**CASTLE SHANNON BOROUGH**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

February 13, 2023

The following elected officials were present: M. Heckmann, J. Maloney; R. Astor; N. Kovach; W. Oates; M. Randazzo; D. Swisher; D. Baumgarten. Tax Collector E. O’Malley was absent. The following appointed officials were present: K. Stringent, Borough Manager; P. Vietmeier, Codes Official; D. Biondo, Solicitor; J. Stanton, Engineer. Police Chief K. Truver was absent.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the January 23, 2023 council meeting were presented. Ms. Randazzo motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Astor seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Public Comment – Agenda Items:** No comments were received; therefore, the public comment section was closed.

**Real Estate Tax Collector:** Council wished Ms. O’Malley a happy birthday.

**Council Committee Reports**

**Public Relations/Communications –** Mr. Heckmann announced that a monthly online newsletter is available. The newsletter can be viewed on the borough website, and residents can sign up for email notifications.

**Buildings & Grounds/Public Works** – Mr. Maloney reported that PA American Water is planning road restoration on Poplar Avenue the first week of March. Other streets will follow with restoration soon after.

The public works crew has been cleaning and preparing storm basins during this break in winter weather.

**Finance** – Mr. Swisher reviewed the check registers for January 27th, February 3rd, and February 10th and had no further questions.

**Community Activities/Planning and Codes** – Mr. Vietmeier announced that the UCC Board of Appeals will meet on February 15th at 7 pm regarding Polished Nail Studio & Spa.

**Library –** Ms. Randazzo announced that the Souper Bowl dinner was a success with a dozen people attending. Ms. Randazzo thanked Ms. Myrah for hosting the event.

The library is hosting a Personal Care/Professional Accessory Drive to help out the Dress for Success Program from Saturday, February 18th through Friday, March 18th. Donations will be accepted for new and unopened personal care items and new/gently used accessories (belts, scarves, handbags, jewelry, etc.)

The library will hold a fundraiser at Panera (Caste Village) on Saturday, February 25th from 8 am to 8 pm. Twenty percent of sales will be donated to the library.

The Amazon Smile program will be ending February 20th. Patrons can join iGive (for free) via this link: [https://www.iGive.com/CastleShannonLibrary](https://www.igive.com/CastleShannonLibrary)[.](https://www.igive.com/058yBhR.) When you login & shop their 2,000+ stores (Chewy, Walmart, Expedia, Verizon, Uber Eats, and so many more), the library will earn donations.

Friends of the Library used book sale will be held March 15th to March 18th.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be March 2nd.

Mr. Heckmann stated that the Candy Bar Bingo event was a nice program with approximately 30 participants.

**MRTSA** – Mr. Heckmann urged residents to subscribe to the ambulance service.

**SHACOG** – Mr. Oates reported that the next board meeting will be held February 16th in Mt. Lebanon.

Mr. Heckmann advised that a new trash collection contract will be bid through SHACOG. Automated pickup service is being proposed. No trash will be collected outside of the bins. Each household would receive one can for garbage and one recycling bin. Residents can contract with the company for an additional can or collection of other items. A minimum increase of 30% in collection costs is expected.

Mr. Stringent reported that the borough’s glass collection bin at the fire department has been well utilized with 46 tons of glass being recycled in 2022.

**ACBA** – The next board meeting will be held March 4th.

**Police Pension/Non-Uniformed Pension:** The 2022 Statement of Accounts were received.

**Manager:** Mr. Stanton gave a presentation on the Six Parks “Plus” Master Plan Update and presented slides of Phase I and II. The plan has four phases.

Phase I – Prospect Park and front of the Castle Shannon Library. This phase has been bid and will proceed this year upon award of the bid to the contractor. Library improvements include shade sails in a passive recreation area, new sidewalks, landscaping, bike rack and book return replacements, and an outdoor classroom with seating as a focal point. Ms. Stringent commended the library board for dedicating some funding in the 2023 budget to support these improvements. Mr. Stanton stated that Prospect Park will have a new tot lot and replacement of the wooden retaining wall.

