



The Morrisville Borough Council met on Monday, March 15, 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 all rise 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
Nancy Sherlock (via Zoom)
Michael Yager (via Zoom)

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

Not in Attendance: Dave Rivella, Mayor

Mr. Parker stated, we will have an executive session at the end of the meeting for personnel and real estate.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

There were no special presentations this evening.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

1. Eileen Dreisbach – *75 Harrison Avenue*

She stated, the reason I am here, I see on the agenda that there is a call for a motion for the engineer to submit an application for the Manor Park Playground for a grant and I just want to speak on this. Everyone that knows me knows that it is near and dear to my heart and I understand that someone reached out to council members and said that they're not voting for it and I hope that you all vote for it because it's a necessity in our Borough. I've been involved in this for over 33 years I know a lot of people don't know the history of it. About 33 years ago my son was a teenager and him and several of his friends got caught in Falls Township with tomatoes and eggs in their car on mischief night they were sent to the youth aid panel and they told the youth aid panel there's nothing for them to do in Morrisville, so their community service was coming to council and requesting some type of amusement or recreation for kids that we didn't have and they came up and they spoke and for eight years after that I came up and followed up speaking at every meeting. Twenty-five years ago we got a grant for the playground and in between I did fundraisers I sold a million Gertrude Hawk candy bars and gourmet lollipops. We had the flyers come up and we had a hockey marathon for the day and it was a nice time but now I know that the playground has reached its end. It's been there 25 years, we need a new one. The swings and the merry-go-round aren't bad because I know the merry-go-round wasn't put in that long ago because I actually donated \$2,000 towards the merry-go-round. Also, the tunnel slide when it broke, I spoke with Game Time and it took us months going back and forth before we finally got a new tunnel slide but then that was put in and it was also destroyed, so

that was taken out. So the climbing equipment there definitely has to go, but on another note we never had the proper surface put under the playground from the time it was put in there and that was one of the major issues there. I came before council numerous times asking for appropriate wood chips to be put in there they never were. So I just want to plead with everyone right now to please vote to put the playground in. We can't put one in Williamson Park right now because the dike has not been accredited so we need a playground for the kids. There have been numerous kids down there every day of the week. I walk my dog and I know for a fact that they're there, so please keep the kids in mind and keep something in the community for them to do so they don't go on the streets again. Thank you.

2. Noel Sperry – *531 Prospect Avenue*

He stated, I'd actually like to read a statement from Hedda Sharapan of The Fred Rogers Center. I've always thought of March as a month of hope, spring is on its way, it's been a whole year since the pandemic changed our lives and we're just now beginning to see hopeful signs of returning to some kind of new normal. For us at the Fred Rogers Center this has always been a time to celebrate because we're coming up on Fred's birthday, March 20th, we call it, won't you be my neighbor day. A number of years ago we started it as an annual tradition to honor Fred on that day by wearing a sweater and doing something neighborly. A little known fact about Fred Rogers, it was his testimony to congress that saved PBS, without him there would be no Sesame Street, Zoom or other programming that has enriched many many lives. I'm urging people of Morrisville in the town to join me, take some time on Saturday, reach out to your neighbors, do something nice for them or just say hi, that's it, that's all it needs to be, because that will enrich our own neighborhood and ourselves. Also I'd like say Happy St. Patrick's Day to all our Irish neighbors in town. Thank you.

3. Jacqueline Carol – *36 Union Street*

She stated, I'm here to talk about Williamson Park. Something that I think is an issue is that the last meeting it was brought up that our comments were being ignored and it sounds to me as though that's something that's happening and I would like to urge you guys to actually listen to our comments. I don't mean to come off as being aggressive, come off as speaking as a towns person who is concerned about our recreation. That being the biggest park in our town and being used every day for multiple types of activities such as baseball, basketball, tennis, just going on walks or if people just want to sit out and get some fresh air, bring their kids out of the house to get some activity in. It's all very important and I think that it's something that also has potential to bring more people into this town events and money. If we don't let it get blighted and if we keep continuing to bring in grants for it, it's a park that's still here as long as it's here I think we should be allowing the grants to come in. I think that's more for the commission people to decide but I think it's something that is important. If we spruce it up and make it nice we can use it to its full potential. Everyone who I know in this town really appreciates that being there, it's a staple for them to get activity out and I just hope you all can keep an open mind and not commit just yet. All right, thank you very much.

