

**Pennington Borough Council
Special Meeting – March 19, 2007**

Mayor Persichilli called the Regular Meeting of the Borough Council to order at 7:00 pm. Borough Clerk Betty Sterling called the roll with Council Members Garber, Heinzl, Lawver and Tucker in attendance. Mr. DiFalco was absent and Ms. Zompa arrived at 7:05 pm.

Also present were Superintendent of Public Works, Jeff Wittkop, Public Safety Director, Bill Meytrott, Borough Administrator, Eugene Dunworth and Borough Clerk, Betty Sterling.

Mayor Persichilli announced that notice of this meeting has been given to the Pennington Post, Hopewell Valley News, The Times of Trenton and The Trentonian and was posted on the bulletin board in Borough Hall according to the regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act.

Mayors Business

Mayor Persichilli stated that he got a request from members of the School Board to postpone the school busing discussion scheduled for this evening as the administration will be presenting a new proposal to the board at their meeting tonight. Mayor Persichilli asked if anyone in the audience would like to comment on busing at this time.

New Business- Council Assignments

Mayor Persichilli recommended Eileen Heinzl as representative to the Planning Board and Environmental Commission. Council Member Tucker made a motion to approve the assignment, second by Council Member Lawver with all members present voting in favor.

Mayor Persichilli recommended Bob DiFalco as representative to Community Services. Council Member Tucker made a motion to approve the assignment, second by Council Member Heinzl with all members present voting in favor.

Council Discussion

Mayor Persichilli stated that about a year ago, Borough Council held its first strategy session to identify everything that needs to be done in the Borough and to rank them as priorities so that items can be addressed in a reasonable fashion. Mayor Persichilli stated that at this meeting Council would take another look at priorities that were identified and to discuss any other things that have come up since the last meeting. Mayor Persichilli stated that the discussion would include funding resources and assignment of Council Members to work on projects. Mayor Persichilli asked Mr. Dunworth to facilitate the meeting as he did last year.

Mr. Dunworth stated that ranking of the items on the agenda really does not make sense as all the items on the list have some importance. Mr. Dunworth stated a better approach would be to identify a goal for completion and a means to fund the project.

Mayor Persichilli stated that he received memorandums from Cindy Coppola, Don Fetzer, Parks and Recreation and the Environmental Commission in response to a memo that went out prior to the meeting.

Public Works

Mr. Garber commented on the following items concerning Public Works:

- Water Tower
- Well Issues
- Water Loss/Leak Detection
- Sewer Plant Expansion
- Senior Center
- NJ DOT – Schedule of Road Improvements

Mr. Garber stated that the Public Works Committee has discussed water issues at length. Mr. Garber stressed the importance of maintaining the water/sewer system. Mr. Garber stated that leak detection and repair is important as the Borough has an aging system with a certain amount of water loss. Mr. Garber explained that the Borough is obligated by State regulations to on an ongoing basis detect and correct leaks. Mr. Garber stated that tied into leak detection is replacement of water meters throughout town to better capture water that is flowing and recapture lost revenue. Mr. Garber stated that new meters would also enable the Borough to isolate areas of the town where there might be problems so that we can verify and correct leaks. Mr. Garber stated that another important issue is need for a new water tower. Mr. Wittkop explained that the Borough could not meet the gallons needed to maintain pressure so that if there were a fire, water pressure would drop. Mr. Wittkop stated that State Law requires that certain levels be met and presently the Borough cannot meet the requirements. Mr. Garber stated that a year or so ago Van Note Harvey undertook a study and did a presentation to Council. Mr. Garber suggested that it might be a good idea to revisit that study and have another presentation to bring Council up to speed on the severity of the problems the Borough is facing. Mr. Garber stated that in terms of priorities, an additional water tower is needed along with replacement of meters and leak detection and repair. Mr. Garber stated that well issues also exist and need to be addressed. Mr. Garber stated that maintaining the Borough's utility is very important. Mr. Lawver reviewed funding sources and scheduling for these projects.

Mr. Garber gave a brief overview of the proposed sewer plant expansion. Mr. Garber stated that the plans have been designed and are before the Department of Environmental Protection, but the actual plant expansion is probably years away.

Mayor Persichilli stated that the Senior Advisory Board is working to raise funds for minor repairs at the Senior Center. Mr. Wittkop stated that to continue using the building repairs would need to be made to the HVAC system. Mr. Wittkop stated that he is working on getting some prices together.

Mr. Garber updated Council on the schedule of road improvements.

Public Safety

Ms. Heinzel stated that NJDOT is going to be working on a design study for the safe crossing of Route 31, beginning with pedestrian and traffic counts next month.

Mr. Lawver stated that whether or not a grant is received for sidewalks and depending on what direction the school board heads in with regard to hazardous busing, the Borough may find themselves in a position where they want to put in sidewalks between Rockwell Green and Weidel Drive on Lower King George Road. Mr. Lawver stated that the sidewalks would virtually eliminate all hazardous busing for elementary students.

Ms. Heinzel stated that Mr. Meytrott had mentioned doing a town-wide survey addressing pedestrian safety issues. Ms. Heinzel stated that she felt it would be a good idea and that bicycle safety should also be included. Mr. Meytrott stated that several other towns have operator initiated illuminated crosswalks. Mr. Meytrott suggested consideration of these for the crosswalk at the Pennington School and at the Tollgate School. Mr. Meytrott stated that his research has shown that these illuminated crosswalks have been very successful in other towns.

