

Borough of Northumberland
175 Orange Street, Northumberland, PA 17857
Northumberland Borough Council Meeting
September 17, 2013

Council President James Troup called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call

Council members present were Gregory Carl, Adam Klock, Stephen Reed, Ellie Rees, James Troup, and Harry Wynn. Others present Thomas Slodysko, Street Supervisor; C.L. Kriner, Chief of Police; Jeremy Deitrick, Sewer Department Superintendent; Ted McCollum, Code Enforcement Officer; and Janice Bowman, Borough Secretary. Mayor Len Zboray and council member Ty Sees were absent.

Public Comment

Mr. James Weiss informed the council that he lives at 885 Water Street. A sidewalk goes partway across his property and stops. He may want to remove a portion of it at some time and would like to end the sidewalk at his driveway. His lot ends at C Street. He would like to either end it altogether or extend it to the end of the property.

Mr. Weiss informed the council that on Thursday, August 29th, at approximately 11:30 a.m., his wife was walking east on the North side of Front Street. When she crossed Queen Street, she stepped into a hole and fell. Her injuries were described. She had a CT scan which showed a rib fracture. She has pain in her ribs and left arm. Mrs. Weiss is requesting \$130,000 at this time for the loss of mobility, loss of ability to carry on her normal activities and duties around the house, for much pain and suffering and for future out of pocket medical expenses now and possibly in the future. Mr. Klock asked if a police report was filed. The response was that no report was filed. Mr. Troup replied that the council would take the matter under the advisement of counsel. Mr. Reed questioned where the hole was located. Mr. Weiss stated that it is in the crosswalk on Queen Street.

Mr. Weiss asked about the requirements for permits. The code officer stated that he could provide that information.

Mr. Jack Hoffman, a resident at 132 Hanover Street, informed the council that the gas company has patched the street four times in front of their home but will not replace the line because the Borough had recently paved the street. Mrs. Jo Hoffman stated that she had contacted the gas company before the street was paved. The company was there today and discovered that the ground is saturated with gas. She noted that the gas odor is also strong. Mr. Hoffman said that the supervisor came the last time a hole was patched. Mr. Reed stated that the utility was given plenty of notice to repair or replace the lines. Mr. McCollum confirmed that three cuts have been made in the same

area of the street this year. He also stated that one of the gas company's employees told him that the local office had budgeted to replace the line before the street was paved but someone "higher up" cancelled the work. Mr. Troup suggested that the Hoffman's contact the PUC.

Executive Session

Mr. Troup stated that the council meeting would be adjourned for an Executive Session to discuss personnel issues. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m. Mr. Troup reconvened the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Sewer Department Report

Mr. Klock informed the council that an agreement for nutrient credits from Kelly Township was received today. He stated that the agreement is different than the one that was presented to Kelly Township by the Borough. Mr. Brian Book stated that the dollar amount per pound and the number of pounds is included in the contract. The terms are for one year, not three years. He suggested that the council give the sewer committee the authority to act if the agreement must be signed before the next council meeting. The terms are for one year, not three years. The price is \$1.00 per credit. Mr. Book stated that the price of nitrogen credits at the recent PennVest auction was \$2.20 and phosphorus was around \$1.25. The price the Borough has received from Energy Works was \$1.00.

Mr. Wynn moved to purchase nitrogen credits from Kelly Township at a cost of \$1.00 per credit for one year, as stated in the contract. Mr. Klock seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Mr. Troup moved to permit Adam Klock to sign the three-year contract with Energy Works for phosphorus credits for \$1.00 per pound for approximately 4,000 pounds annually for three years.

