

BOROUGH OF WILMERDING  
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 7, 2007 REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Vice President S. Shurgot.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Vice President.

ROLL CALL: G. JAKUB, present; L. FIASCO, present; K. PETERSON, present; C. SPICUZZA, absent; S. VOLPE, present; S. SHURGOT, present; C. TUSCAN, absent.

MR. S. SHURGOT: we were going to have this meeting outside in the park as part of National Night Out. We moved it inside due to the threat of rain. After the meeting we can all go down to the park and enjoy the rest of the National Night Out.

L. FIASCO / S. VOLPE TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 10, 2007 AND JULY 17, 2007 MEETINGS AS PRESENTED. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 5-0.

PETITIONS & MEMORIALS

MR. B. LAWThER, AIRBRAKE AVE.: I am the new President of Crime Watch and I live at 914 Airbrake Avenue. I was wondering if we could get some signs down there telling the truckers where the entrance to Thomas Rigging is. At night they sit in front of my house idling for hours because they do not know which way to go. When they are leaving they make the right and go down Airbrake Avenue instead of making the left to get back onto the Tri-Boro.

MR. C. SPICUZZA ENTERED COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND WAS RECOGNIZED BY THE CHAIR AT 6:41 P.M.

They have cracked my sidewalk and also the sidewalk leading to my porch. I am asking for signs that say no right turn and some help fixing my sidewalk.

MRS. S. ZIBRAT, AIRBRAKE AVE.: there are a lot of homes up for sale and a lot of them are being bought by one individual. When I spoke to this individual he says that he takes care of his properties and that he checks it out before anybody moves in. I don't agree with that because I have seen people move in the next day. They move in and out within twenty four hours with his properties. Why can he do this and who is backing this fellow that is buying up all of this property. Most of his property is rented out under Section 8. I have nothing against low housing as long as they keep the property up. The statistics in Wilmerding seems like the rental properties are ninety percent Section 8 and ten percent regular rentals. We are going to become like a Braddock if you don't do something soon.

MR. S. SHURGOT: we share your concern. The Attorney General is investigating some of these mortgage companies. There is really not much we can do but to make sure we enforce the 979 ordinance.

MRS. S. ZIBRAT: I understand that the Park Building had numerous calls and the people are still there. Why isn't that ordinance enforced there. You need to do something to keep this town clean.

MR. S. SHURGOT: we met with the Building Inspector, the Code Enforcement Officer and the Police Chief to start enforcing the ordinance to the fullest extent. If you have any suggestions on what we can do, within the law, please let us know.

MRS. S. ZIBRAT: what do we have to do, and I have nothing against the North Versailles Police Department, to have someone here twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. There was an incident one night where the kids were bouncing on the fence at the playground and I called the police and they told me that they were on another call.

MR. S. SHURGOT: we cannot afford it. We would have to raise taxes many mills.

MRS. S. ZIBRAT: East McKeesport has two policemen on at all times and they cover Wall and East McKeesport.

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MR. S. SHURGOT: when you call the police they answer calls on a priority basis. They take the high priority calls first. There are times when we may have the high priority and someone in North Versailles would have to wait.

MRS. S. ZIBRAT: why would they say they were all adults. They were not all adults when we called.

MR. M. VOLPE, PROPERTY OWNER AT 420 CALDWELL AVE.: we had numerous complaints from our tenants, and they did not want to come tonight. They are being harassed by the kids up there and they are destroying everything and tearing everyone's antennas off of the cars, upsetting flower pots and they even damaged my pool. The tenants have called and most of this stuff occurs after the curfew. They are looking into windows, running through the properties, they are busting stuff up and they are out there having a good old time with bonfires and drinking. The police come pick up the kids and take them down the street and drop them off. I understand that after the curfew they are supposed to take them up to the station and their parents are to come and pick them up. The curfew is not being enforced in the 400 block of Caldwell. I have called several times and my tenants have also called. I understand that there were ten cars that had their antennas broken off or broken into. They even threatened to beat my dad when he went down after they tried to break into his garage.

MR. S. SHURGOT: can you let the Chief know which houses they are and who the kids are.

MRS. P. VOLPE, CALDWELL AVE.: I called John about the house across the street that is abandoned. The windows are all broken out and the kids are going in there. Something needs to be done with that house.

