

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
June 11, 2024

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Business Meeting on June 11, 2024, at Borough Hall at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Troy Goodman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Members in attendance were Council President Troy Goodman, Council Member Christine Dise, Council Member Michael Kindlick, Council Member Roger Stief, and Mayor Ryan Maurer. Council Vice President Rick Lombardo and Council Member Thomas Baer were absent. Staff and Professional Members present were Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens, Solicitor Tom Klonis, and Engineer Tom Unger.

Others present included Clark Bussey, James Sparks, Amanda Stief, Jennifer Lopez, George Saltzman, Kate Flowers, Leamor Kahanov, and Mitchell Wasik.

Public Comment

Clark Bussey, 3 Earle Gables Court – Mr. Bussey indicated that he supported the permit parking program.

James Sparks, 8 Earle Gables Court—Mr. Sparks reiterated support for the permit parking program, emphasizing its necessity due to high school parking concerns. He highlighted that despite vocal opposition at the previous meeting, many residents, especially those living near the school, support the program. He urged the council to consider the long-term parking needs and the potential impact on the community.

Jennifer Lopez, 2413 Cumberland Avenue – Ms. Lopez shared that she supported the permit parking initiative but expressed concerns about the current ordinance revisions, mainly the exclusion of parking spaces on Cumberland and Grant near the school. She suggested holding off on specific provisions until the pending appeals are resolved, noting that the school district's parking plan relies on public spaces, which is contested. She raised practical concerns about enforcement and the potential for ongoing parking issues if the ordinance is enacted prematurely.

George Saltzman, 6 Earle Gables Court – Mr. Saltzman supported Jennifer Lopez's points and emphasized the need to consider resident feedback thoroughly. He brought attention to an unkept property on Filbert Avenue, describing it as overgrown and neglected, posing a potential hazard. He expressed frustration over ongoing issues with weed control along curbs throughout the borough, suggesting that previous efforts to address this have been insufficient.

Kate Flowers, 266 Friedensburg Road—Ms. Flowers commented that recent Social Media posts made by community members and interactions with those posts by Borough Elected Officials about the School District were inappropriate.

Leamor Kahanov, 7 Earle Gables Court—Ms. Kahanov indicated she supports the permit parking program and wanted to echo Mr. Sparks's comments earlier.

Executive Session on Personnel Matters

The council announced they would recess the meeting to discuss personnel matters in the executive session. The meeting was recessed from 7:18 PM until 7:38 PM, and Mr. Goodman called it back to order at 7:44 PM.

Permit Parking Ordinance Discussion Draft

Council members engaged in an in-depth discussion on implementing the permit parking program, considering factors such as affected areas, costs, and enforcement mechanisms. The discussion included specific streets like Filbert, with considerations for different sections and how best to manage parking to balance resident needs and budget constraints. The cost implications were detailed, including estimates for signage and other related expenses. The council explored ways to minimize costs while ensuring effective enforcement.

Enforcement was a key topic, with the council considering the role of local law enforcement and borough officials in monitoring and enforcing parking regulations. Flexibility was emphasized, with council members acknowledging the need to adapt the program based on ongoing feedback and real-world issues as they arise.

The discussion emphasized the need for clear communication with residents about the new parking regulations and enforcement procedures. It also discussed the potential use of technology and administrative processes to streamline permit applications and monitoring.

Discussion of Cost Sharing of St. Catharine's Street Improvements

The council discussed a proposal from St. Catherine's Elementary School to repave Woodvale Avenue with a cost-sharing arrangement. Council members supported the agreement, provided the work meets borough specifications and quality standards.

Thomas Baer motioned to contribute half of the costs for improvements on Woodvale Avenue not to exceed \$8,550.00 and must adhere to PennDOT Guidelines. Mike Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Regular Approvals

The Council discussed amending the foreclosure property program ordinance to update the definition of default based on recommendations from Hera Registry.

Roger Stief motioned to advertise Ordinance 892, Amending the Foreclosed Property Program Ordinance. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

The Council discussed establishing restricted parking at 2530 Filbert for handicapped use only, ensuring designated spaces for disabled residents.

Roger Stief motioned to advertise Ordinance 893, Establishing a Handicap Parking Spot at 2530 Filbert Avenue. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

The Council discussed an ordinance imposing parking restrictions on Center Street to improve traffic flow, safety, and access to public services, including the Fire Company and Sanitation vehicles.

Roger Stief motioned to advertise Ordinance 894, Restricting Parking on Center Street. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

The Council discussed approving a letter requesting remuneration for the Sign and Administrative expenses from the Antietam School District for the Permit Parking Program.

Yrisol Garcia motioned to send the letter with the expenses of the program's costs. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Ahrens requested that the Council approve closing Borough Hall to the public on Friday, July 5th, 2024. He shared that staff would need to take personal time or work in the office to be paid for that day, not to create another holiday.

Yrisol Garcia motioned to approve the closure of the Office on July 5th, 2024, using employee Personal Time. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to 5-1, with Mss. Dise and Garcia, Messrs. Baer, Goodman, and Kindlick voted in the affirmative, and Mr. Stief voted in the negative.

Mr. Baer expressed concern about a cut signpost on the right side of Hollywood Court and Cumberland Avenue.

Adjournment

Richard Lombardo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Submitted,

Hunter L. Ahrens
Borough Manager

These meeting minutes were developed with the assistance of Otter.ai and ChatGPT 4.0