

June 20, 2023, Council Meeting
Minutes

The second meeting of the Clarion Borough Council was held on June 20, 2023, in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library. President Lapinto called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers present were Mr. Garbarino, Ms. Roberts, Dr. Sanders Dédé, Mr. Aaron, Ms. Schmader, and President Lapinto. Mr. Montana was absent. Mr. Colosimo, Mr. Preston, Mr. Sharrar, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present. Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Solicitor Marshall, and Chief Peck were absent.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items Only

President Lapinto called on Theron Miles and Tom McConnell to give a presentation on the PennDOT TA Set-Aside Funds Safe Routes to School Program.

Mr. Miles stated Mr. McConnell and he, representing the Clarion Blueprint Community, stated it's an organization that strives to find new opportunities to help develop not only the local economy but the neighborhoods by bringing people back to the community and to create a safer community for the residents of Clarion Township, Monroe Township, Clarion Borough, and the surrounding areas. Mr. Miles wishes to discuss a fantastic opportunity for the Borough to invest in by improving the community through a grant designed for transportation called TA Set-Aside Funds Safe Routes to School. PennDOT last had this grant opportunity in 2010 and then again in 2018. This perked the Committee's interest because of the 2nd Avenue Park being installed and the importance of ensuring individuals have a safe way to walk to and from it. Recently, the Blueprint Community partnered with the School District in working to make this more attractive for children and students to be able to use not only as an extracurricular activity during and after school but also to have an opportunity for students to learn a new sport or for an outdoor space for education. Mr. Miles stated one of the biggest concerns the school district had was to provide a safe way to get to and from the park during and after school hours. Evaluating that concern made everyone more aware of how many kids walk 2nd Avenue now and how commonly it is used, which turned out to be a quite heavily walked corridor. Mr. Miles pointed out it is not uncommon to drive a portion of 2nd Avenue from South Street to Clarion Township to see individuals waking along the curb line. These walkers may not be Clarion Borough residents but are entering the Borough. Also, the students in this area not only go to Clarion Area School District but also Clarion Limestone Schools. Mr. Miles stated everyone realizes you cannot attract people without providing or at least working to provide a safe way for children to access the park and walk the streets without having to break the curb line and walk near traffic. The current sidewalks are not safe, could be a tripping/falling hazard, are not on both sides of the street, and are not at all ADA-compliant or friendly for disabled individuals. Mr. Miles commented the PennDOT grant allows an opportunity up to \$1.5 million as a soft cap. It's specifically designed for alternative traffic and safe ways to school. Parents will have a safe place to drop his/her kids off to catch the bus. This may sound odd as this is only 2 blocks away from the high school; however, this is aimed for the Clarion Limestone kids. The grant opportunity paired with this particular corridor and the support from the public school, Clarion Area, the Blueprint Community, and the Clarion County Housing Redevelopment Authority could improve that entire section from Liberty Street to the township line. The Redevelopment Authority owns the former