CHIEF J. COMUNALE: what the people are saying is true. In the last few weeks the kids are getting out of control and it is getting worse. I have three and four officers down here. When we took over in 1999 we were averaging about 100 calls a month and now we are about 300 to 500 calls a month. Last week we heard a rumor that the deli was going to be robbed and we found out who and when they were going to do it. We took ten kids to the station and had their parents come and pick them up and we told them what happened and they said not my kid, he is respectful. You have a lot of people moving in and bringing these problems here. It all starts on the way they were brought up. It is going to get worse in the next couple of years. We are doing the best that we can with four officers on duty. There were cars that were broken into and the people saw kids hanging around the cars and we asked them if they called in to report it and they said no. We cannot do anything if we don't know about it and that is why we ask everyone that if they see something suspicious to call us. The parents are letting their kids run. We need to enforce the rules and not show any favoritism and be fair to everybody.

MR. S. SHURGOT: we have to enforce the laws. We can't have Council interfere with the Code Enforcement Officer and the Building Inspector. We need them to follow the laws and this may make some people unhappy. If anyone sees someone move in and out call the police.

MR. G. JAKUB: we need everyone to help us. If you see or hear anything you need to call the police. We have a crime watch program and everyone needs to take an active part and get involved.

MRS. S. ZIBRAT: I did pick up the phone and call but the dispatcher told me that they were busy on an emergency call, there was an accident on Route 30.

MR. S. SHURGOT: they had two emergency calls at the same time.

CHIEF J. COMUNALE: that is going to happen. We had eight officers out that night and the dispatcher was putting the calls in priority. I was born and raised here in this town and I care about it.

MRS. A. BRUCE, AIRBRAKE AVE.: like I said before, when the police go by they should stop and talk to the residents so that they get to know them and who belongs where.

MRS. P. VOLPE: the issue is that the kids are out after the curfew. The police need to pick them up and take them to the station and cite the parents.

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MR. J. CERESA, SPRAGUE STREET: I am having problems with vacant homes, delinquent properties that are not being taken care of. I cannot walk down my sidewalk because of the overgrown weeds. It is a disgrace to live up there on that street. We have been talking about this since March and nothing is being done. No one should live like this. There is a house up there that has been vacant for six years. The County told me today that we should be able to knock on the door at 14 Sprague Street because there is a couple that lives there. I told them that there has not been anyone living there for six years. Also, there are a lot of cars that go up and down and they fly like crazy. Right before we had the paving done we had crosswalks by each set of steps. We need to get those crosswalks back by each set of steps.

MR. G. JAKUB: we have finished painting all the curbs and now we are ready to do the crosswalks.

MR. S. VOLPE: it seems like everyone is playing the blame game, why isn't Council doing this and why aren't the police doing that. You have to see where the source is, the kids, and found out where they live. There are a couple people in town who don't really care and they are just moving anyone into their apartments. Citations are going to be issued and we are going to ask for the maximum fine that the ordinance calls for.

MS. A. TUCKER, LYDIA STREET: cars are also speeding on Card Avenue. Is there a way that you can put a fifteen miles per hour speed limit up there. There a lot of kids up there playing and the cars go through the stop sign. Can you also put up a children at play sign. Also, I noticed that there are kids hanging on the awnings of the Park Building. I heard through somebody that the police are not here to babysit. The police came down right away when you called. There were kids down there not just adults. Is there a way that we can get someone to clean up all the trash that is around there. There is trash in front of the building and in the park every day. The owner should be made to clean that up. Is there anything that can be done to remove that dumpster in the alley.

MR. S. SHURGOT: we are going to address that later.

MS. A. TUCKER: as far as the street department goes, cleaning up the leaves in the street. Is that borough property or does the home owner have to clean it up.

MR. S. SHURGOT: the street is our right of way and we will clean them up. But the home owner should not through them out into the street for us to pick up. They should bag those leaves and the garbage men will pick them up.

MRS. A. BRUCE: how about the weeds.

MR. S. SHURGOT: you know what Mrs. Bruce, you can speak your peace like everyone else or you are going to be leaving. I don't go to your meetings and disrupt them and you are not going to disrupt Council while I am sitting here.

MS. A. TUCKER: are you going to cite people that do not have occupancy permits or are you going to let it go.

MR. S. SHURGOT: we are going to go after everyone.

MRS. S. ZIBRAT: I know you sent a company over to repair the playground, but where the merry go round was removed there is a big hole there and anyone can rip the rest of that surface up.

MR. S. SHURGOT: we are looking to get some hot patch in there to seal it up.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

PUBLIC SAFETY - S. SHURGOT: the ambulance responded to 34 calls. I do not have the fire department report. The fire department would like to add Daniel Duncan and Steve Prosser to their roster.

