

February 3, 2010, Council Meeting
Minutes

A regular meeting of Clarion Borough Council was held on Wednesday, February 3, 2010, in the Assembly Room at the Clarion Free Library. President Vavrek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. In addition to President Vavrek, the following Councilmembers were present: Messrs. Zerfoss and Walters, Dr. Dédé and Ms. Leonard, and Messrs. Noto and Hopkins. Mayor Estadt, Chief Hall, Solicitor French, Messrs. Ragon and Stutzman, and Mss. LaVan and Freenock were also present.

On a motion by Mr. Walters with a second by Mr. Hopkins, the minutes of the January 4, 2010, Re-Organization Meeting were approved by a vote of six yea, with Dr. Dédé abstaining as she was absent from that meeting.

Mr. Hopkins made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Leonard to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2010, Council Meeting. The motion carried with a vote of six yea, with Dr. Dédé abstaining as she was absent from that meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Ms. Jessica Moore, Director of Operations for Service Access and Management, which is housed at the old hospital on South 7th Avenue, advised Council that parking at the building is “dicey.” She stated that several agencies are housed in the building, and she noted that an additional 13 spaces are needed on a daily basis. Now, cars are parked in the grass and also block the paths that would be used by EMS vehicles. She asked that the area be rezoned to allow for diagonal parking. In addition, the handicapped space should be moved from the back of the building to the front.

President Vavrek stated that the lot is privately owned by the County, and thus the County can direct how parking is to be arranged. Mr. Ragon stated that there is a designated size for a parking space and that there must be a handicapped space. There must also be a traffic lane wide enough to accommodate EMS vehicles.

Ms. Moore asked about the “invisible sidewalk” and noted that she understood that at some time in the past, someone blacktopped over the existing sidewalk. President Vavrek stated that Public Works paints lines on the blacktop so that individuals do not park there. The police have and will issue tickets in the area for illegally parked cars. Ms. Moore thanked Council for its time.

Mr. Ron Kopko of Kopko Engineers informed Council that the bid documents for the South Street project were ready. He explained the project for the benefit of new Councilmembers. Mr. Zerfoss made a motion to grant permission for bids to be solicited for the South Street project and to publish notices regarding same and to proceed in accordance with the schedule distributed to Council this evening by Mr. Kopko. Mr. Walters seconded the motion.

Mr. Noto asked the proposed cost of the project; the engineer's estimate is \$387,000. Mr. Noto also asked how many trees would be lost. Mr. Kopko stated 4 from Center Place to Sixth on the south side; on the north side from Sixth to Eighth, there are several small trees.

Ms. Freenock stated that this project is being funded entirely with CDBG money from the years 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Mr. Zerfoss confirmed that none of the sale proceeds from the CAA sale would be used.

The motion carried unanimously.

President Vavrek noted an Executive Session will be held at the end of the meeting for personnel with Public Works Department. No action is expected.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Hopkins made a motion to approve the appropriations for the month of February. Ms. Leonard seconded the motion which carried by a vote of six yeas, with Mr. Zerfoss voting no due to the invoices from Campbell Durrant.

Ms. Leonard made a motion to appoint Chief Hall as the "Webmaster" and to reallocate \$3,000 from the Administration Contingency Fund to a Website Maintenance Fund. Mr. Walters seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Ms. Freenock stated that she hoped that the site would be more Borough-friendly and that the forms that are used by Mr. Ragon could be accessible on line. The site needs to be more navigable and to connect to others such as the Clarion Conservancy and the Chamber.

The special event request from Immaculate Conception Church for Vacation Bible School was approved by a vote of seven yeas, following a motion by Mr. Hopkins and a second by Mr. Noto. Ms. Leonard confirmed that an insurance certificate will be provided to the Borough prior to the event.

Mr. Walters made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2010-772 to change the name of Ninth Avenue to Arnold Avenue. Mr. Zerfoss seconded the motion. Mr. Zerfoss noted that a letter was received from the University regarding that request and a copy should be given to new Councilmembers. The change will be made at no cost to the Borough as the University will pay all associated expenses. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Freenock noted that the Fair Housing Notice and the first Hearing Notice for the Borough's 2010 CDBG Application have been published. No information has been released from DCED about this year's application, but these actions are necessary and the process was started so as not to be caught short. The 2010 project, as stated previously, is the South Street reconstruction.

