

**Minutes of the Work Session
Of the Borough of Chester Heights
222 Llewelyn Road
Chester Heights, PA 19017**

August 28, 2017

- MEMBERS PRESENT** Susan H. Clarke, President
Anne Searl, Pro Tem
Philip Block, Ph.D.
Marta Driscoll
Jeffrey D. Durst
Joseph McIntosh, Esq.
- OFFICIALS PRESENT** Frank Daly, Esq., Solicitor
Mathew Houtmann, P.E., Engineer
Richard Jensen, Bldg Inspector, Zoning Officer
- CALL TO ORDER** President Clarke called the public meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led those in attendance in a moment of silence and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- PUBLIC TO ADDRESS**
COUNCIL
ENNIS PROPERTY Jim and Dave Ennis, owners of the corner property at 106 Valleybrook Road informed council that were just made aware that their property is not included in the Borough's Inter-Municipal Sewer Agreement with Concord Sewer Department. Councilman Block provided information on the recent sewer agreement between Chester Heights, Arbour Square and Concord Sewer Department. Council suggested they speak with Madison Apartments and talk to Concord Sewer Department.
- VISITOR'S POLICY** President Clarke reported that the Visitor's Policy has been reviewed and revised. The current revised policy (Office Safety and Records Integrity Policy) has been emailed for council's review. President Clarke asked if anyone had comments for the revised policy.
Councilman Block provided council with the following comments:
"To begin, to date I generally have been ambivalent to the installation of a visitor sign-in book in the Borough office. However, after the public comment period at the Borough Council general meeting on August 7th of this year, during which time I recommend this additional public comment session, I have given this matter a great deal of thought, and as a means to open this period of dialog

with the community, offer my thoughts as a starting point for discussion.

With respect to the need of signing a visitor book, during the course of my job, I have visited many state and federal public offices as well as private corporate offices over the years, and I am required to sign a visitor log almost everywhere I go. In fact, I must sign in every week when I visit my mother at an assisted living facility up the road from here. So, to me, I do not see, as some folks put it at the last meeting, that signing a log-in book as “intimidating”. Annoying perhaps, intimidating no. The mayor during the August 7th meeting stated that there are few instances where public facilities require signing in. Well, I can give two recent examples that would counter this statement. This past month, I had need to meet with the Garnet Valley School Superintendent. The school district requires all visitors to sign-in via a log book, not only at the individual schools, but also at the administration building. In addition, I know the mayor signed a visitor book with me, when several members of the Council visited the Southwest Delaware County Municipal Authority. I do not believe anyone of us felt intimidated, or even gave it a second thought. Over the last two weeks, I contemplated why the school district and the public utility require signing in to conduct business with them.

There are three basic reasons for a sign in log. First is security. In our case here, I am not sure that having a visitor log is useful for security purposes, as it is located inside the office and does not provide much in terms of protection for the staff and Council. The second is safety. Many places have multiple floors or disparate office spaces, and in such a case, if there is a fire or other emergency, the site staff need to know where how many visitors are present to account for them during such an event. Again, this may not be too relevant here, as the office is one room, with a bathroom attached, and we are part of the fire station, whom would provide adequate searching during an emergency! The third, and in my opinion, the truly relevant reason here is for providing a public record of official business done on behalf of the citizens of the Borough.

Several residents stated at the last meeting, that the business that they are seeking with the Borough is private and the public has no need to know what that business is. I would argue that no business before the Borough, its employees or the Council is private as this is a public entity by its very nature, and that there should be no expectation of privacy when conducting business with the Borough. To highlight, one resident gave the example that

neighbors and the Council should not know if the resident is seeking a permit to remodel their kitchen. However, it actually is a matter of public record, and any permit request or granted permit is available for review by the community. Several residents expressed sentiments that as they pay taxes and are residents of the community, that access to the Borough offices and conducting private business with the Borough is their right and that they should not need to sign in to access “their public building.” This is just not the case. Paying one’s taxes does not give ownership to the Borough offices, any more so than the school taxes that are paid giving a resident ownership or property rights over Garnet Valley High School or the right to use school property for personal business. So who owns the Borough offices in that case? The people of the Borough do. The people is not the same as an individual taxpayer. The people of the Borough do have a right to know what business comes before the Council or the employees of the Borough, which is why Borough records are accessible to the public per proper information request submissions.

The mayor went on record last meeting, stating that meetings residents have with him are and should be kept confidential and private. With all due respect Mr. Mayor, I believe this to be absolutely wrong. The State of Pennsylvania has Sunshine laws covering how members of Council can meet to prevent discourse from happening outside the purview of the citizens. I believe this is true for all business of the Borough. Allowing secretive meetings with individuals and Borough representatives or employees, and conducting meetings in the shadows, may lead to corruption. Who knows who will be sitting in these Council seats in the years to come, and it is our responsibility to provide open business for our residents, even at the sake of the potential privacy of a resident. Also, just because previous Councils have run business without a visitor log-in book over the past decades does not make it a good practice, and in fact may have lead to a lack of public oversight and lack of transparency.

