

**EAST PITTSBURGH COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
June 16, 2020**

The June 16, 2020 meeting of the East Pittsburgh Borough Council was called to order by Mary Carol Kennedy at 7:04 p.m. via video teleconference.

Mr. Abrams announced additional agenda items: discussion of the emergency declaration, request to place a stage on Grandview Ave. for an event on 6/19/20, discussion of the towing process, and the proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Abrams 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 (arrived at 7:35 pm)

Other:

Seth Abrams, Borough Manager  
Nick Evashavik, Solicitor  
Dave Gilliland, Engineer  
Denise Hartford, Secretary  
Lou Payne, Mayor

All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Public comments were solicited to be submitted via mail or email.** No comments were received.

**REQUEST TO ALLOW A STAGE TO BE PLACED ON THE STREET ON THE 700  
BLOCK OF GRANDVIEW AVE ON 19 JUNE 2020**

Mr. Nathaniel Carter of This Generation Connect requested a stage to be placed for the rally taking place with Ms. Michelle Kenney on June 19<sup>th</sup> from 10 am-12 noon.

Council approved the request unanimously, with notification going out to the residents of the streets that may be affected by the closure.

**ENGINEERS REPORT**

Mr. Gilliland's report is on file.

Paving is scheduled to begin on 6/29/20. Mr. Abrams asked if paving would be complete by the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. Mr. Gilliland will request that work be completed by the 4<sup>th</sup>, which he believes is reasonable.

Mayor Payne requested signs to be posted ahead of time. Mr. Gilliland stated signs will be placed at least 48 hours before paving commences.

### **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Kennedy noted a correction to the Mayor's report. Requested the statement about funding being cut for the flowers, from stating the "program that helps" to the "program that supplies".

Ms. Simon made the motion to approve the May 2020 Council Minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Frazier. Roll call vote was unanimous in favor. Motion passed.

### **MOTION TO PAY BILLS**

Mr. Borkowski made the motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$ 145,167.67. Seconded by Mr. Reyes. Motion passed unanimously by roll call.

**FIRE MARSHAL REPORT** – the report is on file.

Mayor Payne noted the increase in citation activity in May. Mr. Abrams stated that trash/rubbish is still a concern with residents placing trash out early, and often without cans. This results in trash being spread and littered streets.

**PUBLIC WORKS** – Vactor was in town this week. The clogged pipe at Quarry Field has been bid and was accepted.

**POLICE** – no report

**Zoning Hearing Board** - no report

### **SOLICITOR REPORT**

Mr. Evashavik reported any discussions of the Merrion Oil Zoning Board Hearing can take place in general during the public meeting or during an executive session if needed.

### **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Payne asked about additional paving while the paving company is in town. Mr. Abrams cautioned about committing additional funds during an uncertain financial situation. Mr. Gilliland offered to provide an estimate based on the unit pricing for the following streets: 500 block of Isabella Alley, 300 block of Christina Alley and Bryan Alley. The Mayor also noted trees that need to be trimmed. Mr. Abrams will have DPW review the trees identified on Grandview Ave and proceed with arbor care.

**MANAGER'S REPORT** – The activities report is on file.

Finances remain in a stable position. Details are in the report.

There is a longer term concern about the required increase that will occur in 2021 for police services. There will likely be a required increase of \$200,000-\$250,000. This will be further revised as the meetings progress. Mr. Borkowski asked about prior savings. Mr. Abrams confirmed that there are excess funds in the fund balance that would be able to cover any

expenses above the revenues. This would not be a long term solution, as we would eventually drain the fund balance.

The Borough is proceeding with a grant application with TCVCOG for demolition of blighted properties.

Ms. Kennedy asked Mr. Abrams to find and review the plan for a complete-sidewalks. Ms. Kennedy also suggested a ticketing program for code enforcement. Mr. Evashavik noted that Aspinwall has a program like this and Chalfant had an ordinance drafted, but not acted upon. Mr. Abrams raised the issue to tenants being cited instead of the property owner. East Pittsburgh is over 50% rental property.

### **COMMUNICATIONS** – on file

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Rules of Order – Mr. Frazier motioned to adopt the Rules of Order of the Borough of East Pittsburgh to govern the behavior of official meetings. Ms. Simon seconded the motion. Vote passed unanimously. Mayor Payne requested that the Rules of Order be printed and made available at in person meetings.

### **NEW BUSINESS** –

2. Mr. Borkowski mad a motion to accept the bid of \$3685 by Creative Enterprises to repair the storm drain line at the basketball courts at Quarry Field. Ms. Simon seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Mr. Borkowski made a motion to enter into a contract with Axis Architecture to design an office complex to be built at 506 Bessemer Ave. Ms. Simon seconded the motion. Mr. Reyes asked about the original discussions to reuse the gym. Mr. Abrams informed the council members that the gym is not a financially feasible option due to its poor condition. The project has a cost of approximately \$110,000 for the complete architectural services. The building will be a \$1.3-1.5M project and would include discussions with all stakeholders, including the public. Mr. Reyes asked about a gymnasium. Ms. Kennedy reported that a community room was being built into the plan, but that a gym was not a part of the current plan. Mr. Frazier clarified that the new community center would have a space/room, but not a gymnasium. He raised a concern about the basketball clinic not being able to happen in the winter. Mr. Frazier and Mr. Reyes reiterated the need for public input. Mr. Abrams reminded everyone that the motion on the table is to begin the work by engaging in the contract and then having the architects engage in public meetings. Mr. Reyes asked about the condition of the Gym. Mayor Payne detailed the extent of the damage to the building. Vote was unanimous. Motion Carried.

Mr. Abrams brought up the option to “expire” the Emergency Declaration due to COVID-19. Mr. Borkowski asked what is gained by expiring the declaration. Mr. Abrams said that there was not any benefit. Council opted not to consider this item any further.

Ms. Simon presented follow up questions about the choice to discontinue use of Allmor towing and what attempts were made to contact them. Mr. Abrams explained that the owner would not return my calls, would not tow vehicles because of a full lot and did not respond to emails. Ms. Simon had heard that they were willing to tow for us. Mr. Abrams indicated that Mr. Miller would visit in person as well to drop off forms and request service.

A discussion ensued regarding moving forward with advertising, holding a public meeting and voting on the proposed ordinance to amend section 1200 of the Borough Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Borkowski asked to clarify the repercussions of changing the ordinance now. Mr. Evashavik explained that no one could assert standing for a claim in the future. The current actions with Merrion will always be under the Ordinance as written and in place today. Mr. Borkowski raised the concern that the legal fights could potentially bankrupt the borough.

Ms. Simon moved to table the decision to proceed until additional information is received from Food and Water Watch. Ms. Kennedy seconded. Vote passed unanimously.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Reyes made a motion to adjourn at 9:35 pm. Ms. Simon seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seth Abrams', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Seth Abrams  
Borough Manager