

Myerstown, PA
Tuesday, September 22, 2015

President Pro Tem Keith Fox called the advertised special meeting of the Myerstown Borough Council to order at 6:35 p.m., on Tuesday, September 22, 2015. The meeting was held in Borough Council Chambers in the Myerstown Municipal Center, 101 East Washington Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a roll call was taken. Present were: Keith Fox, Vince Podolski Jeffrey L. Thomas, Dana Reich, Mayor Gloria R. Ebling, and Manager Christopher J. Moonis. Absent were: President Bryan L. Rittle, Vice President Michael D. Behm, and Councilmember Park W. Haverstick, II.

Councilmember Jeffrey L. Thomas asked if the red dump truck was removed on Park Street. The Manager was not aware, but he will follow up with the Code Enforcement Officer. The Manager stated the Code Enforcement Officer is tagging the unhitched trailers so he will make sure the Code Enforcement Officer is aware of this truck if he is not already.

The Special Meeting minutes for August 25, 2015 were presented. A motion was made by Jeffrey L. Thomas, seconded by Dana Reich, to dispense with the reading of and approve the minutes of the August 25, 2015 Special Meeting. All those in favor: Motion unanimously carried.

The special meeting is being held to continue discussion on developing a strategic plan for the Borough. Consultant Nancy Hess was present to lead the discussion. The consultant gave an overview of the discussion from the August 25, 2015 meeting.

Nancy Hess explained at this meeting she would like to zero in on core values as guiding principles. She would like to address what kind of values are behind a decision for a project. The values are very important for guiding and being the priority as to why the Council would make a decision to go forward with a big project. The vision elements are the list of dream projects.

Dream Projects:

Themes:

- Economic Development
- Community Building < physical
< non-physical
- Presentation of heritage – PA Dutch heritage
- People can feel cared-for/security

A key thought is what is the role of government. Government can't do everything, can't be everything. So when we talk about the vision that is the Councils role, to set the vision. When Council thinks about staff and committing resources Council needs to think more realistically. What is it that they can do, what is going to have the most impact, what is it that we really want to focus on, what part of that vision is going to be doable. So as a Borough government, what parts of the vision are you going to advance.

Concerns:

- Concerns voiced relate back to the values.
- Being able to say we hear the value of residents' concerns. So the Council can address and respond not only to their concern but what they are feeling.

Core competencies:

- Resources and assets
- Staffing

For example, having the right staff in positions, having competent people to address the existing demands to ensuring future growth. Development opportunities are enabled because the right people and systems are in place right now to help you advance, but also, the ones Council may need to invest in in the near future. The consultant stated a good example is she met the newly hired Circuit Rider. Council has now addressed this part of their vision, part of their dream of economic development, and has someone in place to execute their plan.

Critical Issues:

- Limited time and funding
- Safety issues
 - Police services
- Property Maintenance
 - Code Enforcement - the approach and shaping of the code enforcement function.
- Curb appeal
 - Outside curb appeal

To get started, the consultant asked each person to think about an icon or symbol that best represents their personal vision for the community.

Icon or Symbol: (Vision)

- (M) – MYersTOWN - it is “My Town” – my community, where I live, my neighborhood
- Trees – big pots of flowers – makes it look friendly and clean
- Bayer Aspirin – a small town but having a nationwide company – place to live & work
- Heart/Sun/People – family oriented – a wonderful place to raise your family
- Pyramid – rebuilding the town – more business – revitalize Main Street – walking friendly – more active - rich in memories
- In the park.. a family .. on bikes.. waiting for concert series to start- then bike to a restaurant for dinner to discuss where in the Borough they are going to buy a house to live

The consultant stated a picture is worth a thousand words and that exercise just shows that. The Strategic Plan vision may be supported by pictures and keywords, a collage piece. The challenge is to create a vision showing where Council wants “to go” to get to the vision picture. Does the value statement coincide with the vision above. How do we get people excited?

Talking about leverage, what are the bold steps. These are the things we identify that will give you the greatest amount of momentum or leverage that will help you produce what you know are the priorities for economic development.

Five Bold Steps:

The top current projects were reviewed because this will all tie the strategic plan and vision together.

Top current projects:

- Economic Development
 - Creating new businesses/sustaining and expanding existing businesses
 - Changing zoning - creating a LERTA District/Tax Abatement
 - Circuit rider – has been hired
 - Business incubator – acquisition of school building/creating community core center
 - Downtown revitalization – image of town – town heritage – museum/walking tours
- Pool/Playground/Parks
 - Master park plan – grant applications with DCNR for pool redevelopment and park plan
 - Sense of community

Top current projects: (continued)

- Street Projects – Broad and Cherry Street
 - Public Works
 - Infrastructure – finding funding for improvements
 - Improves quality of life
- Property Maintenance Codes

The Manager explained currently, code enforcement is a reactive part-time position that is complaint-driven and some of the members of Council stated maybe it should be a proactive policy discussion and a full-time position. Then Code Enforcement is what they do, not only handling complaints but they are looking for property maintenance violations and addressing them directly, which is a different model than the Borough has right now.

The consultant went back to discussing dream projects. She would like to connect the dream projects to both the picture/collage and also the values that have been stated.

Top dream projects:

- Police services
 - Regionalization – not in the foreseeable future
- Healthcare facilities
 - Attract Urgent care facility
- Diversity of businesses
 - Create a thriving community/destination point
- Redevelopment of brownfield site (Quaker Alloy)
 - Create a park area
 - Economic development area

The consultant feels the Council has listed where the Borough has the most momentum, is there anything missing. The Manager stated the marketing piece is still needed. If we do not have marketing, we are not going to attract any companies. To approach a company to expand here we need the marketing component for them to look at the demographics of our area. Funding for a Marketing Plan is part of the E.I.P. III Grant.

The consultant stated the idea is to represent in our summation the key areas that are going to give the most leverage and impact towards the vision. The vision will have elements, the collage of pictures, wording and themes around the vision. Ideas that will bloom from the strategic plan steps. The timeframe for short and long term goals were reviewed. The consultant stated the Borough is moving in the right direction and ended her discussion at 8:35 p.m.

Councilmember Jeffrey L. Thomas stated he would like to get the garbage trucks out of the alleys. The Manager stated he has information (RFP) for the Council packets for their review. After discussion, a motion was made by Jeffrey L. Thomas, to have no garbage trucks in the alleys, garbage out front and dumpsters picked up by small trucks. No second was received. The motion fails for lack of second.

The Borough Council recessed the regular meeting and entered into Executive Session at 8:48 p.m. to discuss legal matters and acquisition of property.

The Borough Council returned from Executive Session at 9:01 p.m. reconvening the regular session and resumed consideration of and action on the regular meeting agenda.

Myerstown, PA
Tuesday, September 22, 2015

The President Pro Tem asked if there were any additional comments for the good of the borough. Seeing none, a motion was made by Vince Podolski, seconded by Jeffrey L. Thomas, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. All those in favor: Motion unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Christopher J. Moonis, Secretary

As transcribed by Lisa A. Brubaker,
Deputy Secretary

CJM:lab