C. SPICUZZA / G. JAKUB TO ACCEPT DANIEL DUNCAN AND STEVE PROSSER AS MEMBERS OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

CHIEF J. COMUNALE: the police responded to 320 general calls, issued 42 citations and 10 parking tickets. The other big problem we are having is tagging, painting on things. The same kid we arrested two times for it did it again. The mother admitted to us that she bought him a book on how to do it because she thought it was artistic.

CODE ENFORCEMENT - J. NALEVANKO: on two comments that were made, the first one by Mrs. Bruce about the police not being out in the field. On numerous occasions, as Code Enforcement Officer, I have called the police up, and if there is no pending situations or emergencies they will respond and walk with me. We spend a good half a day doing this, looking at cars, looking at yards at talking to people. I am working with the county on abandoned property to hopefully get these cleaned up. As a business owner myself I have seen a downward trend in my business. I am embarrassed to bring people down Airbrake and Middle Avenues, it is disgraceful and we have to put an end to it. If I have to be the lone cowboy out there with the Indians, I will be out there. I am not going to be harassed, I am not going to be threatened and I will enforce the law to the utmost and do whatever needs to be done. We also need the homeowners in town to help. What is the value of your home if everything is going to be trashed. These people that are moving in to our community have no respect for themselves and they have no respect for us. Look at the grass, look at the garbage. Every time I see one bag of garbage I stop in the middle of the road and I get out. I have been working with the Health Department about the dumpster in the alley and that the cover has to be closed. If that dumpster is overloaded all the time, that is telling me that there are not enough dumpsters for that particular building.

PUBLIC WORKS - G. JAKUB: the curbs are all painted and now the crosswalks are starting to get painted. The weeds are coming back and we talked about buying an over the counter weed killer to take care of the weeds. We are still looking to bring in a supervisor for public works.

COG REPORT - S. SHURGOT: myself and Mr. Jakub attened a meeting concerning Verizon coming in with their television service. The borough has joined a group in negotiating a good contract. Our current cable contract has expired and we also working with them.

ENGINEER'S REPORT - D. GILLILAND:

The CD 33 YMCA bleacher project has been re-advertised and bids will be opened on August 15<sup>th</sup>. We will have the bid results for your next meeting.

We met with PennDOT on July 24<sup>th</sup> concerning the Safe Route to School sidewalks and lighting and they showed us where we needed to revise our bid item terminology to conform to their standards in order for their computer to accept items for payment. These revisions have been completed and it now goes to their construction review now and then it goes to their contract review and then it goes to Harrisburg for their review. We are hoping to get it advertised for next spring.

The Welsh Avenue drainage project should be completed next week.

The repair of the safety surface under the swings at the Airbrake Park have been completed.

We have issued contracts for the Phase 2 Significant Deficiency Repairs Project.

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Mr. Glenn has responded to a complaint from Rose Alfieri concerning Lilac Alley and he has made recommendations for repairs. He is recommending that the loose material be taken out and patched. It was put in very thin by a utility company.

Mr. Glenn has submitted a recommended form for future use in Grading Permit Applications.

We have submitted the required semi-annual report to the DEP for the Sewage Consent Order.

There were five work sites for the Phase 1 Sewer Deficiency Repair Project. We found that the sewer on Fourth Street (W-55) was not how it was shown on the map. It showed that it was eight feet deep but it was twenty feet deep. There was a significant cost increase on that one, which you were already made aware of. We are recommending that W-54 be deleted because it is going to be more expensive than what we thought because the sewer is a lot deeper. W-51, which is on Airbrake Avenue, we found out that there was a water line that was put in 1869 and laid right on top of the sewer line. There were no sewer maps that showed this line, so we were not aware of this before the construction started. They were anticipating four days to complete this project but it took twelve days instead. The contractor requested delay charges in the amount of \$30,869. We negotiated with him and got it down to \$9,654, which covers his additional labor costs. That change order is up for Council's consideration and also his invoice for completing the project in the amount of \$70,589.35.

C. SPICUZZA / S. VOLPE TO APPROVE THE PAYMENTS FOR THE PHASE 1 SEWER DEFICIENCY REPAIR PROJECT. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

MR. S. SHURGOT: can you get us a price for a patch of surface at the Airbrake Avenue Playground where we removed the merry go round. Also, on Station Street hill there are four large ruts that are getting deeper and deeper. Can you contact PennDOT to have them repair that.

MR. D. GILLILAND: we told PennDOT before they started that it was not going to work.

