

June 21, 2021
7:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of Doylestown Borough Council was held on the above date and time, with the following members present: Council President Jack O'Brien and Council Members Ben Bell, Tim Brennan, Larry Browne, Joe Flood, Joe Frederick, Jennifer Jarret, and Wendy Margolis. Also present were Mayor Ron Strouse, Borough Solicitor Ernest Closser, Central Bucks Regional Police Department Police Captain Robert Milligan, Borough Engineer Jim Dougherty, Borough Manager John Davis, Building and Zoning Director Karyn Hyland, Finance Director Caroline Brinker, and Planning/Public Works Director/Deputy Borough Manager Phil Ehlinger. Vice President Noni West was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Doylestown Borough Memorial Day Parade Marshal Chris Suessenguth and members of the Parade Committee joined Mayor Strouse on the floor.

Mayor Strouse stated that everyone knows that the oldest Memorial Day Parade in America takes a lot of planning, which planning actually starts when there's snow on the ground. He said it is the most exciting and biggest event that occurs in Doylestown and it is done right because our Vets deserve it. The Mayor said the planning involves the Parade Committee, Central Bucks Regional Police Department, our Public Works Department, and also some people in our Administrative Office. He said that this year, the planning was started and it gained some momentum, but then it took a couple of turns because of continuing Covid restrictions. The application process began in February, but by March, the parade was canceled; then we suddenly learned we could have the parade. The Mayor said the Parade Committee pivoted, pulled the whole thing together and made it happen. Mayor Strouse thanked everyone for their part in making the parade happen and then he presented a plaque to Doylestown Borough Memorial Day Parade Marshal Chris Suessenguth.

Mr. Suessenguth said that credit goes to John Davis and his assistant, Shirley Ament, because of their help with the applications and the things they do, and to the Parade Committee members who have been so faithful and doing this for 10 plus years. He said he really appreciates their devotion and help.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. O'Brien called for a motion to approve the **May 17, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes**. (Browne-Margolis) The vote was called and the minutes were unanimously approved.

MAYOR'S REPORT

This evening, the Council agenda includes a resolution in support of proposed legislation in Harrisburg and Washington to help protect the civil rights of members of the LGBTQ community.

The timing of this resolution is not coincidental to events in our community.

On June 1st, Doylestown participated in Pride flag raisings at Doylestown Borough Hall, our Monument Square, and the Old County Courthouse. Organized by the Doylestown Pride Committee, these events were designed to kick off the traditional June Pride Month. I delivered a proclamation to about 300 people of all ages that assembled on this occasion. It is a proclamation celebrating achievements in the face of adversity and discrimination.

This past week witnessed Pride Week here in Doylestown with celebratory brunches, two movies in conjunction with the County Theater, and an afternoon of music in space provided by St Paul's Episcopal Church and spreading out onto permitted space on Pine Street.

The concert attracted a very small, but very loud group of protesters (not from our community) that gave evidence to the continuing need for Doylestown Borough Council to fight for rights and protections for the LGBTQ community.

We accomplished much when we passed a Human Relations Ordinance over 10 years ago. At that time, we joined only a very few communities in Pennsylvania that had done so. Now, nearly 50 municipalities in Pennsylvania have passed similar ordinances providing local protections from discriminatory practices. Most of those ordinances are very similar to ours. However, in those 10 years, the State Legislature has failed to act in similar manner in spite of continuing documented discriminatory practices throughout the Commonwealth.

The coronavirus pandemic has shown that anyone can find themselves in need of government services due to circumstances outside their control. LGBTQ people remain vulnerable to being denied access to these critical services simply because of who they are. Twenty-nine states, including Pennsylvania do not have laws that specifically protect LGBTQ people from discrimination, including discrimination in employment, housing, education, and credit.

Last week, the Supreme Court ruled in a case, *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, a complicated civil rights case in which I joined in filing an amicus brief. The ruling does not create a broad new license to discriminate and it allows governments to have and enforce nondiscrimination laws. However, the case points to the continuing and desperate need for legislative action in Washington and Harrisburg.

Tomorrow, I will participate in a National League of Cities symposium on advancing legislation for equality. I am proud of Doylestown's role in that effort. The resolution you can pass tonight will strengthen the effort.

PUBLIC SAFETY - Mr. Frederick

1. **Authorization to Draft and Advertise Ordinance Eliminating a Metered Parking Space on West Ashland Street at South Hamilton Street.** Mr. Frederick said that Council's Public Safety Committee, at their June 9, 2021 public meeting, considered a request to eliminate a metered parking space on the north side of West Ashland Street, immediately east of its intersection with South Hamilton Street. [Photographs were provided.] He said that cars parked in this space impede sight distance for vehicles on Hamilton Street looking east for westbound Ashland Street traffic. He also noted that nine accidents involving sight distance have taken place at this location since 2010.

