



The Morrisville Borough Council met on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Morrisville Municipal Building, 35 Union Street, Morrisville, PA for a Regular Council Meeting.

Mr. Parker stated, can we please stand for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance?

Virginia Cyphers took roll call.

Those in Attendance:

Borough Council: Ted Parker, President (via Zoom)
Bob Paul, Vice President (via Zoom)
Justin Bowers (via Zoom)
Helen Hlahol
Duane Nicol
Scott Robinson (via Zoom)
Nancy Sherlock (via Zoom)
Michael Yager (via Zoom)

Borough Officials: Micah Heitz, Finance Director
Randy Flager, Solicitor (via Zoom)
Scott Holbert, Solicitor (via Zoom)
Virginia Cyphers, Assist. Borough Secretary (via Zoom)

Not in Attendance: Scott Mitchell, Borough Manager
Dave Rivella, Mayor

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Parker stated, I would like to welcome our new Council Member for the First Ward Duane Nicol. We are going to have an executive session at the end of this for personnel. We are removing action item 9A that will be moved to February and we will also have an additional motion which will become 9B. 9B will be a motion to advertise the position of interim and or full-time Borough Manager. Let me pull up the statement from Mr. Mitchell. It says due to a serious medical condition the Borough Manager has advised Council to prepare for every eventuality to prudently keep the municipal government functioning and that's all I will say publically about his condition.

Ms. Sherlock stated, excuse me Mr. Parker, for those who might not have the agenda in front of them, 9A was the approval of the Comprehensive Plan, correct?

Mr. Parker replied, yes it was. That's been moved to February.

Mr. Yager asked, Mr. Parker, can I ask why? I'm okay with it, I'm just wondering why we're moving it to February.

Mr. Parker replied, part of it is some confusion as to whether or not it was posted and the unavailability of Mr. Mitchell at this time I think it's prudent to move it to February.

Mr. Yager stated, also I'd like to recommend if we could to have somebody from the Planning Commission come in and give us a quick overview on what changed. I get what's in there but to go through and compare it to the prior one would be a little bit of a daunting task. If they can come in and give us an overview of the things that actually changed that would be helpful.

Mr. Parker stated, okay we'll reach out to them and have somebody do a presentation in February before our vote.

Mr. Yager stated, thank you.

Ms. Hlahol stated, Ted I also have a question about that, because we did approve in December for the development so is the Planning Commission also taking that into account?

Mr. Parker stated, this was a last minute pull because of the confusion with it being posted publicly or not and I just thought it was prudent at this time given Mr. Mitchell not being available to just move it to February it was a Council issue. We moved it because of an issue on the Borough/Council side about confusion of how it was advertised and made for the public to view it so we just thought it was prudent to pull it until February.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

1. Jane Burger – *90 W. Maple Avenue*

She stated, I'm glad Mr. President that you have pulled item 9A because that was going to be my recommendation and actually suggest that perhaps you use the Planning Commission next Monday would be too soon but the second Monday in January to maybe have a full presentation of this revised plan at their meeting where it would allow for more opportunity for interaction in case anyone has any questions. That's not possible certainly at your February meeting to know what is changed from the current plan and perhaps what has changed from the draft plan that was on the website I believe it was in August. I've looked through it I didn't see a proposed final one there, but very often we overlook maps and charts so I was curious and I thought I should look at this I call your attention to map one existing land uses and given this additional month I suggest you go over it because there are several errors. I have a feeling this is something that maybe just carried over from plan to plan it gives you the land uses it's very nicely color coded but several street names are missing and I want to look at my house and it's the bright yellow for single family dwelling. My 1919 house was single but in the great

