

## Council Meeting Minutes August 15, 2016

**Present:**

Maria Marcinko, Vice President  
Keontay Hodge  
Kathy Kratzer  
Michael Segina

Thomas Acri, Mayor  
Doug Brown, Borough Manager  
David Wion, Solicitor  
Chief Vance, Fire Chief  
Amrinder Singh, Codes Officer  
Thommie Leggett-Robinson, Exec. Assistant

**Absent with cause:**

President Jeffrey Wright  
President Pro Tem Brian Proctor  
Chief Minium

**Call Meeting to Order:**

Vice President Maria Marcinko called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

Vice President Maria Marcinko let the group in the Pledge of Allegiance

**Moment of Silence:**

Mayor Tom Acri led the group in a moment of silence for our deceased loved ones, including former Borough Councilman, Mr. Lou Brodnick. Mayor also included those persons who lost their lives while in service to this country whether in the armed services, police or fireman.

**Executive Sessions held between Meetings:**

There was no executive session between meetings.

**Approval of Minutes from previous meeting:**

Vice President Marcinko called for a motion to approve the August 1, 2016 minutes of the Council. Ms. Hodge moved and Ms. Kratzer seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items only:**

There were no comments from the public on agenda items.

**Approval of schedule of billing, requisitions, and change orders as presented for:**

***Fire Department and Ambulance*** (Written Report) Highlights of the report:

The aerial devices were inspected and earned their Certificate of Compliance with NFPA Standards and codes. The equipment is inspected annually.

***Police Department*** (Written Report)

***NEDC Committee*** (Written Report)

***Public Works*** (Written Report)

***Codes Department*** (Written Report)

***Mayor's Report*** (Oral Report)

***Borough Manager's Report*** (Oral Report)

The Board reviewed the written department reports. Ms. Kratzer moved and Mr. Segina seconded the motion to accept the reports as written. The Council cast a unanimous vote to accept the reports.

**Presentations:**

There were no presentations made at this meeting.

**Communication:**

Public Employee Retirement Commission - Act 205 of 1984 Notice of 2016 Distress Determination  
Mr. Brown explained that Public Employee Retirement Commission releases a biennial report regarding the status of Government entities retirement funds. The report is to let municipalities know if their retirement accounts are low enough to require supplements through the Recovery Program as established in Act 205 of 1984 Notice of Distress Determination. Steelton Borough received a score of zero, which means that the retirement fund is funded above 90%. The Steelton Borough is funded at 94%, which is very good.

Steelton Borough Council persons and the public are invited to attend and participate in the Technical and Coordinating Committee work of Harrisburg Area Transportation Study. The Technical Committee will meet Friday, September 9, 2016. The Coordinating Committee will meet Friday, September 23, 2016. The meeting agenda and materials will be posted at the website: <http://www.tcrpc-pa.org/hats/> one week prior to the scheduled meeting.

Dauphin County Office of Tax Claim Bureau sent a letter to the Borough requesting the acceptance or rejection of a bid on a vacant lot, Parcel 59-003-054 (Ridge Street). On behalf of the Borough of Steelton, Ms. Hodge moved that Council accept the bid for the parcel of land # 59-003-054 for the price of \$500.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Segina. The Council cast a unanimous vote to accept the bid.

**Unfinished Business:**

Mr. Brown discussed the Steelton Arts Fest scheduled to be held October 22 (9am-9pm) -23 (9am-6pm), 2016. The Arts Fest will be sponsored by the United Arts Studio. Mr. Ken Harris, coordinator of the event, requested the use of Borough property for this event, perhaps some portion of Front Street. Mr. Harris is in the process of soliciting vendors to display their art and crafts. The Fest hours will be 9am-9pm of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 9am-6pm on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Contact <http://www.unityartjam.com/> for registration. This will be a new type of event for the Steelton area. Mr. Harris will attend the September 6, 2016 Council Meeting to personally explain the project and answer any questions the Council might pose. In response to questions from Council members, Mr. Brown explained that the Borough has sufficient liability insurance to cover the event. Ms. Marcinko asked if the United Arts Studio would also have insurance for the event? Mr. Brown will request that Mr. Harris also get insurance. Ms. Kratzer asked if there will be any street closures. Mr. Brown is working with the Police Department to determine if perhaps parts of Front Street would be closed. Ms. Kratzer suggested maybe on the first day of the event. The development and scheduling of this event was referred to the Neighborhood & Economic Development Committee for review, further planning and a recommendation.

