

STROUDSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 18, 2024

A regular meeting of the Stroudsburg Borough Council convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Stroudsburg Borough Municipal Building with the following members present: Council President Matt Abell, Council Vice-President Erica McCabe, Council Member Melody Trunfio, Council Member Cheryl Joubert, Council Member J. Zac Christman, Council Pro-Tem Joseph Shay, and Council Member Victoria DeVries.

Also present were: Mayor Michael Moreno, Borough Manager Larry Kopp, Borough Solicitor Christopher Brown, Esq., Street Superintendent Brian Ace, and Executive Assistant Becky Smith.

Zoning/Codes Officer Kenelle DeStefano was absent.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public hearing for the purpose of determining the boundaries of deteriorated areas to be included within the Borough's Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act (LERTA) ordinance as required by Section 4 of LERTA, 72 P.S. 4725

Mr. Abell stated the purpose of the LERTA ordinance is to encourage developers to redevelop vacant and under-utilized properties, fronting Main Street or Ann Street, or anywhere between those two streets. The additional tax revenue of the improvements would be deferred over a five-year period. This ordinance will sunset in five years after enactment. The boundaries of the included properties on both sides of Main Street, beginning at the West side of the borough line all the way to the Interborough Bridge, both sides of Ann Street, and areas between Ann Street and Main Street. Monroe County, Stroudsburg School District, and the Stroudsburg Borough are the three entities

Mr. Brown submitted the following exhibits into evidence: Exhibit A – Proof of Publication; Exhibit B – Proof that the proposed ordinance was sent to the Monroe County Law Library; Exhibit C – Proof that the proposed ordinance was sent to the Pocono Record; Exhibit D – List by property identification numbers of all properties proposed to be included in the LERTA ordinance; and Exhibit E – Map of the proposed area of the LERTA ordinance, all of which are attached to these Minutes.

Mr. Brown read aloud the statutory sections required to be reviewed and considered prior to Council approving the deteriorated areas included within the Borough's LERTA ordinance.

John Schnaitman, a resident of Hamilton Street, asked if a particular property near the hotel on West Main Street is eligible for LERTA. Mr. Brown explained that if that specific property is not included in the map, the developer can request the Borough to add it to the list of eligible properties, and would need to be approved in another public hearing, and would also have to be approved by the Stroudsburg School District.

Jane Hartin, of Club Court, asked if this includes residential properties. Ms. McCabe advised this ordinance took years to complete. Once the Borough can provide a successful program, the school district will likely expand the area and timeframe.

With no further questions or comments, a motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe to approve the List of LERTA Eligible Properties, as presented in Exhibit D. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

Public hearing and consideration to adopt an Ordinance of the Borough Council of the Borough of Stroudsburg in the County of Monroe, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to amend the Stroudsburg Borough Code by adding a Part 6, Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA), to Chapter 24 Taxation; Providing for real estate tax exemption for new construction and improvements to deteriorated property pursuant to the Pennsylvania Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act and establishing standards and qualifications for obtaining such exemption

This public hearing is to approve the LERTA ordinance, as presented. With no questions or comments from Council Members or the public, a motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to close the public hearing. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

The aforementioned Ordinance was adopted on a motion made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0) The effective date of this ordinance will be June 18, 2024, with a sunset date of June 17, 2029.

Public hearing regarding the Cable Franchise Renewal

The purpose of this hearing is to review the past performance of the cable operator, Blue Ridge Cable, and to identify the future cable-related community needs of the Borough. Blue Ridge Cable has been providing cable service to Borough residents for many years. The current contract between Stroudsburg Borough and Blue Ridge Cable expires this year. This required hearing allows the community members to discuss any issues with the cable service prior to renewing the contract.

Deb Davis, a resident of Thomas Street, expressed her concerns about the cost of cable charged by Blue Ridge. Mr. Abell advised the Borough does not have any control over the price of cable; this contract concerns the percentage that Blue Ridge Cable is required to pay the Borough. Ms. Davis requested customer pricing be discussed at the contract negotiations. Mr. Christman added there is more competitive pricing for internet service in our area, due to multiple providers; however, without other cable providers, pricing is not so competitive.

