

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday 5/14/18

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joseph Pilieri, President
Joseph Knowles, Vice President
Ed Kisselback, Secretary
Jesse Sloane, Member
Ed Tokmajian, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Ron Gans, Township Engineer
Joseph Pizzo, Solicitor
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk
Cindy Terlecki, Recording Secretary

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Council President Pilieri opened the meeting with a moment of silent meditation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Pilieri asked **Pizzo** if there were any changes to the agenda and **Pizzo** said that #6 on the agenda, the Preliminary and Final Land Development plan for Bensalem Veterans Residences is being tabled. The Township received correspondence from the applicant stating they need to go before Zoning for a variance issue, **Tokmajian** motioned to table until the July 9, 2018 Council Meeting, and **Knowles** seconded, motion carried 5-0.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Pilieri asked if anyone from the audience wanted to speak on any agenda items, no one came forward and public comment was closed.

3. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:

Tokmajian motioned to approve the minutes of 4/23/18 with a change noted by **Pizzo**, **Sloane** seconded, motion carried 5-0.

4. PRESENTATION BY PECO:

Theodore Dorand, External Affairs Manager for PECO spoke on the project that has been going on in Neshaminy Valley. This project is part of PECO's System 2020 plan to invest over \$250 million dollars to upgrade aged underground cable. PECO has been monitoring electric reliability for some time and it is not up to standards, so there is a

need to replace cable and transformers in the area. A total of 18 projects began work in 2016 by the end of this year PECO will have completed 14 projects with a 178,000 lineal feet of electric cable replaced and 192 transformers. There is a change with the transformers, originally they were placed underground, which is no longer the standard and now they will be placed above ground. It has been challenging trying to find spots for the transformers on small lots. PECO has met with customers to try to work with them, prior to the work starting, letters went out from PECO with contact information and who to contact with any concerns. The weather this year has not cooperated, there has been temporary restoration to properties. They plan to fix anything that has been disturbed on the customers' property, PECO wants to be a good neighbor. They hope this will bring long term relief to customers and PECO appreciates the Townships cooperation. **Sloane** asked who is performing the work and **Dorand** said they have subcontractors fully vetted and bonded and supervised with a project manager on site. **Dorand** said there are 2 subcontractors, Miller Brothers, and Henkel's and McCoy. PECO is looking for a completion date by the end of October of this year. **Sloane** asked if PECO is meeting with residents to discuss problems. **Dorand** said the residents have had many opportunities to meet with PECO who has assured them, that their property will be restored to its original condition. The longevity of the new transformers is around 70 years. **Sloane** asked about projects for next year and **Dorand** said there are 4 more projects scheduled for next year. **Pilieri** asked if PECO could send a letter to Council as well as the residents before starting work. **Tokmajian** thanked **Dorand** for coming out and speaking before Council, but he felt the design and size of the boxes are an eyesore. **Dorand** said that at the present time, there are few choices as to where they locate the boxes for the transformers. **Tokmajian** said the clean-up of the properties is not perfect, **Dorand** said they get as close to perfect as they can, with good weather all should be complete by the end of October. **Tokmajian** said it needs to get as close to perfect as possible, the residents take pride in their property. **Dorand** said that the customers received a door hanger with contact numbers and if necessary, PECO will circle back, he also said there is a project manager on site every day, and there is a punch list that will be addressed. **Tokmajian** said when they replace a concrete block it doesn't match, **Dorand** said that over time it will fade and blend in better, but there is nothing that can be done about it matching. **Knowles** said that Henkel's and McCoy are very large and did PECO have control of them, and **Dorand** said yes. **Knowles** thanked **Dorand** for coming out and speaking before Council. The **Mayor** said his office received 52 phone calls and 27 emails and every call and email went to PECO. The biggest complaint is the new transformer boxes, the **Mayor** said he also sent letters out to the residents. **Pilieri** thanked **Dorand** and asked if he would please copy Council on any letters sent to the residents. **Pizzo** said any complaints from residents should go to the PECO contact person: Randi Martin (215) 956-3113 or randi.martin@exeloncorp.com.

5. **SIGNING OF RECORD PLAN:**

Applicant	Michael D. Cannon
Location:	4552 Laurence Court
Proposed Use:	Duplex Dwelling
Zoning Classification:	R-3A
Tax Parcel:	2-93-288

Gans recommend that Council approve the signing of the record plan, **Knowles** motioned to approve and **Kisselback** seconded, motion carried 5-0.

6. CONSIDERATION OF PRELIMINARY & FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT:

Applicant BSV Housing LP (Bensalem Veterans Residences)
Location: 3063, 3095 Mechanicsville Road
Proposed Use: Residential
Zoning Classification: BP (Business Professional)
Tax Parcel: 2-37-63 & 2-7-63-1

Tabled until 7/9/18

7. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION:

Pizzo said the proposed resolution is for the upgrading of the existing traffic signal for the pedestrian crossing installation at Bristol Road and Pasqualone Blvd. Shopping Center Access. **Sloane** asked what the cost of the upgrade and it is in the budget, **Gans** said that PennDOT pays for this. **Kisselback** motioned to approve and **Sloane** seconded, motion carried 5-0.

8. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION:

Pizzo said that this proposed resolution is for the dedication of the following to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation: Tax Map Parcels: 2-33-14, 2-37-63, 2-37-64, 2-37-65, 2-37-66, 2-37-67, 2-37-68-1, 2-37-86 and 2-38-2 the intersection of Mechanicsville and Byberry Roads. This intersection improvement was fully funded by PARX Casino and no Township funds were expended. **Sloane** asked who owns these properties and the **Mayor** said some are the residents and some belong to PARX Casino. The Casino put up 2 million in escrow for this work, **Kisselback** motioned to approve and **Knowles** seconded, motion carried 5-0.

9. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION:

A resolution is needed for the filing of an application for funds under the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP), the Township is seeking grant funds for this. **Tony Belfield**, a former Council member and current member of the Environmental Advisory Board, who spearheaded this project, came to the podium and spoke in support of this. Bensalem Central Park is the most celebrated of Bensalem Townships' park system, residents and visitors enjoy the use of the pavilions, playground, and amphitheater. There is over 30 acres of woodlands and wetlands and open space which is in need of improved accessibility. A grant for \$136,922.25 has been received and the Township is seeking a grant from the state for \$56,000.00. **Sloane** asked if the crushed stone which will be used in the project is ADA compliant and **Belfield** said it is. **Sloane** also asked when the project will begin and **Belfield** said as soon as the funds are available and subject to weather conditions, it should take 3 months start to finish. **Knowles** motioned to approve and **Tokmajian** seconded, motion carried 5-0.

10. ESCROW RELEASE:

Developers Request: Somerton Valley Homes, LP-Phase 1-Release #14
Location: Carter Road @ Somerton Road
Tax Parcel: 2-6-1- and 2-7-2
Amount: \$ 0

Gans said the applicant requested an escrow release in the amount of \$22,458.30 but based on the punch list, **Gans** did not recommend release of any amount at this time. **Knowles** motioned to not release any escrow at this time and **Sloane** seconded, motion carried 5-0.

11. ESCROW RELEASE:

Developers Request: Somerton Valley Homes, LP-Phase 1-Release #19
Location: Carter Road @ Somerton Road
Tax Parcel: 2-6-1- and 2-7-2
Amount: \$ 0

Gans said the applicant requested an escrow release in the amount of \$1,011.00, again based on the punch list, **Gans** did not recommend release of any amount at this time. **Tokmajian** motioned to not release any escrow at this time and **Kisselback** seconded, motion carried 5-0.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Melanie Goldstein of 4419 East Yates spoke about 287G and she said she was glad that Bensalem Township decided they would not pursue this, she said no thanks to the **Mayor** who did not offer a definitive answer on the subject. She went on to say that thanks to the community activists, families will not have to live in fear of deportation, Bensalem is a model for other communities, and she hopes the **Mayor** will stand by his word.

Frank Goldstein also of 4419 East Yates Road said he was before Council several weeks ago when the 287G subject was raised and he said that some of his remarks may have been taken the wrong way. He said 25 years ago he founded the Bucks County Hero Scholarship Fund, he went on to say he is a strong supporter of the Police, EMS and first responders.

Allan Windsor of 3232 Azalea Ave. said he was on the bus to Washington DC recently for the Bucks County Tour of Honor, it was very humbling to see the Vietnam Vets finally get the recognition they deserved. He hoped that this goes on every year and that the Vets from Iraq, and Afghanistan will be recognized for their sacrifices also.

13. OTHER BUSINESS:

Mayor - as far as the 287G the Township is doing what is right for the community, he does not want the community split over this. He also said that he went to Washington on

the Tour of Honor and he found his nephew's name on the wall, he said that **Joe Szafran** who runs this program is doing a wonderful job along with his staff.

Pizzo – said he is a longtime resident of this community and Bensalem is a model community, we should be proud of our elected officials in Bensalem.

Sloane – was concerned about comments that were made on 287G by the Director of Public Safety **Fred Harran**, the **Mayor** said he would talk to **Harran** about it. **Sloane** also said he was not informed ahead of time about the Press Release on 287G and would like to be notified ahead of time before anything is released. The **Mayor** said he would make sure Council be notified, but the press release was not put out by the Township.

Pizzo – said the Township would get information to Council. **Sloane** asked about the overhead projector and when would the Township be using it at the Council meetings. The date when the projector will be ready is June 1st. **Sloane** then wished everyone a safe Memorial Day.

Tokmajian – referred to the School Board Meeting and **Harran** mentioned about another resource officer for the school and asked who would pay for that? The **Mayor** said the school district reimburses the Township, the officer would rotate between the middle schools, not the high school. **Tokmajian** also said he would like a quarterly report on the budget, particularly the money spent on snow removal, he wished all a Happy Memorial Day.

Knowles – said he is proud of Bensalem's diversity and he is glad that 287G is over, he noted that President Clinton started 287G during his administration.

Kisselback – thanked the men and women who have given their lives for our country, he said the High School will have a dedication this Saturday at 12:00 p.m. for all the members of the high school who served their country. He also said to remember all the men and women who left school to fight in the Vietnam War.

Pileri – wished everyone a safe and happy Memorial Day and to remember that 5/15/18 is Election Day and get out and vote.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

The next Council meeting is scheduled for 5/29/2018

**Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Terlecki**