

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 21, 2022 – 7:00 PM**

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Wortman presided over the March 21, 2022, regular meeting of Warren City Council in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Wortman announced that Council met in executive session on March 16 regarding ongoing roundabout (intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue West and Market Street) concerns and immediately prior to this meeting for the purpose of discussing real property matters pertaining to the acquisition of real property as well as receipt of legal advice.

ALL-COUNTY MUSICAL

Mayor Wortman introduced Elizabeth ~~Kobley~~ *Koebley*, Logan Johnson, Sydney Johnson, and Rob Pearce representing the All-County High School Musical production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Miss Kobley and Mr. Johnson performed one of the numbers from the musical. *Spelling correction made 4-18-22.*

ROLL CALL

Members present and responding to roll call were: Mayor David Wortman, Maurice Cashman, Philip Gilbert, Wendy McCain, Joe Michaels, Jared Villella, and John Wortman. Members of City Staff present were Nancy Freenock, City Manager; Jessicca Byler, Acting Finance Officer; Michael Holtz, DPW Director; David Krogler, Fire Chief; Teena Leary, Assistant City Clerk; Randall Rossey, Codes and Planning Director; Chad Yuriscic, City Engineer; and Andrea Stapleford, City Solicitor.

RECOGNITIONS

Mayor Wortman announced that Council member Philip Gilbert recently received the Governor's Award for Local Government Excellence for his role in developing Innovault Coworking . Mayor Wortman presented Mr. Gilbert with a congratulatory certificate.

Mayor Wortman presented James Decker, Executive Director of the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry, with a certificate of thanks in recognition of his dedication to completing the local portion of the PA Wilds Build Back Better grant application. If awarded, the City stands to receive several million dollars for the Allegheny Riverfront Redevelopment Project.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Wortman welcomed all visitors. Present were:

- Present regarding Pickleball were Jon Marti, Kim Mong (via Zoom), Doug James (via Zoom), Barb Zawacki, and Mary Ann Mallow
- David Winans and Chrissi Winans: Historic District
- Tom Christie: 231-237 PA Avenue West
- Madison McDunn: 231-237 PA Avenue West
- Wendy Hollabaugh: Transit Authority of Warren County
- Brandi Rosselli: Mackin Engineering
- Angie Dart, Planning Commission Chair: Comprehensive Plan Update
- Holly LeMeur, Redevelopment Authority Member
- All-County Musical representatives: Elizabeth Kobley, Logan Johnson, Sydney Johnson, and Rob Pearce, Director
- Josh Cotton: Times Observer Reporter
- Andy Close: YourDailyLocal Reporter

Tom Christie addressed Council regarding the properties located at 231-237 Pennsylvania Avenue West. Mr. Christie stated that he is aware that the properties are currently held by Hudson Companies/PA Senior Housing. However, he indicated that he has a “Plan B” for the property and asked that he be informed should the current plan not come to fruition.

Jon Marti, representing the Warren Pickleball Club (WPC), asked that the Club’s request for Council’s support and approval of a location next to the Betts Park Bocce Courts for construction of new pickleball courts be added to the agenda. Mr. Marti stated that such support is required so that WPC may begin fundraising efforts. Ms. Stapleford stated that the matter of Council’s support for the project would be an appropriate addition to the agenda in accord with the PA Sunshine Act.

David Winans addressed Council in regard to the Historic District and noted protections provided to properties within the District when the use of public monies for a building demolition is contemplated.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon motion by Mr. Cashman and second by Mr. Villella, Council members voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Mr. Gilbert made the motion to amend the agenda by the addition of discussion regarding the location of pickleball courts within the City. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McCain and carried with six votes in the affirmative and one nay vote cast by Mr. J. Wortman.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion by Mr. Cashman and second by Mr. Michaels, the minutes of the February 21, 2022, regular meeting were unanimously approved with one typographical correction.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2022, special meeting (tabled at the February 21, 2022 regular meeting). The motion was seconded by Mr. J. Wortman and carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to come before Council.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Brandi Rosselli, of Mackin Engineering, provided an update on the progress of development of a new Comprehensive Plan for the City of Warren. She noted that meetings will be held at the Municipal Building on March 23 and 30 to receive input from community members and that there will be additional opportunities for public input. Ms. Rosselli stated that it is anticipated that the Plan will be presented for adoption during Summer, 2022, and that it will provide a “blueprint” for implementation.

Ms. Rosselli indicated that the review and update of the Zoning Ordinance will commence once the Comprehensive Plan is complete.

TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF WARREN COUNTY

As requested by Council, Wendy Hollabaugh, Executive Director of the Transit Authority of Warren County (TAWC) presented an overview of the types of transportation the Authority provides, routes, and funding sources. Ms. Hollabaugh stated that, per state regulations, TAWC cannot offer same day on demand services. She also stated that PennDOT determines the amount of annual funding which must be derived from local matching dollars and thanked the City for its annual contributions.

RESOLUTION NO. 3179: GALLAGHER MINOR SUBDIVISION

Mr. Rossey stated that Michael J. Lasecki filed a minor subdivision application to divide the property located at 626 Beech Street (Parcel No. WN-574-51900) currently owned by Cornelius P. and Trent P. Gallagher. This minor subdivision would divide the existing Gallagher property into two (2) lots with the Gallaghers retaining Parcel A and the residual Parcel B being annexed to the Michael J. Lasecki property located at 622 Beech Street (WN-574-527900). At its March 16, 2022, regular meeting, the Planning Commission approved this minor subdivision and recommended Council's approval.

Mr. Lasecki's plans for the new parcel include development of an onlot system to manage hillside stormwater runoff. The measures include tying into the City's stormwater system which will alleviate runoff now running across and down Beech Street and causing street issues; this has been discussed with Michael Holtz, DPW Director.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to adopt the resolution approving the Gallagher Minor Subdivision. The motion was seconded by Mr. Michaels and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 3180: DCNR ROUND 28 GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION

Mrs. Freenock stated that as the City continues to develop plans for the Allegheny Riverfront Redevelopment Project, it is necessary to also continue to explore available funding options. Michael Holtz, DPW Director, Jim Decker, Executive Director of the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry, and she recently met with a representative of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources who provided information regarding DCNR Round 28 Grant Funding. This program will provide funding for land acquisition in the amount of fifty percent of the appraised value as well as fifty percent of the pre-acquisition expenses which may include legal fees, title insurance, environmental studies, appraisals, and boundary studies.

It was suggested that the City apply for this funding and that it be utilized to purchase the property which lies behind the HIY building (Clark Street) and is proposed for development of a walking trail and for the undeveloped portion of the townhomes property at Breeze Point Circle which is proposed for vehicle/boat trailer parking. It was further suggested that the City's match in the amount of \$170,000 be derived from the second tranche of American Rescue Plan funds which will be deposited into the City's General Fund.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the resolution authorizing an application for Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant funding with Item No. 5 to be amended to read "...such funds to be derived from the City's General Fund." The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert and carried with five votes in the affirmative and two nay votes cast by Mr. J. Wortman and Mrs. McCain.

RECESS: At 9:15 PM, Council took a brief recess and reconvened.

ORDINANCE NO. 1961: AMENDING CHAPTER 195 OF THE CITY CODE

Mr. Rossey stated that the City previously enacted regulations regarding building permits which are more restrictive than the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) requires. In addition, the City now contracts with a third party to perform building inspection services. Therefore, it was recommended that §195-5 be amended to reflect that the City, or its contracted agent, is the sole authority and provider of inspections for utility service connections. It was also recommended that §195-7 of the Code of the City of Warren be amended to conform to the UCC; these amendments will provide relief from certain building code requirements for residential properties.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to adopt the ordinance amending Sections 195-5 and 195-7 of the Code of the City of Warren. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert and carried unanimously.

Prior to the vote (above), Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to amend the proposed ordinance by striking Section 1 and allowing an individual to have a licensed inspector conduct inspections and file an inspection report with the City. There was no second to the motion and, following confirmation that the City's agreement with its third-party inspector provides that it is to be the exclusive provider, Mr. J. Wortman withdrew the motion.

RESOLUTION NO. 3181: AMENDING VERBIAGE IN THE FEE SCHEDULE

Mr. Rossey noted that Ordinance No. 1961 (see above) amended Section 195-7 of the Code of the City of Warren. Therefore, it is also necessary to amend certain verbiage contained in the Schedule of Fees (Resolution No. 3171 adopted January 17, 2022) as it pertains to the square footage parameters for a Zoning Permit for Accessory Structure.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to adopt the resolution amending the Fee Schedule in accord with the Zoning Permit square footage requirements. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 3158: AMENDMENT (FFY 2021 CDBG APPLICATION)

Mrs. Byler stated that, at the October 18, 2021, regular meeting, City Council approved Resolution No. 3158 which authorized the application for FFY 2021 Community Development Block Grant funding. Upon its review of the application package, DCED notified the City that added language regarding ineligible expenditures that might occur is required in the resolution. Therefore, an amendment to the resolution was prepared and presented for Council's approval.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to adopt the amendment to Resolution No. 3158 in accord with Department of Community and Economic Development language. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously.

