

**BOROUGH OF WILMERDING
MINUTES FROM JUNE 1, 2021, REGULAR MEETING OF BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Shurgot at 7:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the President.

ROLL CALL: JOSEPH HARTZELL, present; KELLY BELIN, present; LINDA KIRK, present; KELLY MAXWELL, present; PAULA SHURGOT, present; JOHN THOMAS, present; STEPHEN SHURGOT, present. MAYOR GREGORY JAKUB was also present.

J. HARTZELL /K. MAXWELL TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 5, 2021, MEETING AS PRESENTED. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 7-0.

PETITIONS & MEMORIALS

STEVE VOLPE 250 CARD AVE: In April of 2021 I was cited by Mr. Hussey for tires, but the report doesn't tell the whole story. I contacted Mr. Hussey and showed him the tires from my neighbors' property, and I asked him about citing the people. He said he was unable to cite them because he did not see him move the tires. I told him I was going to then place them on the front sidewalk in front of the neighbor's property. Mr. Hussey told me that I would then be cited for putting them on the sidewalk. He issued 4 citations, 1 for each tire. Mr. Hussey asked me if I was going to have the tires removed and I told him no. Since then, the tires have been removed but the citations have not been pulled.

S. SHURGOT: as you know we cannot comment in a public meeting as to litigation, but we will discuss it with Mr. Hussey.

TRACY WHARTON 257 WELSH AVE: Last week I spoke with Mr. Hussey regarding a problem neighbor on Welsh Avenue. She gets out of her car and throws garbage everywhere, It's all over the sidewalk, the yard, and down the street. She has 3 blue tarps that are tied to the porch with bungee cords, and I asked him to take a look at it. Mr. Hussey did tell me he was going to cite her and after that conversation with him this neighbor began verbally attacking me. I would like to know if it is protocol for our code enforcement officer to tell the individual who called on them. I had to call 911 and there is a report made but I feel this is completely unacceptable of an employee to relay this information to another. The lady told me how I knew him personally because we grew up in Wall together.

S. SHURGOT: in my opinion it should not have happened but we would like to hear from Mr. Hussey so we can check into this matter further.

A. HUSSEY: So, whatever she is saying is of course totally false as it relates to me telling the lady who complained. There is a past history there between those neighbors which is why the blue tarps have been put up. I did go there and issue a Notice of Violation with a \$25.00 fine and went back later that day because I did not hear from the individual. Upon returning I saw that all of the litter was cleaned up, so I never even spoke with her.

M. FITE 105 PAT MEWS DRIVE: I just want to introduce myself as I just moved in January.

S. VOLPE: I just want to add that the reason I was so upset is because I help the neighbor clean up, I clean up most of Card Avenue and sweep it into piles, but I get cited and no one else. The apartment building on Westinghouse constantly has overflowing dumpsters and trash everywhere. I'm tire of picking up people's garbage, I file a complaint and I get cited but no one else is being cited.

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K. MAXWELL: will we be getting a dumpster again?

C. LANG: we have not discussed it, but we usually do it in the fall.

K. MAXWELL: going through town we all see that there is trash everywhere and I think as a community we can all join together and do a Clean Up day.

T. WHARTON: we had done that one year and were told that we could not go onto people's private property.

K. MAXWELL: yes, that is correct, but we can go on the streets and common areas along the roadways.

M. FITE: I would like to know when a person is calling is a complaint, they are considered a troublemaker? Also, what is code enforcement's purpose?

S. SHURGOT: I'm not sure what you are referring to but there are forms available on our website or in the office that you can fill out anonymously and we will have a record of it in the Borough office. They are supposed to handle property maintenance issues and complete Occupancy Inspections for tenants and sales of properties.

T. WHARTON: who would we address about the trash on sidewalks and streets, and the overgrown grass?

S. SHURGOT: you can call the Borough Office or print a form off of our website and turn it in.

J. TOMASIC 410 WESTINGHOUSE AVENUE: I am representing the Historical Society and the Planning Committee, and both of these groups want to give a thank you to the Public Works Department for the work they did in the park, it was absolutely fantastic.

SHERRI AND JACK MARSALAK 409 HERMAN AVENUE: we also have a concern regarding the litter and understand that the Borough has limited manpower, but we need to take our community back. I suggest we "take five at five", this means when you come home you take a few minutes to pick up in front of your home and possibly your neighbors especially if they are elderly or vacant. There needs to be some accountability and if we do this, we will be able to see the results. If this is something that you would be interested in discussing, please let us know.

S. SHURGOT: I would say discuss it with Mrs. Maxwell as she handles Borough Properties.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Westinghouse Arts Academy has submitted a property use application for the Wilmerding Park on June 11 from 6:00 P.M. to 8:15 P.M. for their Senior Event.