Coke Cola bottling plant building, which their goal is to bring it back to the original state and beauty it once was, and is also working on purchasing the gas station property to redevelop it so it is environmentally clean and possibly allowing it to be sold and turned into something great again. When motorists come up the River Hill, Mr. Miles commented this is the first stop he/she sees when sitting at the red light. Looking to the north or south, it doesn't feel very inviting. It looks as though the street was just walked away from. Mr. Miles thinks this gives people the wrong impression of Clarion Borough. If interested in this grant opportunity, the Borough would have to be the applicant and would have the chance to redo the sidewalks on both sides of the road from Liberty Street all the way to the township line at the end of 2nd Avenue by Chestnut Ridge, as well as new curbing, removal/replacement of trees, and new lighting. Mr. Miles commented the reason for new curbs are for two reasons; 1) the curbs are below the standard height of 7½", which would allow for a full barrier during weather events, and would be a buffer from traffic for pedestrian safety. The Borough would have the ability to remove the old trees that are hollow and dying and replant trees as originally planted in a 100' pattern; one that is more applicable to streetscape projects and redevelopment. Again, Mr. Miles repeated the overall picture would be include new curbs in the exact same alignment as they exist now creating 32' cartway, curbs, 6' sidewalk on both sides, a 6' grass medium behind each curb, and new lighting from the township line the entire way to Liberty Street. Years ago, the Elm Street Program included projects of taking a street beyond recognition and making the right-of-way lines identifiable and the corridor beautiful for the town to improve the overall focus. Mr. Miles also reported this would take the Clarion Borough's taxpayer dollars and multiply it 10 times in return, which is very hard to pass up. As a taxpayer, Mr. Miles would like to see the Borough take opportunities to allow tax dollars to grow by investing in a project. Reason for saying this is that Clarion Borough would be responsible for the engineering of the project to address underground utilities that are decrepit, reestablish the Borough's rights-of-way, identify trees that are proper for streetscape and replant them, and to work on a lighting program to make sure there are the proper amount of lumens. At that point, Mr. Miles informed everyone the project would then be handed back to PennDOT, who would bid the project and manage the project with PennDOT inspectors. Mr. Miles stressed it is a very unique project as there is no match for this grant. This grant opened May 31st, and the preliminary application deadline by the Borough is July 17th. That application is to request funds for the grant. It is not a guarantee that Clarion Borough would receive the grant or that the project would ever happen, but there is a lot of positive energy that would come from this, which Mr. Miles' feels the State will recognize it, especially with all the support around it. Applying for a grant costs money. Mr. Miles reported that Clarion County has paired with a company from Harrisburg, Delta Development, that actually applied for the grant for the library improvements, which was a success. Delta feels that the Borough has a high success in receiving it. Not only does it meet many of the criteria of the actual program outlines itself, but everyone has recognized what a great improvement it is to restore a street back to the way it was. With that partnership, Mr. Miles stated Delta Development would be handling the actual application in partnership with the County and Borough, which takes away a lot of burden that comes with the actual application process. Naturally, grants are a gamble, and 100s of hours can be put into one without being successful. With this, the Borough and other individuals would provide the correct information and then Delta Development will do their work on the overall project. Along with that, Mr. Miles and Mr. McConnell, as Blueprint Community members, will work with the Borough to go out and speak to other municipalities, Clarion and Monroe Townships, and Clarion and Clarion Limestone School Districts, to get support and possible contributions in any way possible, whether

it's a support letter or help with the design cost of the project, as each of them will also benefit from this project. To improve, completely redevelop, and restore 1 of the 9 avenues in Clarion Borough as a 100-year project, Mr. Miles sees this as a huge benefit. There is just a lot of opportunity here. Mr. Miles noted the Borough could also apply for a Multi-Modal Transportation Grant, MTF Grant, that could offset the cost of engineering, which he'd be happy to help with. There would be a 15% match, but would cut down the costs immensely.

Mr. Tom McConnell stated Mr. Miles pretty much covered everything but added, along with partnerships from the school district, County, other municipalities, the Clarion Housing Authority/Redevelopment, additional funds will be sought to help reduce the engineering costs. Community support will only make the application stronger. Mr. McConnell reported Mr. Miles and he have discussed this opportunity with many different organizations and governing bodies to be completely open and think it is a great opportunity for Clarion to start bringing it back to what it looked like in the old-style streetscape.

Mr. Miles added the overall design will restore Clarion Borough to the way it was; puts sidewalks back into place, reestablish the curb lines, installing lighting to give it a very warm feeling to area. The Blueprint Committee pushes for decorative lighting down that street to properly illuminate the sidewalks. At this point, Mr. Miles would be happy to answer questions.

Before opening it to the public, President Lapinto stated Dr. Sanders Dédé believes there is no expense to the Borough at all. However, at the initial meeting, it was mentioned the Borough would be responsible for the engineering, which was estimated at \$150,000 but since that time the low estimate is \$175,000.