Phase II – Lower Hamilton and Rear Hamilton (behind current pavilion). These park updates are scheduled for the 2023 construction schedule. A multi-purpose picnic shelter with kitchen and bathrooms will replace the current shelter. A tot lot and turf field with baseball/soccer will be installed. An electric transformer will be relocated along with a water meter pit. The existing storm and sanitary sewer lines will be rerouted around the field. Regrading of the slope on Terrace Drive will be undertaken for ease of maintenance. A supplemental retaining wall will be installed to increase parking. The relocated walking trail will circle around with a raingarden, and one tennis court will be turned into two pickle ball courts. Additional lighting is planned for the tennis court and ballfield. The basketball court will double as a food truck area and will include horseshoes and cornhole areas. Hamilton Park will be closed for construction this year.

Phase III – Mid Hamilton and Upper Hamilton. These improvements are scheduled for 2024. Steps are planned from Upper Hamilton to Fountain Street to the Mindful Brewing property.

Phase IV – Riehl Park and Municipal Center improvements scheduled for 2025.

Residents attending questioned removal of memorial items from the library, proposed steps from Fountain Street, and fencing around the turf field at Hamilton. The memorial rock at the library will be reinstalled. The proposed steps from Fountain Street will enable walkability to Route 88 and the T station and will be maintained by the borough. A concrete curb with fencing around the turf field at Hamilton Park will be installed to prevent vehicles from riding on the field; however, part of the fence will be removable for access for maintenance and community day.

Ms. Stringent presented a revised Castle Court Plan for a sanitary sewer easement relocation. Ms. Randazzo motioned to accept the revised Castle Court Plan. Mr. Swisher seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Mayor’s Report:** Mayor Baumgarten was saddened to report that two police officers were killed in the line of duty in the last few days in our area. Domestic calls can turn into very dangerous situations, even in Castle Shannon. On a positive note, it is encouraging to see how many people came to the funeral home in Brentwood to pay their respects to Officer Sluganski and his family.

**Junior Council Person:** Ms. Stringent noted that Ms. Azinger has resigned.

**Public Comment:** Michael Warhold, Middleboro Road – stated that in 2009 Castle Shannon was the first municipality to adopt a solder banner program in this area. Initially, veterans purchased their banners which were placed in a downtown area. The program was very successful and has now spread to over 50 thousand banners in 150 different towns in 11 different states. The first banner was dedicated to Sgt. Ryan Lane who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. Through the years, the banners have deteriorated, and currently 76 banners need replaced. The Castle Shannon Revitalization Corporation has agreed to undertake this banner replacement project and coordinate specifications for the new lampposts in downtown Castle Shannon. Mr. Warhold was recently notified that the borough would not be installing the veterans’ banners in the downtown area or on Route 88. In closing, Mr. Warhold stated that every banner has a story, and each of these veterans deserve to be remembered. Not posting the banners is a callous disregard to the American veterans.

Harold Lane, Saddleridge Drive – stated that many Castle Shannon boys either enlisted or were drafted during Vietnam. Mr. Lane lost his son in 2009 in his third tour of duty in Afghanistan, which prompted the development of a website to honor all veterans. An eagle scout project secured a memorial bench in his name. Castle Shannon is aware of all the veterans that lived in this community. We have to honor and recognize these veterans. Mr. Lane stated he is very proud of his son and all the veterans who did their duty. Mr. Lane asked council to reconsider continuing the program and placing the banners in prominent places for better visibility.

Bill Reffner, Blossom Hill Road – noted that in the past to better organize the Memorial Day March and Service, a committee was formed from members of the American Legion, borough council, and the fire department. This has worked well with many veterans and families of veterans who come to the service to honor the men and women who have served this country. It is important for Castle Shannon to maintain the soldier banner program, mainly because it started here. Mr. Reffner believes we can work together to keep the nucleus of this program on the main streets.

Jim Sparvero, Chalet Lane – commended council for their work for the community. Mr. Sparvero grew up in this community and stated that Castle Shannon is noted for starting the soldier banner program which grew across the country. Mr. Sparvero is involved in the soldier banner program for South Park, modeled after Castle Shannon’s program. Mr. Sparvero said he brings his grandchildren to Castle Shannon to see their great grandfather’s banner – a World War II veteran. The veterans who served and were killed in action deserve the respect and support of the community. Mr. Sparvero offered his support to keep the soldier banner program, as it would be a travesty to lose it.

