

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 20, 2023 – 7:00 PM**

Amended 12-18-2023

PUBLIC HEARING: ZONING MAP AMENDMENT – 414 LAUREL STREET

Mayor Wortman opened the public hearing. Mr. Rossey stated that Whirley Industries recently closed on the purchase of the property located at 414 Laurel Street, which is adjacent to its Fourth Avenue plant. The company plans to develop the lot as a parking lot; however, the lot is zoned for residential use. Therefore, Whirley submitted an application for a Zoning Map amendment which would move the zoning designation from the R-2 Residential Medium Density zoning classification to the M-1 Manufacturing and Industrial zoning classification. Prior to approval of a Zoning Map amendment, Council must conduct a public hearing on the matter.

During the public hearing, residents were invited to provide comments regarding the Zoning Map amendment. As required, a hearing notice was placed upon the property, and the legal notice of this hearing and the availability of the proposed ordinance for public review was published in the Times Observer on October 30 and November 6.

Frank Geiger addressed Council and stated his concerns regarding use of the property under the proposed zoning amendment and suggested that other Whirley-owned property might be better suited for parking.

John Nicklas, representing Whirley Industries, indicated that the company's sole intent is to provide a safe parking facility that will not require its teammates to walk across a state route (Fourth Avenue).

The hearing was adjourned at 7:22 PM.

OPENING OF REGULAR MEETING

Mayor David Wortman presided over the November 20, 2023, 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 regarding contractual personnel matters immediately prior to this meeting.

ROLL CALL

Members present and responding to roll call were: Mayor David Wortman, Maurice Cashman, Danielle Flasher, Philip Gilbert, Wendy McCain, Jared Villella, John Wortman, and Junior Council Member Samuel Harvey. Members of City Staff present were Michael Holtz, City Manager; Jessicca Byler, Finance Officer; David Krogler, Fire Chief; Teena Leary, Assistant City Clerk; Randall Rossey, Codes and Planning Director; Joseph Sproveri, Chief of Police; and Andrea Stapleford, City Solicitor.

PROCLAMATION: LIONS CLUB 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mayor Wortman read a proclamation in honor of the Warren Lions Club's 100th Anniversary of its organization on September 29, 1923, and the receipt of its charter on October 25, 1923.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Wortman welcomed all visitors. Present were:

Kelley Coey (via Zoom)	Josh Cotton	Jim Decker
Carl DeVlieger	Frank Geiger	Ron McCall (via Zoom)
John Nicklas	John Papalia	Kim Slocum
Shawn Walker		

The following visitors addressed Council:

- David Winans spoke in opposition to the Hudson Companies' Eagles Crest Project
- Frank Geiger spoke in regard to a Pennsylvania Avenue property which he previously owned.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2023, regular meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Miss Flasher. The motion, as amended below, was unanimously approved.

Mrs. McCain made the motion to amend the October 16, 2023, minutes by correcting the spelling of "Cushman" to "Cushner" and by inserting "Mrs. McCain urged the City to consider the proposal of using the pads for RV and large vehicle parking as a revenue stream until the future of the riverfront is confirmed; Mr. Holtz stated that he would explore that option." under Riverfront Development Project: Staff Update. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried with six votes in the affirmative and one nay vote cast by Mr. J. Wortman.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to table a vote on the minutes until they can be compared/rewatched to confirm that Mrs. McCain's summary (above motion) is correct. There was no second to the motion.

CORRESPONDENCE

John Wortman: Resignation from City Council

Upon motion by Mr. Cashman and second by Mr. Villella, Council members voted unanimously to accept Mr. J. Wortman's letter of resignation to be effective at 5:59 PM on December 4, 2023. Mr. Wortman will begin his tenure on the Warren County School Board on that date. Mayor Wortman presented Mr. J. Wortman with a token of the City's appreciation for his service.

PennDOT: Conewango Avenue Speed Limit

Chief Sproveri presented the PennDOT letter advising the City that it conducted an engineering and traffic study on State Route 1011 (Conewango Avenue) within the City of Warren to evaluate the posted speeds on the roadway. The letter states that a comparison of the observations with the criteria outlined in Chapter 212.108(b) of the *Pa. Code* (Title 67) indicates that 35 mph is the most appropriate speed limit for the location. This recommendation represents no change to the current posted speed limit. The speed study was suggested by outgoing Junior Council member Lydia Balas (8-21-2023 regular meeting).

WARREN WORX PRESENTATION

Shawn Walker presented an updated overview of the group’s objectives and proposed budget and asked that Council consider a contribution of one third of the WarrenWorx budget. He and Jim Decker answered questions posed by Council members.

RECESS

Mayor Wortman called a five-minute recess after which the meeting was reconvened.

ORDINANCE NO. 1974: ZONING MAP AMENDMENT – 414 LAUREL STREET

Mr. Rossey referenced the information provided at the opening of the public hearing and stated that the City Planning Commission and Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission each reviewed the proposed Zoning Map amendment and recommended Council’s approval.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to approve the Zoning Map amendment moving 414 Laurel Street (WN-575-4531-00) from R-2 Residential Medium Density to the M-1 Manufacturing and Industrial zoning classification. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McCain and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 3244: HASKINS MINOR SUBDIVISION

Mr. Rossey stated that William and Debbie Haskins filed a minor subdivision application to annex Parcel No. WN 573-2525 to Parcel No. WN 573-2527. Both parcels are located on Monroe Street and are owned by the Haskins.