Mr. Miles agreed the standard engineering cost usually runs around 10% for municipal projects. This project is estimated to be \$1.4-1.5 million that would include the installation of 4,000 linear feet of curbing, 24 light standards over 4,200 linear feet of sidewalk, 48 trees, and the paving. The Borough should not solely cover the entire cost but work with other entities or grants that could be paired with this one to lower the engineering costs. Mr. Miles noted the Borough will absolutely be the prime beneficiary of this grant and it would be a fantastic investment.

Mr. McConnell doesn't recall anyone mentioning the storm water system will be replaced as well.

Mr. Miles verified a large majority of storm water piping along 2nd Avenue has been replaced by the Borough. The pipe over the years had deteriorated and caused numerous sink holes from South Street to Church Road. Since then, Mr. Miles reported a couple other sink holes have emerged in the remaining portion from Church Road to Main Street, which is probably on the Storm Water Authority's radar to be replaced. With this project, the piping and inlet tops can be included, which that alone could be well over \$50,000 to replace just that stretch. So, there's a natural benefit that coincides with the project and a cost that coincides with the engineering of the project.

Mr. McConnell recapped that both of them are volunteers and have no skin in this game aside from wanting to see the community become and keep becoming beautiful. Both of them have young children that, as parents, would be nice to have them grow up, go off to college, and then return to

Clarion to make a life. Mr. McConnell hopes everyone would be more than willing to do what he/she could to make this project happen.

President Lapinto asked anyone wishing to ask questions to stand and state his/her name and address for the record.

Ms. Deborah Burghardt, 36 South 2nd Avenue, commented she lives on the corner of 2nd Avenue and Wood Street and wondered if the tree in front of their house that appears to be healthy will be removed since it wouldn't match the trees being put in for this project?

Mr. Miles stated the overall goal is to replant all the trees in between the curb line and sidewalk to create a uniform appearance. If the tree is healthy and young, it could possibly be spade out and moved to another location. Everyone has to recognize those trees have lived their life, and it's time to replace them without a cost to the residents

Ms. Burghardt inquired why a 6' sidewalk versus 4' like theirs.

Mr. Miles stated there are two reasons for 6' sidewalks. The first is a 4' sidewalk is no longer ADA-compliant nor safe for people to walk in groups. The other reason is to allow the sidewalks to be plowed with mechanical means. Mr. Miles encourages the Borough to go wider so it would be easier for property owners to plow and safer for pedestrians to walk side-by-side. Currently, the right-of-way measured is currently 60' wide in that section, meaning from the center of the road it is 30' to the east side and 30' to the west side. With that being stated, some sidewalks are beyond the point and could be reestablished in this project. By reestablishing the curbs, a true 6' medium between the curb and sidewalk, especially on the west side, would be coming out further towards the road.

Mr. Phil Kiser inquired what about the east side?

Mr. Miles pointed out there are some sections that do not have sidewalks, with Mr. Kiser's being one of those properties. That would be at the Borough's discretion on how to handle their right-of-way. The goal, again, is to see a uniformed sidewalk on both sides and have the right-of-way established and maintained. This is not an area where Blueprint members would get involved. Mr. Miles pushes for what the Blueprint Community feels is the right vision for this street and to the best way possible to secure the funding. The Borough and the engineer would have to meet with the residents that have porches, driveways, or fences encroaching the rights-of-way and determine how to best handle it. This would have to be worked out well beyond the point of applying for it.

Ms. Andrea Guntrum, 206 North 2nd Avenue, questioned how much this will cost the residents and all the taxpayers of the Borough?

Mr. Miles answered there would be no construction cost whatsoever to the landowner for the sidewalks, trees, and lighting that would be installed as part of this grant, not the taxpayers. A taxpayer should view it as if every dollar he/she sends to the Borough in taxes being multiplied by 10. If you are able to bring in \$1.5 million towards the community at the cost of \$150,000, that is magnifying the value of a tax dollar.

