

East Stroudsburg Borough, January 15, 2013

A special meeting of the East Stroudsburg Borough Council was held at the Municipal Building on Tuesday, January 15, 2013. The following members were in attendance: Peter Begley, Roger DeLarco; Ed Flory, William Reese, Donald Repsher, and Sonia Wolbert. Also attending were: Manager James S. Phillips, Solicitor John C. Prevoznik, Engineering Representative Samuel D'Alessandro of R.K.R. Hess Associates, Inc., Stroud Area Regional Police Department Captain Brian Kimmins, Codes Official Marvin Walton; Road Foreman Mark Hoke, and approximately five residents in the audience.

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. DeLarco called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was led by Keith Flory.

Minutes of January 2, 2013 Regular Council Meeting

Mr. Repsher made a motion, seconded by Mr. Begley, to approve the minutes of the regular council meeting held Wednesday, January 2, 2013 as submitted; the motion carried unanimously.

SARPD Report

Captain Brian Kimmins was present to review the Police Report for December 2012 as previously provided to Council. Mr. Flory asked why traffic contacts were down? Capt. Kimmins said the numbers were probably down due to the Christmas/New Years holidays. Capt. Kimmins reported that the grants offered by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board have been increased to a maximum of \$20,000, and the Department will be submitting a new application as soon as they become available.

“State of the Borough 2013” Address

Mr. DeLarco noted that this message carries on a tradition started by former Mayor David Miller of a year-end report for the Borough.

Mayor, Council, Staff, East Stroudsburg residents, friends, guests and the press:

I am pleased to report on the State of the Borough, on this 15th day of January 2013. The following will be a brief review of accomplishments during the past year, and also touch on future plans and goals for the Borough in 2013 and beyond.

On June 21, 2012 the Pocono Medical Center (PMC) opened the new comprehensive 59,000 square foot Dale and Francis Hughes Cancer Center providing the community with world class cancer care, close to home. The \$31.5 million facility is nearly five times larger than the previous center. The facility was designed to LEED standards to ensure environmental responsibility.

PMC invested in several projects to provide additional useable parking and traffic relief for its employees, patients and clients. This included a pedestrian bridge across East Brown Street connecting the Cancer Center to the main hospital facility. Recently PMC opened the first parking decking in our community on East Brown Street which provides 613 parking spaces and the existing Cancer Center building was torn down to provide additional parking.

East Stroudsburg University, through University Properties, Inc., began student occupancy in 2012 of the Hawthorne and Hemlock suites with 434 rooms and two resident director's apartments. The new facilities include the ESU Police station and a fitness facility.

The rehabilitation of the former East Stroudsburg 1864 train station continues with the help of numerous volunteers and financial support of organizations. The outside renovation of the train station was completed in 2012. The interior renovations began with a \$100,000 grant from the R. Dale and Frances M. Hughes Foundation. The insulation, electrical, plumbing and heating installation are nearing completion. The ECA recently received a \$50,000 state grant sponsored by State Senator Lisa Boscola to be used for furnishings and technology needs of the facility. This completed renovation will provide adaptive reuse of the building for the community as a history museum, local gallery space, community event and meeting space and administrative office.

On October 24th, 2012 the Borough dedicated the completed work on the East Stroudsburg Dam, our largest water supply reservoir. The dam was constructed in 1935 and 1936, and the renovations and modifications involved preparing the dam for a catastrophic flood by increasing stability, armoring the dam for overtopping and constructing a new spillway. The modifications were required by PA DEP at a cost of \$3.6 million and were financed by a \$2.9 million state grant and a \$700,000 PennVEST low interest loan. The East Stroudsburg dam project was selected as the Project of the Year by Lehigh Valley Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Stroud Area Regional Police Department (SARPD) continues to run smoothly. Last year was a year of transition with John Baujan retiring after 9 years as the Chief of Police. Captain William Parrish was promoted to Chief and Lt. Brian Kimmins to Captain. SARPD engaged in Act 111 Arbitration and as a result, several cost cutting measures have been able to be implemented. Chief Parrish has been able to cut costs and still maintain established staffing levels. These are economically difficult times for all municipal entities. The SARPD continues to weather the funding storm by providing exemplary service.

