

East Stroudsburg Borough, January 20, 2009

A regular meeting of the East Stroudsburg Borough Council was held at the Municipal Building on Tuesday, January 20, 2009. The following members were in attendance: Victor Brozusky, Roger DeLarco, Ed Henning, William Reese, and Donald Repsher. Sonia Wolbert was absent. Also attending were: Mayor Armand M. Martinelli; Manager James S. Phillips; Solicitor David J. Williamson of Scanlon; Lewis & Williamson, Engineering Representative Samuel D'Alessandro of R.K.R. Hess Associates, Inc.; Lieutenant Brian Kimmins of the Stroud Area Regional Police Department; a press representative from the Pocono Record, and several residents in the audience.

Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. DeLarco called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Steven Burgoon led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of January 6, 2009 Regular Council Meeting

Mr. Brozusky made a motion, seconded by Mr. Henning to approve the minutes of the regular Council meeting held Tuesday, January 6, 2009 as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Stroud Area Regional Police Department Report

Lieutenant Brian Kimmins was present and answered questions from Council concerning the SARPD monthly report for December 2008. Lieutenant Kimmins noted that the Department had made several arrests regarding several burglaries that occurred in East Stroudsburg in the prior months.

State of the Borough 2009 Address

Mayor, Council, staff, East Stroudsburg residents, friends, guests and the press:

I am honored to report on the State of the Borough, on this January 20th, 2009. The following will be a review of accomplishments during the past year, and also touch on future plans and goals for the Borough in 2009 and the future.

New development continues in East Stroudsburg despite limited available undeveloped properties. Empire Construction constructed buildings with 20 new apartments on a vacant parcel off of Braeside Avenue. East Stroudsburg University opened its new \$40 million Science and Technology Center in August 2008. East Stroudsburg Area School District will be continuing work in 2009 on the \$90 million major expansion and renovations to the East Stroudsburg South High School complex.

Representatives from East Stroudsburg's major institutions have agreed to work together with us to address new development. ESU is contributing \$60,000 to the Normal/Prospect Street intersection signalization which will be installed in Spring 2009.

As Chairman of the Stroud Area Regional Police Commission I would like to note the financial and community policing efficiencies that we anticipated nine years ago when the department was formed are now being fully appreciated. One example of this is the SARPD Foundation has raised over a half million dollars in grants and donations for advance technology in the police vehicles and remote cameras placed in the community. The participating municipalities in the regional police department are looking into the possibility of expanding the department's service area to include Middle Smithfield Township.

In the area of finances, the Borough again finished the recent year with a general fund budget carry-over balance. The 2009 year budget for the Borough is funded by no new taxes. The solid waste garbage fee will increase by \$20 in response to the contract

increase. A water rate increase is planned for 2009 to fund future infrastructure improvements.

We are faced with a recession that has unemployment increasing, a decline in GDP, tighter bank loans and lack of consumer confidence. Although the council and the manager had long discussions and debate about the prospect of a tax increase to fund long standing projects, ultimately the decision was made to cut those items from the budget in return for no tax increases.

Some of those items eliminated from this year's budget included, the Borough Hall remodeling, staff restructuring and the borough's Comprehensive Plan. The cuts were made to balance the budget and not raise taxes. These items are no less strategically important and should top priorities when we have an economic recovery.

In 2008 the Borough received a contract for the long awaited street lighting and pedestrian safety improvements planned for the downtown area. Installation of new decorative street lightning and upgrading of several downtown crosswalks was completed by the new year. Handicapped ramp reconstruction will be finished by this Spring. In addition to the Penn Dot Transportation Enhancement Program grant the borough is receiving \$275,000 in funds from the PA DCED, through the efforts of our community organization Eastburg Community Alliance.

The Borough entered into agreement with PennDOT to "take back" the section of Prospect Street, which enabled Borough to replace the old public waterline and storm culvert and provide funds for the complete repaving of this portion of road in 2009.