Ms. Guntrum inquired how much the CL School is paying if their kids will benefit from this as well?

Mr. Miles stated this is more about taking the opportunity to work together to apply for this grant and to bring this funding here. The CL School District can be asked to work to provide some funds. The bus shelter would cost about \$50,000 at today's standards and might be the only one in the Borough.

Working from home for 5 years, Ms. Guntrum only noticed no more than 20 kids if that walking 2nd Avenue each day. Occasionally, a teacher does walk students up the street. If this grant is going to be for school reasons and CL School is going to be receiving the most benefits, both districts should supply funds.

Mr. McConnell pointed out that's why Mr. Miles mentioned that Clarion and Monroe Townships as well as other entities will be asked to support and/or contribute to the engineering. The State takes into consideration inter-governmental cooperation.

President Lapinto contacted Clarion Township and was informed no one reached out to them yet.

If the Borough is willing to apply for this grant, Mr. Miles commented that is when other municipalities will be approached.

Ms. Guntrum questioned who will maintain the curbs that will be put in. While redoing their own pipes recently, new curbing was installed and has already been ripped out.

If installed to PennDOT's standards, Mr. Miles announced the curb should have a 100-year lifespan. What destroys curbs are obviously if a plow or vehicles hit the curb. Again, this is a chance to have fresh curbs, sidewalks, storm drains to the street. Hopefully, everyone can try a little better to take care of the community. As far as children walking to school, Mr. Miles noted his children attend Clarion but does not risk them getting hit by a car. In October, fog and/or dusk makes it worse at 7 a.m.

Ms. Guntrum added that's why everybody drives his/her kids and then no one can get through.

Mr. McConnell reported this will only get worse when school begins to take kids up to the park for recess, volunteer programs, community service hours, or just to use. That park will not just be used by Borough residents. Events can be held throughout the year, and, in the winter, the ice-skating rink will be utilized. Traffic will come from everywhere not just from Liberty Street to the park.

Ms. Guntrum questioned if parking will be lost?

As a Blueprint member, Mr. Miles mentioned the idea would be to put a travel lane on 2nd Avenue and also a parking area. If anyone has tried to turn from Main Street onto 2nd Avenue heading south, vehicles are parked there in that corridor, making it tight and unsafe. It would have to be considered. Without proper lines and parking spaces established, Mr. Miles agreed the road will be

more hazardous. Add to that, the limited amount of lighting in that section.

Ms. Guntrum inquired if there will be sidewalks on both sides of 2nd Avenue the whole corridor; and, if so, will the cemetery have to take care of their own sidewalk maintenance?

Mr. Miles verified the goal is to have 6' sidewalks on both sides, so they could be easily plowed by mechanical means. As for the cemetery, discussion has taken place and the Blueprint Community will have the obligation to take care of the park and may address the cemetery sidewalks as well.

Ms. Guntrum asked if individuals would be able to drive trucks down the sidewalks?

Mr. Sharrar commented that the Borough ordinance does not allow a motorized vehicle on the sidewalks. A lawn tractor or 4-wheeler with a plow could be used to clear them.

Ms. Guntrum thanked everyone for their answers.

Mr. Phil Kiser, 202 South Street, clarified his property is at the corner of South Street and 2nd Avenue and currently does not have any existing sidewalks in front of his house. If there is 6' of grass and 6' of sidewalk, that means the project would be 12' into his driveway. Mr. Kiser added there is a fence along the right-of-way and would be in this 12' area.

Mr. Miles provided his opinion only that the Borough and engineers would have to work with the Kisers to design a sidewalk to go to the driveway and then from the driveway to the roadway. This property was another main one initially discussed. Not everything can be perfect nor a uniformed straight-lined street. Factors that might change the alignment of this project may be restrictions set to current properties, elevation changes, fire hydrants, and manholes. Again, that would be up to the Borough and the engineers to coordinate this entire project.