Mr. Brown provided an update on the Skate Park/Community Center Project by supplying copies of the visual model prepared by Arment Concrete LLC. This company has a lot of experience working with skate parks. He has shared the information with the Borough engineers. The Borough has requested a \$40,000.00 Tourism Grant to cover the start-up of this project. Armet Cement said the project would cost between \$80 – 90, 000.00. Dauphin County has been approached for an additional funding. Hopefully, the money will be in place in the spring of 2017. The project will be in conjunction with the Community Center, the funds for which are included in the Gaming Grant request. It is possible to have the Community Center built within the

next two years. Approximately \$1500 would cover the cost of additional insurance for the Skate Park.

Mr. Wion presented information regarding Council's instruction to investigate the feasibility of granting an exception to the rejection of the Special Condition Parking Request for Ms. Denise Sanders who resides at 574 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Initially, Ms. Sander's request was denied because there was adequate parking space on her property. However, Ms. Sanders has indicated that her physical condition does not allow her to use that parking place. Following a recommendation from her physician, another study of the area was completed. There is adequate parking space in front of her home to allow the special condition parking space to be declared. Ms. Kratzer moved and Mr. Segina seconded the motion that the Steelton Borough Council grant an exception for the placement of a Special Permit Parking space at 574 S. Second Street. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### **New Business:**

Mr. Solomon from HRG introduced information regarding the HRG request for approval of a Professional Services Agreement for work on the Adams Street Subdivision Plan. HRG proposes to review applicable Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances, detailing any required Variances or Waivers; prepare a Sketch Plan to depict the layout of the newly proposed units; Review expected site grading and possible issues. Provide preliminary grading plan and cross-sections to detail any construction issues; Coordinate building footprints, layout and grading with Tri-County HDC, Ltd and provide project correspondence including brief letter request to detail their findings. The cost of these administrative services is \$1,500.00. Mr. Wion clarified that this is a proposal for complete redesign of the new subdivision plan but something less than that on a preliminary basis.

Mr. Brown introduced Mr. Gary Lenker, from Tri-County Housing Development Company, LTD who made a presentation to the Council about the Adams Street Subdivision Plan. Tri-County is a not-for-profit entity, specifically certified by HUD to use Federal Home dollars to assist low to moderate income persons get affordable housing. The organization receives about \$80,000 annually from Dauphin County to support its work. The funds come from Community Block Grant and Gaming monies. The Board is comprised of citizens including persons who are familiar with the housing industry and finance, including Leo Agresti, Director Harrisburg Housing Authority and George Conner, DCED of Dauphin County. The proposal is to build two building which would contain six housing units. Ordinarily, units of the type they propose to build would cost \$125, 000, however with this special program, purchases could be made mid \$90,000's. Ms. Marcinko asked about the water problem on the property. Mr. Lenker stated that they proposed to resolve the problems with the natural spring water accumulation by using an existing system located near the retaining wall.

The homes would be made available to persons as outright purchases or, for those with credit problems, a lease with the option to purchase agreement. Persons who have a credit score of 620 and attend the homebuyers' classes would be eligible for home ownership. Those persons with less than 620 credit score would be given the opportunity to sign a 24 month agreement, with specific stipulations, to improve their credit score. If they fail to complete the requirements within that period, they lose their option to purchase.

Mayor Acri asked if persons in the homes would be in the Section 8 program. Mr. Lenker assured the Mayor and other concerned Council members that these homes are for sale to the homeowner and cannot be rented out to other parties. Ms. Kratzer asked what would happen to the homes if persons were unable to pay the mortgage and the lender foreclosed on the home would the Tri-County program then step in to assist in resolving the problem? The answer was no. Would the home sit vacant or could it then be rented out? Ms.