In 2008 the Borough again co-sponsored with the Eastburg Community Alliance the sixth annual "American Freedom Festival" at Dansbury Park on July 4th. The national holiday event was again a great success, despite the weather being questionable, attracting thousands of area residents to the park and town center area culminating in a spectacular free fireworks show at dusk. Plans are underway for another fantastic festival this 4th of July as it has become a "must-attend" event.

In 2008 Council awarded a contract for site work at the new fire station site on Chestnut Street and will be proceeding to take bids early this year for the renovation of the building. We feel confident that this will meet the future needs for fire protection of our community for decades to come.

The completion of the environmental clean-up of the former IBW industrial site was accomplished, removing contaminated soil. We are hopeful of the sale of this property in 2009 to create new job opportunities with assistance of the Pocono Mountain Economic Development Corporation.

In pursuit of quality of life issues, this past year the borough passed a property inspection ordinance. East Stroudsburg is the first municipality in the Pocono region to have this requirement. The end result will be an upgraded housing stock and will ultimately increase the market values for the entire borough.

The ESU Student Ambassador is an honorary non-voting member of the East Stroudsburg Borough Council. This position allows the person to gain valuable insight into the political process and operations of a local borough government. The student strengthens the ties between the University and the Borough and enables an individual to improve their own community through public service. For the past year, Miss Ashley Puderbach has done an extraordinary job in that capacity.

East Stroudsburg is fortunate to have competent and dedicated employees and professional staff who are able to administer the wide range of services provided by the Borough.

During the past year I was reminded with new council members come new ideas and new priorities. We are also fortunate to have a Mayor and Council who are able to

work together, along with a large number of volunteers serving on boards and commissions, to make East Stroudsburg a better community for all its residents.

And now a brief look at future plans and goals for 2009:

Organizations summarize goals and objectives into a mission and vision statement. During this year I would like to develop with the council, mayor and stakeholders a vision and mission statement for the borough of East Stroudsburg. The purpose of which is to define the fundamental purpose of the borough and outline the vision for the future and be source of inspiration and clear decision making criteria.

The council enacted a property inspection ordinance which will benefit our community. We should begin the process of reviewing other ordinances that will take the next step with zoning and codes to insure a positive quality of life for our residents in the future.

Smithfield Township will be completing construction of a new sewer line which will in 2009 to send part of the township's sewer flow to the Borough waste water treatment plant and is looking at running a larger force main directly to the East Stroudsburg Sewage Treatment plant to handle additional sewage flow, from the proposed "Wall Street West" business complexes and other commercial development proposed for Smithfield.

And finally I will note several major challenges and opportunities facing the future of East Stroudsburg:

The Borough should actively look into ways of managing our energy costs and enhancing municipal revenues for the future including the sale of resources. Our water and sewer systems capacities make us well suited for future re-development of existing properties to provide employment and commercial activity for the Borough and in our neighboring communities.

The current state of the economy and rising energy cost will renew interest in work, life, shop and play without long drives. The availability of rail service, as well as the mix of commercial and residential zoning, will make East Stroudsburg more attractive. The passenger service plan includes a train stop in East Stroudsburg and with this will come additional traffic and parking issues to the Borough's infrastructure. We should begin now to lobby our state and federal officials for their assistance in the construction of a parking deck and upgrades necessary to the infrastructure to meet the needs of the future.

East Stroudsburg will need to find innovative ways to be involved to stimulate economic revitalization in, and, for our community. We must also open to other methods of fostering economic development locally. A local, independent revitalization organization could act in tandem with Council and other public agencies to enhance our quality of life, provide quality job opportunities to our citizens, and coordinate and plan economic development in East Stroudsburg.

And finally, I would like quote from today's inaugural address from President Barack Obama. He said, "Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real," "They are serious, and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met." Obama recalled old truths and old values: hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism. "They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history," he said. "What is demanded then is a return to these truths."