Mr. Kiser questioned if all the residents would have a little input on this Borough design?

Not speaking for the Borough, Mr. Miles stressed the best projects have the most input. Not everyone may get his/her way, but he/she should have input into a project that would affect his/her property. Working together for the greater good is what should be achieved.

Mr. Kiser supports this opportunity if conversations begin early in the game on what will happen with their property.

Mr. Miles informed everyone no engineering will begin until the grant is awarded and finalized. Just because the application is turned in by July 17th, the Borough may not hear if funding is awarded, fully, partially, or in sections for quite a while. What is being discussed tonight are a lot of hypotheticals; but unless an application is submitted, the opportunity is lost.

Mr. McConnell reiterated the Borough would be submitting a proposal and the design work begins after the notification of an award is received.

Mr. Kiser stated he has parked on his driveway for 25 years and may not be able if a sidewalk is installed.

Mr. Miles agrees this is only his recommendation for a sidewalk before and after his driveway and the Kisers have a very difficult situation as it sits currently. The cemetery board was also a tough situation as it is a volunteer, non-profit organization. The idea is not to cause a financial hardship or burden on anyone. If the grant is successful, the Borough would have to work these details out.

Mr. Kiser inquired what role the school plays in all of this if they are utilizing it?

Mr. Miles announced the school district is actually working to create programs to use the park for high school and elementary students. The Blueprint Community plans to reach out to CL, Keystone, and the surrounding schools to provide the opportunity for their students to also use the park for their curriculum. Mr. Miles commented the school district was asked to help with maintenance and have agreed to create a volunteer program, one being called the Cool Cats of Clarion. It is a program that allows students to work and learn the skills helping maintain the facility, itself, along with other volunteers. The school district is in full support of this project. The district also wants to provide a safe way to school route. It may behoove the Borough to ask the school district for funds towards engineering as well. Mr. Miles pointed out the first step is if the Borough accepts the project. If so, Mr. Miles, along with Mr. McConnell, will work to bring in other members to assist and possibly provide funds. The funds are not needed until the award of the grant. Mr. Miles does not believe anyone else from Clarion County is applying for this program. The last application was the Climax Tunnel, which was a huge success. The \$1.5 million cap is a loose interpretation, as at the end, that project received \$2 million. Being the only applicant in the County is another outstanding reason as to why the chances are good to receive this grant to improve the safety of this corridor.

Mr. Kiser added safety is one of his concerns. Having 2' more to shovel in the wintertime will add more responsibility on them, as owners, due to students walking on them.

Mr. Miles agreed. The Committee just asks that everyone step up in the community to make this town a great place by taking on more maintenance of his/her property that will be wider but safer sidewalks. Sometimes sacrifices need to be made by all to keep Clarion up with other communities.

Personally, Mr. McConnell prefers to see people and children utilizing the park instead of staying inside to watch TV or play video games. It may be a little work but would be worth it. Mr. McConnell envisions being able to hear Christmas music and kids laughing on the ice-skating rink and wants to see the town grow and people to move in.

Mr. Kiser supports it and doesn't think anyone in the room doesn't want to see that happen.

Mr. McConnell informed everyone he attended college here and ended up loving the area so much he stayed. This is the reason to find opportunities to make it a nice place for more people to want to come and stay as well.

Mr. Ron Wilshire, exploreClarion reporter, verified the municipality has to file the grant application?

Mr. Miles and Mr. McConnell both agreed.

Mr. Wilshire inquired what the Borough will be liable for, what the responsibilities will be if Council applies for it, and if the Borough will be definitely locked into the engineering fees?

If the Borough receives the grant, Mr. Miles stated the Borough will be responsible for the engineering costs. However, if the application is submitted, hopefully everyone is in. No one wants to send an image to Harrisburg that Clarion is wishy-washy by having no intention of using it. The goal is to be fully committed and work with others to help with the funds for engineering costs.

