

BOROUGH OF PORTLAND
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 27, 2023

The Portland Borough Council regular meeting of March 27, 2023, was called to order at 7:00 PM by Stephanie Steele, President of Borough Council.

The meeting was held in-person at the Borough Hall Council Chambers.

Council Members Present for Call to Order:

Stephanie Steele Kay Bucci* Patrick McHugh* Wendy Klug* Karen Pfeiffer* Lance Prator*

- Councilman Kyle Overfield was absent.

Others Present:

1. Michael Gaul, Solicitor
2. Heather Fischer, Mayor
3. Carol Hummel, Borough Secretary

Approval of the Agenda and any Amendments:

AMENDED TO ADD:

Amend the agenda to discuss and/or approve architectural services for a Cost Comparison for the construction of new Handicap Ramp for the Municipal building.

A motion was made by Lance Prator, 2nd by Karen Pfeiffer to approve the posted agenda with one (1) proposed amendment. The reason for the amendment was to allow expedient action by Borough Council.

Motion carried 6-0-0.

Announcement of Recording:

The meeting is being digitally recorded by the Secretary for assistance in preparation of the minutes.

Council President inquired whether anyone in the audience plans to record the meeting.

- There was none.

Public Comment: Time Allotted – (5) minutes per person

- None

DCNR Resolution 2023-2: Municipal Recreation Master Plan

Remarks by Solicitor Gaul:

- The resolution was prepared using the DCNR form for grant applications..
- Authorizes the President of Borough Council to execute the grant application.

BOROUGH OF PORTLAND
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 27, 2023

- If DCNR grants the Borough's application, the electronic signature of President Steele on the grant application automatically becomes the Borough's signature on the contract grant, and the Borough is bound by the terms and conditions of the grant contract after the resolution is adopted.
- This grant is contract terms and conditions are similar to LSA grants.
- Most DCNR grants are related to open space and recreation projects.
- The grant may prohibit the Borough from transferring Borough property related to the grant project from being transferred without the DCNR's consent. The Borough is required to be the owner of the site, or control it. Solicitor Gaul noted that while the Borough was owner of record of the Borough property, that the deed contained a reverter clause to the School District in the event it was not used for municipal purposes. Solicitor Gaul did not know whether DCNR would have a concern with that.
- The DCNR could also impose future restrictions on the Borough property that is the subject of the grant application and maintenance obligations. How DCNR requirements would apply to a planning grant, as opposed to an infrastructure project, was somewhat unclear.
- Costs incurred before the execution of the DCNR grant agreement cannot be submitted for payment.
- Councilman McHugh asked whether the grant would prevent the Borough from moving the salt pile to a different location on Borough property or demolishing the municipal building (old school) and constructing a new building.
- Ms. Bucci replied the grant is for the planning process of gymnasium lands. The Portland community and Borough Council will have input with the planning. Ms. Bucci stated that Borough Council approved and voted, at its previous meeting the grant writing contract with URDC to prepare an application for a grant for a Master Recreation Plan. Part of the plan process is the survey of the Borough's three (3) tracts parcels. \$15,000 from the grant funds has been set aside for the comprehensive survey. Borough Council applied to the LSA-DCED for an amendment to the original LSA grant for use of the remaining funds for a new use beyond demolition of the gym. The amendment was approved.
- Solicitor Gaul stated that the Borough should assume that the areas that are the subject of the Recreation Plan will be limited in the future to recreation and open space, and not other municipal uses. If the Borough wanted to include only certain areas in the plan, and exclude other areas, the Borough should make that clear in its application.

A motion was made by Lance Prator, 2nd by Kay Bucci adopting Resolution 2023-2 as presented. Motion carried 6-0-0.

- Councilman Prator stated that by adopting this resolution this is the first step to receiving more grant funding.

Other Business:

Agenda Items:

Discussed were Council member's requests for agenda items to the Secretary. Ms. Steele stated that most of the requests can be directed to the appropriate committees; then bring your findings/reports to Council. Ms. Steele stated that Council members need to attend meetings that are sent via emails, which pertain to the Borough's involvement for the benefit of the Borough. Ms. Steele cited one meeting where she was unavailable to attend and no one from Council took it upon themselves to attend in her place. Council members cannot rely on Ms. Steele, Mayor Fischer and Ms. Bucci. The problem is that no one communicates with each other.

