

JIM THORPE BOROUGH SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 17, 2022
MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 6:33 p.m. by President Gregory Strubinger with the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence for the armed forces, first responders and their families. The meeting was held in Memorial Hall, 115 East 10th Street, Jim Thorpe, PA 18229.

Roll Call of Members

Gregory Strubinger	Thomas Highland – via phone	Joanne Klitsch
Kyle Sheckler – absent	Michael Yeastedt	Robert Schaninger
Jessica Crowley - absent	Mayor Michael Sofranko	Solicitor Nanovic
Police Chief Schatz - absent	Public Service Manager Yaich - absent	Manager Sterner
Engineer Dan Wilusz		

Committees

Public Service (Sewer/Sanitation/Water/Streets) – Road Projects – new project procedures
President Strubinger discussed the reason for the public meeting is for residents to hear about procedures specifically for road paving projects. Increasingly, we have been experiencing more and more 100-year storms which are causing flooding issues. The change in procedures for road paving projects is to review the areas to determine what storm water measures are needed for a particular area and put those measures into place. He stated that over the course of many years stormwater basins and measures have been eliminated adding to the issues. There are MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) requirements and National Pollution Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) requirements. The Department of Environmental Protection can institute those MS4 requirements on us at any time. These are just more unfunded mandates the state puts upon municipalities with no thought as to how we are to pay for it.

President Strubinger stated that in the discussions among Council, the primary concern was the cost to residents. By planning the whole project out, we have been able to lower the costs to residents.

A discussion followed between all attendees.

Todd Morris stated he doesn't have anything specific to say yet until he knows the costs. Manager Sterner explained the only figures we have at this time are estimates. We won't know exact costs until the project is bid out. Todd stated he felt the residents on Front Street are being singled out and used as a test case.

Councilman Yeastedt stated the residents of Front Street are not a test case. This is the location of the first project. He explained that in planning for the stormwater borough-wide, you must start at the low end. Pipes and basins will need replacement. Once the low end is completed, you move up to the next area and continue on. The Borough has agreed to pick up costs for the projects.

President Strubinger explained this same process will be done where needed. We will not install this type of stormwater system in an area where this system is not needed and if no system is needed in an area, no system will be installed.

Todd Morris stated he understands the need but is concerned with the costs, especially with costs associated with sewer lines that have been identified as needing repairs due to the Inflow & Infiltration smoke testing we have been conducting.

Councilwoman Klitsch stated she thought we can do payment plans. Manager Sterner stated we can work on that if council directs it. Solicitor Nanovic verified we can set this up; you may do payment plans and

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place a lien on properties to ensure payment. Just be aware that you may not be paid back until a property is sold.

Dave Franko stated the costs keep going up and he believes they are being singled out.

Manager Sterner stated the costs have not changed from what was discussed at a meeting with the property owners last year. She again explained the figures are only estimates.

Andrew Roberts mentioned the fee just for sidewalks is \$1,950.00 so the residents should consider that; he discussed the total costs and suggested the Borough use Sanitation Capital Reserve Fund monies in order to do interest free loans for the residents.

Kevin Herman asked if we have to use all of the \$262,000.00 estimated for the Front Street project. He said we should look at leaving the trees and asked why curbs are needed; why can't we just let the water run the way it is running now?

Residents inquired if the Borough would be putting in sidewalks. Engineer Dan Wilusz explained that the width of the road and why that prevents sidewalks on the park side. The topography would require us to build up the ground in order to put in sidewalks.

The Mayor asked if the park side of the road would be no parking. Dan responded it would be. The Mayor stated that cars park there now, partially on the grass. Installation of curbs would make the road width even more narrow. Dan and Councilman Yeastedt noted that there really isn't room now to be parking on that side.

Eileen Cassidy asked if the corner of Front and South Streets is included. She is not included in this project. Solicitor Nanovic stated we cannot tell her she will not be included in future projects.

Harold Hydro asked if this would increase stormwater into the storm sewer system and if there is some way to divert water so it does not get dumped onto private property. Dan Wilusz explained that by completing the stormwater projects, we can direct the water into the system and catch & convey the stormwater in a better manner. Harold stated the Borough collects and dumps the stormwater onto his property. Clarification was made that the stormwater is directed into the creek/stream and the creek/stream runs through Harold's property. Dan said a proper system would collect the water and direct it to an area that is not private property. Future systems may include detention basins.

There was a question as to whether LB Morris Elementary School has a basin and if it is functioning properly.

Dan Wilusz further explained that the MS4's are a way of upgrading your systems to correct the errant stormwater. Infiltration systems may also be considered.

President Strubinger stated that stormwater on state highways is also an issue.

Ed McArdle asked what other roads the Borough will be repairing this year. Councilman Mike Yeastedt stated that the Front Street project is utilizing the 2021 and 2022 paving budget funds. Ed asked what we are going to do about the water flooding people's basements and properties from roads paved a few years ago. Manager Sterner asked if those projects included curbing. Ed said no. President Strubinger and Councilman Mike Yeastedt both stated that these new procedures for paving projects is what we are doing to fix this issue.

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Jake Arner encouraged the Borough to look into lower impact and less cost options. We will eventually have to treat all stormwater in systems. It is important you have a large overview of the total costs of what the MS4s would be. Also look into swales and conservation methods. Dan Wilusz said we hope to be able to use swales or other types of systems as we move to the top area of the area wide systems.

Manager Sterner explained that there are different types of systems and we will put the appropriate type of system in each area.

Kevin Herman again stated we don't need curbing at the park; don't install it and save the trees.

Action

2022 Local Share Assessment (Gaming) Grant

This is a new grant and options for projects were discussed – High Street Wall project; downtown traffic calming & pedestrian improvements; Asa Packer Mansion repairs. There are other grant opportunities for High Street and downtown. At this time, we do not know about other options for the mansion. MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Bob Schaninger to pursue the 2020 Statewide LSA Grant for upgrades and repairs to the Asa Packer Mansion. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Andrew Roberts mentioned that quite a few years ago Ron Sheehan had brought before council the condition of the caretaker's house. Nothing has been done. We may wish to investigate grant opportunities for this.

Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau Impact Grant

Some ideas were discussed for this grant. MOTION by Bob Schaninger, seconded by Mike Yeastedt to apply for the PMVB Grant for improvements to the driveway area at the Jim Thorpe Mausoleum. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Executive Session

An executive session will be held after the meeting for personnel. No action will be required.

Adjourn

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, second by Mike Yeastedt to adjourn the meeting and go into an executive session. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

The meeting ended at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sterner
Borough Manager