Mr. Wilshire asked for clarification Council would or wouldn't be liable for the engineering costs?

If Council receives the grant money, Mr. Miles offered his opinion that the responsible party would be the applicant, meaning Clarion Borough. However, that check does not go in with the application and will not be paid out to the engineer all at one time.

Ms. Roberts read the article in the newspaper where Mr. Miles brought this up to the school district. It doesn't sound as though the members were very much in tune and questioned why should they give any money. Also, no one has gone to the other municipalities to get a firm 'yes, we would like to be part of this'. Ms. Roberts doesn't feel Council can commit to \$150-175,000 without knowing if someone will be able to match or meet Council half way.

Mr. Miles stated nowhere in the application does it make the Borough obligated to receive the grant funds and complete a project. Hundreds of projects fall apart for one reason or another, even some Borough projects have fallen apart after bidding for construction. If it is not feasible to do, then there is an opportunity to get out of it. However, Mr. Miles stressed he'd like to see everyone work together to make it possible to fund the engineering along this street.

Mr. Wilshire heard a rumor that there's a number of unmarked graves at the cemetery?

Because the cemetery section was most sensitive, Mr. Miles and Mr. McConnell met with both cemetery boards to discuss the possibility of unmarked graves in that section of Borough right-of-way. No one really knows. Reading the attendants at that meeting, Mr. Miles feels confident the consensus was if only surface features will be done no more than 18" to replace sidewalks and curbs nothing should be affected. No utilities are in this area. Graves are usually 4' deep.

Mr. Pete Bauer, representative of the Clarion Cemetery Board (not the Immaculate Conception Cemetery), stated the members did agree to put sidewalks where they once were. No one really knows if there are graves in that area or not. But if the sidewalks only go down 18-24", it should not be an issue. The Board asked that a fence be erected between the sidewalk and the cemetery to discourage anyone from playing in the cemetery and also asked for an exemption from the Borough to maintain these sidewalks. Mr. Bauer commented he is the youngest of the volunteer board.

Since the Borough has not enforced those existing sidewalks to be shoveled in the past, Mr. Miles

thinks that section during the winter months could be exempted and a sign could be put up that says 'no winter maintenance'. It shouldn't be an issue nor out of line since these people donate his/her time to take care of the dead. As stated before, Mr. Miles intends to keep the sidewalks in front of the 2nd Avenue Park clean and could do the cemeteries as well.

If the sidewalk does not get cleaned and someone would slip and fall, Mr. Sharrar thinks the Borough and cemetery boards will be sued. If the sidewalks are installed, people will have a reason to walk there to use it during the winter.

Mr. Miles still feels that it could be handled similar to the way a township treats a no winter maintenance road. The township still owns it, is still responsible for it, but state very clearly that the road is not maintained in the winter. It would be a simple exemption that sidewalk has no winter maintenance and is closed. That would be more than reasonable but would be up to Borough Council to work out with the cemetery board.

Mr. Miles feels it is more likely to see someone hit by a car because of no sidewalks than there would be if the sidewalk is covered with snow.

Mr. Bauer asked if a truck with a plow can be used on the sidewalk?

Mr. Sharrar stated the ordinance does not allow that. A tractor or 4-wheeler with a plow is permitted.

Addressing the fence, Mr. Miles agrees one should be installed and could match the wrought-iron look already there. It could be made out of aluminum for longevity. It would look very nice and fit in. Mr. Miles is confident that it could be worded properly to be included with the application.

Mr. Terrance Bean, 204 North 2nd Avenue, verified the \$150,000 for the engineering, if awarded, will have to come from someone and feels that would be the Borough and asked for a yes or no?

Mr. McConnell and Mr. Miles both stated yes.

Mr. Bean asked if there is a cost upfront for the application?

Mr. Miles stated no.

Mr. Bean continued that the Borough would just submit the grant and doesn't have to show the funds are available.

