

## OFFICIAL MINUTES January 19, 2021

The Regular Meeting of January 19, 2021, of Council for the Borough of Kennett Square was called to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Video Conference with President Mercomes in the Chair.

### ROLL CALL

Present: *President Brenda Mercomes*  
*Councilmember Ethan L. Cramer*  
*Councilmember J. Douglas Doerfler*  
*Councilmember Rosa Moore*  
*Councilmember LaToya Myers*  
*Councilmember Peter L. Waterkotte*  
*Councilmember Mayra Zavala*

*Mayor Matthew W. Fetick*  
*Interim Borough Management Team – Chief William Holdsworth*

### ADOPTION of AGENDA

*It was moved by Councilmember Doerfler to approve the agenda; seconded by Councilmember Waterkotte.*

President Mercomes called for the vote on the amended agenda.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Thomas, 406 South Broad Street, commended the fire company for the wonderful job they did a few nights on something that could have been very tragic.

### CONSENT ITEMS

The following Consent Items are deemed accepted with the approval of the agenda:

- Approval of Minutes – January 4, 2021
- Approval of Bills

**PRESENTATION – KENNETT AREA PARK AUTHORITY (KAPA)**

Richard Lyons, Chair of KAPA gave a presentation detailing the proposed plan for the soccer fields that are not playable anymore because they are not in compliance with the Southern Chester County Soccer Association (SCCSA) due to noticeable settlement. He noted that in recent years, the use of the soccer fields has been in decline and enrollment in SCCSA is down, they do not have money to help with the fields and they also have found another venue. Mr. Lyon shared that KAPA does not expect them to renew their lease, which will result in a \$20,000 loss to the KAPA budget, which is 10% of their total annual budget. He noted that KAPA met with Bill Stulken from Southeastern Chester County Refuse Authority (SECCRA) and Eden Ratlif, Kennett Township Manager, to come up with a solution and noted the cost of total remediation for the soccer fields is in excess of \$250,000.

Mr. Lyons shared that in response to this issue, the KAPA board has approved a preliminary design for the fields that includes 1/3 high quality, irrigated sports fields, 1/3 natural habitat consisting of meadow, woodland and pollinator gardens, and 1/3 agricultural cropping.

Mark McGreevy, KAPA Board member and Borough resident, noted that KAPA believes there is the need for recreational soccer fields in the park and will take 3.5 acres and turn them back two (2) soccer fields at a cost of approximately \$80,000, including reseeding, leveling, irrigation system, erosion control, etc. He also noted they would still like to do field rentals to supplement the loss of income and maintenance of the fields. They are in the process of developing bid documents.

John Gaadt, Vice President of the KAPA Board explained that KAPA looked to broaden their thinking on what to do with the land and researched other landfill area uses. Their concern is how can we use this land to bring it back to a natural condition, improving the health of the soil and include crops for the local community.

Nancy Allyon Ramirez, a Borough resident and a KAPA Board member explained that KAPA is requesting the Council's support and approval to use the funds from the in lieu of dedication fee. She noted that the fee authorized under the section of the municipal code is reserved for providing or acquiring park or recreational facilities and the use of the fees is for things like playing fields, such as baseball, football, soccer fields, and the like. Ms. Ramirez stated that if we come to an agreement and if the Council approves the proposal, this fee in lieu of dedication can be used for the improvements and the projects that we are proposing for the park.

Councilmember Waterkotte asked KAPA has a start and end date for their project.

Mr. Lyon shared that their goal is to break it down into phases and the sports field reclamation is the first phase. He noted they would put the field work out to bid and hopefully have the fields available for play in the Fall of 2021 or Spring of 2022. He shared that the second and third phases (meadow and cropland) will take more time for planning and programming, community buy-in, as well as putting time in to find our partners in this work. It was suggested by the Chairman of SECCRA to get programming in place first.

Vice President Moore asked how much money KAPA estimates they would raise from the fees in lieu of dedication.

Mr. Lyon shared that the hope is this would be part of the discussion with the Borough, because not only is there the landfill reclamation costs for the fields, there is the rest of the project as well. He noted

that it is an ongoing discussion that we would like we have. He explained that KAPA is looking for approximately \$100,000 for the first phase.

