

NARBERTH BOROUGH COUNCIL CAUCUS MEETING

April 6, 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, April 6, 2016 at 8:00PM by Council President Aaron Muderick.

2. **Roll Call**

Aaron Muderick, President (present)

Gigi Tevlin-Moffat, Vice President (present)

Marlene Richmond (present)

Charles Silio (present)

Bob Wegbreit (present)

Bob Weisbord (present)

Tom Grady, Mayor (present)

Sean Metrick, Borough Manager (present)

Matt West, Dir. of Civic Technology (present)

3. **Appointment to fill vacancy of Council**

Mr. Muderick opened the floor to accept nominations for the seat on Council that was created by the resignation of Councilman Richard Diaz. Mr. Wegbreit nominated Barbara Fortner to fill the vacant Council seat. No other nominations were submitted.

Mr. Wegbreit moved to appoint Barbara Fortner to fill the vacant Council seat, seconded by Mr. Silio. A roll-call vote was conducted:

Gigi Tevlin-Moffat, Vice President - Aye

Marlene Richmond - Aye

Charles Silio - Aye

Bob Wegbreit - Aye

Bob Weisbord - Aye

Aaron Muderick, President – Aye

6 Ayes, 0 Nays. Motion passed.

4. **Oath of Office**

Mayor Tom Grady administered the Oath of Office to Barbara Fortner to fill the vacant Council seat.

Mr. Muderick stated that Council will accept applications from interested residents for the position of Vacancy Board, as Ms. Fortner has resigned from that position after being appointed to Council. He continued by saying that Council would move to make that appointment at an up-coming Business Meeting of Council.

5. **Narberth Building Inspector, Yerkes Associates**

Mr. Frank Newhams and Mr. Joe Lavelle of Yerkes Associates were in attendance to provide information on the Borough's building permit process, including what role Yerkes plays in that process. Mr. Newhams discussed the timing of the permitting process including plan review, approval/denial, inspections, etc.

Mr. Muderick asked for details pertaining to demolition permits. Mr. Newhams explained that there are a couple of chapters within the building code that address the demolition of buildings. He continued by saying that, among other things, the emphasis is on the protection of adjacent properties is key. The termination of all utilities must be completed in the presence of the inspector. He continued by explaining the process to identify and remediate hazardous substances that could be located in buildings set for demolition.

Mr. Wegbreit asked a question pertaining to the costs associated with permits, and if that is a consideration when reviewing a permit application. He also asked about what other municipalities Yerkes works for. Mr. Newhams provided background on the various projects he has worked on personally, as well as those by Yerkes. He continued by saying that Yerkes currently is involved with over 20 municipalities with zoning, permitting, inspections, etc. Mr. Newhams then stated that the costs associated with demolition permits aren't set, and that there are numerous variables that effect the final price, including the value of the materials being demolished.

Mr. Wegbreit asked if anyone from Yerkes has walked through the building, and Mr. Newhams replied that it has not happened as of yet, and stated that process would be covered during the pre-work coordination meeting. He estimated a project such as the church on Elmwood Avenue would take a couple of weeks to complete, with a couple more weeks to consider environmental concerns.

Mr. Silio asked if Yerkes is involved with any other types of inspections outside of the permitting process. Mr. Newhams stated that there are other types of inspections that Yerkes could be performing, but that that decision must come from Council after identifying whether it would be cost effective to do so. Mr. Lavelle added that he has experience conducting inspections as a result of property transfers, as well as apartments.

Mr. Silio asked how costs are determined for the permit applications, as the fees are based on that value. Mr. Newhams explained that the cost for projects are based on the cost of construction estimate. He added that a failed inspection fee should also be considered. Mr. Weisbord noted that the costs for permits are only for construction costs and not finish elements such as countertops and cabinets.

Mayor Grady asked if the review process included any vetting of the contractors. Mr. Newhams explained that there are no provisions in the Commonwealth that allows inspectors to deem whether or not they are able to perform the work. He continued by stating that so long as their licenses and liability coverage are current, the contractors are deemed qualified to perform the work.

6. Committee Reports

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

Mr. Silio stated that the next meeting agenda will focus on laying out a timeline for the development of the 2017 budget. He stated that the committee is starting to talk about the budget process early, to ensure that other committees, boards, and commissions have adequate time for input.

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

Ms. Tevlin-Moffat stated that she was invited to meet with the fire department to discuss how the department and Council can be more connected. She continued by saying that the committee is hoping to have the updated language for the Civil Service Commission for approval at a future Business Meeting.

Mr. Silio announced that there would be an Executive Session of Public Safety Committee at the conclusion of the Caucus Meeting.

