

BOROUGH OF PORTLAND
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 22, 2023

The Portland Borough Council meeting of March 22, 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* Lance Prator*

- Councilman Kyle Overfield and Councilwoman Karen Pfeiffer were absent.
- Mayor Heather Fischer was absent.

Others Present:

1. Michael Gaul, Solicitor
2. Becky Bradley, Executive Director, LVPC
3. Dean Severson, Director of Regional Staff, LVPC
2. Carol Hummel, Borough Secretary

Approval of the Agenda and any Amendments:

A motion was made by Lance Prator, 2nd by Patrick McHugh approving the agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0-0.

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.

- Lance Prator announced that he may record parts of the meeting.

Edito's note: Recording of the meeting by the Mayor, Borough Council members or members of the public, are for personal use only, and do not constitute official Borough action, or an official record, unless expressly authorized by specific Borough Council action.

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

- None

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, LVPC: Becky Bradley; Dean Severson

River Pointe Logistics Land Development:

Ms. Bradley handed out of draft LVPC review letters concerning proposed RPL land developments of Land Use of Regional Significance, UMBT, Northampton County, Lot 1, Lot 2 and Lot 6. Ms. Bradley began the discussion by stating that the LVPC received the above (3) development plans for review.

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- There are significant traffic issues. The LVPC is concerned with the traffic study.
- The railroad trestle issue is not resolved. (2) Tractor trailers cannot simultaneously pass underneath it.
- Ms. Bucci reiterated again that River Road is in Mount Bethel, not Portland Borough. Ms. Bradley replied that she would make the necessary correction.

- Ms. Bucci stated that there is no way to widen the railroad trestle.
- There are also traffic issues for the adjoining municipalities.
- Ms. Klug commented that she feels that the Borough has no control over this.
- Ms. Bradley stated that this is the largest development in the Lehigh Valley.
- Ms. Bradley believes that a portion of this development will move forward.

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

Ms. Bradley, or others, as noted made the following comments:

- Ms. Bradley stated the Borough would not give up any power if it continued to participate in the PSB regional process.
- Dean Severson provided a hand-out of a collection of excerpts from the draft PSB concerning regionalization of utilities, and possible clarifying language.
- Ms. Bucci replied that she has been dealing with UMBT for over (40) years, and they should construct their own utility system.
- Ms. Bradley stated that there is flexibility in the language, "feel what you can accommodate".
- Ms. Bradley stated Pen Argyl Borough and Plainfield Township are ready to adopt the Plan.
- Ms. Bucci asked, "what are the benefits to the Borough?" Ms. Bradley replied, the Borough is required to have a Comprehensive Plan, the current Borough Plan will need revising in the near future, which will be expensive; Portland could improve its standing for grant funding.
- Ms. Bradley gave an example. Instead of one municipality paying the cost to update their codes, all the municipalities can band together to save money as a region. Resources are shared but each municipality has their own individual codes.
- Ms. Bucci and Patrick McHugh replied there is nowhere to expand the roads. Ms. Bradley replied that the Borough should be willing to agree with the other municipalities about what may happen in the future.
- Ms. Bucci stated that Martins Creek and Tatamy Borough have been harmed by development in or next to their areas.
- Ms. Bucci asked Ms. Bradley if PennDOT has spoken with the developer, Ms. Bradley responded, Yes, but that the railroad trestle is privately owned, PennDOT owns the roads/highways.
- Ms. Bradley stated that all need to get to the table; Plan Slate Belt is about revitalization not the proposed land development.
- The LVPC makes recommendations, but the municipalities do not have to implement them.
- Ms. Klug asked about storm drains. Stormwater Management was discussed.
- Ms. Bradley asked Borough Council to have a workshop with LVPC and tell them what the Borough doesn't like in the Plan. Ms. Bradley stated that the LVPC sat down with Plainfield Township (3) different times until the township got what they wanted to be included in the Plan.
- Ms. Steele stated this is an opportunity to reevaluate the Plan. Council did not need to take any specific action tonight. The topic will be placed on the June 5, 2023, agenda. That would allow Council members to consider the matter, and absent Council members to participate in the discussion and any vote.
- Ms. Bradley and Mr. Severson left the meeting at 7:55 PM.

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Slate Belt Rising (SBR): Stephanie Steele

Ms. Steele reported that Director Brian Fenstermaker contacted her concerning a grant from the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. Slate Belt Rising would apply for the grant on behalf of Portland to install the (7) kayaks that were donated to SBR and painted via SBR funding, for display at Borough businesses. The Borough is asked to provide a 50% match up to \$2,000 for the project. SBR is researching the best display locations, property owners that may need to be contacted for permission, the best way to display each kayak and the means in which to secure them from theft.

The costs would be purchasing materials for display and securing the kayaks, thus the grant monies. If the Borough wished to apply for the full \$4,000 grant, matching with the \$2,000, whatever is left over would be spent toward other items within the grant programs guidelines for the downtown. The deadline for the grant application is May 31, 2023.

Mr. Fenstermaker is canvassing for the best locations. There was one placed at Fuhrer's Tavern & Grill several years ago. The new owner of the Port Mart has replied that he would like to hang one on his building.

To help with the matching \$2,000 funds from the Borough, the consensus of Council was that Ms. Steele should try to raise the matching funds from local businesses and donations. Whatever the difference of the \$2,000 would be funded by the Borough.

A motion was made by Lance Prator 2nd by Kay Bucci authorizing Slate Belt Rising to apply for the \$4,000 grant on behalf of the Borough of Portland (BOP), with the BOP providing matching funds up to \$2,000. Motion carried 5-0-0.

- Ms. Steele will contact Mr. Fenstermaker concerning the donation letters.

Park & Ride Lot:

President Steele provided an overview of the litter problem, and cigarette butts, at the Park & Ride Lot on Delaware Avenue. Ms. Bucci suggested no Smoking Signs.

Discussed was a no smoking ordinance. No action. There are no full-time police officers on duty to patrol. The lot can't be closed because it was paid for by the DRJTBC; the streets department could approve several no smoking signs.

For the June 5, 2023, Regular Council meeting executive session:

- Review the applications for another street maintenance worker.
- Recommendation for a new hire.

Executive Session: None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM on a motion by Patrick McHugh, 2nd by Lance Prator. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol A. Hummel
Carol A. Hummel, Secretary