

February 7, 2023

Mr. Smock, President of the Board, convened the work session at 7:00 PM on the above date. Also present were Commissioners Milazzo, Eckles, Pavone and Miller, as well as: Jason M. Bobst; Colleen Marsini, Esquire; Kathy Frederick; Michael Kelly; Stephen Morris; Donna Horn; Michael Valyo; and Jon Dzedzy. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the meeting proceeded.

Presentation *Naomi Crimm of the Montgomery County Planning Commission prepared and presented a power point presentation of the Planning Commission's work on the Main Street Corridor, which is the portion of W. Main Street between Trooper Road & Forrest Avenue. Ms. Crimm outlined the vision of the Corridor, it's uses, including retail, restaurants and offices, and described the look, including depth of lots and design standards, including frontage and streetscape. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Smock regarding when changes are to go into effect, Ms. Crimm replied when the property is demoed. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Milazzo regarding signs, Ms. Crimm noted that same would be in accordance with the recent Sign Ordinance of 2021. Per Mr. Bobst, the next steps are preparation of the Ordinances, map and text amendments, advertising of the Ordinances (three times) and a hearing thereon at the end of 30 days.*

**Discussion/
Status Update** *Discussion/Status Updates were given by Mr. Bobst as follows:*

A. The request for rezoning of the property at 450 S. Trooper Road (Plaza Flowers) from mixed zoning to C – Commercial will be included in the map amendment with the W. Main Street Corridor.

B. Sherry Johnson mentioned the homeless issue and presented a YouTube video of the homeless encampment on The Schuylkill River Trail in Norristown. Ms. Johnson expressed her concern for the homeless residing on the Trail which, according to Ms. Johnson, has been exacerbated since the closing of the 50 bed shelter @ Norristown State Hospital, but also for the theft of property and safety of the residents of West Norriton Township residing near the encampment. According to Mr. Johnson, there are 568 homeless people in Montgomery County and that something should be done to house them, perhaps in palette homes/shelters. It was also mentioned by Ms. Johnson that she is organizing a clean-up of the area on Earth Day, April 28th. Mr. Bobst mentioned that the County Managers are joining together to work on this issue as it is larger than we are aware of since many are living in their cars. Per Mr. Bobst, the County has "dropped this at our feet" by distributing sleeping bags and tents to the homeless, but nothing else, and that the County should take this on because they have COVID funding. Mr. Bobst added that he applauds the residents who want to get involved and bring about the conversation that needs to be had.

Resident Peter Moore commented that “we have no defense against these people” and that he is concerned about the homeless, but that he is more concerned about his family’s safety. Chief Kelly stated that there are two separate issues here: how to keep law and how to help not break the law. Mr. Bobst stated that he will work with Chief Kelly and Deputy Chief Morris on increasing patrols of the bike trail utilizing opioid funds to cover costs, and that he will also work with them and Ms. Pavone and Ms. Eckles on a mission statement on this issue to be presented at the next meeting. It was explained by Mr. Miller that the opioid funds came from litigation against opioid manufacturers to reimburse costs for battling opioid overdoses (Narcan) and addiction.

C. The HRC will be presenting a draft ordinance at the Board’s March work session banning conversion therapy.

D. Officer Alexis Nagel volunteered to be the police liaison for the HRC, as she was in a similar position at Drexel University, and Mr. Bobst is the public liaison. These positions are a general point of contact and complaints are still lodged with the HRC.

E. Also, with regard to the status of the American Rescue Funds, \$1.4M is available for use among the following projects/proposed projects: \$40,000.00 for the Stonybrook cleanup, sewer credits to homeowners, a home renovation project and stormwater upgrade. Mr. Smock mentioned that he was in favor of this stormwater upgrade and suggested that Center Avenue be an area of focus. Ms. Milazzo inquired if we should focus on one area of a number of them. It was added by Mr. Bobst that the goal of the home renovation program is to assist homeowners with improvements to keep them in their homes and would be allocated at \$10,000.00 per home. Mr. Bobst noted that he would work with Ms. Milazzo on this program and that perhaps we could get matching government funding.

According to Mr. Bobst, the following items would be considered for adoption and/or action thereon at the next Board meeting:

Manager

- A. Adopting Resolution #23-1698 Sale of Personal Property for the sale of a vehicle on Municibid;*
- B. Appointments to the Township’s Boards and Commissions;*
- C. Adopting Resolution #23-1699 Appointing Residents to Boards and Commissions, specifically the Township’s Zoning Hearing Board; and*

D. Approval of the 2022 Fire Call Credit List for Jefferson Fire Company No. 1 for 18 firefighters @ \$500.00 each for a total of \$9,000.00.

**Liaison
Committee
Reports**

Per Mr. Smock, the Planning Commission kicked off work on the Comprehensive Plan which is the Township's 20-year plan for the future.

It was stated by Ms. Milazzo that the Parks & Recreation committee is progressing with its events planning, and that the Silver Circle will be meeting next week with Representative Bradford for Q&A. Ms. Milazzo thanked the Arts & Culture Committee for a great concert and noted that many people attended.

Ms. Eckles mentioned that the Philadelphia Academy of Vocal Arts concert, first event of the Arts & Culture Committee, was wonderful!

Ms. Pavone commented that the HRC showing of the movie "Hidden Figures" was well-attended, and that the HRC is working on an Ordinance banning conversion therapy.

It was noted by Mr. Miller that the EAC is meeting tomorrow evening and will discuss the clean-up event at the homeless encampment on the river.

**Public
Comment**

Leroy James Watters, III. of 1 E. Indian Lane gave thanks for: the signs; the opera, which he said gave him goosebumps; and the Johnsons for bringing to light the issue with the homeless. Regarding the homeless situation, Mr. Watters suggested locations for the homeless to be relocated, namely the Norristown State Hospital and Roosevelt Field because of the level of security there.

Shari Donath inquired about the status of the plastic bag ban Ordinance. Mr. Miller replied that the EAC is discussing that topic at its meeting tomorrow evening.

MaryEllen Moran, Port Indian Road, commented that she has personally been threatened by the homeless on the bike trail and she has had reason to call the police for people around her home and the homes of others in the neighborhood. According to Ms. Moran, she is a compassionate person and the homeless situation is a terrible thing, but she also doesn't want to see the trash and debris. Ms. Moran also announced that the County is holding a meeting tomorrow morning on the homeless issue.

Upon motion of Mr. Miller, seconded by Ms. Eckles and unanimously agreed, the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

**Upcoming
Meeting Dates**

According to Mr. Bobst, the following is the upcoming schedule of meetings: Environmental Advisory Council – February 8th @ 7:00 PM; Recreation Committee – February 15th @ 7:00 PM; Planning Commission – February 20th @ 7:00 PM re: 1956-1966 W. Main Street; Zoning Hearing Board – March 6th re: 1621 Sheridan Lane variance for pool installation; and Human Relations Commission – February 23rd @ 7:00 PM.

Mr. Bobst added that Tuesday, August 1st is National Night Out and he requested the Board to consider cancelling the work session for that evening so that the Township could hold events that evening related thereto. Mr. Miller suggested that the work session be suspended and the remaining Board members agreed.

Adjournment

There being no further items on the agenda, upon motion of Mr. Miller, seconded by Ms. Eckles and unanimously approved, the work session was adjourned at 8:21 PM.

*Kathy K. Frederick
Assistant Secretary*