

**New Hope Borough
Council Workshop Meeting
March 4, 2019
4:00 PM**

PRESENT:

President Connie Gering, Vice President Dan Dougherty, President Pro Term, Tina Rettig, Alison Kingsley, Ken Maisel, Laurie McHugh, Peter Meyer, Mayor Keller, Borough Manager E.J. Lee, Laura Kent (Scribe),

Karen McNair, Borough Engineer from Gilmore Associates

CALL TO ORDER:

Council Workshop Meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM

DISCUSSIONS:

Newsletter Production through Hometown Press

Ms. Lee brought up the topic of Hometown Press being used to publish the Borough's newsletter this summer. She explained that Hometown Press is a newsletter printing company that collects ads and covers the cost of the newsletter printing. They cover all the costs associated with printing we provide them with articles and photos. They do the layout they go out and collect the ads to put into the newsletter, which would cover the cost of the printing. The Borough is responsible for the cost of postage and handling, which means they take it to the post office box, make sure everything is properly mailed out. For this summer, Ms. Lee proposed 1500 copies of the newsletter for print – 1,300 for delivery and 200 to keep on hand.

Ms. Lee was asked what the costs associated with postage and handling would be, to which she responded that she wasn't sure exactly what the meter postage rates are right now, but again the postage fee comes down to the weight of the newsletter. So how many pages we have in there, the primary driving force and also how many. The more there are bulk the cheaper the rate. But the 2019 budget included \$1500 total for the newsletter production overall for this year.

Ms. Lee further iterated that she is proposing production of just one newsletter this year to evaluate how it is received. She understands that the ads may be an issue for some but utilizing Hometown Press would minimize the costs as well as the time that goes into a newsletter production since Hometown Press handles the layout and the Borough handle the review and proofing.

Ms. Lee assured that the Borough would review the entire newsletter layout before print and distribution to review the articles, it's placement as well as all the advertisements.

Ms. Lee will also be requesting from Hometown Press specifics of the newsletter layout such as the front cover and the back cover with no ads and the inside front page with no in addition to a couple of spreads with no ads so that there can be full Borough content.

Ms. Lee distributed samples of other municipal newsletters that Hometown Press published. She also explained that she requested that whoever is collecting the ads for Hometown Press, that they focus on Borough businesses first before they branching to outside Borough businesses.

Mr. Meyer asked if the newsletter can be provided to us electronically to be posted on the website, to which Ms. Lee responded that the Borough would get an electronic version that we can be posted on the website with the printed publications.

Ms. McHugh asked if we get just the online version because the Borough had a newsletter distribution up until about 4 years ago but stopped when the businesses in town didn't want them because they weren't really being read and most went into the trash. She also iterated that the printing isn't the most "green" method of communicating.

Ms. Lee explained that the mailing distribution group would be reviewed to make sure they're the most recent and would also include distribution to the businesses. If there are businesses that don't want to be included, that can be figured out a way to separate residential from commercial and can only send it to residential and reduce the 1300 distribution by maybe half.

Ms. McHugh further explained that when this was done several years ago, there were numerous complaints about chunks of neighborhoods and businesses that did not receive them via mail.

Ms. Lee shared with the group that in the last several months having worked here, she has noticed some issues with the local post office mass mailings dropped off to them were not being delivered. She shared that she may use a different post office to make sure that things get delivered.

Mr. Maisel asked if the Borough would get a discounted rate as a non-profit/government, to which Ms. Lee responded that because Hometown Press is handling the shipping and delivery, that might affect the costs.

Mr. Maisel further shared that considering the costs associated with the newsletter print, it appears to be a good deal to try.

Ms. Lee further shared that the option to produce the newsletter in-house is available but it would be approximately \$600/year for the software to do the layout, approximately 100 hours required to complete the newsletter, and cost to print and ship.

Mr. Dougherty shared that this topic was discussed at the recent Finance Committee Meeting and that the \$1500 is included in the 2019 budget but the larger question is the purpose of producing the newsletter and the ultimate goal of the newsletter.

Mr. Maisel voiced that he appreciates the personal form of communication and the value of home delivery.

Ms. Lee shared what she currently has lined up for the newsletter: the 2019 budget, very basic information on the 2019 budget, the historic district and HARB, reminders of the fire inspection program, the parking kiosks and how it works, the building permit process, shade tree commission and what they do, the fire Chief's annual report, the police department's annual report and outreach programs, the library's upcoming projects, and the paving schedule.

Road Paving with Karen McNair

Ms. MacNair, Borough Engineer provided the group with the background of how the list of roads for 2019 paving was determined. She shared that Waterloo Street and a portion of E. Mechanic Street are recommended for paving based on the Borough Public Works Director's assessment. E. Randolph St. is also proposed for paving with an alternate option to include the park for pavement as well.

Ms. MacNair explained the two options about paving Stoney Hill Rd. in addressing the stormwater issue there where the water sits on the road and gets iced over and gets a lot of snow on it. She further explained that both options would require reconstruction because the water has sat on the road so much that it's opening up. This section of the road requires a long term fix to avoid having to pave the road as frequently as it currently requires.

Ms. MacNair provided the two options:

1. Base Drain with perforated pipe where a pipe would be installed for stormwater drainage.
2. The second option is a larger swale on the side of the road where there is already an existing small swale. This option would require the road to be changed to a one-way as She further explained that East Mechanic St is designated as a one way in the direction of leaving town, so we would have Stoney Hill would be changed to a one-way coming into town, completing the loop of one way on either direction at that area.

