

**East Washington Borough
Council Meeting**

D R A F T

**Monday, May 4, 2020, 7:00 pm
via phone and/or teleconference**

+1 650-517-6049 PIN: 122 028 139#

**Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call**

Michael Gomber, Mayor
Maryann Weinstein, President
Kent James, Vice President
Tim Hurney, Council Member
David Bradley, Chief of Police

Douglas Corwin, Council Member
Daniel Bird, Council Member
Demond Nixon, Council Member
Arthur J. Fulton, Council Member
Aaron Lucero, Supervisor, P. Works

Dennis Makel, Solicitor
Rich Rush, Engineer
Reca Panian, Chair, Park & Shade
Sandy Motichak, Sec-Treas.
Gerald Coleman, Code Officer

Public Comment – Any person from the public may speak for a 3-minute period. Total time allotted for public comment is 15 minutes. Please state your name, address and subject. Please choose a representative to speak if you have the same concern.

Kenny Schriskey, 36 Thayer Street. Mr. Schriskey stated On March 16, 2020 he had 3 trees cut down on his property. One of the trees was shifting toward his garage that was on borough property. Mr. Schriskey is requesting reimbursement of \$400 for that tree. Mrs. Weinstein asked Mr. Schriskey to send the bill and photos so Council can review and will respond to his request.

Christine Interval, 25 Sheraton Ave. Ms. Interval is concerned about the property at 640 Lemoyne Ave. Ext. It is vacant, and there is trash and safety issues with the home. Asked if it has been inspected by Code Officer and received a rental license. It has diminished the value of their property.

Jeff Bull, 20 Fairmont Ave. Asked if all the email account borocouncil@eastwash.com went to all council email addresses on the website. Mr. Fulton answered yes. Mr. Bull expressed displeasure with the renaming of the park to Nicholas Cumer Park. Has any member attended the boot camp? Maryann Weinstein responded yes, and Kent James attended a similar workshop.

Motion Demond Nixon, second Doug Corwin to approve Minutes April 6, 2020. Motion passed.

Motion Demond Nixon, second Tim Hurney to approve Bills Gen Acct. \$ 40,868.58 Minus the \$ 995.00 Invoice from Widmer Engineers, sent in error. To be credited/corrected. Motion passed. Check Nos. 6721 to 6754 to (April 4 to May 1)

Engineer - Rich Rush – Widmer Engineers – Bid Status, Wilmont drainage

Re Wilmont: Water company has investigated and told Gerry Coleman that the water is not coming from a water company source. The water appears to be coming from a natural source. There appears to be water coming from up the street at the next driveway up on right side. All pipes were connected and tied into the same system with underdrain when work was done on Wilmont. We need to see what happens before we start digging up the area and perhaps it shuts off in 4 months or so. Monitor the situation then address it when COVID-19 is lifted and can proceed with more details.

Bid/Road project update. A Notice to proceed has been sent to Independent Contractors, however no definite date has been scheduled due to COVID-19.

President Weinstein announced to enter an executive session at 7:28 pm. A different phone number was given to Council Members, Mayor and Solicitor to call in for the executive session. Out of executive session at 7:49 pm. No action taken.

Action Items / Discussion:

1. Resolution 009 of 2020 - Emergency Declaration due to COVID-19 extended to May 31, 2020. Motion Dan Bird, second Kent James to approve Resolution 009 of 2020. Motion passed.

2. Financial ramifications of Covid – Kent James. Includes discussion of real estate tax options recently passed by the state.

Mr. Kent James sent a thorough detailed report to Council of his assessment where the Borough stands financially, due to COVID-19. The borough has a strong fund balance. The Governor signed Senate Bill No. 841 which will be known as Act 15 of 2020. It adds Chapter 57 to Title 35 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes - Health and Safety. Chapter 57 deals with the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency. Most relevant and of importance for local municipalities are provisions addressing property taxes and local government meetings.

The borough has an option to grant relief for Property Taxes by extending the Discount (2%) period and waive the penalty (10%) if paid in full by December 31, 2020 by passing a resolution by May 20, 2020. Mr. James feels that from an economic standpoint, there is no a reason to do this because a discount of 2% is not going to be the difference between being able to pay and not (the 10% penalty is more significant, but still not enough), doing so will cost the borough money, and the method of collection (selling the property to get the back taxes) is pretty strong. On the other hand, politically it is probably a nice gesture, it won't cost the borough a lot of money, and it might provide some financial and emotional support to people who are in need. Mr. James felt the bottom line is that while there will be some stress on the borough finances, the borough is in pretty good shape to handle the stress.

Upon further discussion, a motion was made by Dan Bird, second Kent James, pursuant to PA Act 15 of 2020 – COVID-19, Council approves the adoption of Resolution 010 of 2020 for property tax relief to extend both the 2% Discount Period to August 31, 2020 and waive the 10 % Penalty Fee if paid in full by December 31, 2020. Motion passed.