With no further questions or comments from Council Members or the public, a motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. DeVries to close the public hearing. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

Approval of Council Meeting Minutes for the Regular meeting on June 4, 2024

The minutes of the regular meeting on June 4, 2024 were approved as circulated on a motion made by Ms. Trunfio, seconded by Ms. DeVries. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

Monthly Administrative Reports

The following monthly reports were approved on a motion made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Trunfio: Right-To-Know Report, Parking Report, Fire Department Report, and the Police Department Report. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Accept Unaudited May 2024, Treasurer Report

A motion was made by Mr. Shay, seconded by Ms. Trunfio to accept the Balance Sheets, FY 24 vs FY 23, and the Budget to Actual Report. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Mr. Kopp discussed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Five-Year Report for the Brodhead Creek Superfund Site. Mr. Kopp provided the report to Council Members for their review. A 12-acre site on the west bank of the Brodhead Creek continues to be monitored by the EPA. A manufactured gas plant was on-site from about 1888 to 1944. Coal tar, a waste product of the manufacturing process, contaminated groundwater, soil and sediment at the site. The coal tar cannot be practically removed, therefore, it requires monitoring periodically.

Mr. Kopp discussed submitting a grant application for the Environmental Protection Agency's Community Change Grant Program in collaboration with the Pocono Family YMCA. Mr. Kopp stated a grant writer is being paid by the YMCA. The Main Street Project fits perfectly into the grant parameters. A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Trunfio to approve the Borough Manager to submit the grant application, with the Pocono Family YMCA as the lead applicant. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

Mr. Kopp discussed the next steps for the Transforming Main Street Initiative. The Borough has applied for DOT Grants for this project, however, if grant funding is not approved, there are other options to proceed. The project can be broken down into multiple segments, or the Borough can apply for a grant to pay for engineering fees, making the project more fundable. Mr. Abell gave direction to Mr. Kopp to continue applying for DOT Grants, and to divide the project into multiple segments.

Mr. Kopp discussed his recent attendance at the annual Pennsylvania State Associate of Boroughs (PSAB) Conference. The Borough of Stroudsburg is doing the things municipalities are supposed to do, and continues looking ahead and planning future projects. Mr. Kopp received his Certified Borough Official (CBO) Certification at the conference.

Mr. Kopp led a discussion regarding the situation with the homeless population within the Borough of Stroudsburg. The United Way created a work group comprised of representatives from surrounding municipalities, Monroe County, and Street to Feet organization. Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg Borough have the largest population of homeless. Monroe County allows use of county land, including property adjacent to Glen Park. Mr. Shay suggested a deputy from Monroe County should monitor the property since they are residing on county property. Bill Parkinson, a resident of South Stroudsburg, does not want the homeless to be encouraged to live in and around his neighborhood; and mentioned vehicles run the stop sign at the exit ramp onto Park Avenue, due to two men who continue to stand there. Ms. McCabe reminded everyone that the homeless population are part of our community, and are human beings; there is an urgent need to find a solution.

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Trunfio to approve the application of Todd Matthews, as recommended for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the HARB, for adding a walkway/hallway between 418-422 Main Street. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. DeVries to approve the application of Kevin Casey, as recommended for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the HARB, for repairing of the front porch at 618 Sarah Street. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Trunfio to approve the application of Sujit Dhakal, as recommended for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the HARB,

for adding siding on the west side of the building at 19 Williams Street. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Trunfio to approve the application of Compton Ferreira, as recommended for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the HARB, for the replacement of rotten wood/siding in different areas of the property, replacing gutters with a K-style, and covering over windows at 701-705 Sarah Street. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Trunfio to approve the application of Josh Kohen, as recommended for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the HARB, for the replacement of three windows and replacing one window with a door at 523-525 Sarah Street. The motion was carried. (yes-7; no-0; abstain-0)

Committee Reports

Codes Committee – The next committee meeting is June 26, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.

Budget Committee – No report.