PICKLEBALL LETTER OF SUPPORT

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to draft a letter of support for the construction of pickleball courts at Betts Park to be managed under the existing Special Events process in place at the time. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McCain. The motion, as amended (see below) carried unanimously.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to add language to the letter of support to include: event scheduling, amount of land required, number of courts to be constructed, proof of the Betts Foundation's support, maintenance and forecasted costs to the City, and construction costs. The motion was seconded by Mr. J. Wortman and carried unanimously.

AGREEMENT: PENNDOT UTILITY RELOCATION (ROUNABOUT PROJECT)

Mr. Holtz noted that this item was presented for Council's consideration at the February 21, 2022, regular Council meeting. At that time, Council voted to postpone action until PennDOT's response to the City's request to halt construction of a roundabout was received.

PennDOT issued the response and stated its intent to move forward with construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Market Street and Pennsylvania Avenue West. It will be necessary for two (2) manhole covers to be adjusted. As with prior PennDOT street projects within the City, PennDOT requested that the City enter into an agreement under which the City would provide the necessary materials for the manhole adjustment and PennDOT would provide the labor. PennDOT originally stated it would require the agreement in February; however, in consideration of the timing of the response regarding the roundabout, PennDOT extended the date for entering into the agreement by one month.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the Utility Relocation Agreement with PennDOT. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert and carried with four votes in the affirmative and three nay votes cast by Mr. J. Wortman, Mr. Michaels, and Mayor Wortman.

CONTINGENCY FUND EXPENDITURE: NORTHWEST TAX APPEAL APPRAISALS

Mrs. Freenock noted the previously announced executive session during which Council received legal advice regarding the Northwest Tax appeals. Mrs. Freenock stated that, pending any action that Council may vote to take, it may be necessary to expend funds as the City's share of professional fees for appraisals of the subject properties. It was requested that Council authorize the use of Contingency Funds in an amount up to \$3,000 for that purpose.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to authorize the expenditure of up to \$3000 from the contingency Fund for the professional appraisals regarding properties that are the subject of tax appeals by Northwest provided that Warren County and the Warren County School District approve the expenditure of a like share of the total fee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert and carried unanimously.

UPDATE: MANUFACTURE AND WHOLESALE STORAGE OF AMMUNITION

Mr. Rossey stated that the Planning Commission and City Staff continue to gather information regarding this matter. It is expected that this item will be on the Commission's April agenda.

UPDATE: ADJUSTMENT OF HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY

Mr. Rossey stated that City Staff conducted research and also held a discussion with a representative of the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission. As a result it was determined that the process to change the boundaries of a Historic District are very stringent and it is, essentially, impossible to do so.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT: EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PLAN RECOMMENDATION

Mayor Wortman proposed the formation of a committee for the purpose of developing recommendations regarding the City's approach to negotiations pertaining to Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Mr. Villella made the motion to form an EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Committee and to appoint David Wortman, John Wortman, and Joe Michaels as members. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman and carried unanimously.

UPDATE: MARKETING COMMITTEE

Mr. Villella outlined short-term goals which include: signage indicating hours during which parking is free and open to the general public at the Clark Street Parking Garage, posting of Council agendas on Facebook, posting of recorded Council meetings via the City website, and development of a public input questionnaire to be disseminated both electronically and in-person.

JUNIOR COUNCIL PROGRAM

Mayor Wortman asked that a Council member volunteer to facilitate outreach to high school students regarding the program and the opportunity to serve as a Junior Council Member. Mr. J. Wortman indicated that he will work with the Warren Area High School administration and teachers.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS – FEBRUARY, 2022

The following reports were presented for Council's review:

- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Department of Public Works
- Codes and Planning Department

APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Council acknowledged receipt of the following approved minutes:

Blighted Property Review Committee Index of Properties	– January 27, 2022	Regular Meeting
Planning Commission	– January 19, 2022	Regular Meeting
Redevelopment Authority	– January 26, 2022	Regular Meeting
Street Landscape Committee	– January 25, 2022	Regular Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Mr. Villella and second by Mr. Gilbert, Mayor Wortman declared the meeting adjourned.