4. Mary Hrenda – *343 Crown Street*

She stated, I hope that Council will appoint as our new Borough Manager someone who can evaluate with fresh eyes the proposal by Morrisville Select, LLC for development of Williamson Park and has no prior involvement with Joe McGrath. I hope this person has the skills and experience to evaluate the financial, social and environmental impact of the proposed development on our Borough and our environment. The loss of our park and the loss of our Williamson Park is the vast majority of our open space here in Morrisville. A scenic walking destination on the river, a well used recreation area, home of the Morrisville Little League and a community gathering place. I really feel that it would be a

great blow to our community to lose this space, so please choose carefully to somebody skilled, experienced and not prejudiced for this job. Also, I want to say there's a problem with the audio on the cable, there's an echo of some kind when Jackie was speaking, she was very hard to understand and when I'm speaking, I'm sure that that happened too. So please fix the cable audio. Thank you.

5. Joshua Kuntz – *40 Union Street*

He stated, normally when I talk, I've been trying to be more participant in all this and normally when I talk I spend some time to structure out and write out my speech because I think that in an attempt to be efficient at what I'm trying to communicate I will do that so I can be more articulate with what I'm saying and thought out. I'm not doing that this time, this is just me riffing, me speaking directly to everybody who's listening and I think part of that is because I was very disheartened by what I had heard after I had to leave because I had work in the morning so I had to obviously go to go to sleep and I know everybody has jobs and stuff but I went back and I watched through the entirety of the last session because I wanted to see what I had missed. As Jackie had brought up I also heard the comments about Councilman Ted saying that he just ignored what many of the people were saying and that he's not going to abide by conspiracy theorists. Now at first this had me extremely disheartened to the point where I didn't feel like I could continue watching the rest of the video because of just how personally kind of ignored I'd been, but I kind of feel that if anything to take something positive out of that, that maybe there is a wrong foot that has been gotten to in this discourse and that we might need to reframe this and that I want to have empathy for everybody who feels like they might be being accused or attacked of some kind of corruption or anything like that because if the response is to entrench and to make an other out of those of us who are trying to voice genuine concerns about something I don't think that that's going to facilitate a community. That's not going to help us and that we need to try to get rid of these barriers of cognition

of how we process information, so that we can actually hear one another. Now I can then go on to say that obviously I'm not a council member, it's not my job to do that and I don't know if you guys get paid and I can understand that this might not be business as usual, there's more attention being drawn and it might be more of a burden and because I as a person who's a server understand what it's like to be of service and trying to serve people and how frustrating it can be when the people you're trying to serve and work for aren't like making it easy for you and it's not nice to be accused of anything, so I really understand that. I want to come from a place of empathy but I also do think that it's worthwhile to be hearing what we're trying to say even when we're talking about the plan proposal, where if we see in there that there's not language explicitly trying to protect the park, like it's not weird for us to be pointing out that seems like a bias. It seems like that there's an opportunity for somebody to come in and take it away and that when we're trying and I know like okay maybe that's a conspiracy theory, but that also means that if you have more information about that we need to hear that stuff, we need to be a part of this process because if we're not then you're cutting us off and you're creating a fake other because we're in this together. I don't know everybody's lives here, I wish I did so I could be more personal be more appropriate to people's needs but it is so disheartening to hear myself after me pouring work into this stuff be dismissed so off-handedly that I really hope that you guys can -- and I'm talking to you Ted, because you've been looking at something this whole time and not listening to people. I watched you ignore two speakers already. You're muted, I'm sorry. I know you're probably working, you're still muted, I'm sorry. I know you're reacting to me. I want to hear what you have to say but you're muted.

Mr. Parker stated, I can listen to you and write it down at the same time. I've heard everything – it has to do with being accused of corruption for voting to hear a proposal from a developer with no commitment to anything that's what it was about.

Mr. Kuntz stated, I can appreciate that. Am I allowed to respond?

Mr. Flager stated, you have three minutes this is not a debate this is public comment.

Mr. Kuntz stated, I know, that's fine.

Mr. Flager asked, how much time does this gentlemen have left?

