

**TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES
DECEMBER 5, 2023**

I. OPENING PROCEDURES

- A. Call to Order by President Smith at 7:04 p.m.
- B. Roll Call
 - Council Members Present: Robert John Smith, President of Council; Cassandra R. Eccles, Vice-President of Council; Richard S. Hughes, First Ward; George H. Stewart, Second Ward; Michael F. Hammill, Third Ward; Olivia T. Payne, Fourth Ward; John R. Denny, Jr., At-Large
 - Also Present: Julie A. Jakubec, CPA, CGMA, Township Manager; Brendan Lucas, Township Solicitor; Charles W. Steinert, Jr., P.E., Township Engineer; Christopher Komora, Special Projects Coordinator/Code Enforcement Officer; Todd Giammatteo, Public Service Superintendent; Jay Davis, Police Superintendent; Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

II. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- A. Marimar Landing Comparable Departure Concerning a Set-Back

Manager Jakubec stated the Planning Commission reviewed the subject request at its November 20, 2023 meeting. Council granted Final Land Development approval in February 2021, which included a comparable departure for building spacing from the required twenty (20) feet to twelve (12) feet. To accommodate the installation of elevators in eight (8) of the nineteen (19) buildings for people with disabilities, the building spacing would be reduced to nine (9) feet and four (4) inches. The consensus of the Planning Commission was to recommend to Council that the requested Comparable Departure be granted.

Mr. Stewart noted only the part of the building where the elevator shaft is would have reduced spacing. He questioned the developer if they originally planned to have elevators in some of the buildings. Dominic Ricciuti, representing River Road Development Group, indicated it was, but in learning through the design process that they needed some additional clearances to accommodate the elevator, which is why they applied for the change to the comparable departure and with that we did the minimum amount to accommodate the elevators.

Manager Jakubec reminded Mr. Ricciuti about patchwork repairs needed on River Road. Mr. Ricciuti indicated the patchwork is on schedule and would be done before applying for any permits.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution on the December 12th regular meeting agenda for consideration.

III. CITIZEN COMMENTS CONCERNING NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

II. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION CONTINUED

B. Proposed Zoning Changes Related to the C Commercial and SM Suburban Manufacturing Districts (RIDC Park)

The Manager noted that based on discussions with RIDC, the RIDC Business Alliance and staff, certain changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance are recommended to assist in revitalizing the RIDC Park. The proposed changes include the addition of definitions, Commercial District Accessory Use change, Permitted Principal and Accessory Use and Conditional Use changes to the SM (Suburban Manufacturing) District, and related Supplemental Regulations.

Mr. Denny, Jr. questioned what the changes will allow that they cannot do now. Manager Jakubec explained that currently a bank is a conditional use. The change makes a bank a regular permitted use and would not require Council's approval. Post-secondary education would provide a pipeline to get employees into the Park. The thought is if training is offered, they could get employees straight from the post-secondary education, which would be a conditional use. Another change would allow the ability to have a convenience store with fuel pumps with certain parameters. Sundry shops in a building, like some buildings in the City of Pittsburgh have, for people to get coffee and grab-and-go items.

Mr. Denny, Jr. asked if anything would be near residential areas, which the Manager stated no.

Mr. Stewart inquired of other areas in the municipality that the terms would apply. Manager Jakubec stated it is only in the SM zoning district. Mr. Stewart asked if there is another SM district. The Manager stated the SM zoning district is RIDC. Some folks are not aware that across the street, where Ametek is along the river, is part of RIDC. If Ametek wanted to sell the property, a Sheetz could go there.

Manager Jakubec stated some supplemental conditions are because of proximity to residential areas. No audio at the gas pumps that scream at you while you are pumping gas, unless it's safety, because those can be very loud. A Sheetz cannot be in the middle of the Park, so there are parameters that it needs to abut a State road or interstate exchange and cannot abut a residential area. She noted a proposal received from a convenience store with fueling at the Periwinkles site and RIDC is on board. Staff met with them and explained the process for the Township and RIDC. Also, universal EV chargers would be allowed at this fueling station because that is one thing this corridor desperately lacks.

President Smith recalled the zoning ordinance requires Planning Commission to have an opportunity to comment. Manager Jakubec stated Planning Commission commented at their last meeting and moved it toward Council. President Smith expected a written recommendation from Planning Commission. Solicitor Lucas advised Council they could request a letter from Planning Commission for next week. The ordinance would not be adopted for at least 45 days after sending it to the County for review and comments. Manager Jakubec requested the secretary to prepare letter for Planning Commission Chair to sign.

