

STROUDSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 17, 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 Pro-Tem Joseph Shay, Council Member J. Zac Christman, and Council Member Cheryl Joubert.

Also present were: Borough Manager Larry Kopp, Mayor Michael Moreno, Borough Solicitor Christopher Brown, Esq., Street Superintendent Brian Ace, Jr., Zoning/Codes Officer Kenelle DeStefano, and Executive Assistant Becky Smith.

Council Member Victoria DeVries was absent.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Council Meeting Minutes for the Regular meeting on September 3, 2024

The minutes of the regular meeting on September 3, 2024 were approved as circulated, on a motion made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman. The motion was carried. (yes-5; no-0; abstain-0)

Monthly Administrative Reports

The following monthly reports were approved on a motion made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman: Right-To-Know Report, Parking Report, Fire Department Report, and the Police Department Report. The motion was carried. (5-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Accept Unaudited August 2024, Treasurer Report

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Shay to accept the Balance Sheets, FY 24 vs FY 23, and the Budget to Actual Report. The motion was carried. (5-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

There is a vacancy on Borough Council, with an unexpired term of December 31, 2027. At this time, Joanne Kochanski, member of the Vacancy Board, joined council to discuss the candidates. Four letters of interest were received from the following candidates: Walter TJ Lopez, Keith Swiatkowski, Nigar Ifrit, and Michael Schroder. Ms. McCabe nominated Walter TJ Lopez, as he applied in a timely manner, submitted his resume as requested, is tech savvy, and would be readily available for borough business due to working from home. Mr. Abell mentioned Mr. Lopez is the only candidate who has attended the two most recent council meetings. Ms. Joubert added it is nice to have a younger person serve on council. Mr. Shay mentioned that Michael Schroder has applied previously, is in the fire department, submitted a well-written letter of interest, and has previously run for council.

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to nominate Walter TJ Lopez to fill the unexpired term of the current vacant Council Seat, with a term ending December 31, 2027. The motion was carried. (5-yes, Ms. Kochanski, Mr. Christman, Ms. McCabe, Mr. Abell, Ms. Joubert; 1-no, Mr. Shay; 0-abstain)

Mr. Lopez was sworn in by Mayor Moreno, and joined Council for the remainder of the meeting as the newly appointed council member.

A motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe to approve the 2025 Minimum Municipal Funding Obligation (MMO) in the amount of \$918,478.00. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

A change order from M&J Excavation for the South 8th Street project was received for the installation of one ADA ramp. Mr. Shay thought that intersection is currently ADA compliant with ramps, and suggested the business near the intersection should share the cost of the project. Mr. Shay suggested cost-sharing be a contingency for future projects. Mr. Ace stated the ADA requirements changed in 2011, from a 5% grade to a 2% grade with a mat, and room for a wheelchair to turn around, which becomes very costly. If paving occurs through an intersection that is not compliant, by law it must become within compliance. Mr. Ace added that \$6,000.00 is a reasonable price to rip out and replace a ramp. A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to approve Change Order #1 from M&J Excavation, Inc. for the South 8th Street Project, to install one ADA ramp at the intersection near the Hampton Inn, increasing the contract price by \$6,000.00. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

A second change order from M&J Excavation for the South 8th Street project was received for the installation of five new inlet tops. A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Abell to approve Change Order #2 from M&J Excavation, Inc. for the South 8th Street Project, to install five new inlet tops to raise inlets, increasing the contract price by \$4,000.00. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to authorize the submission of a Monroe County Local Share Account (LSA) Grant Application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) in the amount of, and not to exceed, \$1,000,000.00 to be used to offset costs associated with the repair/rehabilitation of a parking garage facility on Ann Street in the Borough. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to approve free parking on Small Business Saturday, November 30, 2024. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