Mr. Hopkins made a motion seconded by Mr. Walters to hire Todd Colosimo as a part-time, temporary employee, effective January 19, 2010 at a rate of \$20/hour.

President Vavrek explained that the Borough had a contract with GCCA, Mr. Colosimo's former employer, to handle CDBG matters for the Borough. GCCA disbanded on December 31st, but there are issues outstanding for the Borough's program from 1998-2004. Mr. Colosimo has been working on those issues with DCED. Since he is between positions, it was thought that it would be prudent to have him work for the Borough to resolve all open issues rather than have to engage another consultant who would then have to spend time becoming acclimated with the outstanding issues. Ms. Freenock stated normally positions with the Borough must be advertised. The Borough Solicitor, however, believes that this position is a professional service, which requires a high level of skill and knowledge, and thus need not have been advertised.

Ms. Leonard noted that Mr. Colosimo will be paid with CDBG money. Mr. Noto asked how many hours is part-time and how long is temporary. Ms. Freenock stated that Mr. Colosimo has been working 3 days per week. She could not comment on how long the engagement will last as DCED must respond to the information that Mr. Colosimo has located. The motion carried by a vote of seven yea.

Ms. Freenock requested permission to attend the PELRAS conference in State College March 16-19, 2010, and the PSATS Conference April 18-21, 2010, in Hershey. The cost of the PELRAS Conference is \$526.54 and the PSATS fee is \$175 plus lodging. Ms. Freenock may also attend a workshop that has an additional fee, depending on what the Housing and Zoning Committee recommends. Ms. Leonard made a motion to approve Ms. Freenock's attendance at the conferences. It was seconded by Mr. Hopkins and was approved unanimously.

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE

Mayor Estadt presented each member of Council with a guide to Clarion, which was produced by the Clarion Conservancy.

President Vavrek stated that Mayor Estadt was responsible for the guide and thanked her for a job well done.

Conservancy meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at Michelle's Café at 8 a.m., with the exception of this month when the meeting will be held on the second Wednesday.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Zerfoss made a motion for Messrs. Stutzman and Preston to attend the 2010 Municipal Road Maintenance and Safety Symposium April 18-21, 2010 in Hershey. The fee is \$50 per person plus lodging. Mr. Walters seconded the motion, and the motion carried by a vote of seven yea.

Mr. Zerfoss then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, to authorize the Borough to participate in the 2010-2011 State Salt Contract. The application is due in March, and pricing will be available in August. Mr. Stutzman stated that the Borough has

participated in this for many years, and it results in a great cost savings. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Zerfoss noted that the Public Works employees have encountered problems with parked cars throughout the Borough when plowing. He stated that the Committee would be looking at parking and the Snow Ordinance to see if changes are warranted. This process may take one year.

Public Works meetings will be held on the first Monday of each month at the Public Works Building commencing at 4 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Walters reported that the Committee met on January 20th at 7:30 a.m. Several issues were addressed:

- The Procedure Manual is completed;
- Leasing a police car will not result in a cost savings;
- The Chief will work on getting the Department accredited; that may take up to one year and will cost approximately \$250; once completed, the Borough will realize a cost savings of between 5-10% on its Police Liability Insurance;
- Parking tickets are now being issued in “real time” and scoff laws more easily enforced; and,
- NIMS training has been scheduled at the Fire Hall on Sunday, February 21, 2010, at 1 p.m.

Mr. Zerfoss made a motion, seconded by Mr. Noto, to solicit proposals for the purchase of a 2010 police vehicle and to obtain proposals to finance same and to award both to the lowest bidder. The motion carried by a vote of six yea, with Mr. Hopkins abstaining as his employer will be bidding on the vehicle.

Mr. Zerfoss then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Noto, to sell the 2003 Ford Crown Victoria Police Car to the highest bidder. Chief Hall indicated that he now has 18 taxi companies that may be interested in the car. He would like to complete the sale by March 30th before the inspection expires. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Walters thanked the Police and Fire Personnel for their professionalism when handling incidents.

Ms. Freenock thanked Chief Hall and Frank Stacey of C-93 News for the public service announcement aired last week after a police vehicle was hit twice within 24 hours.