Hodge offered information about other programs that could assist with a homebuyer in that situation. Ms. Marciano's concern is based on the experiences of the Felton Loft Apartments and Hoyt Towers both of which did not come up to the initial projected standard. Mr. Segina expressed concern about the requirements for living in the houses. Is there a minimum or maximum time that the homeowner must live in the home before they can sell or rent it out? Ms. Marcinko asked if the new owner has to go through the housing program in order to purchase the home. Ms. Hodge asked for clarification on the questions previously asked. She wanted to know if there was any guarantee that this would not turn into another HUD rental program. The concern of the Council is improving the tax base in the Borough. Ms. Marcinko asked Mr. Lenker about the organization's experience with similar projects. Ms. Marcinko expressed that the Council wanted this to be a community based project where people buy homes in the Borough of Steelton, strengthen our tax base and not be vacant, and not turn into rentals. Currently, 51% of housing in the Borough is rental property. The concern is improving the quality of life in the Borough by having homeowners who care about and are committed to the community. The Borough's experience with renters and absentee landlords has not been positive in regard to maintaining Borough Codes and minimum property standards. Ms. Marcinko thanked Mr. Lenker for his presentation.

Mr. Wion recommended the proposal be referred to the Neighborhood & Economic Development Committee. He will meet with them for review and recommendation to be presented at the next Council meeting. Mr. Segina moved and Ms. Hodge seconded the motion that the Council approve no more than \$1,500.00 to be paid to HRG for professional services to work with the Adams Street Development Project. The motion passed three to one, with Ms. Kratzer casting the dissenting vote.

Mr. Wion presented the request from HRG to approve funding for a Professional Services Agreement for the Mulberry and Bessemer Street Utility Improvement Project. Because the scope of this project involves both water and sewage, both the Water Authority and the Council will share in this project. The Authority has already approved the proposal. HRG proposes to work with the contractors on all phases of the project including: advertising the project for and opening bids, issuing notice of intent to award, issuing notice to proceed, preconstruction conferences, supervising the construction and review for final approval of the completed project. Since the project involves both the Borough and Authority, the Borough's portion is 33% of the \$55,900.00 request. On behalf of the Borough, Ms. Kratzer moved and Mr. Segina seconded a motion authorizing HRG's request for approval of \$ 18, 400.00 for administrative fees for the Mulberry and Bessemer Street Utility Improvement Project. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of the Council.

Mr. Brown reminded the members of the Finance Committee that it is time to schedule budget meetings. Following the development of their proposed budgets, the Department Heads and the Finance Committee will hold public hearings, the dates of which will be announced.

The Vice President recognized Chief Vance. Chief Vance requested the Council approve the appointment of Nate Martin as Battalion Chief of the Fire Department. Mr. Martin has been with the Fire Department 13 years, is an ENT, a State certified instructor and a Harrisburg career Fireman. Ms. Hodge moved and Ms. Kratzer seconded the motion that Mr. Martin be promoted to Battalion Chief. The Council cast a unanimous ballot in support of the motion.

#### **Public Comments:**

Mr. Emmuel Powell, 321 Lebanon Street – inquired about the number of employees in the Codes Department. Ms. Marcinko stated that there are three persons employed in that Department. He was asking because of the problem with trash. Mr. Powell stated that Steelton had more trash than Harrisburg and something must be