Thank you, and God bless East Stroudsburg!

Respectfully submitted,

Roger L. DeLarco, President
East Stroudsburg Council
January 20, 2009

Steven Burgoon – Need for Government/Education Channel on Cable TV System

Steve Burgoon introduced himself to Council members. Mr. DeLarco said Mr. Burgoon had called him concerning this matter and he had encouraged Mr. Burgoon to come to Borough Council. Mr. Phillips noted that when the Borough had renewed its cable television franchise agreement with Blue Ridge Communications several years ago, Blue Ridge had indicated they didn't have enough bandwidth to provide an Educational Channel. They indicated that they would have capacity when they switched to a digital system in several years. Mr. Burgoon passed out a handout outlining the benefits of a Government and Educational Channel for the Cable TV system. There are many possible applications including educational seminars that could be taped and rebroadcast over the Educational Channel. There are significant costs involved in setting up a "head-end". However, East Stroudsburg University already has such a setup which presumably could be used by municipalities for their Educational/Government Channel.

Mr. Henning asked what will it take to make this happen? Mr. Burgoon said under the existing franchise agreement Blue Ridge has until November 2010 to make the Gov/Ed Channel available. Mr. Brozusky asked if he had contacted Monroe County? Mr. Burgoon said he did contact the Commissioner's office and was referred to Bob Gress but has not received a call back yet. Mr. Henning asked if Blue Ridge is receptive to establishing a Gov/Ed Channel? Mr. Burgoon said the cable company is not that receptive because they would have to give up a revenue producing channel to make room for the Gov/Ed Channel. Mr. Henning commented that generally this is a good idea, but he needs to get a lot of people lined up behind this project to enable it to come to fruition. Mr. Burgoon indicated that he would be contacting other municipalities and would report back to Council next month.

Denny Willis stated he runs a Production Company and said that he sees a need for a Government/Educational Channel such as being suggested by Mr. Burgoon.

Mr. Phillips asked if Blue Ridge is the only cable provider currently operating in Monroe County? Mr. Burgoon said yes, as far as he knows. Mr. Phillips said that's why it makes sense to try and setup something on a regional basis. Mr. DeLarco asked if setting up a Gov/Ed Channel would require full-time staff? Mr. Burgoon said yes, presumably at least one full-time staff person would be needed.

Public Comments – Agenda Items

Kevin Conroy of 333 Greentree Drive, noted that at the last meeting he had commented about the need for better snow removal on Greentree Drive for the lower hill coming up towards the Budget Inn. Mr. Conroy said during this last storm the road was in better condition.

Agreement with Redevelopment Authority for Housing Rehabilitation Program

Mr. Phillips said the Redevelopment Authority of Monroe County has sent a proposed agreement for continued administration of the Housing Rehabilitation Program for the Borough for the 2009 Year. The only thing changed in the agreement is a slight increase in the per unit fee charged by the Redevelopment Authority for administering the entire program for the Borough. Mr. Brozusky made a motion, seconded by Mr. Henning to approve the proposed agreement with the Redevelopment Authority for the 2009 Year as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing on Community Development Needs of the Borough

Mr. DeLarco noted that Council annually schedules the required public hearing on community development needs of the Borough that may be addressed by the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Mr. Brozusky made a motion, seconded by Mr. Repsher to schedule and authorize advertising the public hearing for the February 17, 2009 regular meeting date. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 5-2009 – Appointment to SARPC

Mr. Reese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Henning to approve proposed Resolution No. 5-2009 reappointing James Phillips to a new three (3) year term on the Stroud Area Regional Police Commission (SARPC) expiring December 31, 2011. The motion carried unanimously.