The City Planning Commission and the Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission each reviewed the application and recommended Council’s approval.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to adopt the resolution approving the Haskins Minor Subdivision. The motion was seconded by Miss Flasher and carried unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 1975: VACATING RIGHTS TO PLATTED RIGHT-OF-WAY

Mr. Rossey noted that prior to the October 16 regular meeting, Council held a public hearing and received public comment regarding the proposed vacation of an unopened alley (right-of-way) which runs in an east-west direction between the westerly curb of Eddy Street and the westerly boundary of Parcel No. WN-499-5395. Jack Wills submitted an application and petition pertaining to the vacation.

During the regular meeting on October 16, the City Solicitor advised Council that the right-of-way first appears on the plat of the West Warren Realty Company; however, it was not titled to the City (then Borough), and it has not been opened or improved by the City.

Following additional review by Ms. Stapleford and City Staff, it was recommended that the City vacate all actual or implied rights to the Alley.

Mr. J. Wortman made to the motion to approve the ordinance vacating all actual or implied rights to an alley as it appears on the plat of the West Warren Realty Company (extending from the west curb of Eddy Street to the west boundary of Parcel No. WN-499-5395). The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman and carried with six votes in the affirmative and one nay vote cast by Mrs. McCain.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE: 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mrs. Byler requested that Council set the date and time for the 2024 Municipal Budget Public Hearing. As required, the proposed budget will be available for public viewing in advance of the public hearing.

Upon motion by Mrs. McCain and second by Miss Flasher, Council members voted unanimously to establish December 11, 2023, at 5:00PM as the date and time for the 2024 Municipal Budget Public Hearing.

Mayor Wortman noted that the proposed budget does not contemplate a tax increase.

DISPOSITION OF DPW VEHICLE

Mr. Holtz requested Council's authorization to dispose of a 2011 Ford F250 Crew Cab truck (VIN No. 1FT7W2B68BEA37376) which was used for parks maintenance. It was noted that the vehicle has been replaced and is no longer in service. Upon motion by Mr. Cashman and second by Mr. Villella, Council members voted unanimously to authorize disposition of the stated truck.

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO THE WARREN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION BOARD

Mr. Holtz stated that Chapter 296 of the City Code requires that Council appoint a representative to serve on the Warren Library Association Board. Mark King, who was appointed in December, 2022, recently resigned his seat on the board. Therefore, the Library's Executive Director requested that Jeff Scutella be appointed to serve the remainder of Mr. King's term. It was noted that, historically, the City has appointed the individual suggested by the Library. Mr. Scutella previously served two terms as the City's representative to the Board.

Mr. Villella made the motion to appoint Jeff Scutella to serve as the City's representative to the Warren Library Association effective immediately and continuing for the remainder of the term which will expire on December 21, 2025.

AGREEMENT: GEOTHERMAL LINE RELOCATION

Mr. Holtz stated that in January of 2005, the City and the Susquehanna Valley Development Group, Inc. and Breeze Point Landing Energy Systems, LLC, entered into an agreement which provided for an easement across land then owned by the City for the purpose of allowing Breeze Point to install a portion of its geothermal line. The easement crosses a portion of the land located at the southeast corner of Liberty Street and Pennsylvania Avenue which is now owned by Pennsylvania Senior Housing Associates (PSHA). The agreement was not recorded in Warren County's real estate records and, therefore, was not known to PSHA prior to its acquisition of the property.

The geothermal line, as constructed, lies mostly within the Liberty Street right-of-way; however, a portion of the line lies under the property owned by PSHA. Breeze Point and PSHA agreed upon terms under which PSHA will move that portion of the geothermal line so that the line will lie entirely within the Liberty Street right-of-way. An agreement relating to the existing easement and the relocation of the geothermal line was prepared for Council's consideration.

Mrs. McCain made a motion to postpone action on the Geothermal Line Relocation Agreement until Pennsylvania Senior Housing Associates closes on its tax credit financing. There was no second to the motion.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to approve the Geothermal Line Relocation agreement between the City, Susquehanna Valley Development Group, Inc., Breeze Point Landing Energy Systems, LLC, and Pennsylvania Senior Housing Associates. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried with six votes in the affirmative and one nay vote cast by Mrs. McCain.

MARKETING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mr. Villella presented an update and noted that there were five views of the October 16, 2023, meeting YouTube video. *There was discussion regarding making the budget work sessions available via the City's YouTube videos and the delineation between work sessions and public meetings; this topic will be revisited. (added 12-18-2023).*

Mrs. McCain requested that, in addition to the Marketing Committee, monthly updates be provided in regard to the Warren County COG, Trestle-to-Trestle, and the Comprehensive Plan Task Force.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS – OCTOBER, 2023

The following reports were provided 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 | – | September 21, 2023 | Regular Meeting |
| Planning Commission | – | September 20, 2023 | Regular Meeting |
| Redevelopment Authority | – | September 27, 2023 | Regular Meeting |

ADJOURNMENT

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