depression of the 30s the attic was converted and it has been a multi-level two-family home since then so it really should be the pumpkin color. Also there's a professional building across from the shopping center that has not been a single family dwelling since the late 40s and looking at the color for residential rental units given the high percentage of rentals we have in the Borough I know that several conversions and other properties are not on here. This summer I had the opportunity doing census work and I know from Stockham some places in the Manor and on North Pennsylvania there are definitely homes that we're one single family but are now multi-dwelling either two or three families so there needs to be a way with the tax map or working with the tax collector since the sanitation bills are now through your tax bill to use the tax map you're trying to correctly capture all the residential units that are now multi-family. I will leave this with Mr. Micah because I did list on the back of it some of the street names that I could not find. Where there's space and where there's gray, the code for transportation which I think would include the Bridge Commission and the railroad tracks is listed as vacant rather than its gray colors so it might be worthwhile in this time frame to take a look at this and make sure that it really is updated to reflect the Borough's land use today so I thank you for that. I just want to comment I did see the public notice you will be going to the Court of Common Pleas in Doylestown February 1st for approval for tax increase over 30 mils for the general fund. Obviously those monies won't be available so it won't affect your expenditures in this first quarter but it is noteworthy I think it's the first time in modern history that you weren't able to get a court date before December 31st. Thank you again COVID-19.

2. Deborah Colgan – *120 Hendrickson Avenue*

She stated, thank you for removing the comprehensive plan from the agenda. The comprehensive plan is an important guide that helps the community fulfill its vision and the Borough spent a lot of time and money creating the elements of this one, it deserves a thoughtful review by both Council and members of the public. I do know that there were a

number of errors in the draft, there were some incorrect calculations that kind of stuff that would list properties correctly. There were a lot of inconsistencies with the maps. I do know that they were supposed to correct those or at least some of those. I was surprised that the comprehensive plan was even on the agenda since there wasn't really the plan that you were actually approving wasn't even available to the public and I was kind of hoping for more transparency with this new Council and I believe that you would let us know what you're considering, let us see it and give you input before you make any decisions and I'm asking that you do so going forward. We need to be partners with you as we look at the Williamson Park proposal. Some of us know our positions some for some against and we need the opportunity to make our case to you and to each other. There might be some people that are unsure and they want more details to make an informed opinion this is a big decision and we must make it together. Ultimately it's going to be in the hands of just eight council members and I have to believe that no matter what and no matter how painful and how long it takes that each of you wants to learn all you can and wants to hear out everyone's opinion you carry a heavy responsibility. So for transparency as well as for as effective community collaboration please provide the details of the work that is being done within the Borough Administration to move this project forward, how much time was devoted, what activities were done and then the overall process, we don't really understand what the process is what is the next step and how you'll engage us at each step as we move forward. At each meeting we should have a detailed report on the months of select Morrisville activities that occurred that month and they should be shared with all of us. I really ask that we all work together to decide Morrisville's future. Thank you.

3. Mary Hrenda – *343 Crown Street*

She stated, my comment was also about transparency. I'm having a hard time with the way the public is being involved in the Council meetings, the agenda goes up late on a Friday for the Monday meeting and then

things happen like the posting of the comprehensive plan where the draft plan was up for months and months but then there were revisions made and they were never made available to the public to look at before this meeting. I think if we are going to have community participation if we're going to have transparency in local government we need to have documents such as this that are important to the path forward of the Borough to be made available to the public so the public can become familiar with them and comment on them to Council if they wish. Also, I would like to emphasize that the Williamson Park project I think we need to be informed as to what steps have been taken by Borough staff. I would like the Manager's report to reflect what interactions the staff and Borough staff and professionals have had with Morrisville LLC and what was done and if there were meetings a brief synopsis of the meeting. The same with the Council members I think that public should know when Council members meet with Select Morrisville LLC, what the meetings were about and a brief synopsis of the meeting and I think this should be made available to the public at Council meetings thank you very much. Please try and keep us informed. Please try and be transparent with us and give us timely notice of things that are happening. Thanks.

4. Joshua Kuntz – *40 Union Street*

He stated, I am a little bit new to this so bear with me. Thinking about the phrase local park destroyed to make way for luxury apartments and retail outlets sounds like the plot of a kid's morality tale about how those who care more about money are evil and we need to care about the things that are good for the community. The fact that this is a reality in the 21st century after we are abundantly aware of the forces of gentrification and just outright economic assault on anyone lower than the upper middle class sadly feels all too like the year that we just got out of which is to say a bit of an insult to our sanity. It feels like a corrupt action just on its superficial look and to extract resources from the many to benefit those of the few. In this case the resource being space not wilderness per se but rather the space of public use space with the intention and purpose for