Special Joint Meeting on 1/27/09 with SARPC

Mr. DeLarco noted a special meeting is planned between East Stroudsburg Borough Council, Stroudsburg Borough Council, Stroud Township Supervisors and Middle Smithfield Township Supervisors and the Stroud Area Regional Police Commission concerning the possible expansion of the Regional Police Department to include Middle Smithfield Township. Mr. Phillips said the meeting is planned to be held at the J.T. Lambert School in the auditorium. Mr. Brozusky made a motion, seconded by Mr. Repsher to authorize advertising the proposed joint special meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments – New Business

None

Correspondence

Mr. Phillips reported receipt of the following items of correspondence:

1. A letter from the former Monroe County Office of Emergency Services announcing that the Department will henceforth be known as the Monroe County Office of Emergency Management.
2. A letter from Stroudsburg Borough announcing the appointment of Barbara Quarantello to the Stroud Area Regional Police Commission Board.
3. A letter from the Church of St. Matthew requesting approval to close Brodhead Avenue for the annual Church Block Party to be held August 7-8, 2009. Mr. Henning made a motion, seconded by Mr. Repsher to approve the request from St. Matthews for the road closing for the annual block party as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.
4. A letter and \$1,000 check from the Penn Prime Workers Compensation Trust in recognition of the Borough's Peak Performer Award for the 2007 Claim Year. Mr. Brozusky made a motion, seconded by Mr. Repsher to authorize a portion of the funds received to be used to sponsor a lunch for Borough employees in recognition of their efforts in attaining the Workers Compensation Peak Performer Award. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports

Mr. D'Alessandro reviewed his written engineer's report previously submitted to Council. Mr. D'Alessandro discussed the H2O Grants which are available from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for water systems, sanitary sewer system or dam improvements. The application deadline is February 13, 2009 and Borough Council will need to adopt resolutions approving the applications at the February 3, 2009 meeting.

Mr. Henning noted that he will be discussing several zoning issues with the Codes Officer John Blick at the upcoming Zoning Ordinance Review Committee meeting.

Mr. DeLarco said the Borough needs to consider adopting ordinances like the ones in place in Havertown Township to address the type of student housing issues that are always brought to the attention of the Borough.

Mayor Martinelli asked Mr. D'Alessandro if he has checked the status of the cofferdam recently regarding the repairs that were made last fall? Mr. D'Alessandro said

that they had checked the cofferdam after the most recent high water event and the repairs appear to be holding at this point.

Mr. Phillips noted that the next Pocono Mountains Council of Governments meeting will be held on Monday January 26, 2009 and Council has not yet appointed a representative. Mr. Phillips also said the next MECAB Mid-Eastern County Association of Boroughs will be held next Wednesday January 28, 2009 and likewise Council has not yet appointed a representative. Mr. Phillips noted that the Borough has received a \$5,000 check donation from Pocono Medical Center for the Fire Truck Replacement Fund; and just today we received a \$1,000 check from East Stroudsburg University for the same purpose. Mr. Phillips stated that the Borough has advertised and will be opening bids for Timbering a portion of the Borough watershed property south of the main reservoir on February 6, 2009. Mr. Phillips noted that he is obtaining a quotation on pollution liability insurance coverage as the Borough currently does not have that form of coverage. Finally, Mr. Phillips said that he did finally receive a response from the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS) in regard to the complaint that the Borough had filed regarding the cost figures for the Non-uniform Employees Pension Plan that were so different from the cost study done by PMRS several years ago.

List of Bills Payable

Mr. Reese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brozusky to approve the list of bills payable and to ratify expenditures and payroll made through January 20, 2009 as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session

Mr. Henning made a motion, seconded by Mr. Repsher to adjourn into executive session at 8:40 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

At 9:00 p.m. Council members reassembled in the meeting room and Mr. Brozusky made a motion, seconded by Mr. Repsher to reconvene the public meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Williamson reported that the executive session had been held to discuss several litigation matters and a real estate matter regarding the lease agreement for the ESU Business Accelerator Building.

Adjournment

With no further business Mr. Brozusky made a motion, seconded by Mr. Henning to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

James S. Phillips, Secretary