Mr. Book explained that the sewer committee would review a number of technical items at the next committee meeting on October 1st. In anticipation of submitting permits between now and October 1st, and due to the November 13th deadline for filing the PennVest application when a number of permits must be in hand, Mr. Book recommended that the council approve the execution of the permits. The permits include a Chapter 105 permit, a Chapter 106 Flood Plain permit, an NPDES Stormwater Permit, and E & S permit, and a Water Quality Management Permit Revision. Mr. Carl moved to approve submitting the permits, and to authorize Adam Klock to execute the permits and Jan Bowman to write the necessary checks for the permit applications. Mr. Wynn seconded the motion. Mr. Klock requested that the motion be amended to authorize Jeremy Deitrick to sign for the permits along with Mr. Klock. The motion was amended as requested. Council approved the motion unanimously.

Mr. Book provided council with his response to the Northumberland Waste Water Treatment Plan BNR Upgrade Second Opinion Project Review. This response and the Engineer's Status Report are included as an addendum to the meeting minutes.

Mr. Klock noted that Jeremy Deitrick attended the Point Township Sewer Authority Meeting last Thursday and thanked him for attending to address any concerns. Mr. Klock requested that Jeremy attend all future meetings of the PTSA. Council concurred. Jeremy stated that he is willing to do so as long as he has no other commitments. Mr. Klock noted that someone from Hazen & Sawyer could be asked to attend if Jeremy is unable to do so.

Mr. Klock provided the council members with a spreadsheet that shows a breakdown of the method of the municipal reconciliation for the costs of treatment and collection. Discussion ensued. Mr. Reed moved to accept the method of billing municipal reconciliations on behalf of the Borough. Mr. Carl seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously. Mr. Klock stated that the document would be forwarded to Point Township.

Council Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2013

Upon motion by Mr. Klock, seconded by Mr. Carl, council voted unanimously to approve the council meeting minutes of August 20, 2013.

Emergency Services Board Report – no report

Code Enforcement Officer's Report

Mr. McCollum stated that code violations and complaints have tapered off.

Mr. McCollum informed council that he is pursuing funding for blighted properties. He had gone to the county for a Planning Commission meeting today and was told that the meeting was cancelled. He said that Patrick Mack would meet with him next week. He had been told that money is pending approval for the Borough. Mr. McCollum informed council that the property at 264 Water Street was not sold at the July 18 sheriff sale and the property was returned to Wells Fargo. Mr. McCollum contacted Wells Fargo and learned that the property was deeded back to the Veterans Administration since it was a V.A. loan. Mr. McCollum had an idea that wounded warriors or disabled veterans could be put into the house. He sent letters to Congressman Tom Marino and Representative Lynda Culver addressing this idea. He received a call from the PA Housing for Homeless Vets who had been contacted by Congressman Marino. According to Mr. McCollum, in order to qualify the homeless vets must be employed and must pay their taxes. He explained that under the Wounded Warriors category, they are tax exempt. In the letter he stated something similar and that is where the homeless vets came about. He requested council's permission to continue to pursue this funding. Mr. Carl asked if there is a list of the blighted properties. Mr. McCollum replied that he has a list of nine blighted properties. Mr. Reed asked if Mr. McCollum has been in the 264 Water Street property and if it is safe. Mr. McCollum stated that he has not been in the property. He added that the door was opened and that he locked it. He explained that there is no water or sewer so it is an unsafe structure. He has put caution tape and a sign on the property. He said that there are still personal possessions in the property. Mr. Carl asked if Mr. McCollum has been inside the property. He stated that he has not been in the property, but has walked around the property and noted that if someone complains, he has right of entry onto the property, according to the code. He said that there is a list of violations including a garage in the back that is ready to fall down, high weeds, and a large tree limb to be removed. Mr. Carl stated that he feels there is a safety issue for the code officer to be in a property that is unsafe. Mr. McCollum stated that the V.A. must provide permission to enter the house. Mr. Klock asked about the status of the Geiswhite property. Mr. McCollum responded that he has sent a letter informing Mr. Geiswhite that downspouts may not cross over service lines and windows. Mr. McCollum stated that he would address the nine blighted properties one at a time. Mr. Troup stated that Mr. McCollum would not enter a property without the owner's permission. Mr. McCollum said that he did enter the Exchange Hotel with the owner's permission. Mrs. Rees asked about Mr. McCollum's statement that if there is a complaint, he may go onto a property. She asked if he keeps a record so he could prove that a complaint was made. Mr. McCollum replied that he does jot down the date and time that a complaint is made. He also gets a name. Mr. Gary Klick asked if the Borough could inform

the residents when these properties are being sold. He was told that the sales are advertised in the paper or information would be available from the Tax Claims or Sheriff's offices.