HOUSING AND ZONING

Mr. Hopkins reported that the Committee met on January 12th. There is a business that may locate in the Borough and both Mr. Ragon and Ms. Freenock reviewed the Zoning Ordinance and there is no conflict. Mr. Hopkins also stated that the Sign Ordinance

would be reviewed; and that next month, the Committee would be working on rental inspection issues.

RECREATION

Ms. Leonard stated that a Committee meeting was held on January 25th. Jamie Simpson from Clarion Little League was present. He stated that last year, Council granted permission for a press box to be built at the softball field. The project was not completed last year but will be done this year. Little League will pay all costs, and Public Works will assist in locating wires etc.

Ms. Leonard indicated that the bleachers have been ordered and will be purchased with CDBG funds.

On January 6th, Ms. Leonard, Mr. Hopkins and Ms. Freenock reviewed the proposals received in response to the Borough's RFP for a Recreation Comprehensive Plan. Five proposals were received. Three companies were requested to interview with several members of the Study Committee. Those interviews were held last night. Ms. Leonard distributed a hand out showing the fees proposed by each firm and then announced Mackin was recommended by the Committee.

Mr. Hopkins stated that Mackin has been working in the Borough, most recently with the University on its dorm suites. Ms. Freenock checked their references, and they were all glowing. In addition, the PR firm with which Mackin is partnering worked on the Route 68 Project and on the PA Wilds Study.

Jim Watenpool will also be working with Mackin. He is a recognized expert in Western PA on Parks and Recreation. He addressed the issue of continued maintenance of Borough recreational facilities, a subject that was not raised by the other interviewees.

Mr. Hopkins made a motion, seconded by Dr. Dédé to engage Mackin Engineering to prepare the Borough's Recreation and Park Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Freenock noted that the Plan will be paid via a grant from DCNR with matching CDBG funds. Ms. Vavrek inquired about partnerships. Ms. Freenock stated that the RFP stated that recreational facilities within a 15-mile radius of the Borough must be examined. The Borough's facilities are open to everyone, regardless of residence. It is hoped that by making this plan more regional in scope, other municipalities may see what the Borough offers to the local community and that other municipalities may reciprocate.

Ms. Leonard stated that a meeting has been scheduled for February 8, 2010, at 10:30 a.m. with the YMCA to discuss a new Management Agreement. The next meeting of the Recreation Committee will be on Monday, February 22, 2010, at 5:30 p.m. at the Borough Office, and, thereafter as needed.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Freenock stated that the Borough is working with the County Commissioners and the EDC to see if anything can be done regarding the pending closing of the O-I Plant in the Borough. The announcement regarding the closure was a surprise. Ms. Freenock supplied Council with the potential loss in tax revenues, including EIT, LST and discussed OI's real estate tax payments. Ms. Freenock also stated that the real impact of this closure will be felt by the entire community and cannot be calculated. She stated that the Borough is saddened by the news and feels for the employees and their families.

Ms. Freenock then reported that Mr. Ragon's computer crashed this week, and it cannot be resuscitated. A new computer for Mr. Ragon was in the budget. In addition, last year, the Borough was awarded a grant to purchase a computer and software for Mr. Stutzman. Due to the state's financial condition, Ms. Freenock was unsure of the status of that grant. She received word today that the grant is being funded. Ms. Leonard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, to expend \$1,567 for two computer hard drives and one monitor, to be purchased through the State's Costars Contract.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Zerfoss noted that two variance applications had been received. Mr. Ragon stated that one was new and the second was for KFC. They are requesting less signage than in their previous variance application. Mr. Zerfoss stated that the Sign Ordinance must be revised to be more business friendly.

President Vavrek called an Executive Session concerning personnel, leaving at 8:15 p.m. including all Councilmembers, the Mayor, Ms. Freenock, and Solicitor French. President Vavrek stated that she expected that no action would be taken.

President Vavrek called the meeting back to order at 9:05 p.m. and stated that no action was taken.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. LaVan read a thank you note from Ms. Janet Ruslavage, Co-Chairman of the Board of Trustees of First United Methodist Church, regarding parking on 6th Avenue.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, on a motion by Ms. Leonard, with a second by Dr. Dédé, the meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy K. Freenock
Borough Secretary