A request was received from Kyle Moran, owner of 519 Queen Street, for relief from street opening fees. Mr. Moran planned to have UGI install natural gas to his home. UGI's fee to the homeowner is \$3,600.00, and the degradation fee charged to the homeowner by the Borough is \$3,595.20. This fee is calculated by a formula set by Borough Ordinance, and goes towards the depreciation of the road; it is not a refundable deposit. Queen Street was last paved in 2020. Mr. Moran stated he would be willing to delay installing natural gas until the fees are lower, and asked council's consideration for any relief, not necessarily waiving the full cost. Mr. Abell invited Mr. Moran to the September 18th Streets Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom if he is interested in learning how the fees are calculated. A motion was made by Mr. Shay, seconded by Ms. McCabe to deny the request from Kyle Moran, of 519 Queen Street, for relief from street opening fees. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

There was a discussion about traffic flow and a potential traffic direction change on Barry Street. Ms. McCabe stated a recent road rage incident occurred, resulting in a car crashing into the stone wall at the corner of Barry Street and Park Avenue. Aside from this incident, it has been noted that vehicles are speeding through the end of the I-80 off-ramp and continuing up Barry Street. During the 7th Street bridge construction, the traffic direction on Barry Street was changed. It would not be beneficial to change it back due to sight distance issues, trucks, and plowing. No action taken.

The Special Event draft policy changes, recommended by the Special Event Ad Hoc Committee, were presented, and read aloud by Mr. Abell. The purpose of the policy change is to standardize special event requests, including free parking requests. Mr. Abell mentioned the Borough loses approximately \$4,000.00 during free-parking events. Mr. Christman suggested providing a discount for Sunday events, however, Ms. McCabe stated Borough staff gets time and a half if they are required at an event. Recommendation #10 suggests a certified Borough employee train an event volunteer to flag, instead of hiring flaggers. Ms. Kochanski advised to clarify in the policy who would be liable if a situation occurs. Any public input on the policy changes can be addressed to Mr. Kopp to be considered by council. A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Lopez to take more time to review the Special Event draft policy changes. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

Mr. Kopp discussed the Borough's 2024-2025 grant strategy and the Main Street Matters Program. Mr. Kopp met with Delta Development Group on Friday to review funding opportunities for potential major projects, including the five-points roundabout, the parking garage, the Creek Walk Trail, stormwater infrastructure, new playground equipment, and a traffic light at Park Avenue and Broad Street. There are options for the Main Street Matters Program, including hiring a downtown manager, whose functions include attracting new businesses, coordinating events, and keeping streets and sidewalks clean for visitors. Ms. Kochanski stated the role could be expanded to include managing grants, and the flower program. The Borough would be required to provide health insurance for this full-time employee. Mr. Abell recommended this topic be referred to the Redevelopment Committee, which is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at 4:30 p.m., via Zoom.

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Shay to approve the following applications, as recommended for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by HARB: #24-000145, erecting a 6-foot privacy wood fence at the back yard of 19 S. 6th Street, and #24-000161, replacing existing façade with limestone-like tiles, removing temporary metal roof, and adding up-lighting to the Penn Stroud Hotel, 700 Main Street. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

Committee Reports

Codes Committee – The next meeting is Wednesday, September 25, at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Budget Committee – Mr. Kopp is working on the 2025 Budget.

Parking Committee – The next meeting is Tuesday, September 24, at 5:15 p.m. via Zoom.

Recycling Committee – The quarterly Recycling Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 23, at 5:00 p.m., followed by the Ad Hoc Recycling meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Sewer Committee – No report.

Street Committee – The next meeting is Wednesday, September 18, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Personnel Committee – No report.

Public Relations/Media Committee – The next meeting is Thursday, September 26, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Redevelopment Committee – The next meeting is Wednesday, October 9, at 4:30 p.m.

I-80 Expansion Task Force Committee – No report.

Parks and Rec (Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation) Committee – The next meeting is Tuesday, September 24, at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor’s Report

Mr. Moreno recently attended the: Legislative Fellow Breakfast, Bizzy Awards Gala, and Pocono Center for the Arts Broadway Show.

Council Member Reports

Mr. Shay reported the contingencies set forth in the September 3rd approval for county employees to park in the lot on 8th and Main Streets have not been met. Mr. Shay noticed only a few barricades are set up around the perimeter of the lot, the ingress and egress pattern is not well established, and no one is directing traffic during the morning and afternoon hours. Also, there is a pile of debris in the lot. Mr. Kopp will reach out to Bob Gress, Monroe County Chief Clerk, to discuss the matter.