Mr. Heitz replied, he's already had five minutes.

Mr. Kuntz stated, thank you for listening to me. I'm not trying to be attacking or anything like that. That's my time I suppose. Thank you for listening.

6. Steve Fowler – *444 Hillside Avenue*

He stated, I just want to note that Williamson Park is unique as has been said by many people as Borough Council fully recognizes and I think as the Bucks RDA also recognizes as well. I want to note that all healthy existing trees in the park should be kept not just for their beauty and shade cooling contribution to air quality in the Borough, but they all also provide a habitat for migratory and resident birds also generally making the park a place where people can relax, walk, play and yes enjoy a little bit of nature in the middle of the Borough. Once that is gone, it is gone forever and I want everyone to just think about that when we go through our decisions. It is quintessentially a modern American story but becomes a stalemate over what is considered to be best for community. It is a fight that asks us to consider what it is we value, what it is worth saving and how to weigh our history, the open space and parkland against the possible expediency evidence by condemnation, confiscation of Williamson Park by the Bucks RDA and ultimately, possibly, by the Morrisville Borough Council. It is one of our heritage against

technological advance and will be left for future generations of Morrisville residents to enjoy. You are being asked constantly to make decisions voting piecemeal on approval of concept plans that have included portions of the river levee and taking a park from people of Morrisville and yes also of Bucks County. I want to raise a point that in the Philadelphia Inquirer article dated the 11th of March, 2021. It stated that in a single night in 2020, October 2nd an estimated 1000 to 1500 birds perished when flying into skyscrapers in Philadelphia alone. Groups such as the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel, Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, Audubon Mid-Atlantic, Valley Forge and Winco Audubon Societies have also raised the alarm at this atrocity really. In Philadelphia alone this will mean turning off lights on tallest buildings by midnight to 6 a.m. Since 70 percent of our land birds are migratory which is about 350 to 400 species and of these 80 percent migrate at night, illuminated buildings disorient these nocturnal migrants. Since most native songbirds live in rural forested habitats any intense lights can cause birds to collide with windows or walls. Further, development along the Delaware River will only exacerbate the problem. I ask you to consider this when you're making your decisions. Thank you.

7. Darrell Adair – 604 Durham Road, *Langhorne, PA*

He stated, my son and daughter-in-law live right there in Morrisville right along the park. One of the gems of your town is in fact the park. You don't have to go very far in our state to go down to Chester or Philadelphia and see what constant building and not leaving open space for people, what it winds up looking like. Now you have this spot and like has been said before me, once you build on it, it's a done deal. Once it's gone, it's gone. The fact that you have had this for all these years and the fact that you're considering getting rid of it I think really needs to be considered strongly. I don't know every issue, I don't know every issue you guys deal with, what I do know whatever taxes or anything else or monies that this could possibly bring in, it also brings in other problems

with it and it shows people, especially the youth, that the interest in them is minute and I really think you need to think about that before you just go ahead and make a decision. Getting rid of land that they're not making any more of is a foolish mistake if you don't consider keeping some land or open space for kids. That's my comment. Thank you for listening.

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 December 21, 2020.

Motion made by Ms. Sherlock.

Motion seconded by Mr. Robinson.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

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

Motion carried by voice vote 8-0.

Motion 6B - Motion to approve the Borough Council Regular Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021.

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 6C - Motion to approve the Borough Council Special Meeting Minutes of February 2, 2021.

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.

ACTION ITEMS

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

Motion made by Ms. Sherlock.

Motion seconded by Mr. Bowers.

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.

Ms. Sherlock stated, I know there's no official Mayor's Report, but he did send something out that involves some certifications that the Chief had just received recently so I don't know if the Chief is going to mention that or not.

Mr. Yager asked, did that go to everyone or just select people? I don't remember seeing anything.

Ms. Sherlock stated, I thought it went out to everyone.

Ms. Hlahol stated, it wasn't an email it was in one of our package deliveries.

Mr. Yager stated, yeah, I saw the memos, okay. Thank you.

Ms. Hlahol stated, yeah, you're welcome.