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

Mr. Wegbreit provided an update on the committee meeting held on March 16, 2016. He announced that there is a proposed property easement agreement with Lower Merion Township having to do with a new traffic signal planned for the intersection of N. Wynnewood & E. Wynnewood. He stated that there are two possible scenarios: one that would not require the easement of Borough property, and one that would.

Mr. Metrick stated that the preferred option from Lower Merion is the one that requires the easement of Borough property, as it would result in a more suitable pedestrian crossing.

Mr. Weisbord stated that he has a difficult time approving an easement for a solution that is not as sound as the option of constructing a round-about. Ms. Tevlin-Moffat stated that she agrees with Mr. Weisbord's comment and that a round-about would be a better option for safety and control of the intersection. Mr. Wegbreit continued by explaining that the signal is going up, and that the round-about idea is not going forward. Ms. Richmond agreed with the round-about idea, and that she is not comfortable with the easement idea. Ms. Fortner stated that situations like these require Council to rely upon professional staff such as traffic engineers, and that it is Council's role to identify whether or not to accept those recommendations. Mr. Muderick asked for further clarification from Lower Merion and PennDOT on the benefits of design options, and that discussions will continue at Monday's Business Meeting.

Mr. Wegbreit asked Mr. Metrick to provide an overview of the Windsor Avenue Green Street project. Mr. Metrick stated that the design consultant, WRA, will be meeting with staff with preliminary designs, and that a public meeting will be held in the near future to solicit feedback from the community.

Mr. Wegbreit updated Council on the status of the Meriam Estate development, and that the committee has asked the Solicitor to review the current building and construction documents to ensure that they accurately align with the agreement with the Borough.

Mr. Wegbreit explained that the Parking Study RFP is still open. Mr. Metrick said that Mr. West has been coordinating those efforts and that the office has received a few inquiries. Mr. Wegbreit said that he would like to see more bicycle amenities, and hopes that the Parking Study will address those needs.

Mr. Wegbreit said that the committee continues to discuss the re-painting of pedestrian crosswalks, in attempt to make them more visible. He continued by stating that the committee is also interested in exploring other options, such as raised crosswalks.

Mr. Wegbreit asked Mr. West to provide an update on the "Your Speed" signs that are deployed in the Borough. Mr. West explained the specifics of how the signs will be moved around the Borough to monitor streets for both speed and vehicular volume.

Mr. Wegbreit distributed to Council a letter from Fred Hansell regarding the Shade Tree Commission, and asked Council to review the letter. He continued by saying that the Shade Tree Commission has historically been reported through Council Committees, and suggested that remaining Commissions also be attached to a relevant committee.

Mr. Wegbreit stated that the committee begin discussing regarding sidewalk inspections process, and that the Borough should be looking at other mechanisms to inspect outside the Use and Occupancy process.

Mr. Wegbreit updated Council on the upcoming gas line replacement on the south side of Narberth, and that Council should consider developing a repaving plan based on PECO's work to minimize the expense. Mr. Metrick explained that the office has been in discussions with PECO to coordinate the work, and that he is awaiting a response from a paving contractor regarding expenses. Mr. Muderick suggested that "blended" options should be considered, as the conditions of roads vary, and that roads shouldn't be repaved if already in acceptable state.

Mr. Silio announced that the office has deployed a parking enforcement system, to replace the paper-based system. Mr. West provided details on the system, and is encouraged by the future analysis opportunities to help manage parking within the Borough.

D. Property Committee (Weisbord, Silio)

Mr. Weisbord, Vice-Chair, began by explaining that the committee is beginning work on developing a building-use policy. This policy will address how the Borough-owned buildings are used by Council, public, and clubs. He explained that it would address weekday and weekend usage, as well as long-term usage. He continued by explaining that the committee is also looking at including storage within the buildings.

Mr. Silio added that the baseline for the policy discussion is to provide a framework and documentation to better manage the usage of the buildings. Ms. Tevlin-Moffat asked if the committee is also considering the scheduling process for building use. Mr. Weisbord stated that the committee hopes to include that in their policy development.

Mr. Weisbord then asked Mr. Metrick to provide an update on the Library Terrace project. Mr. Metrick explained that the lowest qualified bidder was P&S Incorporated with a bid that was approximately \$243,000. He stated that the contract got close to being signed, and that the contractor asked for a contract revision, which was denied by the Borough's solicitor. Therefore, the contractor did not agree to the terms, and removed themselves from the project. Mr. Metrick stated that there are two options: go with the next lowest qualified bidder; or re-bidding the project. Mr. Wegbreit stated that in speaking with the Borough Solicitor, that Council discuss this matter in an Executive Session. Mr. Muderick stated that the Executive Session would be held at the conclusion of Monday's Business Meeting.