P. SHURGOT/K. BELIN TO APPROVE THE USE OF WESTINGHOUSE PARK TO WESTINGHOUSE ARTS ACADEMY ON JUNE 11 FROM 6-8. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 7-0.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

PUBLIC SAFETY – L. KIRK: for the month of May Eastern Area Ambulance responded to 30 calls and had 17 transports. Their average response time for emergencies was 7.4 minutes and for non-emergences it was 11.2 minutes.

The Fire Department responded to 22 calls, 4 intown, 18 out of town, 5 work details, 4 trainings, and 16 maintenance hours.

INSPECTOR MCCLELLAN: So, I do not have a report this evening. We have started using a new program and it does not have the capabilities of printing individual reports yet.

J. HARTZELL: can we do anything about the garage on Westinghouse parking cars on Caldwell, and the end of Westinghouse that are or are not inspected?

INSPECTOR MCCLELLAN: I will have Sgt. Havens look into it but to tag them you need to place a warning first and the vehicles will just be moved in that time frame.

J. HARTZELL: would it be easier to just go talk to the owner and tell him not to park there?

INSPECTOR MCCLELLAN: we can but it's not illegal.

J. HARTZELL: I know that but if they're not inspected it is, he's taking up parking spaces.

INSPECTOR MCCLELLAN: this would be more of a code violation, and you would need to see if there is a Borough Ordinance for this.

L. KIRK: the fire department did decide to go with the quote from Lowry's for the tires.

CODE ENFORCEMENT – AL HUSSEY

P. SHURGOT: who is selling all of the houses on Middle Avenue?

A. HUSSEY: it is Red Knot.

J. HARTZELL: in March I asked how long it is for the 2nd Inspections to be completed and you said you give them enough time to correct the problems but how long it too much?

A. HUSSEY: It will depend on what is being done with the properties. We had on Middle that took over a year because he remodeled the entire unit. The one on Westinghouse was just completed and will be reinspected. We would never let anyone live in the property if it weren't safe.

K. BELIN: I was told that 119 Card is vacant but there is a large beehive and apparently, they have contacted the police and yourself. Was there a response or any kind of solution?

A. HUSSEY: we have someone coming to remove the honeybees with permission of the homeowner.

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K. BELIN: 233 Card tenants moved out last month and the grass is waist high. Parts of the roof are falling into my yard and the downspout has fall into another neighbor's yard. Also, do you know anything about a bar/restaurant operating out of the beer distributor?

A. HUSSEY: I will look into the issues with 233 Card, and I have not received anything regarding a new business but that would be more of the jurisdiction of the LCB, but I will check into that as well.

PUBLIC WORKS – P. SHURGOT: There was lots of grass cutting, the brus hog came in this afternoon, they helped the police look for a sick raccoon, set up for Memorial Day. There was 1 application for summer employment, his name is Brian Beresford. He lives in East McKeesport and is 15.

P. SHURGOT/J. THOMAS TO HIRE BRIAN BERESFORD AS A SUMMER LABORER AT \$8.00 PER HOUR. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 7-0

G. JAKUB: can we have someone go up onto the high side of Card Avenue, it is very overgrown.

J. HARTZELL: also, underneath the underpass the weeds are growing up out of the sidewalk. Do we still participate in the agility program, were we give something, and they do something for us in return?

S. SHURGOT: I don't think we ever discontinued that.

J. THOMAS: does anyone know anything about the catch basin over on the onramp by the auto part store?

C. LANG: I will look into that.

ENGINEER – L. HEMPHILL: I gave my report in the pre meeting, so we just need a vote on demolition.

S. SHURGOT: We received a \$30,000.00 Blight Removal Grant, we originally asked for \$151,250.00 to demolish 10 homes. With the money awarded we need to vote on the structures that we want to raze. During the pre-meeting there was a discussion regarding 448 Card, 126 Middle, 128 Middle and 474 Airbrake. We just need a motion to move forward.

P. SHURGOT/J. THOMAS TO ADVERTISE SEPERATELY THE DEMOLITION OF 4 PROPERTIES, 448 CARD, 126 MIDDLE, 128 MIDDLE AND 474 AIRBRAKE. ROLL CALL VOTE.

L.KIRK: YES

K. BELIN: YES

J. HARTZELL: NO

K. MAXWELL: YES

P. SHURGOT: YES

J. THOMAS: YES

S. SHURGOT: YES

J. HARTZELL: since there will be individual bids, I would like to change my vote to YES.

MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 7-0.

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COG REPORT – J. HARTZELL: CD 46 still has some project to do, CD 47 the award letter was sent, and we only got the sidewalks approved. The Act 152 grants should be awarded sometime in June. They are looking for vacant lots that we cut ourselves so they can try and bid it out and free some time up for the Public Works.

L. KIRK: do they want all of the vacant?

J. HARTZELL: just the ones our Public Works department does, and I understand there are only 2, 428 Airbrake and one on Westinghouse.