benefiting people that's the focus of the space and that's the focus of a park right? In an era of increasing wealth disparity to siphon yet another resource from the people's psychological and spiritual well-being from this town it feels rather wrong to put it mildly and sadly in the keeping of the trends of this country. I think that there are other avenues that moneyed interests might be able to use to increase and improve our community like investing into homes to repair businesses to invest into business and we have an entire infrastructure that could do with assisting for aesthetic and functional utilities, but no they've chosen the park it seems like the park is the desire which seems a little bit out of sorts with those things that could be improved upon. If we care about the community we need to repair the community I feel, not to replace it. Now I have lived in Bucks County for about 25 of the 32 years of my life and I've been pretty sickened by watching what the wealthy has done to beautiful farms and forests of this county. A great recent example is what's going on up in New Hope right now with hotels and bars with very high prices being invested and they're blocking views of the rivers they're taking away from the natural appeal of not only the town's aesthetics but also from the nature itself. Now as much as I can muster perhaps some happiness for the owners of these buildings I do feel that they are made to appeal to people of wealth, people who travel and just people who have excess money, but it's not really helping those of us who are in the area and in fact it's making it harder for us to live our lives and to enjoy the areas around us. This county seems to be bending to the wheel of money this is what the impression seems to be from the outlook and I just think that if we want to live up to the better ethics of our society we have to invest in to improving what we have not building things for those who already have enough. I think that we need a better park not a community center or a thing of retails and I just wanted to kind of make that voice heard in this I hope that I didn't come off as too rude I appreciate the time that I was given and thank you. I suppose that's it.

5. Jackie Carol –*36 Union Street*

She stated, I am not a fan of the development plans at the Williamson Park and I see a lot of flaws in it and lot of what Josh just said, it was very on the nose. I feel like I can't say it as good as that but those are like all my views. I see a lot of potential a lot of possibly like bad things happening with the businesses that are already established in town and I like I think it's silly for them to pick the park that everyone uses when there are a lot of abandoned buildings that we should like rehabilitate that instead of just destroy, destroy, destroy. So, I'm highly against it and I hope you all hear my concerns and take them into consideration. All right it's a short one, so that's about it. Thank you very much.

6. Shana Carol –*49 N. Delmorr*

She stated, I'm just chiming in to say I'm against this also and Josh did say it very perfectly how I feel also about the environment, the gentrification, not taking care of things that are already here. I just wanted my voice to be heard even though this is short also but I'm done thank you.

7. Joshua Adare –*49 N. Delmorr*

He stated, I talked to a lot of people. I live across the street from the park. I've been talking to people about this nobody is for this, nobody in town wants this. The people don't want this and we're going to fight this tooth and nail. I'm sorry to say this you don't have the public in mind with this and I just don't understand you're going to take away a public place where during COVID-19 it's an ideal place for people to kind of get outside and get away and social distance I mean this is the wrong thing to do and it just really -- it's upsetting to see a place so special you know just kind of under the cover of night being turned into something that we don't want, you know, I don't think that's fair to the people. I don't agree with it. That's pretty much all I have.

8. Lauren Beebe –57 N. Delmorr

She stated, I wanted to chime in and voice my support with what everyone else has just said, Josh, Josh, Shayna and Jackie. I live right across the park I'm not in support of redeveloping it. I think it takes away a key landmark and source of positive recreation for the community and I'll just restate what Josh just said. I don't really think anybody in the community is for this, so that's my two cents.

9. John Capra –57 N. Delmorr

He stated, I live right across from the park it is the first thing that I see when I walk out the door it is just such a peaceful place for me to look out as soon as I walk out the door. It's also you know one of the only things that Morrisville has going for it, it's the only thing that people want to go to Morrisville for is this park, it's the only reason why people that live here want to go there. I mean I don't even know what you would be inviting these new people that would be living here to even do, like what activity would they be able to get into if they don't even have a park that they can hang out at that they can social distance at, especially during these times. You know, it's a very special place and that's all I got.

There being that no one else wished to speak, public comment portion was closed.

MINUTES

Motion 6A - Motion to approve the Borough Council Regular Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2020.

Motion made by Mr. Yager.

Motion seconded by Ms. Hlahol.

No discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, all in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

Motion carried by voice vote 8-0.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion 7B - Motion to approve the bill list and pay the bills.

Motion made by Ms. Sherlock.

