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PABB01475

MINUTES
Bloomfield Borough Council
Public Hearing
October 3, 2016

Bloomfield Borough Council met this evening for a Public Hearing session in the Bloomfield Borough Council Chambers with the following Council members present: President Malinda C. Anderson, Vice President John J. Patterson V., Michelle L. Jones, Patricia A. McCarty, Pierce L. Clouser, Jr. and Karl L. Cless.

Also present: Mayor Arlis Krammes, Assistant Borough Secretary Kathleen M. Miller, Solicitor Richard Wagner, Acting Borough Enforcement Officer/ Zoning Officer Edward Albright, Bloomfield Borough Sewer Plant Employee Damon Hartman, HRG Representatives Ryan Hostetter and Mike Postich, and Moderator Kevin Fitzpatrick.

Bloomfield Borough Residents attending were Carl Pote, Bonnie and Gene Westhaffer, Phillip Eckert, Seth Tressler, Charles Summers, Kim Fitzpatrick, John Long, Peg Kingsborough, Gerald Jansen, Mike Whitmer, Jonathan Whitmer, Kevin McCarty, Charles Fry, Peggy and Herb Robb, Kathy Burkholder, Cory Peters, Kelvin Spotts, Chaz Sheaffer and James Woods, Centre Township resident Keith G. Thebes, Elliottsburg residents Linda Jacobs and Don Jacobs, Nittany Media representatives Michael Hain and Mark VanDire, and Newport resident Gary ?.

HEARING OPENING

Moderator Kevin Fitzpatrick opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. and had the Bloomfield Borough Council introduce themselves. He then explained the public hearing process to the attendees. Mr. Fitzpatrick explained that any tax-paying Borough resident will be given 3 minutes to speak. At 2 ½ min. a yellow card will be held up followed by a red card at the 3 min. finish time. If there is time, a resident can be revisited. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked that proper decorum be displayed by both the public and the Council. He also asked that when wishing to speak, residents state their name and address.

President Malinda Anderson welcomed everyone to the Public Hearing. She thanked Mr. Fitzpatrick for moderating the Hearing. President Anderson stated that the entire Bloomfield Borough Council wants to see the bridge repaired and a lot of Council members have worked very hard to make sure this will happen. The bridge will be repaired within the parameters that are safe and also meet the Borough's liability issues. It will be a safe structural repair that will hopefully be done once and fixed. President Anderson stated that the Council was prepared to make the allocations of funds available to fix the bridge on Barnett Woods Road and are planning to do that during the Council meeting, October 4, 2016. President Anderson made it known that the Borough Council is absorbing all the expenses for this bridge repair. The Borough has had no assistance or offers of assistance from Perry County or PennDot.

Vice President Patterson stated his responsibilities for the Bloomfield Borough. He stated the Council has put a lot of time and effort into the bridge situation that the residents do not generally see. He spoke also about the time and money that has been put into road improvements. He stated that 40% of the sewer lines are completed and the sewer plant has been upgraded. The Borough has spent \$1.156 million dollars in the last five years and did not have to borrow anything and taxes have not been raised since 2009. VP Patterson stated there are other projects money has been allocated for that need done possibly before the bridge but the bridge replacement can be handled financially.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Charles Fry (99 Barnett Woods Road, NB) gave a history of Barnett Woods Road. His grandfather built his house and the road was used as a farm lane only. In the 18 years he has lived here, he has had many close calls because of cars not stopping at the stop signs and with excessive speed on the road. He stated that almost every promise every made to his family about this road has been broken. He would like to see the bridge stay closed.

Bonnie Westhafer (55 East Main Street, NB) addressed the 1,800+ vehicles that travel Barnett Woods Road a day and the property damage she has incurred because of oversized vehicles making the turn at her corner. She had pictures with her. She wants to know how the Borough can keep the oversized vehicles off Barnett Woods Road.

Don Jacobs (Don Jacobs Insurance Company) stated he feels it is not the problem with the bridge, but a problem with lack of enforcement. He stated that he looked at the bridge and did not see any problems. Councilman Karl Cless responded that the west side is falling away. VP Patterson passed this question to the Borough Engineers, HRG. Mr. Ryan Hostetter, of HRG, explained why the bridge had to be closed for safety reasons. Mr. Jacobs asked about the Borough using the bridge. VP Patterson and Borough employee Damon Hartman explained that it is safer to use the bridge with the skid loader and scag mower rather than going out onto Route 34 to access the Ball Field and the center of town. It was also explained to Mr. Jacobs that the road on the south end has to be kept open for the 2 residents that live on the south end of Barnett Woods Road. Mr. Jacobs then questioned the price of the Borough trucks. Mr. Jacobs addressed the traffic issue in town and this issue was acknowledged by President Anderson.

Moderator Fitzpatrick asked about the 1,800 number. Council stated this was in fact a traffic study done two years ago and it was discovered 1,800+ vehicles per day used Barnett Woods Road.

Gerald Jansen (215 Patio Court, NB) was appalled that the Borough was not going to fix the bridge because only Newport people use it. He stated New Bloomfield has to change because its 2016. He asked the Borough to look at tax free loans because he can not believe the Borough will foot the entire bill. He pays a lot for sewer and water so use that money to help pay for the bridge. He asked the Borough to please put the bridge in.