MR. G. JAKUB: I noticed at the playground that there are small tears starting at different spots. It looks like someone just sat there and started tearing it up.

MR. D. GILLILAND: it is a good surface if you leave it alone. Once there is a hole it is very easy to rip it up. It is very expensive to repair. The alternative is to take it out and put wood chips back in.

MRS. S. ZIBRAT: it seems that the part they are ripping up, there must have been air under there and just by walking on it your shoes will kick it up. It just didn't feel right.

UTILITIES - L. FIASCO: the spring clean up went very well and we are looking into having a fall clean up.

MR. C. SPICUZZA: if we have a fall clean up I would like to see a different site other than the one on Pitcairn St.

MR. S. SHURGOT: if we do have a fall clean up I would like to see something like Turtle Creek did. They had the Boys Scouts go around and clean up the town.

MR. G. JAKUB: now that we have the hi lift in service and it is functioning fine, within the next week or two we will be cleaning up around Pitcairn Street.

MR. C. SPICUZZA: someone told me that someone went down there and dumped a bunch of two by fours. My concern is now that we have no dumping signs there that if we use the site just for the clean up day, it will go right back to where it was.

MR. G. JAKUB: we are in the process of getting that cleaned up.

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SOLICITOR - G. EVASHAVIK: no report.

FINANCE - S. SHURGOT: we received two proposals for our insurance, one from our current carrier, H.A. Thompson Co. and the other one from Rupp and Fiore. Since they were very close in coverage we decided to stay with our current carrier.

L. FIASCO / S. VOLPE TO RENEW OUR INSURANCE WITH OUR CURRENT CARRIER, H. A. THOMPSON CO. (PIRMA). MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

L. FIASCO / C. SPICUZZA TO PAY ALL THE APPROVED BILLS. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 5-0 WITH S. VOLPE ABSTAINING.

BOROUGH PROPERTY - S. VOLPE: we already discussed the playground. Also, we are working on getting the front door fixed. The gentleman that was out here is on vacation and if he can not do it then we will get someone else.

RECREATION - L. FIASCO: about a half hour ago we started our festivities in the park for National Night Out. This whole National Night Out is about taking back the streets again. There are only a few towns around here that do this.

PLANNING COMMISSION - C. SPICUZZA: there was no meeting last month.

PERSONNEL - G. JAKUB:

G. JAKUB / C. SPICUZZA TO REIMBURSE THE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE FOR OUR EMPLOYEE. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

MR. G. JAKUB: we met with our borough employee to discuss his raise.

G. JAKUB / C. SPICUZZA TO GIVE OUR PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEE THE OTHER TWO PERCENT RAISE.

ROLL CALL: G. JAKUB, yes; L. FIASCO, yes; K. PETERSON, abstain; C. SPICUZZA, yes; S. VOLPE, no; S. SHURGOT, yes. MOTION PASSED TO GIVE THE PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEE A TWO PERCENT RAISE, 4-1-1.

OLD BUSINESS

MAYOR D. POMPOSELLI: did you get a sign put up, below where I live, no dumping.

MR. S. SHURGOT: yes.

MAYOR D. POMPOSELLI: have the police been notified to enforce that.

MR. S. SHURGOT: yes.

MAYOR D. POMPOSELLI: how about finishing the job on the Station Street steps and the curbs.

MR. L. FIASCO: I believe that we are waiting on some quotes.

MR. S. VOLPE: if we hire a foreman that knows what he is doing we can do it ourselves.

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NEW BUSINESS

MR. S. VOLPE: what are we going to do with that dumpster in the alley.

MR. S. SHURGOT: what do you want to do.

MR. S. VOLPE: I want to get rid of it. We gave him a trial period of putting a dumpster there for his apartments. There is more junk being brought in by different vehicles and dumped there. Every single day John goes down there and takes pictures of the garbage all over the street and sidewalks.

S. VOLPE / C. SPICUZZA TO GIVE THE OWNER TWO WEEKS TO REMOVE THE DUMPSTER FROM THE ALLEY AND TO FIND OTHER MEANS FOR HIS TENANTS TO DISPOSE OF THEIR GARBAGE AND TO RE-OPEN THE STREET. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

MR. G. JAKUB: I want to verify that they are still citing him for all that trash there, as well. John are you citing him.

MR. J. NALEVANKO: if Council wants those issued then we will issue them.

MR. G. JAKUB: after our meeting it was decided that we wanted you to start citing everyone that is in violation.

MR. J. NALEVANKO: the Chief will take care of it.

MAYOR'S REMARKS - D. POMPOSELLI:

None

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.