done about it. Mr. Singh, Codes Director, referred Mr. Powell to the Codes Report. Mr. Singh stated that the Department was working diligently to tackle the property maintenance issues in the community. In July, 361 visits were made, which resulted in the issuance of 233 warnings and 54 quick tickets, which are like municipal parking tickets. The issues that cause a ticket are high grass, animal waste. He explained the process as: 1) a homeowner received two tickets, if the violation remains, he is given a citation and has to appear in District Court where she can be fined up to \$500.00. If she has not answered the citation within 10 days, a warrant is issued for his arrest or he must pay the fine. The Dauphin County of Common Pleas can overturn the decision of the District Justice. There are 2,571 properties in Steelton Borough and Mr. Singh has requested additional staff to handle property and constructions inspections. Mr. Powell asked how long a person has to respond to citation. Mr. Singh responded that after a person has been referred to the District Office, they have 10 days to make a plea, if that is not done an arrest warrant is issued. Some people just pay the fine, others opt to plead their case before the District Justice. If the violation is not resolved, the process is repeated. The Codes budget for 2017 might include a small fund that can be used to hire a private contractor to clean up properties, then put a lien on the property. Mr. Singh indicated that at this time, it is the responsibility of the property owner to hire a private contractor. The discussion regarding the Adopt-A-Block ensued, noting that individuals and/or groups could come together and adopt one or several blocks to ensure the Borough is clean. The Borough will provide plastic bags and gloves to support the community's efforts. Mr. Powell shared a negative experience with the District Justice system. Someone expressed concern about the condition of 433 Lincoln Street.

Ina Alcendor, 109 East Conestoga Street, requested a police presence on Second Street in her area. She stated that persons driving on Second Street do a rolling stop instead of a complete stop at the corner, noting that the same is true about the alley. Her concern is that people are coming down the hill and there will be an accident because someone did not come to a complete stop at that corner. The same holds true on Lincoln Street. Ms. Alcendor also mentioned that some older persons may not be able to maintain the weeds on their sidewalk. Ms. Marcinko discussed the development of A People-in Trouble or Helping Hands Program in the community. Councilman Proctor and the NEDC Committee is working on that and there is hope, with the revitalization of the Foundation, a program will be developed to address that issue. She also remarked that Steelton has more trash than it has had been in the past.

Jim Deimer, 131 North Third Street wanted more information on the Adopt-a Block program. Ms. Marcinko and Mr. Brown clarified the operation of the Adopt-A-Block Program. They stated that the program is designed for a person or organization to select a street in Steelton and accept responsibility for cleaning that public block area at least four times a year. The application for participation is filed with the Borough office. After two successful clean-ups, a sign, designating the name of the person/organization who has accepted responsibility for that block is placed on both sides of that street. The Public Works Department will provide all the needed supplies for the clean-up work (special colored trash bags, gloves, safety vest, etc.) Mr. Deimer proposed a project that involves the path on Second Street that goes up the hill to the North end of the 100 block of Third Street where tree limbs and brush have accumulated. His question was if persons gathered all the debris in that area, would the Borough ensure its collection? Ms. Marcinko committed the Borough to collecting the debris. Mr. Deimer named several persons that he would contact to assist him in gathering the debris. Further, since the Constables Building is for sale, perhaps someone could be encouraged to open a restaurant in that building. It was noted that Steelton need a family oriented restaurant. Ms. Kratzer noted that it would be difficult to use as a restaurant again because of the small kitchen and because there are training programs are located in the building. It was noted that the Capital Center Counters building is also now vacant, so there are several vacant building that could/should be put to use.

## Council Concerns:

Ms. Kratzer thanked the Police Department for their participation in the National Night Out and Taste of Steelton. There were about 200+ persons in attendance. She recognized the death of Mr. Robert Butts, the former Fire Chief. She thanked the Fire Department and Police Department for their good work to ensure things went well. Also mentioned are committed to participation at the Back to School Block Party.

Mr. Segina thanked persons for attending the meeting.

Ms. Hodge thanked persons for coming out to the meeting. She thanked Mr. Lenker for what he is trying to do, and is hopeful that the project will be successful. She noted that the Borough is concerned about getting more homeowners in the area. The Borough recognizes that in certain areas there are home owners that take pride in their property. She addressed Mr. Deimer, acknowledging that there are business moving in and out of Steelton which results in vacant buildings. She stated that there are efforts being made to attract more businesses to the area. Further, she stated that he made good point by stating that we need a family restaurant in the Borough. She supported Ms. Alcendor's statement that the seniors in the community need more help maintaining their properties. Ms. Hodge expressed her shared concern about the seniors and her hope that a program can be established to give such assistance. Further, she suggesting that perhaps we can get the school involved as a project for athletes or other students that could assist with such a project. She thanked Mr. Powell for his participation in the Council meetings. Ms. Hodge thanked everyone for coming and everyone who does things in the Borough to make things happen and expressed the need to more toward the future.

