

**EAST PITTSBURGH COUNCIL
MINUTES
February 18, 2020**

The February 18, 2020 meeting of the East Pittsburgh Borough Council was called to order by Mary Carol Kennedy at 7:01 p.m. at the Senior Citizen Center located on Grandview Avenue.

Ms. Hartford took the roll:

Present:

Absent:

Mary Carol Kennedy, Council President
Stacy Simon, Council Vice-President
Paul Borkowski, Council Member
Earnest Frazier, Council Member

Jonathan Reyes, Council Member

Other:

Seth Abrams, Borough Administrator
Nick Evashavick, Solicitor
Dave Gilliland, Engineer
Denise Hartford, Secretary
Lou Payne, Mayor

All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Pat Geric, raised concerns about the condition of Main St. in the Borough. Mr. Geric made a statement that the State was preparing to pave from Edgewood to Brinton Ave, which is the connecting road to Main St. He requested that the Borough ask if the paving could continue to Main St. Messrs. Abrams and Gilliland will look into the proposed paving project.

Mr. Geric also spoke out in favor of allowing Merrion Oil & Gas to continue their application process unimpeded and requested that Council reconsider their position. Mr. Geric also inquired about progress to change street lights to LED's. Mr. Abrams responded that Duquesne Light is not amenable to concurrent work while the light poles are being changed as a part of their own project.

ENGINEERS REPORT

Mr. Gilliland reported the bids to replace the concrete steps next to the Senior Center came in and Satira Construction presented the lowest bid at \$15,825. He recommended that the project be awarded to Satira Construction for the said amount. The Mayor inquired about the scope of the project and if the cost was just to repair the upper section. He asked why the Borough couldn't just patch them? Mr. Gilliland responded that it was possible, but his instructions were to seek bids to replace the steps. The Mayor believed that all of the broken steps in the borough could be replaced for the cost quoted. Mr. Yocca, public works, stated that we do not have the equipment to do proper repairs. Mr. Borkowski suggested that we have someone bid out all borough concrete repairs. Council requested that Mr. Gilliland obtain new bids to repair or as needed,

replace all of the broken steps in the borough, including the steps from Grandview to Rt. 30, The steps from Rt. 30 to Linden Ave, from Prospect St. to Electric Ave., and the steps from Sunnyside down to Quarry Field.

Mr. Gilliland noted the CITF grants were awarded and that he will alert the Mayor ahead of time so that DPW could clean Chritina Alley. The demolition part of the project is underway, and Eveready construction is awaiting the health department permits for the asbestos that is on the outside of one of the homes. We also received quotes for three additional homes. The quote for 210 Bessemer was too expensive due to asbestos siding. The bids for 524 Bessemer came in at \$25,100 and 728 Grandview at \$7,800. Ms Kennedy requested a motion to approve a change order adding the latter two properties to the CITF project for a total of \$32,900 additional.

The motion was made by Mr. Frazier and seconded by Ms. Simon. Motion passed unanimously.

530 ½ and 532 Grandview is completed and the manhole repair under Union Railroad has been completed. Mr. Gilliland presented the conceptual drawing to reduce the concrete on the Linden Mall be tearing it all out, adding permeable areas that would act as a bioswale and increase the visual appeal. If Council approves, the plan would remove over 8,000 sq. ft. of concrete, and they could begin to work up costs to seek grant funding, including the ALCOSAN Growing Green program.

Ms. Simon made a motion to move forward with the project plans to obtain hard costs and begin to seek out grant funding. Mr. Borkowski seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The drawing will be placed in the Borough Offices for public view.

Mayor Payne spoke about demolition. He praised the current work of Eveready. He stated that there are 6 other homes that he feels needs to be demolished and three homes up for Sheriff's sale. The Mayor stated he counts 13 homes that are vacant but not ready for demolition. He recommended that Mr. Miller provide data for last date occupied/inspected, Mr. Abrams to gather tax information, and then to sit with Mr. Gilliland to determine which homes are worth saving and trying to engage the current owner. Mr. Abrams informed Council that this fits in with the data cleanup that is being undertaken in the office.