Mr. Klock stated that the Exchange Hotel was condemned more than thirty days ago and the structure has not been demolished. Mr. McCollum stated that there is an interested party, as of last week, and they hope to close before the end of the month. The buyer has assured Mr. McCollum that the building will be torn down well before Christmas. [Note: The Fire Department had requested permission to use the Exchange Hotel as a training exercise prior to its demolition.]

Mr. Troup stated that Mr. McCollum's probation period is over so he is welcomed aboard. Mrs. Rees asked if that happens automatically after a probationary period. Mr. Troup responded that there were no problems and it was discussed in personnel.

The Borough Secretary requested to meet with the council in Executive Session.

Committee Reports

Rules

Mr. Klock stated that many discussions and meetings were held to develop the animal control ordinance.

Upon motion by Mr. Wynn, seconded by Mr. Klock, council voted 5-1 to approve Ordinance 2013-3, the animal control ordinance. Mr. Carl cast the dissenting vote.

Community Development

- Mr. Carl stated that the committee met last Monday out on the playground and decided to have the crew put sand in the cracks between the soft tiles. The crew has done that. Mr. Wynn had spoken with Jim Neidig at Playworld. Mr. Neidig said that he would contact someone who may be able to advise the Borough about the tiles. Mr. Wynn stated that he would contact Jim Neidig again.
- The work on the kitchen is progressing.
- Mr. Klock stated that he, Steve Reed, and Tom Slodysko have installed the sign at the dog park. He added that a work party will be held at the dog park every Saturday at 10:00 a.m. until it is completed.
- Bruce Killian will drywall the stage. He has other work to complete before he can begin the work here.

Finance

Mr. Troup stated that the Finance Committee would meet at 6:30 p.m. on September 19th.

Personnel - No report

Public Safety

Mr. Troup stated that he would like Mrs. Rees to chair the committee since Mr. Reed is already the chairman of two committees. Mrs. Rees asked if it would be okay to put an article in the newsletter informing residents to contact the Borough Office about potholes.

Mr. Wynn asked if it is okay to put a downspout through the curb. Mr. McCollum stated that it would be permitted per the codes.

Streets

Mr. Reed stated that the street paving has been completed. The millings were placed by the ballpark.

Mr. Troup questioned the downspouts on Duke Street that are directed from the roof out over the streets. Mr. McCollum stated that he would check into it.

Mr. Troup asked if anyone had any questions for Chief Kriner. No one did.

Old Business

1. Mr. Klock stated that he has heard back from the Election Board. They are in favor of using this building as the polls for wards 1 and 2. Ward 3 votes at the Kiwanis Building. The Borough would receive double the amount of payment from the county.

New Business

1. Upon motion by Mr. Reed, seconded by Mr. Carl, council unanimously approved payment of the bills. Bills to be paid from the General Fund total \$69,897.07; Liberty Splashland bills total \$40.00; Liquid Fuels bills total \$60,855.80; bills to be paid from the Park and Recreation fund total \$2,540.00; and Parking Meter Fund bills total \$641.54.
2. Upon motion by Mr. Wynn, seconded by Mr. Reed, council voted unanimously to appoint Paul Boyer to the Fire Police. Mr. Troup noted that Mr. Boyer is a member of the No. 1 Fire Company and has obtained a background check.

Mr. Troup stated that the council would meet in Executive Session to discuss personnel and that the meeting would not be reconvened.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice R. Bowman
Borough Secretary