

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday
June 12th, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Kisselback, Council President
Joseph Pilieri, Council Vice President
Joseph Knowles, Council Secretary
Michelle Benitez, Council Member
Stacey Champion, Council Member

SUPPORTING PERSONNEL:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary
Quinton Nearon, Senior Municipal Inspection Manager
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
Phil Wursta, Township Engineer

PLEASE NOTE:

The minutes are not verbatim but rather a synopsis of what transpired during the meeting, and while I do my best to attribute remarks and questions to the correct individual, there may be mistakes or omissions because of the “back and forth” dialogue and the lack of the use of the microphone.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING:

Council President Kisselback opened the meeting with a moment of silence and/or prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

D.A.R.E. PRESENTATION:

Detective Brian Oliverio and Detective Carrie Palmer deliver the D.A.R.E. program to the 9 elementary schools in Bensalem. Each year the students are asked to design a poster that illustrates an important message that they have learned in the D.A.R.E. program. This year’s Poster Contest winners are:

1 st Place	Harmony Collins	Valley Elementary	\$175 Gift Card
2 nd Place	Jamie Schilling	Cornwells Elementary	\$125 Gift Card
3 rd Place	Gianna Adaire	Belmont Elementary	\$100 Gift Card
4 th Place	CeCe Barton	Valley Elementary	\$ 75 Gift Card
5 th Place	Sierra Grams	Faust Elementary	\$ 50 Gift Card

Council President Kisselback asked the Director of Public Safety, William McVey, to update the Bensalem Residents on the I-95 collapse. Following Director McVey's presentation will be the Township Engineer, Phil Wursta, with his update.

Director McVey indicated as of 4:00pm today there has been no impact to Bensalem Township. Bensalem Officers are checking on I-95 continuously throughout the day and monitoring the Park-N-Ride off of Station Avenue with the additional cars that are expected.

With the catastrophe that occurred on I-95 the Police Department was notified around 6:00am. Sunday morning regarding the traffic being detoured off at Woodhaven Road and diverted to Route 1. Subsequently, there was a watermain break and a gas leak on Route 1 in Southampton and that traffic had to be diverted. Thankfully, the traffic did not impact Bensalem. Director McVey contacted the Mayor and updated the Mayor throughout the day.

Director McVey indicated that on the Police Social Media site they posted the alternate routes that the Philadelphia Police were advising. Other sites to visit for information would be PennDOT and any of the local news networks would have the latest advisories. Southbound I-95 you will exit at Cottman Ave, Northbound is Betsy Ross, Aramingo Avenue. It is a quick diversion, once you get off you are on the side streets for a few minutes then you get right back on I-95. They are requesting you travel through New Jersey if possible or down Route 1 just to avoid I-95.

Phil Wursta, Township Traffic Engineer, provided his update with the following information. Mr. Wursta has been monitoring the traffic issues associated with the impacts to Bensalem and was pleased to report a slight impact. The traffic signals are being monitored as they are adaptive to change the signal timing based upon the volume. If there is an uptick in volume the signals will change automatically and will communicate to all the other traffic signals in the line. Those signals are based along the Street Road corridor and other areas of the Township. The Route 13 and Woodhaven Road exit is being monitored, as far as those traffic signals there are no issues to report. The Cornwell's Park-N-Ride is being monitored. Often you see an uptick in traffic when there is an incident on I-95 along Bristol Pike and State Road, but have yet to see any great concerns along those roadways.

Mr. Wursta has coordinated with PennDOT and their Traffic Unit associated with any support they can get from the Unit and any support the Township can give. They have coordinated with SEPTA who has responded that they appreciate the offer and if they need anything they will not hesitate to reach out to Mr. Wursta, but they seem to be very prepared as well. Mr. Wursta reached out to the Bucks County TMA and they are also monitoring the situation. Their website is www.tmabucks.com and they have information on there as well.

The roadwork should take 4 to 6 months; however, they are still coming up with a design. They need to come up with a design on what to do to stabilize each section, and to add a new section on top of that. Most of that design will be a temporary basis until they place the permanent construction.

Mr. Wursta indicated the area of the truck explosion was underneath the Northbound section of I-95 between Cottman and Aramingo Avenues, which has collapsed, Southbound has been compromised.

