

OFFICIAL MINUTES

April 21, 2020

The Regular Meeting of April 21, 2020, 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
Borough Manager Joseph C. Scalise

ADOPTION of AGENDA

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

It was moved by Councilmember Zavala to amend the agenda by removing the discussion on the dissemination of information to the community about housing amid coronavirus to a later date; seconded by Councilmember Myers.

The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Thomas, 406 South Broad Street, shared his concern after last night's meeting. He believes that 95 percent of the Borough does not know what is happening with our Borough Council and the meetings. He suggested that Councilmembers need to do more to get information to the public.

Councilmember Waterkotte asked for someone to address how we publicize meetings.

Michael Crotty, Borough Solicitor explained that Act 15 was just passed and allows the Borough to hold remote meetings. He noted we have advertised all of the upcoming meetings, as well as post them on the Borough's webpage and provide a dial in phone number so that the public can attend and participate. He noted that residents still have the ability to make public comments and review all of the documentation. Mr. Crotty explained that the Borough is actually doing more than they are required to do to comply with the laws.

Mr. Thomas commented that at least 50 percent of the Borough's population lives in poverty, some do not speak English, they may not have access to a computer or other device and it is up to Council to do a better job for the community.

CONSENT ITEMS

President Mercomes announced that the following Consent Items are deemed accepted with the approval of the agenda:

- Minutes – March 2 and April 7, 2020
- Bills
- Resolution Committing Interim Financing for Parking Garage Expansion Project
- Extension on Lap Times LLC 518 Richards Road per the MPC
- Updated Fee Schedule
- Revolving Loan Fund Payment Extensions
- VPP Grant Extension
- Opting-In to County Funding 2021-2023

REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Councilmember Waterkotte shared that the Finance Committee met on April 13th, 2020 at 8:00 a.m., and noted the following:

- Reviewed minutes and financials;
- Discussed recent garage repairs made and noted we are in line with the budget;
- The year-end parking check was issued to the General Fund;
- Codes Department has inspections on hold until mid-May at this point;
- Public Works Department is working two (2) shifts on opposite weeks;
- The Director of Public Works position is on hold for six (6)- eight (8) months, which will allow time to possibly make some changes internally;
- Water bills were mailed and residents have been given an extra 30 days to pay;
- Discussed waiving transaction fees for paying bills online; residents would see a credit on their next quarterly bill; this being offered alleviates residents having to come into the Borough office;
- There are only two (2) – four (4) weeks of work left on garage expansion once workers are allowed to return to the job; and
- Financially he noted we are fine but are looking at possible bank programs to reconstruct loan payments if need be; at this time there is nothing available for us, but that may change.

Councilmember Cramer asked how EIT will be handled and where we might see an effect in terms of layoff offs in the economic downturn,

Borough Manager Scalise explained that the Director of Finance is watching the EIT and revenue streams, although we have not seen much yet. He noted that parking revenue is down for the meters and we will keep watching that as well. Borough Manager Scalise noted that when we begin to see changes, we will bring them forward to Council.

BOROUGH SOLICITOR'S UPDATE

Michael Crotty, Borough Solicitor, noted that Act 115 passed at the end of last week and among what is covered, it allows for us to extend the discount period to August 31st for real estate tax payments and push back the penalty and interest periods to December 31st. He noted this would need to be approved by resolution and we could consider it at another committee meeting and suggested bringing it forward to the Finance Committee.

ACTION ITEMS

CONSIDER NEW COUNCIL MEETING FORMAT and SCHEDULE

Councilmember Moore shared that she feels it is most important to have meetings that everyone can attend, so while she thinks this could be a more efficient way of running meetings, she understands the scheduling issues and would like to do what is best for everyone.

Borough Manager Scalise noted that if you like the idea of the condensed version, then we can work on ways to make the scheduling work for everyone and we can re-advertise the meeting schedule.

It was moved by Councilmember Doerfler that we continue this format on a trial basis on the 3rd Monday in May and collect what works best for Councilmembers; seconded by Councilmember Moore.

Councilmember Myers commented that she spoke extensively about this last night and will not reiterate those points. She has made a commitment to this Council and will do her best to serve. In terms of the concept, she does not see how this format is more efficient and believes that agendas will be longer.

Councilmember Waterkotte noted that towns larger than ours have said it is an efficient way of meeting and he is willing to give it chance.