For the first time, East Stroudsburg hosted the Northeast District meeting for the Pennsylvania Municipal League (PML) on April 18, 2012. The district includes 12 municipalities and at the meeting we facilitated a Borough tour and a dinner meeting at Liquid. The purpose of the PML is to strengthen, empower and advocate for effective local government.

The Borough assisted the Acme Hose Volunteer Fire Department with the purchased of a new aerial truck delivered late in 2012 with a cost of \$1 million and funded with a \$570,000 FEMA grant.

The 2012 street paving program included paving work on the remaining portion of Greentree Drive. Construction also included replacing/upgrading ADA handicapped ramps at street corners on Ridgeway and East Brown Street.

On July 4th the Borough again co-sponsored with the Eastburg Community Alliance (ECA) the eleventh annual "American Freedom Festival" at Dansbury Park. Plans are underway for another fantastic festival this 4th of July as it has become a "must-attend" event.

The Borough continues to cooperate in efforts of the Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission through healthful recreational, cultural programming and responsible stewardship of parks and open space. This year plans include the surfacing of the levee trail from Dansbury Park to the Veterans bridge.

I am pleased to report the former Pocono Lutheran Village assisted living facility will remain open and under private ownership, as Pocono Tranquil Gardens, specializing in assisted living, Alzheimer's care and older adult daily cognitive care. This facility is converting to private ownership which promises an important tax rateable back in place.

This past year saw the semi-retirement of long time Zoning & Code Enforcement Officer John Blick, who remains on part-time staff as Building Code Officer/Inspector. Many thanks to the Council personnel committee of Bill Reese, Ed Flory and Sonia Wolbert who worked with Jim Phillips to review and interview applicants for a replacement. We welcome Marv Walton as the Borough new Zoning & Code Enforcement Officer.

In the area of finances, Borough Council had to take the tough step to increase the General Fund real estate tax millage rate for the fourth year in a row.

We are fortunate to have qualified and dedicated employees and professional staff who are able to administer the wide range of issues facing the municipal government for the betterment of the Borough as a whole. We are also fortunate to have a Mayor and Council who are able to work together along with a large number of volunteers serving on boards and commissions to make East Stroudsburg a better community for all its residents. It has been noted that we as a Council may not always agree, however, we always conclude our decisions with mutual respect.

And now a brief look at future plans and goals for 2013:

During the past year Smithfield Township started on a sewer line extension project along Route 447 which is set to send more flows to the East Stroudsburg Sewage Treatment Plant. The majority of this sewage flow will be from commercial establishments including the new Staybridge Suites within the Township. The cooperative agreement will allow for future commercial growth benefiting both municipalities.

This year Council will finalize plans with Johnson Controls, Inc. for the Borough energy management project which will lead to undertaking energy conservation measures that will save on future energy costs. The contract will guarantee the savings obtained by the energy conservation measures which will more than offset the cost of borrowing monies to complete the improvements.

The Zoning Ordinance Review Committee (ZORC) has reviewed several zoning ordinance amendments with the assistance of Planner Charlie Schmehl of Urban Research & Development Corporation, consultants. Included are a zoning overlay district for the gateway area and a new IM designation in the Franklin Hill area. ZORC will continue this year reviewing zoning regulations and codes and advising Council on ordinance revisions and planning recommendations

In conjunction with the actions taken by the University, the Borough has also worked diligently on a Rental Housing Licensing and Inspection Ordinance which purpose is to help with the health, welfare, and safety of not only the residents, but the tenants who are renting properties. The ordinance is proposed to be in place by September of this year.

The environmental issues and remediation are nearing completion at the former IBW industrial site. We are hopeful that 2013 will see the sale of this property to create new job opportunities within the community.

East Stroudsburg Borough plans to implement the second phase of our Downtown Street Lighting Improvement project in spring 2013. This phase involves extending "spines" of lighting out from the downtown area along Washington Street, Courtland Street, and Analomink Street. Design work has been completed by the Borough. Installation of this lighting is being paid for through a PennDOT Transportation Enhancements grant in the amount of \$506,000.

In 2012 R.K.R. Hess completed survey work in the Stroudsburg/East Stroudsburg Flood Protection Levee which is the first step in the required FEMA certification. This year the project to certify levee elevations will be completed which will enable the Borough to remain in the National Flood insurance program.