DISCUSSION REGARDING TABLED AGENDA ITEMS:

Council President Kisselback asked **Solicitor Pizzo** if there were any changes to the agenda this evening.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated agenda item 4, which is the application for Shax Express Cargo. The Township has received a request from the applicant advising that they had recently submitted plans to the Township consistent with the request and direction of the Council during the earlier part of that hearing. Those plans having recently been submitted the Administration and the professionals have not had an opportunity to complete the review and to prepare the review letters for Council. Accordingly, this would be appropriate to table to the Council meeting date of June 26th.

Councilwoman Benitez motioned to table Agenda Item 4, consideration of a Preliminary and Final Land Development for Shax Express Cargo, TMP 02-075-079 to a date certain of June 26th, 2023. **Council Secretary Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Council President Kisselback indicated the Public Comment will be heard at the time the agenda item is heard. Seeing no one come forward the first of two Public Comments was closed.

3. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:

Councilwoman Champion motioned to approve the Minutes from the May 22nd **Council** meeting as presented. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

4. CONSIDERATION OF A PRELIMINARY AND FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT FOR:

Applicant:	Shax Express Cargo, Inc – Mr. Sheroz Vafaev
Location:	Winks and Marshall Lane
Proposed Use:	Truck Parking
Zoning Classification:	G-I – General Industrial District
Tax Parcel:	02-075-079

This matter was tabled by a prior motion.

5. **CONSIDERATION AND PUBLIC HEARING OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 225 “VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC” ARTICLE III – PARKING REGULATIONS, SECTION 7 – PARKING, STOPPING, APPENDIX A SHALL BE AMENDED TO ADD THE FOLLOWING RESTRICTIONS:**

**No Parking,
Stopping, or
Standing
Anytime Sign**

Direction of Travel

Location

New Trevoise Road

All Directions

Entire Length

Solicitor Pizzo indicated Administration received a request for the Township to consider installing no parking along a Township road. The request comes as a result of issues either with traffic not being able to get through, or the safe view of oncoming traffic being obstructed by cars parking on the road. For New Trevoise Road, the Township received complaints about trucks and cars parking along the roadway and obstructing views making turns difficult and reducing the roadway to one lane. In this case, the vehicles parking on the roadway were causing delivery trucks to Target and Home Depot to not be able to enter the properties.

The Township had a Traffic and Safety analysis done by the Traffic Safety Officer. The conclusion of the report was that the Township make a No Parking, No Stopping, No Standing Anytime on both sides, in all directions of travel on the entire length of New Trevoise Road.

The Ordinance has been properly advertised in the Bucks County Courier Times and is in a form acceptable for Council’s consideration and approval.

Council Secretary Knowles motioned to approve the request for No Parking, No Standing Anytime signs for New Trevoise Road in all directions as recommended by the Township Traffic Safety Officer. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motioned carried 5-0.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF ESCROW RELEASE FOR:**

Developers Request:

JP Morgan Chase Bank – Release #1

Location:

1729 Street Road

Tax Parcel:

2-043-305

Amount:

\$422,008.45

Quinton Nearon, Senior Municipal Inspection Manager, indicated there are a few issues which are documented. Some of the landscaping is undersized and the Township is monitoring the health and growth. Holding a portion of contingency to ensure landscaping replacement if necessary.

Council Secretary Knowles motioned to approve Release #1 for JP Morgan Chase Bank in the amount of \$422,008.45 as recommended and audited by the Township Finance Department. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

7. **CONSIDERATION OF ESCROW RELEASE FOR:**

Developers Request: Amazon.com Service, LLC - Phase #1 - Release #1
Location: 3750 State Road
Tax Parcel: 02-079-009, 079-004, 079-005, 079-006
Amount: \$ 1,004,237.00

Quinton Nearon, Senior Municipal Inspection Manager, indicated some of the landscaping is in decline and any dead or landscape in decline should be replaced. Checked the drainage runoff in the area of Winks Lane to confirm runoff is being controlled on site, with the rain that occurred today, everything seems to be in order.