Councilmember Zavala shared her concerns as well, noting that she does not believe it to be an efficient format and believes it will present several challenges in scheduling considering her travel commitments to her work.

Councilmember Cramer shared the principle that every discussion should be headed toward a motion and a vote. He also believes residents are less likely to come to meetings twice in a row.

President Mercomes feels it is most important to have a meeting schedule that fits for everyone. She likes the efficiency of having two (2) meeting in one week, not necessarily one day after the next.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Thomas, 406 South Broad Street commented that we have advertised for the year and we should keep to the current schedule.

The motion carried 4-3 with Councilmembers Myers, Cramer and Zavala voting no.

President Mercomes noted that it is still important that we look at what works for everyone, so we will meet on the third Monday and Tuesday in May and meanwhile will discuss ideas and dates.

CONSIDER WAIVERS for LAP TIMES LLC 518 RICHARDS ROAD

It was moved by Councilmember Doerfler to approve two (2) of the three (3) waivers as indicated in the staff report and denying the sidewalk waiver; seconded by Councilmember Moore.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Alex Barlow, D. L. Howell, shared he does not see the value of adding sidewalks on the two properties because the properties immediately to the right and left have significant landscaping and grading work that would need to be done. He also noted that 506 Hazel Avenue is relatively new home and was not required to put in a sidewalk.

John Thomas commented that he thinks it is a fair deal.

Councilmember Cramer advised that requiring sidewalks wherever possible in the long run breaks the chain of “no one next to me has one”. He noted the goal for the Borough is to have a walkable community.

President Mercomes called for the vote.

The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER PRELIMINARY APPROVAL for LAP TIMES LLC 518 RICHARDS ROAD

It was moved by Councilmember Waterkotte to approve the preliminary approval for Lap Times LLC 518 Richards Road; seconded by Councilmember Doerfler.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER PARKING RELIEF for 116 SOUTH UNION STREET

Russell Drumheller, Code Enforcement Officer, explained that the barber shop is required to have six (6) parking spaces but they only have two (2). Staff believes it is close enough to the parking garage that they should be able to receive parking relief.

It was moved by Councilmember Cramer to approve parking relief for 116 South Union Street; Seconded by Councilmember Zavala.

Councilmember Cramer commented that we will have the methodology to monitor what spaces are being used, but in the absence of a parking study, he feels we should continue to grant necessary waivers.

Councilmember Waterkotte noted that we should do anything we can to help small business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Thomas believes that if you are going to ask the business to pay for four (4) parking spots, they should have to pay for them every year.

President Mercomes called for the vote.

The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER SETTING PRIORITIES for ADVISORY COMMITTEE on LATINO AFFAIRS (ACOLA)

It was moved by Councilmember Waterkotte to approve setting priorities for ACOLA; seconded by Councilmember Zavala.

Councilmember Waterkotte thanked Mr. Tovar for his presentation last night and he looks forward to working with him.

Councilmember Zavala noted that everything Mr. Tovar brought forward last night are urgent matters and we have to act now.

Councilmember Cramer advised these are urgent priorities and that ACOLA gave us a strong agenda to work with and believes this approval is a statement by the Councilmembers that we are concerned for these matters. He also shared that we are passing are priorities, not mandating specific steps to take.

Councilmember Doerfler shared that he supports all five priorities noting that a few can happen quickly and the others may take more time, but we will work through them.

President Mercomes noted that we would like to hear the progress you make with the five (5) initiatives as we move forward.

Councilmember Myers advised that ACOLA does need some staff support to accomplish their goals.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Thomas commented that he is against supporting drivers licenses for undocumented individuals because they can be used for other things. He is also concerned for the landlords.

President Mercomes called for the vote.

The motion carried unanimously.

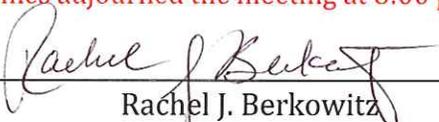
COUNCIL, MANAGER and MAYOR COMMENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Waterkotte thanked everyone for attending, noting that this is new technology for all of us and things went more smoothly tonight.

Borough Manager Scalise spoke with New Garden Township about the Revolving Loan Fund and he should hear back from them later this week. He also noted that the Finance Director will look into different EIT reports.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Mercomes adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.



Rachel J. Berkowitz
Borough Secretary