Finally I will note several major challenges and opportunities facing our future:

Organizations summarize goals and objectives into a mission and vision statement. I would like to develop with the Council, Mayor and stakeholders a vision and mission statement for the Borough of East Stroudsburg. The purpose of which is to define the fundamental purpose of the Borough and outline the vision for the future and be source of inspiration.

The Borough's single family housing stock continues to be converted into rental properties at an alarming rate. The Rental Housing Licensing and Inspection program will assist with this impact that rental properties have on residential neighborhoods. We should explore the next step by offering incentives in promoting and preserving owner-occupied residential housing in our community.

The recent revitalization in our town center is very truly welcomed. It is anticipated property values will increase as a result of these projects, and more importantly, the facility will attract tourism and bring people to our business community. Along with change and growth come challenges, we must continue to find innovative ways to stimulate economic revitalization and job creation in and for our community. We must also be open to creative methods of fostering economic development. Council will need to work in tandem with other public agencies to enhance our quality of life, provide quality job opportunities to our citizens, and coordinate and plan economic development in East Stroudsburg.

Thank you and God bless East Stroudsburg!

Respectfully submitted,

Roger L. DeLarco, President
East Stroudsburg Council
January 15, 2013

Public Comments – Agenda Items

None.

Resolution No. 3-2013 - Appointing Delegates to the Monroe County Tax Collection Committee for the 2013 Year

Mr. Phillips said he was willing to continue as the Borough Delegate to the Monroe County Tax Collection Committee (MCTCC); and asked Mr. Repsher and Mr. Begley if they were willing to continue as Alternates? Both indicated they were. Mr. Reese then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Flory, to adopt proposed Resolution No. 3-2013 appointing James Phillips as the Delegate and Mr. Repsher as Alternate Delegate and Mr. Begley as second Alternate Delegate to the MCTCC for the 2013 year. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 4-2013 - Proclaiming Week of January 20-26, 2013 as Martin Luther King, Jr. Equality Week

Mr. Phillips read a portion of the Resolution and Mr. Flory made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wolbert, to adopt proposed Resolution No. 4-2013 proclaiming the week of January 20-26, 2013 as Martin Luther King Jr. Equality Week in the Borough of East Stroudsburg. The motion carried unanimously.

Authorize Release of Performance Guarantee for Prospect Cemetery Mausoleum Expansion Project – Land Development Application from 2004

Mr. Walton explained that Prospect Cemetery had obtained land development approval in 2004 for an expansion of the mausoleum at the cemetery, and had posted a cash deposit of \$28,435 as a performance guarantee. The project languished for several years until finally being completed this past year. William Greiner of Gilmore & Associates, Inc., Alternate Engineer, has inspected the stormwater work and has recommended release of funds held by the Borough. There is currently over \$33,500 being held by the Borough with accumulated interest.

Mr. Flory made a motion, seconded by Mr. Begley, to authorize release of the performance guarantee held by the Borough, after payment from these funds of all engineering and legal review fees incurred by the Borough; the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments – New Business

Mark Idhe of 337 Merten Street said he wanted to renew his complaint against Mayor Martinelli for “slandering him” last year. Mr. DeLarco said this was not new business, nor something that Council would take action on; and asked Mr. Idhe if he had any other comments?

Mr. Idhe said January 24th will be the fifth anniversary of the “terrorist attack” by his neighbor Mr. Soliman, who cut down trees in his yard. Mr. Prevoznik advised Mr. Idhe that Borough Council meetings are not a forum for slandering someone else, and Council does not conduct criminal investigations; Mr. Idhe should go to the Police Department, District Attorney, or State Attorney General if he feels there are criminal statutes that are being broken.

Keith Flory, President of Acme Hose Co. No. 1, said he was present to answer any questions Council may have. Mr. Flory said the issue of purchasing a new Fire Pumper has been discussed by the Firemens’ Relief Association, but has not been brought up before the Fire Company itself. Mr. DeLarco asked about the new aerial truck? Mr. Flory said Pierce will be sending someone out to train the Fire Company on operation of the apparatus on February 1-2, 2013. Mr. Reese asked if the Fire Co. has any position on reinstalling the fire siren? Mr. Flory said no, but he would bring it up at the next meeting. Mr. Begley asked if there was any progress on installing a “doorbell” at the new Fire Station? Mr. Flory said they are still working on it. Finally, Mr. Flory reported that the Fire Company is looking into holding a road race as a fundraiser; possibly to be held on East Broad Street between J.M. Hill School and Route 447.