Ms. Sherlock stated, I guess I'll mention it then, that Chief McClay was certified with PEMA for completion training requirements on November 30th, 2020 and then also an advanced certification, he completed training September 14th, 2020. This came from the Mayor and we got two letters that accompanied it and the letters came from PEMA, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. That's it. Thanks.

Police Chief's Report – Chief George McClay –He stated, good evening Council, four quick items. April 9th I'm going to have a bike sale from 4:00 until whenever I get rid of all the bikes. If you look in your crime report for February, we had a rape, I can tell you that it was a known doer and there was no threat to the general public. Our crime numbers continue to go down from last year and continuing that way this year. Lastly, Bo Luna has officially announced his retirement as of May 1st. That's all I have. Thank you.

Interim Manager's Report – Micah Heitz – There was no report this evening.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no committee reports this evening.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion 9A - Motion to adopt an updated Comprehensive Plan prepared and recommended by the Morrisville Borough Planning Commission and the Bucks County Planning Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Yager.

Motion seconded by Ms. Sherlock.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, roll call please.

Motion carried by roll call vote 8-0.

Motion 9B - Motion authorizing Morrisville Borough to participate in the Bucks County Department of Health 2021 Mosquito Control Program and to treat Municipal properties for mosquito control.

Motion made by Mr. Bowers.

Motion seconded by Ms. Sherlock.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

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

Motion carried by voice vote 8-0.

Motion 9C - Motion authorizing the Borough Engineer to submit an application for CDBG funding to the Bucks County Department of Housing and Community Development, requesting an amount of \$555,000.00, to underwrite certain installation of new sidewalk along West Trenton Avenue and ADA ramps along Hillcrest Avenue and Washington Street.

Motion made by Mr. Bowers.

Motion seconded by Mr. Parker.

Wade Helder of Gilmore & Associates talked about the CDBG curb ramp application.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, roll call please.

Motion carried by roll call vote 8-0.

Motion 9D - Motion authorizing the Borough Engineer to submit an application for CDBG grant funding in the amount of \$581,116.00 to the Bucks County Department of Housing and Community Development to underwrite certain improvements to the Manor Park & Playground.

Motion made by Mr. Yager.

Motion seconded by Mr. Bowers.

Wade Helder of Gilmore & Associates talked about the CDBG Manor Park & Playground improvement application.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Mr. Parker stated, roll call please.

Motion carried by roll call vote 8-0.

APPOINTMENTS

Motion 10A - Motion to appoint Library Board: Three 3-year appointment to expire on 3/1/24.

Mr. Parker stated, we have received three letters of interest.

Motion to nominate **Eva Kastner Puschi** made by Ms. Sherlock.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Motion to nominate **Dina Tanzillo** made by Mr. Robinson.

Motion to nominate **Eileen Grossman-Bailey** made by Ms. Hlahol.

Mr. Parker stated, we are going to do one vote to accept the three nominations. Roll call please.

Motion to appoint **Eva Kastner Puschi, Dina Tanzillo and Eileen Grossman-Bailey** carried by roll call vote 8-0.

BOROUGH OFFICIALS

Mr. Parker stated, on the 25th of February we lost our Borough Manager, Scott Mitchell. He had been sick for a while, he was a very personal man and never really made it public. It was a pleasure working with him and became a good friend and I'm going to miss him.

Ms. Sherlock stated, I concur with what you said regarding his professionalism and he had a wealth of knowledge that was extremely helpful.

Mr. Bowers stated, he definitely will be missed and he left some big shoes to fill.

Mr. Parker stated, absolutely.

Ms. Hlahol stated, and he didn't finish this job.

Mr. Flager stated, I'd like to extend my condolences to his family too and his parents, his mother and his stepfather who live in Levittown where he grew up in Highland Park and his brothers and sisters. He had a very close family and he was a really quality human being and on behalf of our firm we will miss him. He was incredibly hard working. There weren't a lot of managers that you can call up -- he would tell you he was out one or two o'clock in the morning checking out a hookah bar because there were complaints. I don't know any other manager that would do that but he did. May his memory be for a blessing to his family and to all of us.

Ms. Sherlock stated, thank you Randy. Mr. Parker, I have a question. I don't know if Randy can answer this. Do we need to appoint a board of appeals position which is a UCC requirement because we don't have that filled right now. The last person, the former person I don't know if we didn't contact him or what but it has to be somebody semi-qualified but it's an open position right now. That's just one of my questions. It doesn't have to be answered this evening but maybe you can give Ted some guidance and we would advertise it I'm not sure.

