



BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS
53 W Baltimore Pike 2nd floor
P. O. Box 658
Chester Heights, PA 19017
General Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2025, at 7:00 pm

Call to Order President Marta Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7pm and led all those in attendance in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call Marta Driscoll, President
Natalie Young, Vice President
Jeanne Montgomery, Pro Tem
Natalie Anderson, Councilmember
Timothy Hudak, Councilmember
Ginamarie Ellis, Mayor

Officials Present Alex Baumler, Esq., Solicitor
Mike Kissinger, Engineer

Public Comment: No comment

Solicitors' Report:

Fire Tax Ballot Referendum

- It has not been determined if the fire tax will be added to the May or November ballot.
- Solicitor Baumler will follow up getting a response by the next meeting.

The Zoning Ordinance Amendment

- The Delaware County Planning Commission is reviewing the amendment this month.
- Once the DCPC approves the amendment we will advertise the hearing.

Walnut Hill Utility (Financial Agreement)

- There has been no response from Walnut Hill Utility regarding the financial agreement.
- There was a discussion on possibly forming a sewer district along with the Oversight Agreement.
- Council cannot make an assessment to do an Oversight Agreement without receiving the financial agreement information.



Engineer's Report:

Grant Opportunity for Trails

- Pennoni is researching grant opportunities to resource our community trails.
- Engineer Mike Kissinger is working with Councilmember Timothy Hudak on the signage plan for Ivy Lane and Mildred and Summit Rd.
- Stop, School Bus, and School Bus Ahead signs will be replaced.
- Once an installation quote is received it will be added to an agenda in April for approval.
- The curve on Ivy Lane needs signage that states "School Bus Ahead" in each direction for safety purposes.

Grant for Smithbridge Rd. Sewer Project

- The sewer project is in an obstacle phase.
- There is a grant to do the work and the plans for the project are completed.
- In two months, the bidding process will begin.
- There are some legal and real estate issues regarding the sewer project, an Executive Meeting may be scheduled at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Councilmember Montgomery – Committee Update

Easter Egg Hunt

- Easter Egg Hunt will be held Sunday, April 6th.
- The materials have been ordered and we have a lot of volunteers for the events
- Councilmember Timothy Hudak volunteered to place the stakes for the event.

Seed Bomb Event

- The Seed Bomb event will be held Thursday, April 17th for all ages.
- Bernie Miller will be the facilitator for the event.

Powell Acquisition Update

- President Marta Driscoll gave an update on the Powell Acquisition:

Good evening, Council and residents.

I'm pleased to share that on Friday, March 14th, the Borough officially closed on the Powell Property — a milestone achievement for Chester Heights, and a meaningful step toward protecting open space and shaping our community's future.



This was not a simple transaction. It involved many moving parts, months of coordination, and a great deal of persistence. But the result is something we can all be proud of: the successful preservation of a significant property that will serve the public good for years to come.

This success would not have been possible without the support of key partners. I want to begin by thanking Senator John Kane and Representative Craig Williams, who stepped in at a critical moment and worked to ensure that we had the approvals and resources needed to complete the deal. Their leadership was instrumental.

We are deeply grateful to the funding partners who believed in this project and helped make it a reality:

- *The Land and Water Conservation Fund*
- *The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)*
- *The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)*
- *The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Delaware County Council's Greenways Grant Program*
- *And The Conservation Fund, whose interim financing helped move the project forward when it mattered most*

We also recognize the generous contributions of private donors in honor of Fred Wood.

Each of these donors played a critical role in bridging the gap and bringing this vision to life.

I also want to recognize Philip Block, who had the bold vision back in 2018 to preserve this land for public use. At the time, many, including some still in this chamber, opposed the idea. Philip's leadership and early advocacy laid the foundation for everything that followed. His belief in what was possible helped guide us to this moment.

Our partners at Natural Lands also deserve our gratitude. Robyn Jenny helped us align funding opportunities and preservation strategy in the early stages of the project. When Robyn moved on to a new opportunity, Jack Stefferud stepped in and carried the work forward with professionalism and dedication to the finish line.

Special thanks to Audey West of Admiral Abstract, whose patience and persistence helped shepherd the transaction through numerous delays and complexities and ensured we closed successfully.