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

Mr. Weisbord stated that the committee reviewed the preliminary development plans for 198 Elmwood Avenue. He stated that the Planning Commission will also review prior to Council action. He then announced that the Public Hearing for the adoption of the Form Based Code will be held on April 28, 2016 at 8PM, and that there will also be a Public Hearing that same night on the FEMA Floodplain Conservation Ordinance.

Mr. Weisbord provided details about historic preservation opportunities, including the development of historical preservation policy. He explained that there are various levels of policy that could be developed, and that it would help the Borough implement historic planning initiatives.

Ms. Richmond said that she was in favor of the historic preservation idea, and encouraged Council to consider the development of a Strategic Plan for the Borough. She asked that Council set priorities for the enactment of these policies, and to better define the role that the Planning Commission would play in these processes. A number of Council members discussed the idea of establishing Ad Hoc Committees to work on specific projects such as these, to include qualified members of the public. Mr. Muderick suggested that a discussion on the roles of committees and commissions be added to the June agenda.

F. Economic Development (Richmond, Chair, Weisbord)

Ms. Richmond said that one of the top priorities of the committee is the idea of raised pedestrian crosswalks. She stated that the committee would like to identify future grant opportunities to help fund these sorts of projects.

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

Mr. Wegbreit stated that the committee met with the Borough Manager and that the committee is working on defining the review process of the Manager.

7. Announcements

Mr. Muderick announced that Council will be considering a Resolution at Monday's Business Meeting to potentially change the time and day of recurring Council meetings. Mr. Metrick suggested a change that would move the Business Meeting to the third Wednesday from the second Monday, to meet at 7:30PM. He explained the benefits of moving the Business Meeting day and time. The day of the Caucus Meeting would remain the same, but the time is proposed to be moved to 7:30PM. Mr. Silio suggested that the day of the Business Meeting remain on a Monday, but move it to the third Monday.

Mr. Muderick also announced that Jim Cornwell, Chair of the Planning Commission was in a serious car crash recently, and that he is on the mend. He wished him a speedy recovery.

Mr. Muderick then announced that he and Ms. Tevlin-Moffat met with the Superintendent and Board President Lower Merion School District, to discuss the growing needs of the district. He said that it was a positive meeting.

Mr. Silio announced the annual LiBrewery event that is coming up. He encouraged everyone to attend, and that the event is a fund raiser for the Narberth Library.

8. Public Comment

A. Heidi Boise, 306 Grayling Avenue: *Expressed her appreciation for Council talking about the round-about, and asked that Council inform the residents why the traffic light is safer.*

B. Steve DiRico, 402 N. Essex Avenue: *Asked how much money was budgeted for the Library Terrace project.*

Mr. Metrick answered that the funding for the project would have to be taken from borrowing.

C. Kimberly Neff, 407 Dudley Avenue: *Introduced the idea of a Communication Committee, and volunteered to help. She stated that the Library Terrace project is an example of how this proposed committee could work to inform residents. She then expressed her concerns about the Terrace project. She then asked if the community room, AKA the Girl Scout Room, would be able to be better utilized by residents. She expressed her frustration when she tried to use the room last year and felt as though she had to go through too many steps to try to gain access. She asked that the rules governing the use of that room be explored.*

Mr. Silio answered that the Property Committee examined this issue last year and that it continues to be on the agenda, as other issues distracted the Committee from this issue.

She then asked about the assessment of the playground adjacent to the library.

Ms. Tevlin-Moffat stated that the Shade Tree Commission would be looking at the trees at that park and that residents should be in attendance.

D. Deborah Lonsdorf, 128 Chestnut Avenue: *Commented about the funds being received from the Meriam Estate, and asked if that money had to be used for the traffic light.*

Mr. Wegbreit and Mr. Muderick explained that there were two separate pools of money: one for the signal, and one for the general fund.

She expressed her concern over the Library Terrace. She stated that when the idea first came about that it seemed like a good idea. She stated that the current scope seems to have grown and that the costs are too high. She then stated that she noticed that the bathrooms on the first floor have been locked.

Mr. Metrick answered that the bathrooms can be made available on an as-needed basis.

E. Georgette DuBois, 111 Price Avenue: *Expressed her concern about the Library Terrace project, and that she believes more information on the background of it. She said that she has been searching local newspaper website to find more information, and continued by stating that there is very little information available. She asked that a timeline of the project be developed that would define the original concept, pricing, selection, etc. She asked how many trees were taken down at the Library in preparation of the project, and asked what the cost was.*

Mr. Metrick stated that it was \$3,800 paid to Preservation Tree Company. Mr. Muderick stated that more information would be forthcoming about the Terrace project.

9. Action Items

None.

10. Adjournment

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

The meeting concluded at 10:12PM

Respectfully Submitted
Matt West, Director of Civic Technology