Mr. Borkowski asked about the pipes on the side of the viaduct for Union RR. Mr. Gilliland explained that it is for water runoff that is supposed to catch water and filter into catch basins. Union RR is stating the water flow is constant and more than they designed the drainage structure to handle. Mr. Yocca stated that DPW has to salt the area every morning when it is below freezing. Mr. Abrams inquired about the repair status of the Union RR project. The catch basins that were damaged by the project have been repaired. There is still one catch basin that belongs to the Borough to be fixed. The other belongs to PennDOT. It was recommended that Mr. Gilliland contact Union RR and Penn DOT in writing to inquire about the water runoff – and that East Pittsburgh is putting them on notice about the ice and potential liability.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Borkowski made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 21, 2020 meeting as submitted. Seconded by Mr. Frazier. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION TO PAY BILLS

Mr. Frazier made the motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$103,870.02.
Seconded by Ms. Simon. Motion passed unanimously.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT – the report is on file. Ms. Kennedy inquired about the fines levied on the report and why a \$500 fine was not shown. Mr. Abrams explained that the Magistrate determines the fine/payment plan, and that we could see it in pieces, and that we would not see any of it until at least the next report. Ms. Kennedy inquired about remedies should a person refuse to pay their fines. Mr. Evashavik explained that it is the magistrate's responsibility to enforce and collect the fine. The borough could file a lien if needed. Mr. Abrams stated that this has not been an issue to date, and all fines are being collected.

PUBLIC WORKS – Mr. Borkowski reported that DPW has been proactive in cleaning the borough, including cleaning the area by, and replacing the sign at the end of Dookers Hollow Bridge. Mr. Borkowski recommended that we look at obtaining more equipment so that we are not as reliant on other boroughs for items such as salt and cold patch. Mr. Abrams indicated that equipment expenses are being planned for the 2021 budget. We will likely be reapplying for the OVR program for summer help. Otherwise we may need to hire part time summer help.

POLICE – Mr. Payne reported that the first workshop meeting will be March 5th. Whitaker is backing out of the plan. This may be helpful due to the geographical disconnect.

Zoning Hearing Board - The ZHB received an appeal from Merrion Oil and Gas as a result of last month's vote to revoke the conditional use permit from December 2017. Mr. Abrams received an engagement letter from Maiello, Brungo & Maiello to serve as ZHB solicitors for a rate of \$150 hour. The appeal will take place on March 10th, and will be advertised on Thursday. Ms. Simon asked the duties of the ZHB solicitor. Ms. Evashavik explained their advisory capacity.

Mr. Borkowski made the motion to engage Maiello, Brungo & Maiello as Zoning Hearing Board solicitors. Mr. Frazier Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

SOLICITOR REPORT

Mr. Evashavik requested an executive session at the conclusion of the Council meeting to report on a legal matter.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Payne had no additional comments.

MANAGER'S REPORT – The activities report is on file. Participated in initial introductory meeting with RIDC to connect Keystone Commons with the Borough. The next meeting is at the end of February. Finances are in good condition right now with \$669,453 in the General Fund and over \$1.1M in overall liquid funds.

Mr. Abrams presented a Delinquent Tax Policy to provide additional consistency in our collections of delinquent property taxes. It appears that we are currently picking up an additional 5 percent of the total tax base for 2018. We would like to improve that number.

Ms. Simon made a motion to adopt the Delinquent Collections and Payment Plans for Delinquent Property Taxes. Mr. Borkowski seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Kennedy asked if the letter sent to landlords was included in the Council packet. Mr. Abrams stated it was not, and that he would email it to Council the next business day.

COMMUNICATIONS – The Turtle Creek Watershed Association is requesting sponsorship for their 50th anniversary. The Borough has historically supported the Watershed Association with a \$100 annual donation.

OLD BUSINESS None

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Motion to approve the Tri-Cog Land Bank’s acquisition of 527 Sunnyside Ave, Lot/Bloc 375-R-140, and waiving all tax/municipal claims against said property.

Motion: Ms. Simon
unanimously.

Second: Mr. Frazier. Motion passed

COMMITTEE ACTIONS - None

Mr. Abrams mentioned that the personnel committee is reviewing a new handbook and job descriptions. Parks and Recreation is preparing to engage with Glenn Engineering to review land drawings.

Mr. Abrams announced that an executive session was held on 11 February 2020 to discuss potential litigation issues.

Motion to Adjourn to executive session

Mr. Frazier made a motion to adjourn to executive session at 8:17 pm. Ms. Simon seconded the motion.

The executive session met from 8:37 until 8:55 to discuss litigation issues.

Mr. Frazier made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Seth Abrams
Borough Manager