I also want to express sincere appreciation to Darlene, who kept communication flowing and helped the team navigate challenges with steadiness and grace. When obstacles arose and there were many, her ability to keep everyone on track made a real difference.

Finally, I want to thank our Borough professionals for their ongoing commitment, and recognize solicitors Alex Baumler, Kyle Miller and engineers Mike Kissinger and Matt Houtman for their trusted guidance throughout this process. This acquisition is more than a real estate deal, it is an investment in our community's future. It reflects what's possible when we work together with determination, vision, and a shared commitment to serving the public good. Thank you.

New Business:

Planning Commission Resignation – John Lesky – Consider Motion



MOTION: Upon Motion, Council (Young | Hudak) voted unanimously to accept John Lesky's resignation.

- The resignation from John Lesky was received on March 3rd and was asked to be effective immediately.
- Mayor Ginamarie Ellis stated that it was requested through a "Right to Know" open records request for her communications with John Lesky prior to his resignation.
- Mayor Ellis shared her email to John Lesky with Council and those present dated Friday, March 14th and read as follows:

Hi John,

I understand you received a suggested comp-plan task force last night. My understanding is that deciding who serves on this committee is at the discretion of the chair of the Planning Commission. Council appoints your recommendations. It is the Planning Commission's task to complete this project with Council's support, but not your direction. Now that the planner contract is in place, I want to put in my two cents on the topic.

Firstly, as you are a member of this, you know that we already have a task force that began this process over two years ago with the development of RFP and were the ones that interviewed potential planners. It consisted of the folks below. The current task force is John Lesky, Ronald Serkin, Fred Wood, Larry Paolola Jr., Chris Leiser, Drew Baum, Marta Driscoll, and myself. The 2013 Comp Plan team was mark Carrol, Mayor Fred Wood, VP of Borough Council Patrick Patterson, Borough Council Chris Leiser, Chairman, Planning Commission Ed Sherkrin, Planning Commission Glen Maughan, Historic Commission, and Zoning Hearing Board.

Obviously, Fred is no longer available to serve on this committee. Ron Serkin has moved out of the borough and I'm not sure Chris would be interested in participating at this point. It is my belief that at least one representative from Council, Planning Commission, and Zoning Hearing Board, and the Mayor should serve on the upcoming task force. We should add at least one community member who is currently Larry Paoellella Jr. I don't think we should have any paid professionals on the task force as that might incur a conflict of interest like Pat McFadden, who is our paid Zoning Officer. The former Mayor co-chaired the effort, and it would be my honor to be considered to continue that tradition. I also think it's imperative that we have a cross-section representation of community members with insight and expertise.

ZHB Vice Chair Justin Buccelli is a parent of a younger child, a perspective not represented in the suggestions from council president. I understand I've been corrected on that. He would satisfy many subject matters expert perspective. Larry Paoellella Jr. is building contractor who also has a younger child. His knowledge of development, zoning, building, and permits would be a value add to the conversation as well. I also believe that we should have a mix of political affiliations and not the one-party heavy group suggested last night. Happy to discuss my perspective further. Here's my cell phone number. Thanks for your time in reading this Gina.



Building Code Official Resignation – Brian Razzi – Consider Motion

The resignation letter from Brian Razzi is effective March 14th.

MOTION: Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Young) voted unanimously to accept Brian Razzi’s resignation letter.

Appointment of Building Code Official

MOTION: Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Anderson) voted unanimously to appoint Patrick McFadden as the BCO for the remainder of 2025.

Appointment of Catania for Inspection Services – Consider Motion

President Marta Driscoll reviewed the hourly rates for services from Catania Engineering Associates:

- The hourly rate for Commercial Building Inspections is \$125
- The hourly rate for Residential Building Inspections is \$100

MOTION: Upon Motion, Council (Young | Hudak) voted unanimously to appoint Catania Engineering Associates as building inspector for the borough.

Public Comment:

Eileen Lehmann asked a question about forming a sewer district with Walnut Hill Utility. Patrick McFadden discussed the issue of conflict of interest. He stated if an issue of conflict arises, he would defer to another official.

Adjournment:

MOTION: Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Anderson) voted and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christiana Barbour