move to the Borough. She stated that they received the mailing about the proposed Code and that she and her husband were thrilled with the amount of time and effort put into the proposed Code, and asked that Council act quickly to adopt it. She stated that she believes that there will never be a "perfect" zoning code, but that the proposed Code is superior to the existing zoning code.*
- M. Michelle Paninopoulos, 125 Merion Avenue: *Stated that she concurs with a number of previous comments, and that she is also in favor of the proposed Code. She stated that she was not in favor of the idea of adopting the proposed Code in phases, as that would be difficult to manage.*
- N. Noreen Walsh, 101 Woodside Avenue: *Stated that she is in favor of the proposed Code, and move slowly to make changes to the Code over time. She then provided her opinions regarding the proposed Code that she hoped would be included in the final Code.*
- O. Todd Bressi, 300 N. Essex Avenue: *Began by stating that he is a member of the Planning Commission, and thanked Mr. Muderick for hosting the information sessions on the proposed Code. He stated that the Code is really close to being adopted, and that it needs to be adopted as soon as possible.*
- P. Ken Krivitsky, 1 Woodside Avenue: *Stated that he trusts the experts that have been working on the proposed Code and that it needs to be adopted as soon as possible. He continued by saying that the proposed Code is not perfect, but it is much better than the current Code.*
- Q. Miriam Shakow, 149 Merion Avenue: *Stated that she was a member of the Planning Commission and that she is heartened by the unanimity amongst Council and residents that tear-downs of homes needs to be prevented. She stated that time is of the essence and that the proposed Code needs to be adopted soon. She also spoke in favor of including apartments in the diversity of Narberth.*
- R. Dennis Montagna, 306 Grayling: *Stated that he was a historian and has studied Narberth a great deal. He stated that he believes the proposed Code will help the Borough as it tries to preserve the charm of the Borough.*
- S. Karen (last name unintelligible), 247 Hampden Avenue: *Stated that she is concerned that members of Council are accusing residents of slander. She commented that she doesn't believe Mr. Cornwell of the Planning Commission actually filed a right-to-know request to the Borough.*
- T. *Mr. Muderick then read letters from several residents regarding the proposed Form Based Code.*
- U. *Mr. Muderick read a Letter of Resignation from Councilman Richard Diaz, and stated that a motion to accept the resignation should occur at the following Business Meeting. He then provided details regarding the appointment of the vacant seat.*

7. Action Items

Motion: *Mr. Weisbord moved to add a motion to the agenda to introduce the FEMA Floodplain Conservation Ordinance for action at the next Business meeting. Seconded by Mr. Silio. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.*

Motion: *Mr. Weisbord moved to introduce the FEMA Floodplain Conservation Ordinance for action at the next Business meeting. Seconded by Ms. Tevlin-Moffat. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.*

8. Adjournment

Ms. Tevlin-Moffat moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Weisbord. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

The meeting concluded at 11:31PM

Respectfully Submitted
Matt West, Director of Civic Technology