Mr. Lawver stated that when the sidewalk ordinance was adopted, there was discussion about obtaining a bulk price for residents for sidewalk repairs. Mr. Lawver stated that Mr. Fetzer recommended doing an RFP to request quotes. Mr. Garber stated that he would bring this up at the next Public Works meeting.

Interlocal Agreements

Mr. Lawver stated that he had a conversation with John Murphy of Hopewell Township recently about the various interlocal agreements between Hopewell Township and Pennington Borough. Mr. Lawver stated that specifically they spoke about the interlocal for Health Services, which is a one-year agreement and was up for renewal. Mr. Lawver stated that they discussed moving all of the interlocal agreements towards multi-year agreements that would live within the 4 percent revenue cap imposed by the State. Mr. Lawver stated that this should be done on the administrative level. Mr. Lawver suggested that Mr. Dunworth begin working on multiyear agreements with the Township.

Mayor Persichilli asked if there were any additional sources for shared services. Mayor Persichilli stated that at the last meeting the discussion of hiring a consultant to conduct a feasibility study looking into shared services for Police services has generated some interest in the community. Mayor Persichilli stated this is a study only and ultimately the decision would rest with the voters.

Mr. Lawver stated that another possible opportunity for shared services is the Construction office. Mr. Lawver stated that this would not only be a cost savings, but a service improvement issue. Mr. Lawver stated that he has heard around town that it is very difficult to work with a part time construction office. Mr. Dunworth stated that one of the issues was that the construction office was without a secretary and we have since hired Wayne Blauth who is excellent at scheduling and record keeping. Mr. Dunworth stated that there are three options, contract with Hopewell Township, the State or a private company. Mr. Dunworth stated that without having a full time construction office, the Borough would always have issues with hours of operation. Mr. Dunworth suggested that the first step should be to sit down with John Hall as maybe he is unaware of these complaints.

Ms. Zompa suggested that the Borough look into purchasing office supplies through the State Distribution Center. Ms. Zompa offered to provide information and a price for the State Distribution Center.

Planning & Zoning

Mayor Persichilli stated that Diane Zompa has been talking to people throughout town to try to get the Streetscape Plan moving. Mayor Persichilli stated that the key is to find funding for the project through either grants or donations.

Mr. Will Dickey stated that one of the objectives for the Economic Development Committee is to try to move the Streetscape Improvement Plan along and he was happy to hear that there is momentum in that direction.

Ms. Heinzel stated that Walter Bliss had provided a very good analysis of the Newsrack Ordinance and had asked Council to decide what direction they wanted to go with the Ordinance in terms of Modular Newsracks and enforcement. After a brief discussion, Council decided to revisit the ordinance under Council Discussion at the April Council meeting.

Council briefly discussed COAH obligations. Mayor Persichilli stated that this issue is basically on hold pending State decisions. Ms. Heinzel stated that Cindy Coppola had provided a memo with regard to COAH obligations and the third round is something that the Borough has to address.

Ms. Heinzel stated that Cindy Coppola's memo mentions amendments to Borough ordinances regulating zoning sub-divisions and site plans and the need for consideration to bring the Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan into consistency.

Finance

Mr. Dunworth stated that the goal is to introduce the budget for 2007 at the April 9th meeting.

Council briefly discussed the sale of Borough Property, including the landfill area, the property on Broemel and the excess land at the new Public Works site. Mr. Lawver suggested the formation of an ad hoc committee comprised of people familiar with Brownfield laws to guide the Borough through the process. Mr. Lawver stated that he would like to begin the process of forming a committee of professionals in May of this year, after the budget has been finalized.

Mayor Persichilli stated that as a source of revenue, he would like to have Mr. Bliss research liquor licenses and find out if the Borough is permitted one or two licenses and what would be involved in the process. Mr. Dickey stated that the Economic Development Committee is also interested in this matter. Mr. Dickey stated that preliminary results of the consumer survey are indicating that residents would like to see a tavern or establishment in town that serves liquor.

Environmental Issues

Mr. Lawver stated that currently there are no funds available for greenbelt development. Mr. Lawver stated that Jack Koeppel and the Open Space Committee will be requesting that after the D & R Greenway deal on the excess public works land is completed; a small balance of about \$75,000 will remain in the Borough open space account. Mr. Lawver stated that Jack Koeppel is going to recommend that this money be given to the D & R Greenway to be used for whatever project that they feel is important. Mr. Lawver stated that the rationale for doing this is that the two or three properties tied to Pennington's green belt would require much more time and money to bring to fruition. Mr. Lawver stated that secondly, the State is not funding the Open Space accounts and they are pulling funds from municipalities with unspent funds. Mr. Lawver stated that unless a specific project is attached to the remaining funds, they are likely to go anyway and be used elsewhere. Mr. Lawver stated that should funds become available in the next couple years, the records would reflect that Pennington used their money.

Other

Mr. Dunworth stated that when he first came to work at the Borough there were talks of meeting with the Pennington School to discuss the possibility of a land swap to help with the parking problems in Pennington. Mayor Persichilli stated that the Economic Development Committee is putting together some ideas for discussion with the Pennington School to include the crosswalks, tax exempt properties owned by the school, land swap for parking and other things. Mayor Persichilli stated that the feeling is to approach the school with a package instead of with individual concerns.

Open Comment Period

Mayor Persichilli asked if there were any comments from the public. There were none.

At 9:05pm, Council Member Garber made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Council Member Heinzel with all members present voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Sterling
Borough Clerk