3. Park grant update and playground plan/vendor-Reca Panian

Reca's group met and then approved site plan. \$110,000K Small Initiatives grant was submitted April 22, 2020. There was a question from Doug Corwin on playground vendors. We do not have to use the vendor who provided the plan for the grant but that vendor is a COSTARS vendor. COSTARS is a program in which the state vets vendors and their pricing.

Aaron and Dan discussed the status of playground upgrades we approved last meeting. The grant for the park was submitted on April 22, 2020. Aaron is waiting for a delivery date for the mulch for the playground. Comments were made as to wait for the COVID-19 restrictions to be lifted before the mulch should be put down. However, Council member Dan Bird felt it was a 2 man job and to do it while the park was closed following CDC guidelines.

4. Communications update-drone footage, email storage, other- Arthur Joseph Fulton

Council Member Fulton edited and sent drone footage of East Washington Borough that Mr. Nixon filmed to Council Members for review. It was agreed that it was good footage and Council Member Fulton stated it was sufficient to use and would save the borough money.

Email boxes are getting full. Solicitor Dennis Makel advised Council that Email messages are to be evaluated on their content and not a format before being deleted. Therefore, they are records if they meet the definition of a record. The Borough must review the information contained therein to determine if the email documents a transaction or activity of the Borough and that is created, received or retained pursuant to law or in connection to a transaction, business or activity of the Borough. The term includes a document, paper, letter, map, book, tape, photograph, film or sound recording, information stored or maintained electronically, and a data processed or image processed document. If the email is just for information purposes about the COVID-19 matter or similar information the email does not have to be saved.

Council member Fulton provided options for upgrading and recommended that we upgrade each account as needed. Council agreed.

5. Yellow lines on S Wade-Dan Bird

Lines were painted in November to try to decrease accidents on South Wade but have faded significantly. Council discussed the need to investigate and decide whether to re-paint. Dan Bird said that the surface was cold at the time the lines were painted. Then with the salt from winter the lines faded. Dan Bird felt that the lines need to be re-

painted because there is a safety concern due to accidents on that road and the center lines help guide drivers. Aaron received an estimate appx \$1,840.00 which is a thermo plastic material with a 3 year guarantee. After discussion, a motion was made by Dan Bird, second Demond Nixon to approve Parking Lot Paving Company to re-paint center lines on S. Wade Ave for an amount not to exceed \$1,840.00. Motion passed. Kent – No Fulton - Abstained

6. Point people for employees. Solicitor Makel provided information to Council. Under the Borough Code the Mayor oversees the direction of the Police Department. As to the rest of the Borough Employees there is no Borough Code language right on point. In several Boroughs certain members of the Council are designated as being representatives for giving direction to the employee between meetings. Discussion continued with the following motions:

Motion Demond Nixon, second Tim Hurney to appoint Mayor Mike Gomber the elected official responsible for the Code Enforcement department/employee (s). Motion passed.

Motion Kent James, second Doug Corwin to appoint Council Member, Dan Bird the elected official responsible for the Public Works department/employee (s). Motion passed.

Motion Dan Bird, second Doug Corwin to appoint President Maryann Weinstein the elected official responsible for the Administrative -Office department/employee (s). Motion passed.

7. People for board vacancies

There are vacancies on various boards. President Weinstein asked Council members for suggestions for appointments to these board.

8. Mission/vision-Mike Gomber Mayor Gomber composed an East Washington Borough Mission statement and sent it to council to review. Council will review mission statement and discuss at a later date.

9. New issue from resident on LeMoyne Ave Ext. Code Officer Gerald Coleman stated that it was his understanding that the property at 640 Lemoyne Ave Ext. is on Article of Agreement and not a rental unit so he doesn't do a rental inspection. Code Officer spoke to the owner, Christian Mary and he did not know the resident was gone. Mr. Mary will make sure trash is picked up. Council discussed at length ordinances and properties that have code violations and what can be done to enforce the ordinances. Solicitor Makel stated that Canton Township just passed an ordinance to address blight and require an occupancy permit when selling a home in the township.

A motion was made by Demond Nixon, second Dan Bird to authorize Solicitor Makel prepare an ordinance to address blight in the borough and require an occupancy permit when selling any dwelling in the borough. Motion passed.

Mayor – Michael Gomber - Mayor Gomber stated that he has been able to obtain 17 face shields at no charge to the borough and no contact thermometers at a cost of \$62.50 each but need to buy 40 of them. He is working with other municipalities to share the cost.

Solicitor – Dennis Makel

Council Members – Reports / Discussion

- Maryann Weinstein, President stated that trash schedule is back to normal and asked Council members if it was necessary to conduct two (2) meetings per month or one (1) meeting per month. Most members felt one (1) meeting a month was sufficient.

- Kent James, Vice President
- Daniel Bird – Park and S. Wade Lines
- Douglas Corwin
- Arthur Joseph Fulton – Drone and emails
- Tim Hurney
- Demond Nixon

Motion Kent James, second Demond Nixon to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm. Motion passed.