Mr. Brown thanked Mr. Lenker for coming and his work with him, Mr. Proctor, Mr. Musser and others as they try to move the project forward. He stated that Adams Street project has been in the making for ten years. and explained that during that time consideration has been given on how to proceed and the housing market in the area. He offered his card to Mr. Deimer so they could coordinate the clean-up project suggested. The Borough currently has a substantial budget surplus this year. Staff was thanked for staying within their budgets. The newsletter was distributed and efforts are being made to get information out about the functioning of the Borough. The Authority was awarded a PennVest Company line of financing for the installation of a new water tank. At this time the project is three months ahead of the projected time for installation. The goal is to break ground in the beginning of 2017. Ms. Leggett-Robinson and Chief Minium joined him at training for the Right to Know Law. In preparation for 2017, Mr. Brown met with Mr. Diffenderfer regarding the auctioning of Borough surplus. Brownfield demolition will start next week. It is time to start thinking about the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. The Departments are scheduled to meet with Ms. Paul and Mr. Brown September 13 -15 to begin the 2017 budgeting process. Each Department is required to present two budget proposals. Any request for increase in budget must improve operations in the Department or improve the Borough.

Mr. Singh reported six things the Codes Department is working on:

- A new software system has been purchased and is being used to assist the department in getting information and documentation done in a more timely manner.
- There are 60 properties where there has been no trash service in 2016. Letters of non-compliance will be sent to these persons, who will be allowed 15 days to comply with Chapter 92 on solid waste. If things have not been resolved in that time period, citations will be issued.

- 125 properties were issued notices of violations for exterior or interior issues. Fifteen day notices will be sent to those property owners if they have not come into compliance or contacted the Codes Office with a plan of action, citations will be issued.
- Upon receipt of information from the Water Department, the approximately 60 homes without water service will receive notices of non-compliance. Owners will have 24 hours to obtain water services. If the property continues to be non-compliant at that point, the property will be condemned and notices of unfit for habitation will be posted.
- New bulletin board are being placed outside the Codes office. The boards are designed as educational tools regarding when building permits are needed, property maintenance and rental ordinances, the responsibilities of property owners and tenant, and information regarding planning and zoning. In addition, this same information will be provided on the Borough website.
- There are 900-1000 properties without valid rental certificates. The owners will be sent a 30 day notice of the need for compliance. Following that notice, if no effort has been made to come into compliance, a citation will be issued each day until the property has obtained the needed rental certificate.
- The Planning Committee will have their first meeting September 7, 2016.

Mayor Acri thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He noted that he did not have a real problem with the Adams Street project. He did note that he was leery because of the disappointment with previous projects.

Ms. Marcinko stated that bringing properties in the community into compliance with the ordinances will take time and patience from everyone. However, once people know and understand the requirements, things should get easier. She was pleased with the fact that citations were being issued in an effort to get the Borough back as a thriving, beautiful community. The Police Chief and Mr. Brown were given special recognition for their assistance in helping visitors from Croatia learn about the workings of a small community. Ms. Marcinko thanked the Police and Fire Department for their work in making the funeral for former Fire Chief successful. She encouraged persons to attend the Back-to-School Block Party and thanked everyone for coming to the Council meeting.

**Executive Meeting:**

There was no Executive Session held.

**Adjournment:**

Upon request of the Vice President, Ms. Kratzer moved and Ms. Hodge seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The August 15, 2016 meeting of the Steelton Borough Council was adjourned by the unanimous vote of the Council at 7:44p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Douglas Brown  
Borough Secretary