



Slippery Rock Borough Council Workshop Meeting

306 E Water Street Slippery Rock, PA 16057

Tuesday June 7, 2022 7:00 pm to 8:

President Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Mayor Longo led the Council members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Shawn Pugh performed the roll call. Those present: Jeff Campbell, Denton Zeronas, Lauren Christmann, John Hicks, Royce Lorentz, Ron Steele, Solicitor Black, Mayor Longo, Borough Manager Shawn Pugh, Councilperson Alex Tuten was present via phone.

Citizen Input for Agenda Items Only:

Jeff Galmarini spoke in favor of selling the lot to Slippery Rock Development stating that as a resident and business owner, he would like the lot to remain a green space. He followed up with stating that approximately 80 Borough residents donated their own money to Slippery Rock Development to help purchase the lot. As president of SRD, he also mentioned that SRD has hopes to upgrade the landscaping and plans to make the space more appealing.

Kristin Vargo spoke in favor of rejecting SRD's bid and selling the vacant lot to a developer. She added that the space in question is very close to the Slippery Rock Park which has plenty of green space to utilize. She voiced her opinion that Slippery Rock needs economic growth to continue to thrive.

Becky Lubold spoke in favor of selling the lot to SRD stating that the vacant lot represents a first impression for those coming into town. She stated that the lot serves as a gathering place where people can socialize and often meet before patronizing businesses. She asked Council to strongly consider looking to other communities for creative ways to support already existing businesses.

Jean Shumway spoke in favor of accepting SRD's bid to purchase the lot to have it remain a green space.

Billie Hunkler addressed Council in support of keeping the vacant lot a green space. She stated that she has seen a lot of changes in the Borough and that the green space is a positive asset for the community.

Augusta Mennell spoke in favor of selling the vacant lot to SRD. She would like the vacant lot to remain a green space stating that the lot is an easily accessible place where people can gather.

Tamila Normand spoke in favor of keeping the vacant lot a green space. She is a manager for the farmers mark and appreciates the ability to use the lot for events.

Carolyn Davis spoke in favor of accepting SRD's bid for the vacant lot. It is a place she and her family frequent often. Her husband, Shawn Davis also spoke in favor of keeping the vacant lot a green space. He is a professor and grant writer and would like to use his class to write grants for landscaping upgrades for the lot. Carolyn added that there are a lot of empty store fronts on Main Street that are available for businesses to invest in.

Willow Malborough spoke in favor of keeping the corner lot a green space. She cited the vacant lot as one of the reasons that her family chose to make Slippery Rock their home.

Abbas Noorbakhsh: spoke in favor of selling the lot to SRD stating that keeping it a green space is an investment in the community. Slippery Rock provides opportunities that do not exist everywhere. The community attracts people looking to escape busy metropolitan areas. He included his opinion that with the size and restrictions of the lot, any potential business that may come in will not provide the amount of revenue that would make the trade-off worth it.

Reports:

Jondavid Longo: The Mayor reminded the community of the annual Independence Day Celebration on July 2nd, 2022. He asked that everyone spread the word to family and friends. He spoke in favor of rejecting the bid from Slippery Rock Development stating that Council should seize the opportunity to sell the vacant lot to a developer which would simultaneously reduce the debt that the Borough owes on the vacant lot while adding to the Borough's tax roll. He added that while green space is appealing, Council has a responsibility to the taxpayers to do everything in their power to ensure economic growth. The mayor also cited several green spaces that already exist in the Borough and urged Council to make the economical sound choice.

Lauren Christmann: Lauren thanked the public for showing up and getting involved.

John Hicks: Mr. Hicks reported that he had met with the SGA president and that he will actively survey his classes to see if he can get a sense of what would draw college students to the town.

Alexandra Tuten: Alex stated that she met with the park board and is happy to report that she will be acting as a liaison, heading up the booster committee, being a bridge between parents, teachers, and the park director to ensure all are on the same page. She noted that she is not confident that the Borough will be able to draw an interest in the vacant lot for commercial use and for that reason along with the clear resident desire to keep the lot a green space, she spoke in favor of accepting SRD's bid.

Ron Steele reported that he pledged his own money in support of the SRD bid. He would like it to remain a green space for the community to utilize and enjoy. He does not believe that a developer will be interested in the lot due to its many restrictions. He echoed that there are other available properties in town that could be revitalized by new businesses. Lastly, he stated that the Borough could look to refinance the remaining debt in efforts to pay it off.

Royce Lorentz reported that he has been working at the Slippery Rock library lot. He thanked the mayor for his help with the lot. There is now a Pollinator Garden featuring 400 plants. He stated that parking is a serious problem in Slippery Rock, and it needs to be addressed. Royce stated that he is business oriented and that he supports selling the lot to a developer to encourage economic growth.

Denton Zeronas: reported that he is in favor of rejecting the bid from SRD citing that the Borough will still be responsible for approximately \$100,000 after the sale.