Ms. Lee reviewed the cost proposal that Gilmore & Associates provided to the Borough which breaks down the costs of just the milling and paving and the extensive stormwater work on W. Mechanic as itemized options.

Ms. Lee further iterated the issue of parking on that strip of the road where really, only one car can get through each direction now anyway and the access for emergency vehicles has been an issue there.

Mr. Dougherty shared that the issue of cars parked on the side of the road isn't going to go away as residents have nowhere else to park, so he requested that this issue be further evaluated by the police department and the fire company to make sure that accessibility of cars is not an issue as part of any improvements proposed for that area.

There was further discussion on the condition of the road, to which Ms. MacNair iterated that the underlying stormwater issues are going to continue deteriorate the road and just the milling and paving is just a short-term solution.

Mr. Dougherty asked if the Borough has a running inventory of the roads in the borough with a paving schedule and updated condition of the road.

Mr. Dougherty also shared that he is familiar with the road and that he has noticed a constant stream coming down this mountainside, to which Ms. MacNair responded that the existing swale where the stream is coming down is where the proposed drain or the swale would go.

Mr. Meyer pointed out that the two options proposed are a difference of \$1,000 and asked what the argument is in favor of one vs the other, to which Ms. MacNair responded that option 2 requires the one-way traffic.

Mr. Meyer further asked if option one might be a better options given the narrow nature of the road, to which Ms. MacNair explained that option one is the underground perforated drain, so it's not visible from the road and not easily noticeable when it needs maintenance, and if it fails, it needs to be dug up for repairs. Whereas option 2 is the swale that's more visible, so it's clear when it needs maintenance.

Ms. Rettig also voiced that the residents who will be directly affected by this should be notified and any concerns be addressed.

Mr. Dougherty asked how many property owners are along that stretch of the proposed work, to which Ms. Lee responded that the Borough would speak with the residents as well as emergency services to make proper recommendations to the Council.

PARKING VIOLATIONS

Ms. Lee provided the background of this topic going back to the September, 2018 workshop when this topic was first brought up. At that time, the Police Chief raised concerns about the

lack of policy in place to address parking tickets issued for human error. At the September workshop, it was discussed and recommended that parking tickets issued as a result of human error (wrong license plate info etc.) should be fine for half the amount of regular parking citation (\$10 instead of \$20 fine).

Ms. Lee explained that in having researched this further, due to the fact that parking citations are a fine as listed in the Borough ordinance, any changes to those fines would require an ordinance amendment unlike Borough fees that are identified by a resolution. Ms. Lee further shared with the group procedures that other cities and municipalities have implemented to address these types of issues where people can appeal a parking ticket through a set process.

Mr. Maisel asked why the Borough imposes a fine for someone who made a mistake in paying for their parking pass and why charge them for half for that mistake.

Mayor Keller chimed in that in 2018, there were approximately 2,000 parking tickets issued to those who made mistakes in obtaining their parking passes, resulting to 2,000 voids of those tickets.

Ms. Lee further shared that each of those parking ticket voids took staff time to research and review.

Ms. Maisel further questioned the idea of giving up approximately \$40,000 of revenue for errors made by the users.

Ms. Lee explained that the proposed appeals process would cut the parking fee in half from \$20 to \$10 to offset some of the staff hours required in the review and research for each parking ticket appeal.

REGISTERING RENTAL PROPERTIES

Council President Gering announced that this item will be tabled for another workshop to review the current landlord registration process further before a public discussion.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Ms. Lee shared that under the direction of Council President Gering, the Borough has been working to find a more streamlined process of code enforcement.

Council President Gering explained that she has been doing research on what other municipalities have been doing to streamline the code enforcement process as it is very time consuming to issue notices and follow up to make sure that the notices have been responded to appropriately. She used the recent issue of overflowing garbage as an example, and how

some towns issue tickets/warnings using a template not meant to fine immediately, but to give them a warning. She hopes this effort will help get the town cleaned up better.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Claire Shaw attended on behalf of the fire company to raise two issues:

The first this was to present EJ documentation for worker's comp payments for the last several years to get the Borough reimbursement of the worker's comp payments going.

Ms. Lee thanked Ms. Shaw for the documents that she will need to submit to the Borough's insurance company for reimbursement of the 2015-2016 policy, which would be turned over to the fire company and also for the insurance company to calculate what the Borough needs to reimburse to the fire companies for the 2017-2018 and the current years.

Ms. Shaw proposed the idea of the fire company forwarding the worker's comp bill to the Borough quarterly for reimbursement, to which Ms. Lee responded that is something that the Borough Finance Committee needs to review and evaluate for Council consideration.

Ms. Shaw asked about the second item: ACT 172, to which Mr. Dougherty responded that was the topic of discussion at the recent finance committee held earlier that day, and that the Borough is examining Act 172 as well as a block grant that Solebury Township has implemented. This is a topic that the Finance Committee will be recommending to the Council after validating some of the data provided to the Borough for a formal recommendation on what the Borough will decide for volunteer incentive.

Mr. Panzika commented on the topic of the parking fines and recommended that the Borough defer all appeals to Judge Snow.

Mr. Panzika also commented that as a landlord, he didn't know what the procedure is. He mentioned that he gets fire inspections, but was not fully aware of all the requirements.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:07 PM to move into Executive Session.