

January 3, 2011

Towanda, Pa.

The regular monthly meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Monday, January 3, 2011 at the Municipal Building, 724 Main St., Towanda. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Mark Christini followed by a moment of silent prayer and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called and recorded as follows:

PRESENT: Mrs. Clark, Mr. Christini, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Long, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Sweitzer

ABSENT: Mr. McLinko, Mr. Roof

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Jay Cory, Ben Franklin Crafts, addressed Council concerning parking issues. He distributed some information to Council and thanked Council for changing the parking flow on Park St. He said they are still having trouble with County employees taking parking spaces. He said he would like to work with Council to come up with some other ideas for tackling the parking issue downtown. Mrs. Clark asked Mr. Cory if he had any ideas and Mr. Cory said the parking garage becomes a reality it would be good to try to get the County employees to park there. He also asked if it would be possible to purchase part of the parking lot out back. He also offered bringing back the two hour parking instead of three. Mrs. Clark asked if it would be possible to make parts of certain streets two or one hour parking.

Mr. Cory also asked Council if the parking space closest to the store could be made handicapped accessible. Mr. Kovalcin said he did not think that would be a problem.

Mr. Haight said there are some other issues that need to be discussed such as the "forgiveness" portion of the tickets. He said that is being abused. He said Ms. Wells has some ideas regarding parking too.

Mr. Sweitzer asked who would be responsible to police the one hour parking? He said he felt the best thing would be to sell them park of the back parking lot and let them police it. He suggested making the parking spaces on Park St. beside Ben Franklin parking for the store only. Mr. Christini said the Borough cannot legally designate parking for an individual business.

Mr. Long suggested to Mr. Cory that he poll his customers about barriers to shopping in his store and come back to Council.

After further discussion, Mr. Christini said the issue would be discussed at the next Finance/Administrative Committee which is held the Thursday before Council at 7 p.m. He invited Mr. Cory to attend. He also said it would be interesting to get a consensus from the rest of the downtown store owners.

Cindy Wood, Dry Goods Plus, noted that parking in front of her building is a loading zone and the next space is handicapped parking so she said she has no parking on Main St. for her store. She said Bridge St. is constantly parked by employees of the area. She said she pays for parking spaces for her employees and some of her tenants. She said she has no customer parking and said she only gets walk-ins. She asked Council to also consider making the first few spaces on Bridge St. one hour parking. Mr. Christini said this is something else that will be discussed at the next Fin/Adm meeting.

Frances Walker, 6 William St., said the traffic on her street is horrific and she said she does not let her children play outside. She said the traffic goes to fast and she said the tenants parking in the apartment houses are getting more and more. She suggested making William and Chestnut a four-way stop it might help elevate the problem. Mr. Christini said her suggestion would be referred to the Police Committee for study and report back to Council at the next meeting.

Joe Doherty, BCVMPA, updated Council on the activities of the Association. He reported to Council that the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources has awarded Towanda Borough a \$200,000 grant for the memorial park.

Mr. Doherty said the members of the Association are trying to cover the entire County to raise funds but he said we don't have enough manpower. He said we would like to consider paying expenses (mileage) for these people. Mr. Sweitzer asked about the other veterans organizations in the County helping out and Mr. Doherty said we haven't asked them yet.

Mr. Doherty introduced Kathy Fields who explained to Council how she was keeping track of the contributions that are coming in and how she was recording the brick sales.

Mr. Doherty said the Association's sculptor of choice is Robert Eccleston from Lake Placid, NY.

George Crowell, BCVMPA, said members of the Association visited Mr. Eccleston and he submitted to Council samples of projects Mr. Eccleston has done. He also showed Council a drawing of the proposed sculpture. He said Mr. Eccleston has offered to come to Council and introduce himself.

Mr. Sweitzer asked what is the time line for deciding the sculpture and Mr. Doherty said before the next meeting.

Mrs. Clark said she personally felt that Council trusts the decision of the Association. Mr. Kovlacin said he felt Council could make a decision now. Mr. Christini agreed.

After further discussion, Mrs. Clark made a motion seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to approve the sculpture rendering by Mr. Eccleston as shown to Council by the BCVMPA. Motion carried.

Cindy Wood, Dry Goods Plus, told Council she felt that the Borough is short a full time officer. She said there are 6 part time officers. She said some of them do not work many hours and she felt they might be a liability to the Borough because they aren't trained properly. She said with the influx of people in the area crime has gone up. She said there are times during the week that only one officer is on duty. She said one part time officer has worked for the Borough for over 6 years—Officer Kelley. She said he needs to have a full time job to support his family and she said another part time officer who puts in a lot of hours is Officer Lake. She asked the Borough to consider this situation.

Chief Osman said he would like to talk with Mrs. Wood at a later time about this.

Chief Osman said all our part time officers have been with the Borough for a long time. Mr. Christini said Council does look at staffing for the Police Dept. based on information presented by the Police Committee. He said we have to balance cost with need but we appreciate your comments and will take it under consideration.