Parking Committee – The next committee meeting is June 25, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Recycling Committee – A meeting was held with members from East Stroudsburg Borough Council to discuss future of the Twin Boro Recycling Center. East Stroudsburg Borough is considering having Monroe County Waste Authority take over recycling and waste hauling operations. Another meeting between Stroudsburg Borough, East Stroudsburg Borough, and Monroe County Waste Authority will be scheduled for further discussion.

Sewer Committee – No report.

Street Committee – Mr. Moreno advised the meeting scheduled for June 19th will be rescheduled for Wednesday, June 26, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Personnel Committee – Mr. Kopp has a personnel item for Executive Session.

Public Relations/Media Committee – Ms. McCabe reported the committee would like to assist Mr. Kopp with the newsletters. Ms. Trunfio, Ms. DeVries, Mr. Moreno, and Ms. McCabe will all have access to post on the Borough's Facebook page.

Redevelopment Committee – No report.

I-80 Expansion Task Force Committee – No report.

Parks and Recreation Committee – The next committee meeting is June 25, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor's Report

Mr. Moreno reported he was invited to the Governor's residence on June 26 for a PRIDE Reception. Mr. Moreno will meet with the Director of Military Affairs at the Pocono Raceway on June 27.

Council Member Reports

No reports.

Solicitor's Report

Mr. Brown has an item for Executive Session.

Manager's Report

Borough Manager Report June 18th, 2024

Meetings

PSAB Conference	June 2 nd – 5 th
Denny Peters/Creekwalk Trail Project	June 6 th
Juneteenth Festival Coordination Meeting	June 6 th
Homeless Workgroup	June 7 th
SARP Executive Committee	June 10 th
Penn Strategies/Grant Administration	June 10 th
Dave Steckel/Personnel	June 10 th
Downtown Business Association	June 11 th
Scott Peckins/YMCA Grant	June 11 th
Hazard Management Plan/Capability Assessment	June 12 th
SARP Commission Meeting	June 12 th
Charlie/Casella	June 13 th
Ad-Hoc Recycling Committee	June 17 th
COG Meeting	June 24 th
Safety Committee Meeting	June 26 th

Infrastructure/Streets/Capital Projects

Ann Street Sewer Replacement & Paving. Sewer and water line replacement complete. Paving late summer.

Quick Build / Main Street Project. Sent request for Signage District to PennDOT. Working on permissions for murals from property owners. Coordinating various project elements. Working on upgrades to the Borough's sign printer & laptop.

Stormwater System Rehabilitation/Upgrades. Currently scheduled for mid-July.

Creek Walk Trail. Scheduling meetings to discuss easements with property owners. Held off on DCNR grant funding request until all easements are in place. Working on plan for a footbridge over the creek in lieu of going through ESSA and property next to post office.

Borough Building Porches. Met with contractor May 16th. Work to begin within several weeks.

Parking Garage Repair/Rehabilitation. In design phase with Peters. Intent is to go out to bid for 2025 completion.

Grants Strategy 2024

2024 RAISE Grant. Applications submitted February 27th, 2024.

2023 Statewide LSA Grant. Submitted 11/28/23. For Creek Walk Trail.

2023 Monroe County LSA Grant. For Parking Garage Repairs. Received \$250,000.

2022 Monroe County LSA Grant. Received \$500,000 for the project.

RACP Grant. Peters Engineering completed draft budget for LSA Grant & RACP Grant. Work with Pocono Economic Development Corp on grant and administering these funds.

Monroe County Hotel Tax Allocation. Received \$12,500 for the remainder of the Bollard Project. Payment in April. Bollards have shipped.

PMVB Beautification Grant Program Round 2. Received \$5,769.00 for electric street sweeper. Received requested grant amount!

PMVB Beautification Grant Program. Received \$2,000 for Dog Park in Glen Park. Working on reimbursement.

Borough Building Repairs

Met with contractor May 16th. Beginning work in the next month.

Homeless Workgroup

Meeting on June 7th. County Commissioners expressed interest in establishing a shelter in close proximity to services, which means either Stroudsburg or East Stroudsburg. Currently, the largest encampment is on county property Southeast of Glen Park along the bike trail.