Councilmember Waterkotte noted that KAPA is looking for a portion of that \$100,00. He shared that he spends a lot of time in the park and it would be a shame if there were no soccer fields since there are so many people in the community who play.

Mr. Lyon shared that he hopes Borough support will help with the continued use of the park and expects the park to be maintained at a very high level.

Councilmember Cramer commented that has had extensive conversations with Mr. Lyon and encouraged him to give this presentation. He asked if Mr. Lyon is in conversation with Kennett Township for their support as well.

Mr. Lyon stated they are looking at all possible partnerships, they have spoken with Kennett Township, and will be presenting to them next week and presenting to SECCRA shortly thereafter.

Councilmember Cramer asked about their process for consistent attention and outreach to the people who know how to garden in the community.

Discussion continued over various ideas and legislative issues that Borough Solicitor Crotty will look into and report back upon. The topic will be further discussed at the next Finance Committee.

Mr. Lyon encouraged people to watch the movie *Kiss the Ground* which was the inspiration behind the ideas for natural habitat and agricultural cropping areas in the park. He believes that KAPA can get the sports fields up and running quickly but the rest will take time because partners will be needed.

President Mercomes thanked Mr. Lyon, Mr. McGreevy, Mr. Gaadt and Ms. Ramirez for the informative presentation.

## **REPORTS**

### **PRESIDENT'S**

President Mercomes did not have a report to share.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Chief William Holdsworth submitted a written report that was included in the Council meeting packet. In addition, Chief Holdsworth highlighted that even with losing two and a half months of truck traffic in the Borough due to bridge closures, the motor carrier enforcement program still had 35 out-of-service determinations for some type of violation. He also noted the Department has had two (2) resignations, one of which was part time officer who had been with us for 8 years; the second was a parking officer with us since 2008. He shared his thanks to both officers for their years of dedication to the Borough. He noted this would have been the meeting where Police Department awards are distributed, and he hopes we can acknowledge their good work at a future time.

## **KENNETT FIRE COMPANY**

Ms. Gina Puoci submitted a written report that was included in the Council meeting packet.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Human Relations Commission (HRC)**

#### **Appointment to Human Relations Commission – Dwayne Bradley**

Rachel Berkowitz shared that she received Mr. Bradley's candidacy form for the HRC at the end of December 2020. He was recommended for the HRC by Marisol Tackett, a Commission member. Mr. Bradley has lived in the Borough of Kennett Square for 29 years and is an IT professional currently working for Vanguard.

**Councilmember Waterkotte motioned to approve the appointment of Dwayne Bradley to the Human Relations Commission; seconded by Councilmember Moore.**

Councilmember Cramer noted that procedurally, it is appropriate for the Commission to present a recommendation in writing and vote from that. He noted that the HRC has been through a lot of transition and thanked Mr. Bradley for willingness to serve.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

President Mercomes called for the vote.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

## **COUNCIL, MANAGER and MAYOR COMMENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

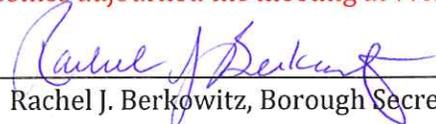
Councilmember Doerfler provided an update on the borough manager search, noting that SGR has been conducting interviews with Council, staff and stakeholders throughout the community as we work to build the position profile in preparation for the advertisement to go out. He also shared that the Personnel Committee met last week to review the current borough manager job description for the advertisement, also reviewed by our Solicitors.

Councilmember Cramer shared that it is worth acknowledging that our democracy as a whole has experienced a significant crisis and believes that it is time to fight and work for a democracy that works. He feels the need and responsibility to be truthful to our constituents and the need to make sure the rule of law is followed and we stick to the roles we have been elected to do. He commented that this work of building a democracy starts here first, because this is the most immediate place to which individuals can come address and participate in government. He noted that our duty has an important context, even though we are small and we have an obligation to do our part. Councilmember Cramer shared that he hopes everyone will take that to heart and that Council will learn the lessons and implement the solutions that we can.

President Mercomes thanked Councilmember Cramer for bringing that up and shared that democracy is not easy to maintain and we can lose it quickly if we do not support it diligently.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, President Mercomes adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rachel J. Berkowitz, Borough Secretary