Correspondence

Mr. Phillips reported receipt of the following items of correspondence:

- i. Brodhead Creek Regional Authority (BCRA) – Notice of Intent to Amend DRBC
Docket for Sewage Treatment Plant in Stroudsburg.
- ii. AWSOM – Thank you note for \$1,500 contribution for Animal Shelter
- iii. Monroe County Emergency Management – Disaster Declaration for Superstorm Sandy, Public Assistance Only
- iv. Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) – Renewal Application needed to Update Docket for East Stroudsburg Wastewater Treatment Plant. Mr. Phillips said this notification came “out of the blue”, but presumably is due to the fact that the existing docket with the DRBC dates back to 1988.
- v. Suburban EMS – Proposed Agreement for Renewal of Designation Agreement
- vi. \$1,500 check received from PennPRIME for the Borough’s designation as a “Peak Performer” for Workers Compensation Insurance again for the 2012 year.

Reports

Mr. Flory noted that several people showed up tonight for the public hearing on the Rental Housing Licensing & Inspection Program, which had been postponed.

Mr. Prevoznik said he had researched the Rosa Brush Estate matter from 1995, and Council will need to determine whether it is worthwhile to consider this again.

Mr. Begley said he was approached by several residents walking their dogs about having an area for dog walking in the Borough.

Mrs. Wolbert asked about the Brewskies sign? Mr. Walton said they have not changed the advertising on the electric sign, but he has not been able to determine whether or not the sign and post are within the road right-of-way.

Mr. Phillips reported that the "Project of the Year Award" will be presented to the Borough at the Engineers Week Banquet to be held Feb. 22, 2013 at Fogelsville, by the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Mr. DeLarco said he would like to attend.

Mr. Phillips said the Borough has drafted a new Floodplain Management Ordinance in accordance with requirements for renewed participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. However, we need to review whether this more restrictive version of the "model" ordinance is what Borough Council wants to enact- to be discussed at the upcoming Committee Meeting.

Mr. DeLarco asked Mr. Phillips for updates on the following matters:

Hiring of Codes Secretary – on hold pending adoption of the Rental Housing Licensing and Inspection Ordinance.

ZORC Meeting – Planner Charlie Schmehl to attend.

Sewer Rates – software administrators for sewer/water billing to create billing summary for proposed new rates.

Sidewalk Ordinance – Staff to provide samples for Council.

Ordinance Restricting Parking in front yards – C. Schmehl to provide draft.

Mr. DeLarco said he has received the performance reviews for Manager James Phillips from each Council member.

List of Bills Payable – January 15, 2013

Mr. Reese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Flory, to approve the List of Bills Payable and to ratify expenditures and payroll made through January 15, 2013 as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session

Mrs. Wolbert made a motion, seconded by Mr. Begley, to adjourn into executive session at 8:55 p.m.; the motion carried unanimously.

Council members reassembled in the meeting room at 9:10 p.m., and Mrs. Wolbert made a motion, seconded by Mr. Repsher, to reconvene the regular meeting; the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Prevoznik reported the executive session was held to discuss a litigation matter, and a personnel matter.

Proposed Ordinance Establishing a Schedule of Compensation and a List of Responsibilities for the Borough Tax Collector for the 2014 – 2017 term of office.

Mr. Begley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Flory, to authorize advertising a proposed Ordinance Establishing a Schedule of Compensation and a List of Responsibilities for the Borough Tax Collector for the 2014 – 2017 term of office; and setting the compensation for the 2014 year at 2% over the current rate for the 2013 year with 2% increases for the years 2015-2017. The motion carried unanimously.

Dog Runs

Mr. Hoke noted that Stroud Township and Middle Township have "dog park" areas where people can let their dogs run.

Adjournment

With no further business, Mr. Flory made a motion, seconded by Mr. Begley to adjourn the regular meeting at 9: 15 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

James S. Phillips, Secretary