Solicitor Wagner clarified that the money paid for sewer and water goes to the sewer and water authority and not into the general fund from which the bridge will be repaired.

Councilman Cless said he was told we could use the Liquid Fuels funds to help pay back a loan from PennDot if we take a 1.7% loan with a 10 year payback.

Councilwoman Jones stated the Liquid Fuels tax is already in the budget, we are not getting extra money to help pay that loan.

HRG stated we still get Liquid Fuels funding unless the Borough closes the road permanently.

Herbert Robb (Barnett Street) encouraged Council to fix the bridge for safety reasons and excess traffic on South Carlisle Street.

Kevin McCarty (200 West High St.) is concerned about the south end of Barnett Woods Road (as opposed to the North end) that enters onto Route 34. He suggested making it a one way street coming North.

Bonnie Westhafer gave more comments about the safety issues and the volume of traffic traveling Barnett Wood Road.

Seth Tressler (305 West Main St.) suggested a height restriction 10' bar across road and speed bumps for speeders. He asked how much money is in the General Fund. He stated that he heard there is basically about a million dollars in this fund.

The road was closed in the January 2016 minutes. HRG stated it might take approximately a year to complete the road properly. DEP permits will be the biggest holdup.

Charles Fry had additional comments about fewer crashes associated with the road since the road has been closed. He asked Council to get reports from the State Police about how many crashes have been reported since the closure. He wants it to remain closed.

Bonnie Westhafer asked Council to review Ordinance 123 that was put into place in 1975, amended in 2009, which deals with the size of vehicles permitted to use this road. It is the oversized and overweight vehicles doing the damage. She would like the Borough to consider some kind of enforcement over the use of the road even if the bridge is fixed.

Nate Summers (238 West Main Street.) drives tractor trailer for a living. He feels one way would be a good idea. He also likes the height restriction idea. A lit sign for weight restriction would be useful also.

Chaz Sheaffer (26 East High St.) asked if PennDot has any authority over a Borough road.

Solicitor Wagner stated the vehicle code controls travelling on streets whether it be state owned or municipal owned and you cannot preempt the vehicle code.

Seth Tressler thought the Borough was responsible for their roads and what is underneath.

Mike Whitmer (301 Barnett Street) suggested a sign that limits the amount of axels before the turn.

President Anderson asked HRG if the signage would have to be approved by PennDot if the Borough wants to place any signs on the state road.

Moderator Fitzpatrick asked Council consider all these suggestions and then have HRG research their feasibility at a later time so as to not put HRG on the spot.

Bonnie Westhafer spoke again about how these ideas can be enforced.

Cory Peters (119 South Carlisle Street) asked if the Borough has made effort for enforcement? He suggests asking the State Police patrol the road. President Anderson stated the Borough has contacted the State Police to ask them for help and the State Police has said they will come out when they have the time. He says the State Police can come out and help with this issue.

Mike Whitmer stated traffic is always going to affect someone.

Carl Pote (208 Maple Lane) suggest a one way road and restrict trucks not to use it.

Chaz Sheaffer asked how many trucks use the road. He suggested having someone watch the road or start a Borough police force. He was informed by Solicitor Wagner that money from fines does not come back to the Borough but goes to the State.

Charles Fry asked again for a speed bump at the stop sign. He commented again about promises broken.

Bonnie Westhafer again commented about property damage at her home caused by these oversized trucks and they might consider a law suit against the Borough. She did give President Anderson credit for her help. Solicitor Wagner stated she would have more success with a lawsuit against the motorist at fault.

Don Jacobs stated his office is zoned commercial. He reviewed the suggestions stated by the public. He wants the Borough to obey the rules also.

Charles Fry spoke to Don Jacobs about the Borough using the road and that is a local delivery.

Jim Woods (204 West Main Street) mentioned about the Centre Township bridge on Dix Hill Road that has been out for more than 5 years. He would rather see the people go after the State and not the Borough. The taxpayers of this Borough are going to have to pay for the bridge. Mr. Woods would not be opposed to paying for the bridge if he thought the bridge would be able to support the trucks that are not suppose to be on it. If overweight vehicles go over a new bridge it is going to be damaged again. He would rather see it closed since he is going to have to pay for it possibly again and again.

HRG stated the new bridge would carry any legal weight limit.

Vice President Patterson stated that right now the road does not have the base to support the weight limit that is on the bridge right now. In order to support the bridge situation the road would have to be rebuilt from the ground up.

Mr. Westhafer would like to see the bridge stay as is.

Keith Thebes (Centre Township) stated the Borough can do it but you have to just start on it.

Councilwoman Michelle Jones thanked everyone for coming out and for being polite and articulate.

Councilwoman McCarty apologized to Mr. Charles Fry and his family on behalf of the Council. She stated that since times have changed and there are more cars it might be an impossibility to close the road but she is sorry.

Councilman Karl Cless thanked everyone for coming and for giving opinions and suggestions for a solution. He stated the Council will have to hash it out and see what they can come up with. He stated he ramrodded this issue from the beginning because he was told the Borough would lose Liquid Fuels tax money and this concerned him. His other concern was traffic safety and no detour outlet if there were to be an accident.

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President Anderson then thanked everyone for coming out and giving their input because as she stated we are all trying to be part of the solution and not the problem. She welcomed everyone to come to the Council meeting tomorrow night.

The Public Hearing ended at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Miller, Assistant Secretary