Mr. Sweitzer said that all our officers are highly trained. They all received the same type of training whether they are full time or part time.

Mr. Christini thanked the visitors for their comments.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

The minutes will be approved at next month's meeting.

FIRE BOARD

Mr. Klinger reported there was nothing to bring before Council.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Miller will be late. His report will be given later in the meeting

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

Will be given later in the meeting.

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT

No meeting.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Mr. Haight reported there were 162 rental inspections made in 2010.

He reported that the new house on Huston & Third is coming along nicely. Mr. Sweitzer asked if it is being sprinklered and Mr. Haight said yes.

Mr. Haight referred to page 7, item 19. He said there is still a lot of brush up there and things that need to be done. He said he will be getting to that. He noted that some of the compliance action items will have to wait till spring to be resolved.

Mr. Haight noted that every apartment in the Borough is being rented and every parking space is being utilized.

Mr. Sweitzer said Council is going to have to make some decisions about parking downtown because these merchants are losing business. Mr. Christini said hopefully some of the merchants can help us solve the parking issues.

Mr. Haight said the Borough has added more parking spaces on Bridge St. and Park St.

Mr. Christini said the County has to step up and help us with parking downtown.

Mr. Haight suggested Council talk to Vicki about parking since she deals with it everyday. He said she has some ideas to discuss with Council.

Mr. Christini said Vicki would be invited to the next Fin/Adm committee meeting to discuss the parking issue.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Osman reported that it was a fairly quiet month. The K-9 unit did several events last month including a stop at the Sullivan County school and they school in turn gave us a donation. He said a roving patrol was conducted on New Years Eve in the Borough.

Chief Osman said the new radios are here and the grant money has been received. He told Council that he will have his year-end report for them next month. He said he is still looking for a K-9 unit to replace the 2002 vehicle we have now.

Chief Osman said the annual updates for the officers is underway.

Chief Osman said Council should be looking to replace one of the vehicles in 1012—probably the 2003 SUV. Mr. Christini said the Police Committee should come to Council with its recommendations.

Mr. Long asked the Chief if he had any data that would support putting a motorcycle in the mix to better budget our money and Chief Osman said he would check the reports and get back to him.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

No meeting.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Frawley reported that with regard to the Steven Michaels property, a grant application has been filed for CDBG funds through the County. He said he made a presentation at the hearing but has not

heard any official confirmation yet. He said he was extremely optimistic that the Borough will be awarded around \$35,000. Mr. Christini asked what will that allow the Borough to do and Mr. Frawley said raze the building.

Mrs. Clark asked if the lot could be sold then and Mr. Frawley said he did not know.

Mr. Haight said if it is razed it removes any code violations and any environmental violations as well as safety issues.

Mr. Frawley reported that with regard to the 410-412 William St. property it is been a hassle to get anything done. He said the Borough gave the estate time because it said it had a buyer that would remove the building. They entered into an agreement but the settlement date came and went and they buyers disappeared. Then other buyers entered into an agreement. The prospective buyers applied for an LLC on November 12th. As of December 7th when the Dept. of State Corporation Bureau was contacted they stated that the application was not completely filled in. It was sent back and said they could process the application within one or two business days. Mr. Frawley said the Bureau said it did not received the refiled application. He said he sent a letter to the attorney representing the estate trying to get this resolved. Mr. Frawley said he talked to the attorney on the 30th who stated she did not know what else she could do that she hadn't already done. He said he next talked to the two prospective buyers and after that the LLC was still not filed with the Bureau. Mr. Frawley said he talked to one of the prospective buyers who said if the LLC was not taken care of immediately he would buy it himself. The other buyer said he would resubmit it tomorrow. Mr. Frawley suggested that the buyers meet with a Council committee and if the problem is not resolved this month we go ahead.

Mr. Sweitzer said let them buy the property now and then file for the LLC. Mrs. Clark agreed.

Mr. Haight said they have started working on the property. They are taking a tree down.

Mr. Christini told Mr. Frawley to keep pushing them. Mr. Frawley said he would contact them everyday this week. Mr. Christini complimented Mr. Frawley on his diligence concerning this matter.

BOROUGH SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mrs. Harris presented reappointments to Borough boards for 2011. Paul Sweitzer and Michael Walsh to the Towanda Municipal Authority for 5 year terms.

Mr. Long made a motion seconded by Mr. Klinger to reappoint **Paul Sweitzer** and **Michael Walsh** to the Towanda Municipal Authority for 5-year terms each.

Motion carried with Mr. Sweitzer abstaining.

Mr. Sweitzer said that since he represents Towanda Borough Council on the Authority, if he was no longer on Council he would give up his seat on the Authority.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Christini said there was no meeting. He did report that the updating of the codes is underway and Mr. Fairchild and Mr. Haight and Mrs. Harris are going to review them and then the Planning Commission will continue its work on the project.

YMCA

Mr. Sweitzer said the SCI/YMCA project is coming along and it is a great asset to the Borough.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sweitzer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Miller to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.