Bill Theobald, Kerry Hill Drive – stated he has seven soldier banners for family members. This was started by Mike Warhold and Harry Munson, and the program has grown to other states. Those veterans served our country and gave us our freedom. Mr. Theobald added that we owe it to the veterans to keep the banners and honor them.

Marv Levin, Corbett Drive - noted that Mike Warhold deserves credit for initiating the soldier banner program in Castle Shannon. The banners entice people to visit downtown Castle Shannon. Castle Shannon was the first to honor the veterans. It would be a disservice to not have the banners in the downtown area.

Mr. Heckmann stated that council is in agreement with the public comments. It has never been suggested that the soldier banner program be discontinued. Every year the public works department installs 250 banners in the borough. All new American flags were purchased last year to display downtown. The idea that the program is going away is not true. From Memorial Day to Veterans Day, people need only drive a block to see banners in the neighborhoods. This is done every year to honor our veterans. Mr. Heckmann was pleased to hear that the CSRC will undertake funding of the replacement banners so that no veteran will go unremembered. Mr. Heckmann noted the following reasons why downtown and Route 88 are not prudent places for banners: 1) the high traffic areas cause the most wear and tear, and box trucks hit the banners in the downtown area; 2) how is it decided which banners are selected for downtown; 3) people cannot stop traffic and take photos of banners in these areas; 4) safety concerns for public works installing banners on Route 88.

A lengthy debate continued about the location and placement of banners for visibility and safety. It was noted that council never voted to eliminate banners from the downtown and Route 88 areas. Ms. Kovach motioned to install the soldier banners in the downtown area which includes upper Willow Avenue, Castle Shannon Boulevard, and lower Willow Avenue annually from Memorial Day to Veterans Day with replacement banners being funded by the Castle Shannon Revitalization Corporation and installed by the borough’s public works department. Mr. Swisher seconded. A roll call vote was held as follows with yes indicating to pass the motion: J. Maloney – yes; R. Astor – yes; N. Kovach – yes; W. Oates – yes; M. Randazzo – yes; D. Swisher – yes; M. Heckmann – yes. All in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Maloney expressed concerns for public works safety if banners are installed along Route 88 without proper equipment. Ms. Kovach believes public works can rent or use mutual aid from other municipalities to secure equipment to make the installation safe. Ms. Kovach then motioned to install the soldier banners on Route 88 annually from Memorial Day to Veterans Day with replacement banners being funded by the Castle Shannon Revitalization Corporation and installed by the borough’s public works department. Mr. Swisher seconded. A roll call vote was held as follows with yes indicating to pass the motion: J. Maloney – no; R. Astor – no; N. Kovach – yes; W. Oates – yes; M. Randazzo – yes; D. Swisher – yes; M. Heckmann – no. Motion carried four to three. Mr. Heckmann then discussed delegated authority within the borough code; and noted that it is the obligation of council to delegate the responsibility of doing work safely and capably to the borough manager. It is the borough manager’s decision on how to proceed or to shut down an unsafe operation. Mr. Heckmann thanked the public for their comments.

Joe Furey, Willow Avenue – discussed the problem of several vehicle accidents on Willow Avenue and would like traffic calming measures instituted since the street is scheduled for resurfacing after a water main replacement. Mr. Furey added that speeding is still occurring even with the speed monitor device installed on the street. Mr. Heckmann stated that Trans Associates was contracted to perform an evaluation of traffic control and safe curve speed in addition to reviewing crash data. An ordinance is being prepared that will adopt some of the report’s recommendations; however, speed bumps were not recommended.

Robert Simms, Willow Avenue – reviewed the traffic study by Trans Associates and has concerns that the recommendations for signage and other items does not address traffic calming measures to slow speeding traffic.

Mr. Heckmann closed the public comment section.

**Other Business**: Mr. Heckmann stated that he has immense respect for the residents who attended and voiced their concerns this evening.

Mr. Astor motioned to adjourn. Mr. Swisher seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Approved as presented this 27th day of February 2023.

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Katie M. Stringent Mark J. Heckmann

Borough Manager Council President