Jeff Campbell: spoke in support of awarding the bid to SRD. He stated that the residents of the Borough have put up their own money in support of keeping the lot a green space and that he was hired to carry out the wishes of the public.

Vacant Lot:

*Ron Steele made the motion to accept Slippery Rock Development's bid of \$208,430.00 for the vacant lot. Alex Tuten provided the second. The motion failed following a roll call vote with Denton Zeronas, Royce Lorentz, John Hicks, and Lauren Christmann being the dissenting votes.

*Denton Zeronas made the motion to reject Slippery Rock Development's bid of \$208,430.00. John Hicks provided the second. The motion passed following a roll call vote with Jeff Campbell, Ron Steele and Alex Tuten being the dissenting votes.

Opening of Paving Bids:

The Borough received two bids for street paving in the Borough. The sealed bids were opened during the public meeting. The bids were as follows:

Pro-tech: Total bid for all listed streets is \$153,739.72

Shields: Total bid for all listed streets is \$116,810.80.

Copies of the bids will be sent to council and a decision awarding the project will be made at the public meeting on Tuesday June 14, 2022 pending solicitor's review.

Borough Updates:

Comprehensive Plan: Shawn Pugh stated that he and Christian Laskey have made a lot of progress on the Comprehensive Plan. They have been meeting on Thursdays at the Boro building and have met with representatives from Slippery Rock Township, the Municipality Authority, SRU, Slippery Rock Business Association, Slippery Rock Development and the Slippery Rock Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Team. They have been working on infrastructure and economic development. Jonathan Foust asked Council to promote the Planning survey that the Planning Committee is using to complete the Comprehensive Plan. The survey is posted on the Borough website.

Parking Lot Lights: Shawn Pugh reported that there are now 3 solar lights in the Borough parking lot. They are motion censored. The lights cost approximately \$300 each.

Main Street Paving: Penn Dot is almost finished with the paving. They will be placing a wear coat over the roads next. There is no notice yet of when that will occur.

Insurance Inspector: Shawn Pugh reported that an insurance inspector came last week. We were advised that the Borough needs to update its safety policies. Safety data sheets are needed for every chemical in the building and a Lock Out, Tag Out protocol was implemented. The Borough will be in compliance by the end of this week.

Grants: Shawn Pugh stated that he had spoken to a professional grant writer and suggested that the Borough may want to consider hiring a grant writer. He is looking into a grant now that could help replace the street light poles and curbs in the Borough.

Discussion Items:

Extension of Fee Reductions (See Attached) There was a discussion regarding the extension of the fee reduction for new and current businesses. There have been 17 business openings since 2017. The fee reduction helps businesses by reducing fees they may be subject to. Denton Zeronas made the motion to move the approval of extending the existing fee resolution for a period of one year to next week's agenda for vote. Royce Lorentz provided the second. The motion passed with Ron Steele being the only dissenting vote.

Solicitation Ordinance (See Attached) The solicitation ordinance ensures that residents will have the option to be placed on the no solicitation list. Background checks will be done on all solicitors and all solicitors will have to wear clearly visible licenses. After solicitor review, Denton Zeronas made the motion to move final approval of the ordinance to next week's agenda for vote. John Hicks provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Borough Sponsorship for Flag: There was a discussion on purchasing a brick to support the flag project. The mayor thanked Shawn Pugh for bringing the idea to Council. It was decided that Council will purchase a brick on their own and not use taxpayers' money to purchase the brick on behalf of the Borough.

Civil Service Resolution: (See Attached) Shawn Pugh attended the PA Association of Borough's training in Hershey, PA. Representatives there asked Borough Managers to speak with Council members urging them to agree to abolish the civil service requirement for police officers. Following a discussion, it was agreed upon to place it on the July 2022 workshop agenda pending solicitor's review.

Citizen Input:

Bonnie Davis spoke regarding a water drainage issue she is having on her property. Borough Manager, Shawn Pugh, and Code Enforcement Officer, Christian Laskey have seen the property. Christian Laskey emailed Gateway requesting an engineer to look at the property to see what can be done.

Councilperson's Remarks:

John Hicks remarked that a healthy University requires a healthy town. The University is down in attendance for the 3rd year in a row. He believes that students want a town with a lot of businesses and that what is available currently now is not enough to draw kids in.

Ron Steele asked what the next step is for the vacant lot. The lot must be surveyed, and the plot lines will be redrawn. The realtor was contacted, and she stated that she may have someone interested in the lot.

Jeff Campbell remarked that he would like to see the lot marketed appropriately stating that parking will have to be considered. Lastly, he commented that he would like to see someone invest in the privately owned lot across the street.

Alex Tuten voiced her opinion that by voting today we have committed the Boro to remaining in debt. And maintaining the green space while paying for it.

Adjournment:

With nothing further on the agenda, President Campbell asked for a motion to adjourn. Lauren Christmann made the motion and John Hicks provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.