President Smith noted Council would have to conduct a Public Hearing. The Manager noted it would follow the whole process. The ordinance would be introduced, a Public Hearing would be held, and then possible adoption.

Mr. Stewart questioned if Counsel has zoning people that the Township works with for more complicated changes. Solicitor Lucas stated all zoning changes are reviewed, and he, personally, specializes in land use work.

Manager Jakubec indicated everyone thought these changes were a good start. The next changes will consider possible residential components, such as could a secondary post education have a dorm. She noted RIDC has engaged Pashek MTR to do their comprehensive plan so that is going to impact things zoning-wise that we did not think of, and we have realtors involved to tell us what people are looking for.

Vice President Eccles questioned the number of cars that would come to RIDC to gas up and go back on the road. Manager Jakubec stated there is a preliminary traffic study, but a detailed study needs to be done. The Township would submit a detailed traffic study to Wooster and Associates and ask that they factor in a component for that. Staff has to be sure the Township's independent traffic consultant agrees with their numbers. She also noted possible zoning issues for signage.

Vice President Eccles questioned how the current busy traffic in RIDC be impacted by the convenience store with gas pumps. The Manager noted RIDC is a post-COVID park that has not come back yet. In revitalizing the Park, you need to plan with these changes and other changes to come, and not to use post-Covid numbers but to use numbers that are realistic with the Park functioning as it could. As for cars coming off Route 28, there will have to be some type of traffic control at that intersection.

The consensus of Council was to include the proposed ordinance for consideration on the December 12th regular meeting agenda.

- C. Requesting Authorization to Purchase Car Charging Stations for Installation at the Lauri Ann West Community Center by Duquesne Light Company

Manager Jakubec stated Duquesne Light Company has offered to upgrade the electrical supply at the community center and install Car Charging Stations at no cost to the Township. The Township would need to supply the Car Charging Stations, which are available to purchase through CoStars Contract #4400024187 from National E Solutions. The total cost of the two (2) Car Charging Stations, mounting kits, commercial Cloud Plan, five-year maintenance plan and shipping is \$23,246.00. Staff is seeking authorization to purchase the Car Charging Stations and accessories for Duquesne Light Company to install at the Lauri Ann West Community Center. The Manager noted the "Drive Forward Program" ended and there are no grants available. Duquesne Light Company has offered a \$45,000 installation, and we will not need an electrician because Duquesne Light will install the chargers and she is certified to activate the chargers. The only cost to the Township is for the chargers. These additional Car Charging Stations will provide a total of six plugs at the community center.

Mr. Hughes acknowledged the chargers have not been in operation for very long and inquired if there was any sense of the utilization in the car chargers just hooked up in O'Hara Township Community Park. Manager Jakubec stated she had done an analysis for a news article but did not

have it with her. She indicated there is a lot of usage, especially in the summer. People plus their car in while they walk. The average is one hour and 15 minutes. Lots of vehicles are plugged in at the community center.

Mr. Denny, Jr. asked if Lauri Ann West Community Center requested these chargers. The Manager recalled a conversation, but the electric upgrade would be cost prohibitive. Duquesne Light Company initially was not interested in that site due to lack of visibility, but no one has taken advantage of their offer and they revisited the site and agreed to do the electric upgrade and install the stations. The Township needs to provide the stations.

Ms. Payne questioned where the funds for the charges would come from. Manager Jakubec stated the unassigned fund balance.

President Smith questioned if the Township is providing the EV chargers to be nice or making money. Manager Jakubec stated the Township is charging \$0.15 per Kilowatt hour and is making some money. The chargers at O'Hara Township Community Park have a dedicated bill, so she will be able to get an actual cost of each charging station and increase or decrease the charge per Kilowatt hour. Initially the first hour was free. Now the Township charges \$0.15 per Kilowatt hour from the time the vehicle is plugged in.

Mr. Stewart asked if the software vendor takes a percentage of the fee for every charge or is it a yearly fee for a number of stations. Manager Jakubec stated everything is remitted to the vendor, they take a percentage and the remainder is remitted to the Township.

Mr. Denny, Jr. questioned why the Township would pay and not Lauri Ann West Community Center, and what does the Township pay for at the community center. The Manager explained the Township maintains anything beyond the sidewalks; the parking lot, flex court, playground, grass mowing, snow plowing. The community center maintains the building and interior. President Smith stated it is in the Agreement, noting the Township owns all of it.

