

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Feb. 1, 2021

Members Present: Douglas Baker, Mayor
Donna Fletcher, Deputy Mayor
James Johnson
Samuel Lyons
Christian Marshall
Fred Mays
Ryan Rudegear

Members Excused: None

In Attendance: Tracy Jamieson, City Manager
Brian Spaid, Esq., City Solicitor
Kevin Anundson, Police Chief
Harmony Motter, Finance Director
Charles Gibbons, Code Enforcement Officer
Michael Gorman, Resource and Development Assistant
Sheila Boughner, Recording Secretary & Community Development
A.J. Titley, Venango Newspapers, Inc.
Aly Delp, Explore Venango

The meeting was held virtually due to the continuing number of COVID-19 cases in the county. Mayor Baker called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA - Resolution No. 10

Mr. Johnson moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Resolution No. 11

Mr. Marshall moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of Jan. 4, 2021, as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PAY THE BILLS - Resolution No. 12

Mr. Lyons moved to pay the bills as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CITIZENS' INQUIRIES – None.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS – Resolution No. 13

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Lyons seconded a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to a garage under construction at 846 Liberty Street, as presented. HARB recommended approval of the changes, which call for the addition of a third

stall and three dormers to the structure, which was previously issued a Certificate of Appropriateness in 2018. Motion passed unanimously.

CDBG SIDEWALK & CURB RAMP IMPROVEMENTS BID AWARD – Resolution No. 14

Ms. Boughner reported that seven bids were received for the CDBG Sidewalk & Curb Ramp Improvements project. She recommended awarding “CDBG Sidewalk & Curb Ramp Improvements – Contract No. 20-B” to GEM Building Contractors & Developers, Inc. of New Castle, the low bidder, in the amount of \$134,828. Ms. Fletcher so moved and Mr. Marshall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

FIRST READING – Bill No. 1 of 2021 – Traffic Code -- Chestnut Street – Resolution No. 15

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 1, “Traffic Code – Chestnut Street” in its entirety, into the record. He noted one correction would be needed -- changing the word “north” to “south” in the paragraph describing the location of the handicapped-only parking spot relative to the intersection. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Lyons seconded the motion to pass on First Reading, Bill No. 1, “Traffic Code – Chestnut Street,” as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.

PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS – Resolution No. 16

Ms. Fletcher moved and Mr. Marshall seconded a motion to approve the following requests:

- May 1 & 2, 2021 • West Park, South Park & 12th Street Island • May Garden Mart • Franklin Gardeners’ Association
- May 31, 2021 • 13th and Chestnut to Liberty, ending at South Park Street, Bandstand Park • Memorial Day Parade and Bandstand Park Ceremony • V.E.T.S. Honor Guard

Ms. Jamieson indicated the May Mart event would be modified to allow for greater distancing and would require masking for vendors and visitors. Mayor Baker checked with Chief Anundson to confirm the parade would require a permit from PennDOT to close Liberty Street, a state route, during the parade. Chief Anundson agreed a permit would be required, leading the Mayor to observe that Council’s approval of the parade would not guarantee the event could be held, as PennDOT has been denying such permits during the pandemic. Motion passed by a vote of 6 to 1, with Mr. Rudegeair casting the lone vote against the measure, citing the PennDOT concerns about the road closure.

REPORTS

Manager

- **Resolution No. 17** – Ms. Jamieson reported on two requests from private citizens asking the City to vacate public areas. The first was a request from Donald Johnston of 448 Elk Street, who asked the City to vacate at least a portion of the area beyond Fifth Street extending from its intersection with Elk Street to the Allegheny River. This vacant lot is located next to Mr. Johnston’s residence, and he would like to add landscaping to the

property. Ms. Jamieson said a main sanitary sewer interceptor and a storm sewer cross the property and advised that any agreement with Mr. Johnston would have to include an easement agreement permitting the City to access and maintain those lines. The second request was from Randy Spencer, asking the City to vacate a "paper street" so he can access property he purchased from the Venango County Repository, located on the wooded hillside behind the 900 block of Buffalo Street.

Mr. Spaid noted that an ordinance is required to vacate property. He also advised that when a property is vacated, it is split between the property owners on either side. Of the first request, Mr. Spaid said that if Mr. Johnston's request was approved, and he wanted the entire lot, he would have to purchase his neighbor's portion and seek approval for a minor subdivision. The City would want to retain easements for access to the storm sewer and interceptor and would also need to restrict future use of the property so nothing could be built on the lot that would impede access to the sewer lines. Mr. Spaid advised that it is not clear which property Mr. Spencer is asking the City to vacate.

Mr. Rudegear moved to table the matter until Council's March meeting so Mr. Spencer's request can be clarified and Mr. Johnston can be advised of the limitations that would be placed on current and future use of the vacant lot. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- Ms. Jamieson introduced Michael Gorman, the City's new resource and Development Assistant, and said she also has a new assistant, TJ Parks. The City is also filling a few positions in the Street and Wastewater departments.

Solicitor -- None

Mayor • Appointments – None

COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Baker

- Offered his condolences to the family of the City's former mayor, Bob Heller, who recently passed away.

Ms. Fletcher

- Indicated Lee Chapman, the woman who first suggested Franklin hold an apple-themed fall festival, plans to return to the City for the 40th anniversary of Applefest.
- Asked Council to give full consideration to proposed future events to re-open the City, following the pandemic.

Mr. Johnson

- Also paid his respects to Bob Heller, on the occasion of his passing.

Mr. Lyons

- Said he hopes the City can open the Miller-Sibley Pool this summer. The pool was closed last summer due to the pandemic.

Mr. Marshall

- Returned to the topic of cars parked on 15th Street near the intersection of 15th and Elk, blocking the view of east-bound motorists on Elk Street as they enter the intersection. Ms. Jamieson indicated the City would continue to look into the matter.
- Praised the Street Department's quick response to a request for the removal of leaves at a Wendy Way address.

Mr. Rudegeair

- Said he received a complaint about people gathered late at night outside the Office Bar.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Boughner,
Recording Secretary