Mr. Frederick said that the Public Safety Committee is recommending that Council authorize the drafting and advertising of an ordinance eliminating this parking space, and if Council wished to follow the recommendation, it could do so by motion. (Frederick-Browne) With no comments from Council, Staff, or the public, the vote was called. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

2. The **Doylestown Fire Co. No. 1 Report** was provided in Council's packet, which showed there were 26 incidents requiring the Fire Company's response in May 2021.

PUBLIC WORKS AND ADMINISTRATION - Mr. Flood

1. **Public Works Monthly Report.** Mr. Flood said that the Work Order Report and the Fleet Services Report were provided. He noted that these reports are also available to the public by following the packet link noted on this meeting's Agenda.

Mr. Flood then asked Mr. Ehlinger for any comments he had about the Broad Street project. Mr. Ehlinger stated that the contractor is getting mobilized to do the concrete sidewalks and begin the plaza construction. He said we are looking at a mid-October completion date for park and plaza. Mr. Ehlinger commented that a butterfly garden has been started in the northeast corner of the park, with sprinklers to get it through the summer. He reported that the contractor is supposed to do the curb on Doyle Street shortly and then the Public Works Department will pave it, which is being folded into our paving season which begins on July 12. He said they will be paving Ashland, Oakland, Pine, and a section of Church, which isn't a huge list, but it is a lot of work.

Mr. Ehlinger further reported that they've begun using the new aerial bucket truck to do some tree take downs which has saved a lot of money. He said he hopes to give Council a more detailed report in the future on the arborist/tree maintenance work they're doing because it really is a new full service that Public Works has taken on.

Mr. Ehlinger noted that they also had a particularly challenging water leak in the Belvedere community where they were dug a 12 foot deep hole. He said it was quite a challenge and they had some shoring issues.

Mr. Brennan asked if the Borough has sufficient equipment as far as safety goes for our people going into something like that. Mr. Ehlinger replied that additional shoring panels will be bought – they have the pieces, but just not enough right now. He said the mains in the streets of Doylestown are only three to five feet deep, nothing like this 12-foot one.

Mr. Frederick commented that the completion of our new park is way ahead of schedule and without Mr. Ehlinger and the Public Works Department, it would have cost a lot more and we would be waiting another year or longer to get it. "Kudos to the Public Works Department and to Phil Ehlinger," said Mr. Frederick.

COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS - Mr. Bell

1. Resolution No. 2021-5, Supporting Legislation Toward Ending LGBTQ Discrimination.

Mr. Bell said that this resolution requests that the legislature of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States Congress act upon legislation that would help address injustices and discrimination in the LGBTQ community. As the resolution was provided in Council's packet, Mr. Bell did not read it in its entirety, but did the resolution paragraph:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Doylestown Borough Council and the Mayor call upon these legislative bodies [meaning the state legislature and the US Congress] to act now to extend protection from discrimination to the LGBTQ community and show rededication toward freedom and equality and justice for all.

Mr. Bell said that if Council wished to adopt Resolution No. 2021-5, it could do so by motion. (Bell-Brennan)

Mr. Brennan commented that anyone present who knows a member of the LGBTQ community realizes how important actually having effective legislation is. He said we are the only state in the northeast that doesn't have some type of nondiscrimination law and it has gone on far too long. Mr. Brennan didn't feel anyone could stand for this type of irrational prejudice that interferes with other people's lives, so he looked forward to this passing.

With no further comments from Council, Staff, or the public, the vote was called. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bell then commented on the Pride Festival which wrapped up this past week. He said it faced hurdles as have other events, but the film screenings were very well attended and the music day was also successful. On behalf of the Pride Committee, he said they are very grateful for their sponsors, the volunteers, and the Committee itself. Mr. Bell said the committee is eager to submit permits for 2022.

ZONING AND PLANNING

1. **Zoning Hearing Board Report** Mr. Brennan deferred to Ms. Hyland, who stated that the Doylestown Borough Zoning Hearing Board will hold a Public Meeting on July 8, 2021, to hear the application by Joseph and Donna Modestine, 187 Union Street, who request several dimensional variances to subdivide their property into two lots, creating a new building lot for a single-family detached dwelling.

2. **Historic & Architectural Review Board (HARB) Recommendations.** Mr. Brennan said that at its regular monthly meeting, the HARB recommended the following: **Sign Applications:** 10 East Court Street, sign and door replacement, 17 West State Street, sign, 135 South Main Street, also a sign; **Building Applications:** 255 West Court Street, windows, 175 East Oakland Avenue, siding, 184 Lafayette Street, demo and a rebuild, 117 West Ashland Street, demo and addition, 47 West State Street, exterior renovations. Mr. Brennan said that the Zoning & Planning Committee recommended that Council approve the applications in accordance with HARB's recommendations. He said that if Council wished to follow the Committee's recommendations, it could do so by motion. (Brennan-Margolis). With no comments from Council, Staff, or the public, the vote was called. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Code Enforcement Monthly Activity Report.** Mr. Brennan stated that the report had been provided in Council's packet for review and it is also available to the public by following the packet link noted on this meeting's Agenda.