Commercial/Residential Recycling

Letter sent to commercial properties notifying them of the requirement to recycle. Letter to trash haulers sent early May. Scheduling another round of garbage inspections for recycling/trash violations, including inspections of commercial properties, this week.

Residential Rental Property Inspections

Postcard out to all rental units and owners. Website updated with information. Notification letter with brochure sent to printer to mail in the next two weeks. Email to current licensees.

Dog Park

Fencing installation complete. Other dog park equipment has shipped; benches have been received.

Monthly E-Newsletters

June issue going out June 13th.

Safety Committee

Safety Committee Meeting on June 26th. Training later this month.

MY WORK Program

Program began Monday. We have four young adults participating starting June 17th for 6 weeks, through July 25th, M-F, 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Scheduled for trash pick-up in the downtown & parks; curb and fire hydrant cleaning; and borough building cleaning.

Penn Strategies

Jason Fitzgerald is selling his interest in Penn Strategies. It may be the time to reassess our contract with Penn Strategies and decide what we do moving forward.

Borough Newsletter

Sent to the printer for mailing later in June.

Dumpster Painting

Met with Casella on June 13th to coordinate.

Sewer Rates/EDU Reassessment

Analysis underway, doing double duty as a confirmation of potential rental properties. Looking at numerous data sets: water EDUs, Sewer EDUs, Act 511 Payroll Taxes, Rental Property Registrations, and Solid Waste registrations.

LERTA

Updated Ordinance on the agenda this evening for approval.

MyGov Software for Codes/Zoning

Going fully “live” with MyGov in 2024 on all permits and licenses. Requiring all Rental Registrations to be submitted through MyGov. Customers will be required, unless they have a compelling reason, to submit all permit and license online through the Customer Service Portal. System has been a bigger success than has been realized; we have a total of 1,699 unique collaborators since we started using the system.

Senior Waste Collection Assistance Program

14 recipients to date in 2024.

Staff Performance Evaluations/ Counseling

Annual evaluations are due. Counseling with all staff this summer.

Sewer Collection System/I&I Initiative

ArcGIS mapping of all cleanouts & manholes complete. Reinstalled flow meters. Restarting Smoke Testing this fall.

Sewer Fund Delinquent Accounts/Liens

Becky is looking at our list of liens and see what liens need to be renewed and if any need to be taken off the list.

Bicycle Racks

Three racks remain to be installed: 745 Main, 401 Main & 33 North 7th Streets. North 7th Street was approved with a slightly changed location. Waiting to hear back from the remaining two property owners. One property owner (1172 Main Street) declined to have the rack on their property. Installation in Spring 2024.

Upcoming Focus

LSA Grant Administration/Budget Development/Coordination
Res Rental Property Ordinance Implementation
Dumpster Painting Project
Potential Grants for Main Street
Day to Day Activities

Engineer’s Report

Kevin Kreitzer reported the 8th Street Paving project will begin in the near future.

Street Superintendent’s Report

No report.

Zoning/Codes Officer Report

Ms. DeStefano was absent.

Approval of Bills on Warrants 240618

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. DeVries to authorize the payment of bills on Warrants 240618. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Public Input for Non-Agenda Items

Alan Brown had questions about the short-term rental licensing program, including if the short-term rental can be advertised for a stay longer than 30 days. Mr. Brown will provide his contact information to Mr. Kopp for further assistance. Mr. Abell will add this question to the Codes Committee Agenda. Mr. Moreno advised there is a free webinar on June 27, from 5:30 p.m. to

6:30 p.m., hosted by the Poconos Association of Vacation Rental Owners, to discuss short-term rentals.

Connie McCool, of LaBar Village, expressed her gratitude to the Borough, especially Jenn Walker, for their time, effort, and support pertaining to the dilapidated building on their property that was recently demolished.

Melissa Addison, of 563 Ann Street, complained about the critters around her home, stating there are several cats, racoons, gophers, and squirrels. It was recommended that Ms. Addison could trap and release the cats; and to contact animal control if an animal attacks her dog.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Trunfio to go in to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 8:29 p.m. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain).

The Executive Session concluded at 8:49 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain).

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m., on a motion made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)