Mr. Abell welcomed Mr. Lopez to Borough Council. Mr. Kopp will send the list of committees and their meeting schedules for Mr. Lopez’s review and consideration to join.

Solicitor’s Report

Solicitor Brown advised he is still in contact with AWSOM, the county, and DCNR regarding the animal shelters’ project.

Manager’s Report

Mr. Kopp advised the public hearing for the revised LERTA ordinance will be October 1, 2024.

Borough Manager Report September 17th, 2024

Meetings

ET&T Meeting	September 4 th
Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan	September 4 th
Sarah/Alta/Main Street	September 5 th
Irish-American Festival Coordination Meeting	September 5 th
Public Policy Cmte Meeting	September 6 th
MyGov Demonstration	September 6 th
SARP Executive Committee Meeting	September 9 th
Downtown Business Association	September 10 th
ClearGov Meeting	September 10 th
BCRA/Section 219 Projects	September 10 th
SARP Commission Meeting	September 11 th
Delta Development/Grant Plan	September 13 th
Peters/CDBG Projects	September 17 th
ClearGov Meeting	September 18 th
Active Transportation Plan Public Meeting	September 18 th
Alta Planning/Main Street	September 20 th
Ad-Hoc Recycling Committee Meeting	September 23 rd
Recycling Committee Meeting	September 23 rd
Text MyGov Review	September 25 th

Safety Committee Meeting
Pocono Prayer Breakfast

September 25th
October 1st

Infrastructure/Streets/Capital Projects

Ann Street Sewer Replacement & Paving. Sewer and water line replacement complete. Concrete/sidewalks work underway. Paving late September – Early October.

Quick Build / Main Street Project. Sent request for Signage District to PennDOT. Jody Singer working on S 4th Street Mural. Coordinating various project elements. Working on upgrades to the Borough's sign printer & laptop.

Stormwater System Rehabilitation/Upgrades. Contractor beginning work this week.

Creek Walk Trail. Working on plan for a footbridge over the creek in lieu of going through ESSA and property next to post office.

Borough Building Porches. Work underway!

Parking Garage Repair/Rehabilitation. Design complete. Intent is to go out to bid for 2025 completion.

Levee Erosion Mitigation. Emplacing rip rap on the Brodhead Creek side of the levee to stop erosion. Met with DEP 8/30. Working on plan from engineer; working on funding options.

Grants Strategy 2024-25

2024 Monroe County LSA Grant. Due September 30th. Remainder of cost of Parking Garage Repairs/Restoration.

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

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

EPA Community Change Grant. Lead Applicant for submission; also, YMCA, SROSRC, East Stroudsburg & Stroudsburg SDs and Pocono Services to Families and Children. In process of refining application for submission.

RACP Grant. Working 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 arrived; will install as part of street paving.

PMVB Beautification Grant Program Round 2. Received \$5,769.00 for electric street sweeper. Received requested grant amount! Sweeper ordered; PMVB gave grants for two sweepers.

Delta Development

Cancelled contract with Penn Strategies, effective 6/24. Met with Delta Development Group Friday to develop funding plan for 2025.

Budget 2025

Budget work underway!

Borough Building Repairs

Work underway. My office doors painted; working on both porches simultaneously.

Dumpster Painting

Contacted East Stroudsburg University and Northampton Community College for volunteers to design/paint. ESU & NCC have shown interest. Scheduled for September/October.

Homeless Workgroup

Clean-up of Glen Park area on August 8th was cancelled due to weather. Provided dumpster for clean-up.

Commercial/Residential Recycling

Letter sent to commercial properties notifying them of the requirement to recycle. Inspections of commercial properties ongoing.

Residential Rental Property Inspections

Inspections underway.

Dog Park

Dog park equipment and benches have been received. Requesting more equipment through County Hotel Tax Grant/Allocation. Working on welcome sign for park.

Monthly E-Newsletters

September issue next week.