Vice President Eccles noted the electrical upgrade is worth \$40,000. Manager Jakubec clarified the electric upgrade is worth \$45,000 plus the electrical work to connect the chargers, estimated at \$7,000 to \$8,000, depending on how involved.

Mr. Stewart inquired about the Township's electric provider. The Manager explained the Township is part of a group that farms out; some electricity is provided by Engie and some by Duquesne Light; whoever has the best price. Duquesne Light's program now is installing chargers in areas of high visibility. They had a bunch of money and just opened another round to install super chargers in designated corridors because they did not get enough people to take advantage of the program. All our chargers are on a map.

Ms. Payne questioned if the chargers in O'Hara Township Community Park on a map. Manager Jakubec stated the chargers are on a map on ChargePoint.

Motion by Mr. Hughes to authorize the purchase of Car Charging Stations through CoStars Contract #4400024187 from National E Solutions was seconded by Vice President Eccles and carried unanimously.

D. Employee Recognition

Manager Jakubec stated Police Officers Michael Burda and John Fabrizi have been employed with the Township since October of 2003. She also joined the Township of O'Hara as Director of Administration/Finance Officer in January 2003 and was appointed Township Manager in 2006. Council has established the tradition of recognizing employees with twenty (20) or more years of service.

The consensus of Council was to include a motion authorizing Council President to sign letters of recognition for consideration on the December 12th regular meeting agenda.

E. Proposed Resolution Recognizing the Services of Robert John Smith

Manager Jakubec noted President Smith has decided to retire from public office after serving on Township Council for a total of 24 years. The proposed resolution recognizes President Smith for his many years of dedication and service to our community.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution on the December 12th regular meeting agenda for consideration.

F. Proposed Resolution Recognizing the Services of John R. Denny, Jr.

The Manager recalled Mr. Denny, Jr. has served on Township Council for a total of 12 years. The proposed resolution recognizes Mr. Denny, Jr. for his many years of dedication and service to our community.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution on the December 12th regular meeting agenda for consideration.

G. Continued Review and Discussion of Proposed Township Year 2024 Budget

Manager Jakubec recalled Council reviewed the proposed Year 2024 Budget in detail at the last meeting. She noted proposed increases to sanitary sewer fees, a shelter at the Lauri Ann West Community Center was requested, and no tax increases are proposed. The School District must approve the installation of a shelter at the community center since the property was donated to the Township. The Manager did not anticipate the School District would oppose the shelter. She referenced an update to the unassigned fund balance provided to Council. Her personal preference is to maintain a fund balance of 15% in the event of emergencies, and budget for repairs.

Paul Cullen, 632 Arbor Court, commented that the 2024 budget reflects the revenues are down almost by \$1,000,000. Manager Jakubec explained the unassigned fund balance is used to balance the budget, resulting in no tax increases. The budget is prepared very conservatively. She noted revenues usually come in hire.

H. Solicitor's November 10, 2023 Invoice

No comments.

I. Proposed December 12, 2023 Regular Meeting Agenda

There were no changes or comments.

IV. CONCERNS OF COUNCIL

Mr. Denny, Jr. stated to the newly elected officials in attendance that the meetings are not usually this short.

Mr. Stewart noted Ravine Street is cleaning up nicely. The Manager noted Jalen Byrd helped to mediate.

Vice President Eccles noted a road patch is needed on Falconhurst. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. was aware and recalled a big dip. He contacted the Water Authority but was not sure if they would address it before December 8th, which is when the paving companies will close for the winter.

President Smith stated he had mentioned to Shamus Petrucelli, incoming Councilmember, that Council would likely pass the \$16,000,000 budget with no citizen comments, but when people wanted chickens, the room was full.

V. CONCERNS OF STAFF

Manager Jakubec announced the Township-sponsored "Spread Cheer Food and Toy Drive" on December 16 between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. in the municipal building parking lot.

The Manager also announced the Township has established recycling of alkaline batteries. Battery terminals must be taped. Holiday lights will be accepted for recycling until after Orthodox Christmas.

Manager Jakubec stated beginning January 15, 2024 the Township will accept gently used prom-style dresses, shoes, jewelry, and accessories. The Township has partnered with Allegheny County for "Project Prom."

The Manager reminded Council about the luncheon on December 19th at noon.

Manager Jakubec requested Council to remain after the workshop for an executive session to discuss labor and legal matters.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The workshop adjourned at 8:15 p.m. and Council entered Executive Session.


Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary