

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING
August 27, 2024

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Special Meeting on August 27, 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 9:39 PM.

Members in attendance were Mayor Ryan Maurer, Council President Troy Goodman, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Christine Dise, Council Member Michael Kindlick, and Council Member Roger Stief. Staff and Professional Members present were Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens and Chief of Police Raymond Serafin.

Several community members were present, including Rob Tiederman, Amanda Stief, Marina McGough, Susan Kane, and Adam Krafczek.

Public Comment

Rob Tiederman, 121 S. 22nd Street—Mr. Tiederman raised concerns over a shared alleyway in which a neighbor allegedly claimed a larger portion than he believed he was entitled to. Mr. Klonis advised that the matter was a land dispute between residents that the Borough could not be involved with, but it would be worth speaking to an attorney about.

Adam Krafczek, 237 & 251 Endlich Avenue – Mr. Krafczek raised his concerns that the permit parking program left out the properties of the estate of Helen Krafczek, which he represents, unfairly which he shared created unsightly conditions at the properties. Mr. Krafczek also shared that the area was left open for public parking, and many school students and other people related to the district parked there. He shared that the School District was in talks with the estate to purchase the homes and could achieve their parking needs by purchasing the properties. Mr. Krafczek also shared that there were access challenges off Philmay Terrace that should be addressed to ensure he could utilize the properties. Council members asked Mr. Krafczek clarifying questions and agreed to review the matter.

Financial Performance Update

The council reviewed year-to-date actuals, noting that revenues exceeded expenditures. There was a discussion on real estate taxes, permit services, and additional revenue sources like business privilege taxes. Mr. Ahrens shared that there was a projection of a small deficit (\$7,760.50) for the year, but due to the conservative methodology and the additional expected revenues, it was likely to shift to a surplus. Mr. Ahrens shared several next steps, including adopting policies, updated projections, and a proposed budget that would prepare the Borough for the 2025 Budget.

Investment of Excess Funds

The Council explored options for actively investing excess funds (approx. \$700,000) to generate higher interest, as the current interest rate was very low. Potential investments included U.S. Treasuries, municipal bonds, and money market accounts. No final decisions were made, but the council approved further investigating brokerage options.

Richard Lombardo motioned to endorse the Finance Committee's investment and high-interest rate options investigation. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

ADA Ramps Project

The Council discussed the ADA Ramp Project with the Borough Engineer. Two change orders were approved to replace ramps to meet ADA compliance and adjust the contract accordingly. The total cost for the change orders was \$2,687 each.

Richard Lombardo motioned to approve the 1st Change Order totaling \$2,687.00. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Richard Lombardo motioned to approve the 2nd Change Order totaling \$2,687.00. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Handicap Parking Ordinances

Six accessible parking spot applications were approved, and the solicitor was authorized to develop ordinances for them and advertise them as required. The residences that had spots approved were 2515 Grant, 2544 Grant, 121 Center, 2436 Filbert, 24 S. 22nd, and 28 S. 22nd. Council discussed creating a simple form that handicapped parking applicants could give to their doctor, allowing a doctor to quickly complete the form as part of their application.

Richard Lombardo motioned to approve the 2nd Change Order totaling \$2,687.00. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Building Codes Ordinance

The council reviewed various international building codes for adoption, including the International Building Code, International Plumbing Code, and International Fire Code. The council is awaiting feedback from Central Berks Regional Codes, Systems Design Engineering, and the Borough's other inspectors regarding the proposed updates. The Ordinance draft was tabled.

Permit Parking Ordinance

The council discussed several items brought to its attention by residents and stakeholders regarding potential amendments that needed to be reviewed. The Council agreed to discuss several amendments that created exceptions for commercial vehicles, government uses, utility uses, adjustments to the payment timeframe, and other potential amendments.

The council agreed to have the Permit Parking ad hoc committee meet, discuss additional amendments, and report back to the Borough Council. The council shared the expectation that Police Officers use their discretion in line with the items the Borough discussed.

Consider Planning Commission Zoning Change Recommendations

The Council discussed whether to forward the Planning Commission's recommended Zoning Changes to Lower Alsace Township. Those zoning changes aimed to facilitate commercial growth in the Borough's Main Street area of Perkiomen Avenue. Discussion concluded that the Borough opened the Zoning conversation with Lower Alsace Township to be narrowed to the most important items, but it would be open to requests that the Township had.

Richard Lombardo motioned to send the summary letter and request to Lower Alsace Township to discuss a Zoning Amendment. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Engineer's Report

The Borough Engineer reviewed his monthly report. He shared that the ADA Ramp project started with issues, particularly with the contractor beginning work too in the morning. Issues were identified with the removal and cutting of concrete in incorrect locations. These issues have been resolved. The contractor's current priority is the ADA-compliant handicap ramps along North 25th Street, focusing on areas between the two schools. Some of the ramps, including one at the elementary school, are near completion.

The survey on Endlich Avenue was completed for the Borough's Multi-Modal Grant, and a meeting will be scheduled to walk the area and identify the necessary work, including paving, curb replacements, and other infrastructure improvements. The council discussed extending the sidewalk along Endlich Avenue to and through N. 25th Street, where a gap exists.

The Council also asked several questions about the occupancy permissions for the Mt. Penn Primary Center and how they were being addressed. There was a brief discussion where it was shared that occupancy inspections were being held with the Borough's inspector.

Center Street and Glen Terrace Access Issues

The council discussed the access issues that Center Street and Glen Terrace residents were experiencing because residents did not respect temporary police parking signs. The consensus of the Council was to create a restriction for parking on one side of Glen Terrace and part of Center Street on waste collection days.

Richard Lombardo motioned to have staff survey the area and propose a plan to the Borough Council. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Discussion of Speed Tables

The council discussed erecting a speed table along Endlich Avenue to discourage motorists from running stop signs at the intersection of Endlich Avenue and Filbert. The council concluded that more information was important; the consensus was to contact the Borough's Traffic Engineer and request guidance be made to the School District to address the intersection in their traffic study.

Discussion of Motorized Devices and ATV Restrictions Ordinance

The council discussed with the Chief of Police a proposed ordinance to regulate and restrict motorized devices and ATVs in the Borough. The effect of the proposed ordinance gives the Borough the authority to confiscate illegal road vehicles and be able to destroy them, which it is hoped will curtail the behavior.

Richard Lombardo motioned to advertise the Motorized Devices and ATV Restrictions Ordinance. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Regular Approvals

Richard Lombardo motioned to approve the Minutes for July 30, 2024. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Richard Lombardo motioned to approve the Minutes for August 12, 2024. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve the August Financial Reports. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, and the motion was agreed to unanimously.

Old Business

The Council had some discussion about the positive coordination between the Mount Penn Volunteer Fire Company and Central Berks Regional Codes department in responding to fires and the ability that the public services have to review challenges with rental properties.

Executive Session on Personnel Meeting

The Council recessed to Executive Session at 9:37 PM to discuss Personnel Matters.

The Council exited the Executive Session at 10:20 PM and resumed the meeting.

Adjournment

Christine Dise made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:21 PM. Michael Kindlick 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