As a result, while the visitor sign in book may be somewhat trivial in the scheme of things, it is part of the building blocks needed for open and sunny business practices. And the people of this Borough deserve and demand to have access to the business and communications of its representatives.

With that I thank the Council and the residents for your time, and look forward to an honest and civil public debate on this issue.”

Councilwoman Searl reported that she had been in discussion with the building inspector concerning making both bathrooms unisex.

Councilman McIntosh commented that concerning office safety the panic button and the fire company security cameras are helpful, but is not clear why the sign-in book is needed.

President Clarke made a motion for council to adopt the Open Safety and Records Integrity Policy.

MOTION

Upon motion (Driscoll/Durst) council voted five to approve, one opposed (McIntosh) to adopt the Open Safety and Records Integrity Policy. The motion will be ratified at the September 11, 2017 Council Meeting.

PROPERTY
MAINTENANCE
ORDINANCE

Council discussed the issues concerning identification and addressing problematic trees along Valleybrook Road. Councilman Block suggested council contact an arborist.

ERIN LEDDY
DENICOLA
118 BISHOP DR

Ms. DeNicola suggested council reach out to the HOA Board at the Village of Valleybrook. The board has hired Springfield Tree to maintain trees in the Village of Valleybrook and has much discussion on this topic. Councilman Block will contact arborists to obtain costs to identify problem trees in the borough and reach out to the HOA at Village of Valleybrook.

ROADMASTER

Mr. Ward reported that he spoke with Ms. Fox at the Village of Valleybrook and she informed him that Springfield Tree Company walked the property at the Village of Valleybrook to review the trees.

MARYANN CHESTNUT
317 WILLITS WAY

Ms. Chestnut informed council that she almost got hit head on Valleybrook Road during the one lane closure. Ms. Chestnut asked if the borough could put more signage up. Mr. Ward informed her that this is a state road and PennDOT oversees signage of state roads.

2018 BUDGET

Councilwoman Driscoll provided council with a Budget Calendar for 2018.

MARINER 1

Councilman Block commented that he has concerns over the Mariner 1 Pipeline and has questions concerning rights of way involved with the relocation of the pipeline. Mr. Houtman stated that Sunoco did apply for a land disturbance permit that was never issued. The engineer and the solicitor will attempt to get contacts for Sunoco and request a presentation for council.

CHARLES REHM 319 LLEWELYN ROAD	Mr. Rehm reported that cost associated with tree removal can be very costly.
MS4 POLLUTANT REDUCTION PLAN	Mr. Houtman reported on the 5 Year MS4 Pollutant Reduction Plan, that starts March 2018. Mr. Houtman requested that time be set for the September 11 th Regular Council Meeting for public comment. The plan includes basin work at Rochford Estates and Rolling Heights.
RECYCLING DAY	President Clarke requested a motion to spend \$500.00 to purchase T-Shirts for volunteers and to purchase magnets with the borough logo to hand out to participants.
MOTION	Upon motion (McIntosh/Searl) council voted to approve \$500.00 to purchase items for Recycling Day.
NEWSLETTER	President Clarke prepared a spreadsheet with various options to consider for the newsletter. Council discussed the options and decided to use Hometown Press for the fall/winter newsletter.
DISALVO PARK PLAN	Mr. Houtmann provided a conceptual plan for the DiSalvo Park. Councilman Block suggested having the engineer obtain contractors cost for the various projects to consider for the 2018 Budget. The work will be done in phases.
PLANNING COMMISSION	President Clarke will contact the Planning Commission Secretary and the Planning Commission Chairman concerning Planning Commission Minutes.
CHRISTINE DURST 29 IVY LANE	Ms. Durst asked if council knows if the Mariner 1 Plan will be replacing the old pipe with a new pipe or will it be they be using the existing pipe. Councilman Block stated that council is seeking to gather more information for the Mariner 1 Pipeline relocation.
<u>NEW BUSINESS</u>	No report.
<u>OLD BUSINESS</u>	No report.
<u>ADDITIONAL PERIOD PUBLIC COMMENT</u>	No response.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion (Searl/McIntosh) council unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Land Development Dates

1. **STF Crier** – Submitted Plans 4/30/07, Reviewed Planning Commission 5/24/07 - Open Ended Extension
2. **S. B. Conrad/CH Market** - Submitted Plans 2/18/10, Reviewed Planning Commission 3/25/10 - Extension 7/19/2017

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Timmins
Secretary/Treasurer