C. LANG: they do approximately 10 of them.

J. HARTZELL: Tony said there were only 2. Do we do those other regularly or just once a year? They want the ones that are done all the time.

C. LANG: once or twice a year. The only one that gets done on a regular basis is the one on Westinghouse because he cuts it on his way to the Field.

J. HARTZELL: the tax committee collection is up 2.8% and will be meeting sometime in August.

UTILITIES – J. HARTZELL: why did it take 2 weeks for the LED Application to be sent in.

C. LANG: I emailed you to see if you were going to send it and when I didn't hear back, I emailed our rep from Duquesne Light to see if he had received it. It took a few days for him to get back to me and once he told me he had not received it, I sent it over to him.

BOROUGH PROPERTY – K. MAXWELL: I want to thank Public Works for cleaning up the park and pulling the dead bushes. The trees in the park I requested bids and only received 1 call back.

K. MAXWELL/P.SHURGOT TO ACCEPT DAVEY TREE SERVICE TO TRIM 10 TREES IN THE PARK NOT TO EXCEED \$4000.00. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 7-0.

P. SHURGOT: Will they clean up what they trim?

K. MAXWELL: yes

J. THOMAS: I noticed yesterday that there is a tree stump in the park.

K. MAXWELL: yes, that was covered for safety purposes. A small tree had broken and Tony said they were going to remove that. I will get with Sherri and Jack about the clean up and work out the details. Also, the repairs were done on the handicap ramp at the entrance to the building.

G. JAKUB: I would like to thank Kelly and Edith for planting all the flowers around the monument, it looked very nice.

SOLICITOR – G. EVASHAVIK: last month there was a discussion regarding safety issues and the authority of Mr. Hussey to conduct inspection on commercial properties and what our ordinance permitted. I researched that and had a recollection that this was discussed in the past. I found an ordinance I drafted in 2016 done to supplement and enhance the International Fire Code which we have already adopted. The ordinance was not adopted at that time but would further authorize the Fire Inspector to conduct inspection

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on all commercial properties and multi-unit properties on an annual basis to ensure compliance. I suggest that we advertise this ordinance now and move forward.

J. HARTZELL: if we adopted the international fire code does that cover that.

G. EVASHAVIK: It doesn't cover that with this extent of the International Fire Code.

A. HUSSEY: we are on the 2018 fire code.

G. EVASHAVIK: we just need to verify that and then change this ordinance if necessary. We will then need to re-adopt the International Fire Code every year that it is updated. I feel that you should review the ordinance before we vote to advertise.

J. THOMAS: There was an issue on the 400 block of Welsh Avenue insisting that that road is a two-way street.

S. SHURGOT: the 400 block is a two-way street. What would we have to do to change that?

G. EVASHAVIK: you would just need to make a motion and post signs.

J. THOMAS/L.KIRK TO MAKE THE 400 BLOCK OF WELSH AVENUE A ONE-WAY STREET TO COINCIDE WITH THE 200 AND 300 BLOCKS. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 7-0.

J. HARTZELL: from Glenn Street up to Welsh on Florence is one-way.

J. THOMAS: That was part of the argument as well and he stated that was not for the hill.

FINANCE – J. THOMAS:

J. THOMAS/K. MAXWELL TO PAY ALL OF THE POSTED BILLS, MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 7-0.

J. THOMAS: there is an assessment issue with the BG2 properties. Last year there was a meeting, and they came up with a solution for all the properties but somehow the paperwork did not go through so we may end up giving them a refund this year because they paid at the higher rate.

RECREATION – K. BELIN: Nothing to report

PLANING – K. BELIN: we have an opening on the Planning Committee and the Zoning Hearing Board so can we post that on Savvy and the Electronic sign?

C. LANG: yes

J. HARTZELL: are we doing National Night Out this year?

K. BELIN: yes we are.

OLD BUSINESS: none

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NEW BUSINESS:

S. SHURGOT: it has been 15 months since we have been in person, and we had to do a pre-recorded message for Memorial Day. It was a big change, but I feel we came out pretty well. We had to put a lot of new procedures in place, and I just want to thank all of the citizens, businesses, council members and employees for everything.

A. HUSSEY: I just wanted to say that there are a lot of great things that we do in code enforcement/fire marshal, and I don't think some of the citizen really know all of the things we do. The anger I think is sometime misdirected toward the warm body in the room but sometimes it is very difficult when there are no responsible owners. Sometimes the support needs to be given too from the citizens. I'm not the one that doesn't cut my grass or abandoned a property.

MAYOR'S REMARKS – G. JAKUB: As you stated we went through 15 months of change, adjustment, and sacrifices and I want to thank everyone who came out on Memorial Day.

K. MAXWELL MOTION TO ADJOURN at 8:03 p.m.