Mr. Holbert asked, which one, zoning, housing, board of appeals?

Ms. Sherlock replied, I don't know if it's zoning, but I know it's a UCC requirement so I'm going to guess it's zoning. It's not listed as housing.

Mr. Holbert stated, okay, we'll look into it then though.

Ms. Sherlock stated, one last thing. I would like, sometime in the future it can be a few months from now. Don, I'm missing his last name, he had asked about giving a presentation about basically Williamson Park and the geology of it and the flooding and that sort of thing and I'd like to see sometime in the future that as part of the EAC he be allowed to give a short presentation a few minutes so I'd like that to be considered.

Mr. Paul stated, it's Don Rice.

Ms. Sherlock stated, Rice, it just escaped me for a moment. That's all I have. Thank you.

Mr. Bowers stated, Mr. Parker I have two things. One on Sunday, March 21st the Friends of the Morrisville Dog Park will be doing their annual dog wash at Four Paws Doggie Day Care from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you go on to Facebook or Instagram you can look up Friends of Morrisville Dog Park for the email address or phone number to call in to make an appointment. We're going to do them by appointment only this year because of COVID. They'll come out and pick up the dogs outside and keep everybody at a distance. My second thing is, I just want to comment with Scott's passing and Micah stepping up to fulfill the Borough Manager position I think council should at least give some thought to some sort of stipend or out of class pay for Micah. I mean, he's essentially doing two jobs and I know he's probably has the help of all the staff down there pulling together because of this unfortunate situation but it's just something we may want to think about especially if our Borough Manager search takes any time more than another few

weeks because it's already been probably a month that he's been doing the position and it could be a month or two longer possibly more.

Ms. Sherlock stated, I agree with that.

Mr. Parker stated, we'll bring that up at the next executive session.

Mr. Yager stated, I have a quick announcement, if I may. As most people probably already know and if you don't, the Morrisville-Yardley Area Rotary Club will not be holding the Easter Egg Hunt this year. We are extremely hopeful that it comes back next year. We are offering a service of delivering candy filled eggs to the 19067 zip code. Along with that, the Easter Bunny is scheduling deliveries to the children for some photos that will be properly spaced in proximity to one another so we could make sure that we keep with all the COVID-19 requests and we are offering a service that is safe for all. If you're interested, the deadline to ask for the Easter Bunny is March 20th. You can find it advertised on Facebook through the Morrisville-Yardley Area Rotary Clubs page. You can also find it on various local sites, but if you want to send an email you can sent it to rotary19067@gmail.com and put in your request. Thank you.

Ms. Sherlock stated, very nice.

Ms. Hlahol stated, I have one thing. Actually Chief McClay could answer this maybe. I was speaking to the hotel behind La Villa in the shopping center and he was telling me that at 4th of July or any time fireworks are being sold, Memorial Day, that it becomes a mess for them back in that parking lot and I'm not sure if there's anything we as the town maybe the officers can do to help him. He said that he has a lot of problems with people going into the fireworks shop and bothering his hotel. There's a lot of traffic he said and with the cars going in and out, the people who are staying in the hotel are having issues as well, so I don't know if there's something you can look into to help him maybe during those big holidays?

Chief McClay (inaudible)

Ms. Hlahol stated, I don't have his name in front of me but it's the owner of the hotel, hold on I can look at my phone.

Chief McClay stated, tell him he needs to contact me.

Ms. Hlahol stated, okay. I too have seen that traffic during those holiday big firework purchases and it is a mess.

Chief McClay stated, he has never contacted me in the seven years that I've been here.

Ms. Hlahol stated, okay, I'll tell him to do that. Thank you.

Ms. Sherlock stated, Ted, I forgot to announce about the household hazardous waste collection which is April 3rd at the college, so that's coming up but I believe it's on our website so people can check it out. There's only a few a year, so April 3rd is the next one for Lower Bucks and it's being held at the college.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn, made by Mr. Yager.

Motion seconded by Mr. Bowers.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Mr. Parker stated, we'll have a brief recess then we'll go into executive session.