Safety Committee

3rd Quarter Safety Comte Meeting scheduled for September 25th. Training sessions scheduled in September. Working on Safety SOPs; finished by the end of the year.

Borough Newsletter

Next issue (Fall) in September.

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.

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. Counselling 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	2024 LSA Grant
Dumpster Painting Project	2025 Borough Budget
EPA Grant	Day to Day Activities

Engineer's Report

Denny Peters, of Peters Consultants, was present. Mr. Peters has been in contact with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Monroe County Conservation District (MCCD) regarding the location of the walking bridge for the Creek Walk Project. A conference call is scheduled for September 26, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., with DEP and MCCD, to discuss required permits. Mr. Peters reported that: the parking garage bid specs are ready to be advertised, and suggests adding that the project will be awarded if grant funding is received; the 8th Street paving project is complete; there was a meeting with DEP on August 30, 2024 regarding the erosion on the levee, and DEP will assist in the grant application; he met with Brian Ace to discuss 2025 paving projects using CDBG funds; and nine pipes for the levee need to be inspected, and hopes to obtain grant money for this project.

Zoning/Codes Officer Report

Ms. DeStefano advised her department is focusing on tenant registrations and inspections, with approximately 160 of the 530 inspections complete.

Street Superintendent's Report

Mr. Ace reported the Ann Street sidewalk project is almost complete; Barker & Barker Paving have been subcontracted to perform the paving of Ann Street, with the estimated completion date of October 7, 2024.

Approval of Bills on Warrants 240917

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to authorize the payment of bills on Warrants 240917. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Public Input for Non-Agenda Items

Max Augugliaro, of *The Pocono Record*, asked for any comments on the new appointment of TJ Lopez. Ms. McCabe stated it was nice to have the ability to choose from four candidates, and believes the right one was chosen; Mr. Lopez added he grew up in Stroudsburg, graduated from Stroudsburg High School, and East Stroudsburg University, and it is an honor to be here.

Rick Hammond, of Lee Avenue, thanked Borough Council for the dog park at Glen Park. Mr. Hammond expressed his concerns of 125 Lee Avenue, which has college students as tenants, and frequently hosts loud parties. The police have been called numerous times for the loud music and noise. The parties bring in a lot of traffic and crowds of students walking through the alley and neighborhood. Mr. Hammond asked how to proceed with these complaints. Ms. McCabe suggested contacting East Stroudsburg University to bring this concern to their attention, continue to call the police, take video of the behavior, and take pictures of the aftermath, which can then be provided to the student advisor at ESU. Ms. McCabe also suggested that Borough Council draft a letter to ESU outlining the complaints. Mr. Moreno recommended to hold off on sending a letter to ESU until police reports are received and reviewed. Mr. Shay asked if there

are more than four unrelated individuals living at this property. Ms. DeStefano stated the landlord has not yet submitted the tenant registration. After discussion, Mr. Abell recommended this topic be referred to the Codes Committee, which is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Bob Armstrong, of Collins Street, stated the house on the corner of Broad and Collins Street has multiple apartments, resulting in more cars parked along the beginning stretch of Collins Street, creating a dangerous situation when turning from Broad Street. Mr. Armstrong requested the no parking zone be extended to allow more room for cars to enter Collins Street from Broad Street. Mr. Abell referred this topic to the Parking Committee, which is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Mr. Armstrong mentioned an increase in shopping carts throughout the Borough, including Glen Park. Mr. Ace stated his department continues to collect carts left on borough property, and charges the respective store \$10.00 each to return them. Ms. McCabe suggested increasing the fees for cart returns.

Keith Swiatkowski, of N. 8th Street, expressed his concerns about speeding in his neighborhood and requested speed bumps. Mr. Abell mentioned looking into speed tables during the borough's long-range planning. Mr. Ace stated speed tables must be approved by PennDOT. Mr. Abell referred this topic to the Streets Committee, which is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Rosa Gastino reported a pothole on West Main Street, near the Exxon station; this is a PennDOT road, and Ms. Gastino can contact her state representative to assist with the matter.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m., on a motion made by Mr. Shay, seconded by Ms. McCabe. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)