- Ms. Pfeiffer stated that she was unable to review the Slate Belt Rising Revitalization Plan. Ms. Steele replied it is posted on the Borough website.

Plan Slate Belt (LVPC) for the Regional Comprehensive Plan:

BOROUGH OF PORTLAND
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 27, 2023

Ms. Steele reported that all comments from Council members are needed for the Borough Council meeting. Council needs to either comment or not comment on the draft plan.

- Ms. Steele and Mr. Prator represent the Borough at the Plan Slate Belt Steering Committee.
- Ms. Steele stated that she is not in charge of comments; Council members should have been submitting comments on their own to Plan Slate Belt.
- Councilman McHugh stated that he was not in favor and would vote no.
- Councilwoman Bucci, stated that as in the past, she was not in favor of the plan and would vote no.
- Solicitor Gaul noted that some of the draft Plan's general comments regarding Borough's did not appear to apply to Portland Borough, and was concerned whether the methodology for Portland Borough public input actually resulted in Portland public input, particularly on the concept of driving intense development to the Borough. Solicitor Gaul also asked whether Portland was prepared to have a regional comprehensive plan with ten other municipalities, and follow through with its provisions, whatever they may be, when Portland and its closest neighbor have never had a regional plan. By contrast, other municipalities in the region have had experience with developing and implementing regional plans on a smaller basis prior to the attempted Slate Belt Plan.

A motion was made by Patrick McHugh, 2nd by Kay Bucci to cease participation in the Plan Slate Belt Comprehensive Plan process and for Borough Council to not approve the final draft plan. Motion carried 5-1-0. (Lance Prator opposed)

Architectural services for a Cost Comparison for the construction of new Handicap Ramp for the Municipal building:

Ms. Bucci received a proposal from Schoonover & Vanderhoof, Architects, LLC, 39 North Courtland Street, East Stroudsburg, PA, for a cost comparison of a new handicap ramp for the municipal building.

Discussion:

The proposal provided is a probable cost of construction between a wooden ramp and a masonry/concrete ramp. After completion of the probable cost, a report will be provided with recommendations.

- Moving the location of the ramp was discussed.

A motion was made by Lance Prator, 2nd by Karen Pfeiffer to accept the fixed fee of \$780.00, for the service of a cost comparison for the construction of a new handicap ramp, from Schoonover & Vanderhoof, Architects, LLC, East Stroudsburg, PA. Motion carried 6-0-0.

Executive Session:

A motion was made by Lance Prator, 2nd by Karen Pfeiffer to convene to executive session at 8:32 PM. Motion carried 6-0-0.

Discussion: Personnel

A motion was made by Lance Prator, 2nd by Patrick McHugh to reconvene from executive session at 8:54 PM. Motion carried 6-0-0.

BOROUGH OF PORTLAND
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 27, 2023

Action Taken:

A motion was made by Lance Prator, 2nd by Wendy Klug authorizing the chairman of the street committee to manage the maintenance employees and the President and Vice President of Council to manage the office staff. Motion carried 6-0-0.

Public Non-Agenda:

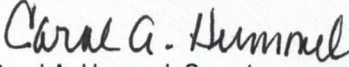
Councilman Prator reported that a streetlight is out on Washington Street. The Secretary replied to Mr. Prator that he should provide the pole number, nearest landmark, and cross street. She will report it to Met Ed.

The removal of the Christmas decorations on the street light poles downtown was discussed. President Steele stated that Riley's Outdoor will install and take down lights on a schedule, as well as banners. Ms. Steele will contact Riley's for the information and cost.

Adjournment:

- The next regular meeting of Portland Borough Council will be held on Monday, April 3, 2023 at 7 PM.
- A motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 PM was made by Kay Bucci, 2nd by Patrick McHugh. Motion carried 6-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,


Carol A. Hummel, Secretary