

Catawissa Borough Council Meeting

DATE: February 5th, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.

- CALL TO ORDER
 - The meeting was called to order by Council President Andrew Detwiler
- ROLL CALL:
 - Present were Andrew Detwiler, Jeff Fleming, Sue Helwig, Ernie May, John Mensch, Gary Steinruck, and Attorney Anthony McDonald. Absent were Mayor Todd Burke and Kevin Ferris.
- READING OF MINUTES:
 - A motion to dispense reading of and approve minutes of the January 2, 2024 Reorganizational Council Meeting was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Ernie May. All Aye.
- GUESTS TO BE HEARD:
 - Guest Gary Roberts brought Council up to date on plans for the 250th Celebration. There will be a cash bingo on March 16th, at Bloomsburg Fire Co. A free concert at Southern Columbia High School featuring the Catawissa Military Band, Southern Columbia School Chorus and Band will be held on May 1st. The Committee will be assisting the VFW with the Memorial Day service on May 30th August 7th will be the first day of a weeklong celebration featuring a Pet & Toy Parade and a concert at town park with the Catawissa Military Band. August 8th will be a concert with Top Shelf band and food trucks will be on hand all weeklong during concerts. August 9th will be Video Daze band, August 10th will be DRIVE band concert with fireworks and August 11th will be a community wide worship service at the Quaker Meeting House. T- shirts and garden flags are still for sale. A commemorative postmark is being produced for purchase at the Catawissa Post Office. Council Member Sue Helwig suggested that Gary Roberts put together a big list to be able to apply for a grant with the Degenstein Foundation. The banner will be installed by the Borough once purchased by the committee.
 - Guest Lori Smith spoke with council on town issue's she feels needs addressed. She spoke of the discontinuance of the Borough picking up yard waste and suggested allowing burning again. She questioned the funding for the Chipper and suggested monies be returned to the government. She stated that there are still many properties around her home that are in disrepair and need attention.
 - Guest Mike Gregorowicz spoke to council about using Borough property for a community garden. Council stated they would look into it. Gary Roberts stated the VFW was looking at establishing a garden also.
 - Guest Nathan Jones from Larson Design Group, informed Council that they have had much success with grant writings and he wants to discuss more available grants with the Borough. He also informed the Borough the yearly Chapter 94 report concerning the Sewer Plant has to be completed.
 - Guest Lisa Unger, owner of the old CVS building spoke of problems they are having with BIU for the change of use for their property. Architect Susan McGarry from Arch Central Architects then spoke on behalf of the Unger's. Ms. McGarry stated that BIU has been un-cooperative with them, that they are at a stalemate and that she will not work with BIU in the future. She stated they are requiring a sprinkler system be installed and, in her opinion, it is not necessary and that BIU is holding up the project. She feels that BIU is requiring many things that are not necessary in her opinion and that is holding up her client's project. Ms. McGarry was asking Council to allow the Unger's to get a different inspection company or have this go to a Hearing Appeals Board of the Borough. Attorney Anthony McDonald stated it is not BIU's job to be cooperative with individuals, but it is BIU's job to protect the interest of the Borough and make sure people comply with ordinances, Atty. McDonald also stated that the architect is correct that you would need to have an appeals board which would consist of 1 Council member and 2 citizens. Lori Smith questioned if the old CVS building is a historical building and would old rules be grandfathered in. Architect Susan McGarry stated it should be since it was built before 1958, but Attorney McDonald stated that would not preclude them from complying with the requirements. Rick Unger questioned as to whether BIU is under contract with the Borough and Chairman Detwiler stated they were. Extensive comments were heard concerning the sprinkler system, the reasons for the building, the requirements that BIU is asking for. Attorney McDonald reviewed notes provided by Kerry Seely from BIU about the various uses that had been planned for this building, and the changes as to use that has been happening. Council member Sue Helwig stated that the Council is trying to grow the economy in Catawissa and it is worth looking into this matter to see what can be done. Attorney McDonald stated that Council should have an appeals board and they would deal with matters such as this. John Mensch made a motion to look into forming an appeals board, 2nd by Sue Helwig. All Aye
- CORRESPONDENCE
 - None
- MAYOR:
 - Mayor Burke was not in attendance.

****All guests will have a (3) minute limit for all issues to be heard. ****

Staff and Authority Reports

- WATER:
 - Nothing to report
- CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:
 - Councilman Gary Steinruck read the Code Enforcement Report.
- POLICE:
 - Council President Andrew Detwiler reported Chief Laidacker had to respond to an emergency and he read the police report.

Committee Reports

- PARK RECREATION/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:
 - A motion to discuss a DCNR grant was made by Sue Helwig, 2nd by John Mench. Since there were no detail provided there was no discussion.
 - A motion to approve Resolution 2024-01 regarding Penn Dot Banner Permit was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Sue Helwig. All Aye.
- FINANCE/UTILITIES:
 - Councilwoman Sue Helwig read the Electric report for January.
 - A motion to approve appointing William Brior as Alternate Sewage Enforcement Officer for 2024 was made by Sue Helwig, 2nd by Jeff Fleming. All Aye.
- PROPERTY/BUILDING MAINTENANCE:
 - A motion to approve a discussion regarding building roof repairs was made by John Mensch, 2nd by Sue Helwig. Gary Steinruck stated the roof over the conference room in the Borough building needs repaired as well as the roof at the Sewer plant garage. He would like to get Larson Design to write up some specifications so that all contractors would be bidding on the same scope of work. It was suggested to find a local contractor to write up a scope of work and then bid it out. Atty. McDonald reminded the Council if it is over \$23,000.00 it would need to be bid out. Council member Gary Steinruck asked to go a step further, since he suggested Larson, is that we still need to go solar in some areas and Larson has grants for solar power. Discussion was held on the issue and Sue Helwig stated she will look into it as part of the Utilities Committee.
 - A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by John Mensch to contact a local contractor to get a scope of work for the roof repairs and then proceed. All Aye
- NEW BUSINESS:
 - A motion to approve the re-appointment of Tom Long to the Zoning Hearing Board for a 3-year term was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Ernie May. All Aye.
 - A motion was made by Sue Helwig, 2nd by Jeff Fleming to allow Catawissa Hose Co #1 to use our grant writers, Penn Strategies. This would be strictly their project. There would be no administration duties on the Borough and no financial responsibility for the Borough. This would not cost the Borough any additional funds, but will save the Fire Co. funds from hiring a grant writer. This allows for only one grant application per year. All Aye.
- FINANCE Payment of Bills.
 - A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Sue Helwig to accept bills as written and any other that may arise before the next council meeting. All Aye
- GUESTS TO BE HEARD:
 - Guest Nathan Jones from Larson Design wanted to inform Council of free engineering thru Larson Design for Penn Vest. He asked if we would have any projects he could look into.
 - Guest Gary Roberts stated that the 250th committee had a table at the Catawissa Fire Co Fish Fry and sold lots of items. The 250th Committee is planning a Heritage tour of Catawissa on June 1st. He asked if anyone had memorabilia that they would like displayed to contact him.
- ADJOURNMENT:
 - A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Sue Helwig to adjourn at 7:19 p.m. All Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Snyder
Treasurer, Catawissa Borough

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