Council President Kisselback asked Solicitor Pizzo if there was additional money in escrow for the road improvement.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated under the Township's Land Development approval for this project which is being done in several phases; that the Township still holds escrow in roughly the amount of \$2,500,000.00, for off-site road improvements that are to be completed by this developer at the intersection of Winks and State Road. Similarly, for Phases 2 and 3 there will also be escrow developer agreements and escrows posted for that as well. The Administration believes there is adequate escrow that remains both for the future on-site work and the future off-site work.

Council Secretary Knowles motioned to approve the escrow release for Amazon.com Services, LLC, TMP 02-079-009, 079-004, 079-005, 079-006 in the amount of \$1,004,237.00 as recommended and audited by the Township Finance Department. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

8. **CONSIDERATION OF A REDUCTION OF PERMIT FEES FOR THE GYM ROOFTOP PROJECT REQUIRED FOR THE RELOCATION OF SPRINKLER HEADS IN THE BENSLEM HIGH SCHOOL GYM LOCATED AT 4319 HULMEVILLE ROAD, BENSLEM, PA:**

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that Council has recently approved and the Township has issued permits for the replacement of the rooftop heating and air conditioning units at the Bensalem High School gymnasium. The result of that is some of the sprinkler heads located in the gymnasium are going to have to be relocated to accommodate the installation of the new HVAC units. The High School has requested as part of their permit submission the typical reduction of fees associated with that permit being \$218.50 which would make the reduction \$111.50. The Administration has reviewed it and finds the request acceptable in form and content.

Councilwoman Champion motioned to approve the reduction in permit fees for the Bensalem High School Roofing Project to the amount of \$111.50. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

John Crichton, lifelong resident on Grove Avenue in the Oakford section. The ATVs and dirt bikes are out of control. The woods are wide open and the residents are being overrun by quads and jeeps with no license plates. They are coming across Bristol Road and up Grove Avenue where 12 homeowners live.

Mr. Crichton spoke to Hilltop and requested they put up a fence. They are coming up along the railroad, they are partying and drinking. They are spinning their quads and dirt bikes and have caused such a dustbowl that you can't keep your windows open because of it.

The residents have made phone calls to the Police Department around 2:30am and receive a very slow response time. By the time the Officer shows up, everyone is gone. After the police leave, the quads and dirt bikes are right back at it.

The Mayor would like the residents to come in to the Township building and meet with the Director of Public Safety to discuss their concerns. The Mayor indicated this was the first he was hearing of this problem and would like to get it resolved as quickly as possible.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated he received an email from Bill Eves on Friday June 9th after 5:00pm, stating what Mr. Crichton just spoke about. The email also stated they were setting off M-80's. Mr. Crichton indicated they were not M-80's, but the next size up.

Tina Trout indicated when she called the Police, they would tell her to go to a Council Meeting with your complaint.

Jim Gregory's house backs up to the parking lot of Neshaminy Falls Train Station. At the end of the parking lot is all stone and dirt. Every day the kids come in spinning out, dust everywhere. They are back there drinking and smashing bottles. This goes off and on all through the night.

Seeing no one else come forward, the second public comment portion was closed.

10. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Engineer Wursta indicated Quinton Nearon does an excellent job out in the field, he is the hands-on person in regards to the Escrow Releases.

The Mayor reminded everyone that Flag Day is June 14th. Concerts have been going great even with the smoke fog we had last Wednesday. This Wednesday is “Lights Out”, and they are a Frankie Vali tribute band. Regarding the I-95 collapse, Bensalem is working so that it really doesn’t have an impact on our community.

Councilwoman Benitez wished everyone a “Happy Father’s Day.”

Council Secretary Knowles reiterated Flag Day and Father’s Day.

Councilwoman Champion reiterated Father’s Day and Flag Day.

Council President Kisselback indicated on June 14, 1777 that the American flag was created, with 14 stripes and with 13 stars and with white stars and a blue background. On May 30th, 1916 Woodrow Wilson proclaimed June 14th to be Flag Day.

June 26th is the next Council Meeting. Goodnight and God Bless!

11. ADJOURNMENT:

With no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of June 12th, 2023 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

www.bensalempa.gov

or

www.youtube.com

Respectfully Submitted,

Debora F. McBreen
Recording Secretary/Clerk of Council