Motion seconded by Mr. Yager.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, roll call please.

Motion carried by roll call vote 8-0.

REPORTS

Mayor's Report – David Rivella – There was no report this evening.

Police Chief's Report – Chief George McClay – He stated, good evening Council. Tonight I would like to give you a little brief review of our 2020 crime stats. We are down 24% in part one crimes compared to 2019. Part two crimes we are down 15% compared to 2019. The biggest cut in crime was the number of thefts and I attributed that to keeping a couple of our known people who like to take other people's things by keeping them in jail, we've been very successful with that. Looking at our finances for the year for the seventh straight year in a row, the police department has ended the year within its budget which I'm very happy with. We have an event coming up on January 24th at 3:30 to 5:30 it is called Walking While Black L.O.V.E. is the answer. This is a film and then a discussion with members of different police departments which Morrisville is a sponsoring agent with this. If anybody wants to sign up you can go on to the Peace Center's website and sign up for it. I will be participating again along with two of my officers along with Falls Township and I believe Yardley in the District Attorney's office and that's all I have.

Manager's Report – Scott Mitchell – There was no report this evening.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion 9A - Motion to approve a tax refund in the amount of \$608.35 to Scott and Ellen Davis for parcel# 24-006-060. (temporary assessment reduction due to a 2019 fire.)

Motion made by Ms. Sherlock.

Motion seconded by Mr. Bowers.

No discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, all in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

Motion carried by voice vote 8-0.

Motion 9B - Motion to authorize the Borough to advertise the position of Interim and/or full-time Borough Manager.

Motion made by Ms. Sherlock.

Motion seconded by Ms. Hlahol.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, all in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

Motion carried by voice vote 8-0.

Mr. Flager stated, my only comment is, we should all pray for his health.

APPOINTMENTS

Motion 10A - Motion to appoint Environmental Advisory Council: One 3-year appointment to expire on 12/19/23.

Mr. Parker stated, Nicole Rahman submitted a letter of interest for reappointment.

Motion to nominate **Nicole Rahman** made by Ms. Sherlock.

Mr. Parker stated, we have one person that put in a letter of interest and I've heard no other nominations.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, all in favor of **Nicole Rahman**? Opposed?

Motion to appoint **Nicole Rahman** carried by voice vote 8-0.

Motion 10B - Motion to appoint Economic Development Corporation: One 3-year appointment to expire on 9/30/23.

Mr. Parker stated, we have one letter of interest for reappointment from Christina Morganti.

Motion made to nominate **Christina Morganti** made by Ms. Sherlock.

Motion seconded by Ms. Hlahol.

No discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker asked, are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I'm having a nomination for **Christina Morganti**. All in favor? Opposed?

Motion to appoint **Christina Morganti** carried by voice vote 8-0.

Motion 10C - Motion to appoint the Municipal Authority: One 5-year appointment to expire on 1/4/26.

Mr. Parker stated, we have a letter of interest from Jeff Johnson who is currently on the board and we have a letter of interest from Justin Bowers.

Motion made to nominate **Jeff Johnson** by Ms. Sherlock.

Motion made to nominate **Justin Bowers** by Mr. Yager.

Mr. Parker stated, we have two names, two nominations. Would anyone else like to nominate somebody?

No discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, since we have two names when your name is called you will state the person that you're voting for and the person who has a majority has the position.

Roll call please?

Mr. Bowers stated, Justin Bowers.

Ms. Hlahol stated, Jeff Johnson.

Mr. Nicol stated, Jeff Johnson.

Mr. Paul stated, Jeff Johnson.

Mr. Robinson stated, Jeff Johnson.

Ms. Sherlock stated, Jeff Johnson.

Mr. Yager stated, Justin Bowers.

Mr. Parker stated, Jeff Johnson.

Motion to appoint **Jeff Johnson** carried by roll call vote 6-2.

Motion 10D - Motion to appoint Planning Commission: Two 4-year appointments to expire 12/31/25.

Mr. Parker stated, we have a letter of interest from Don Diretto who is currently on the commission and then we have another letter from Steve Amend who is currently on the commission and then we have a letter of interest from Steve Hoppe. Do we have anybody else who wants to nominate anybody else?

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Motion to nominate **Don Diretto** made by Mr. Yager.