4. **Building Inspection Monthly Report.** Mr. Brennan stated that this report was also provided in Council's packet for review and it too is available to the public by following the packet link noted on this meeting's Agenda.

ENVIRONMENT AND RECREATION - Ms. Margolis

1. **Naming of New Park on Broad Street.** Ms. Margolis said that the Environment and Recreation Committee, along with members of the Park and Recreation Board, met earlier this month to discuss the naming of the new Borough park currently under construction on Broad Street. She said that although the Committee did recommend a name for the park, she would like to make a motion to table the recommendation to allow for the Park and Recreation Board and potentially Borough residents to provide additional input. Ms. Margolis said that the recommendation arrived on Council's agenda prematurely because they thought they had a signage deadline. Motion to table the recommendation. (Margolis-Brennan)

Mr. Bell commented that in 2016, before he came on Council, the issue before the public was design of the park. He said he was impressed with how Council and Staff conducted four steering committee meetings and two town hall meetings, and he thought those meetings were very effective means to get public input. Mr. Bell was glad to hear something similar is being contemplated about what the park should be called.

Mr. Flood agreed with Mr. Bell and further commented that he thought perhaps D-mail could be utilized to ask for park name suggestions. He said the final names that the Park & Recreation Board came up with could be included to see how people feel about those. He said that getting input from the public would be good.

With no further comments from Council, Staff, or the public, the vote was called. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Lastly, Ms. Margolis commented that on the Saturday, the Design for Nature Garden Tour from the Bucks County Women's Farm and Garden Association took place and it was a huge success. She said that the tour is meant to encourage people to garden with nature and wildlife in mind and there was a great reception for that idea and for the six gardens on the tour. She hoped that if people haven't done the tour, that they do so next year.

WATER UTILITY - Ms. Jarret

1. Authorization to Advertise for Bids for North Main Street Water Main Interconnect.

Ms. Jarret said the Water Utility Committee did meet this month. She said that last month, approval was given to move forward with a water main project to connect existing water mains on Main Street between Fonthill Drive and Chapman Lane. She said this will be an annex section of the Borough. Ms. Jarret said they reviewed a bid package and she was making a motion to Council authorize the advertisement. She said that if Council agreed, it could do so by motion. (Jarret-Flood) With no comments from Council, Staff, or the public, the vote was called. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE/PENSION - Ms. West

In Ms. West's absence, Mr. Frederick gave the Finance/Pension report.

1. Authorization to Advertise Bids for Sale of Borough Real Estate: Harvey Avenue/Shady Retreat Subdivision. Mr. Frederick said that provided in everyone's packets were an Invitation for Bids, Bid Submittal Form, Subdivision Plan, and a draft Purchase Agreement for the sale of Borough-owned real estate on Shady Retreat Road known as the Harvey Avenue/Shady Retreat Subdivision. He said that the Finance and Pension Committee reviewed the package and is recommending that Council authorize the advertisement of bids. He said that if Council wished to follow the recommendation, it could do so by motion. (Frederick-Margolis) With no comments from Council, Staff, or the public, the vote was called. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Finance Report. Mr. Frederick called upon Ms. Brinker for the monthly **Finance Report**. Ms. Brinker reported that the total of all funds expended was \$2,160,765.06. Motion to approve the Finance Report. (Frederick-Browne) With no comments from Council, Staff, or the public, the vote was called. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

PERSONNEL - Mr. O'Brien: No report.

PROFESSIONALS' REPORTS

Engineer's Report - Mr. Dougherty: No report.

Solicitor's Report - Mr. Closser: No report.

Central Bucks Regional Police Department (CBRPD) Activities Report. In Chief Knott's absence, Captain Milligan stated there was no report other than what was included in the packet. The CBRPD monthly activity report showed there were 1144 incidents in the Borough in May 2021, and year-to-date, the Department spent \$2,000,977.54, and were at 32.2% of their yearly budget.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Flood congratulated the CB West Girls Track & Field Team for winning the district title and first-ever state title. He thanked Mayor Strouse for the proclamation he presented at their awards ceremony, which was very well received by the parents and the girls themselves. Mr. Flood said the team did Doylestown proud by their tremendous sportsmanship, their performance, and the way they conducted themselves all season.

Mr. O'Brien added that the team also participated in and were popular in the Memorial Day Parade.

Mr. Brennan commented that it was great being back and seeing everyone live, full-faced. He said he looked and the last time Council met in person was February 24, 2020, and it's just amazing how much has changed, what we've been through. He said he has to be hopeful about moving forward.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:25 p.m., President O'Brien entertained a motion to adjourn. (Browne-West) The vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John H. Davis
Borough Manager

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