Mr. Parker stated, roll call please.

Motion to appoint **Don Diretto** carried by roll call vote 8-0.

Motion to nominate **Steve Amend** made by Ms. Sherlock.

Mr. Parker stated, roll call please.

Motion to appoint **Steve Amend** carried by roll call vote 8-0.

Motion 10E - Motion to appoint Recreation Advisory Board: Three 2-year appointments to expire on 5/21/22.

Parker stated, we have one letter of interest from Jack King. Do we have any other nominations?

Motion to nominate **Brud Anderson** made by Ms. Sherlock.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, currently we have two nominations for three positions so we're going to do Mr. King First. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

Motion to appoint **Jack King** carried by voice vote 8-0.

Mr. Parker stated, next is Brud Anderson. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

Motion to appoint **Brud Anderson** carried by voice vote 8-0.

Motion 10F - Motion to appoint Zoning Hearing Board: One 3-year term to expire on 1/2/24.

Mr. Parker stated, we have one letter of interest Suzanne Zukowksi.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Motion to nominate **Suzanne Zukowksi** made by Ms. Sherlock.

Motion seconded by Mr. Paul.

Motion to table made by Ms. Hlahol.

Motion seconded by Mr. Bowers.

Mr. Parker stated, roll call vote.

Motion to table carried by roll call vote 5-3. (nay votes being Mr. Paul, Ms. Sherlock and Mr. Parker)

BOROUGH OFFICIALS

Mr. Bowers stated, I would like to wish Mr. Mitchell well. I hope everybody keeps him in their thoughts and prayers. I'd like to suggest that for next month or the upcoming months that we put together some sort of online Q & A session and presentation of the Comprehensive Plan by either the Borough or the Planning Commission for the residents. I think it would be beneficial after Borough Council gets a presentation of what the changes are that that presentation be given to the public and given some time as well to digest it and then maybe have another Q & A session for the public for anybody who's going to read through that 200 page book and has questions and since the Planning Commission wrote them I think they said that they already had some sort of open presentation. I'm assuming it was probably at the building because I don't remember seeing Zoom so I think we should utilize our online presence like we did for the Williamson Park presentation so that anybody who wants to be involved online can be.

Ms. Sherlock stated, thank you Justin regarding Scott, keeping him in our prayers. Also the Comprehensive Plan I did want to bring that up so I agree with all of that with regards to questions and answers and so forth. I have read most of it but not all of it and I did ask Mr. Parker if he could pull that until such time that we all were able to weigh in on it but I have to tell you this plan is bipolar, there are so many times when it actually – it says one thing and then the next page it will say something else, so it's not really as in sync as I'd like to see it but I do appreciate the Planning Commission's work that they've done. I know that's not easy like you said it's 130 pages or whatever it is and they do a good job and of course we have the County help but I do think that it needs more a little more scrutiny and I'm glad that we're going to or hope everybody agrees that we'll be able to bring this out to the public and discuss it a little bit more. Finally, I'd like to say thank you to those who not only put up the decorations for Christmas at the Robert Morris Plaza but recently I guess this past weekend they ended up taking them down. I'm not sure who did that but I appreciate that. Thank you so much.

Ms. Hlahol stated, the one thing that I'd like to say about the Planning Commission is, I think they have to be a little, as Nancy said, but sometimes they refer to the Tate and Lyle property as Tate and Lyle and sometimes they refer to it as Staley's, I think it has to be Tate and Lyle across the board.

Ms. Sherlock stated, yes, there are a number of inconsistencies so hopefully we'll get through them all. Thanks Helen.

Mr. Robinson stated, I want to echo earlier in the night with Ted welcoming Duane. I'd like to welcome Duane, thank you for stepping up it's a thankless job and again thanks for doing it. Helen if you look over to your left right now how is Duane holding up? Is he making it through the first meeting okay or everything good?

Ms. Hlahol replied, I think he's going to come back next month.

Mr. Robinson stated, he's going to come back next month, excellent. Thank you Duane.

Mr. Nicol stated, thank you.

Mr. Parker stated, we are going to have a brief recess so that Terry our IT guy can go ahead and secure the Zoom for the Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn, made by Mr. Yager.

Motion seconded by Ms. Sherlock.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.