Mr. McConnell commented the grant would be submitted. No check would go to Harrisburg.

Mr. Miles stressed what is being asked is that a good faith effort is put forth to work together to cover the engineering costs. If the Borough decides it cannot be afforded, then the State would accept a decline letter and the grant would go to another community.

Mr. Bean inquired if the Borough would be penalized in any way?

Mr. Miles offered to reach out to Delta tomorrow and get that in writing on how that is handled but feels the Borough itself may want to contact Delta as well.

Mr. Bean commented neither representative lives in the Borough and voiced one of his biggest problems with the 2nd Avenue Park is that there was a lot of support and things accomplished; but, at some point, it would come back to the Borough to support it. Clarion Borough has the highest taxes around. This \$150,000 has got to come from somewhere. Mr. Bean feels that will come from Borough residents' pockets. The other municipalities have not been approached nor have school districts other than Clarion Area.

Mr. Miles stated that Clarion Area is the only one to hear about this so far. The townships and other school districts will be contacted after the Borough decides to move forward with the grant. Mr. Miles and Mr. McConnell will go along with the Borough to get them involved in this project.

Mr. Bean doesn't believe the other entities will provide funding.

Ms. Guntrum added the Borough is being asked to say yes without knowing if there is any other money coming from others to help offset the cost.

As far as not being a resident of the Borough, Mr. Miles lived in the Borough for 13 years and is the second largest landowner in Clarion Borough, who pays taxes to the Borough. Also, the Miles' are the first business to bring a new manufacturing facility to Clarion Borough. Mr. Miles stressed he will work with the Borough to try to bring new dollars into the Clarion community.

Mr. Bean pointed out this asking a lot from him as he is retired and lives on a fixed income. The taxes are going to have to be increased at some point. Mr. Bean voiced his second problem of a 6' grass section and a 6' sidewalk being installed. If that occurs, the edge of the sidewalk will be at his front porch and the steps may possibly need to be removed. Everyone can say the engineer will come and discuss how to best handle the situation, but Mr. Bean feels it will result in no more front yard.

Mr. Miles disagreed and meant that the project will be designed to PennDOT's standards. The goal is not to disrupt anyone's property or take money out of anyone's pocket book but to control the Borough's right-of-way to do the proper thing for pedestrian safety and traffic. Nothing that has been built will last forever. The Borough is at that 100-year point where most of the infrastructure in Clarion needs to be replaced not bandaged. Opportunities like this grant to bring in outside dollars to redevelop areas are necessary.

Since sidewalks do not exist in front of the cemetery nor the Kisers' area, Ms. Guntrum stated people's property will be taken away?

Mr. Aaron reported the sidewalks will be put on public property, or the right-of-way, which is public property. No private property will be taken.

Mr. Jim Crooks, 321 Wood Street, asked how the project was funded on Grand Avenue, which is beautiful.

President Lapinto thinks it's the worse looking area ever. Nothing seems to belong there.

Mr. McConnell thinks it looks great and drives by it every day. The road Mr. Crooks is referring to is Grand Avenue and Wood Street.

Mr. Crooks wishes that would be in front of his house and feels it was well done.

In a round-about way, Mr. Bean feels Mr. Aaron just told him to get rid of his house and that the Borough will put whatever in no matter what is in the right-of-way.

Mr. Aaron disagreed with that comment.

If 6' of grass and 6' of sidewalk is put in front of his house, Mr. Bean commented then it will be on his front porch. A more diplomatic answer from Mr. Aaron should have been 'you know what, we'll have to look at the property' but instead was 'it will be put in the right-of-way'.

Mr. Aaron disagreed that was not what he was saying to Mr. Bean.

Mr. McConnell clarified that 12' will not be taken from every property along 2nd Avenue; some will stay the same, some will gain, and some may lose a foot or two.

President Lapinto called on the gentleman standing to speak.

Mr. John Lundy, 160 Liberty Street, pointed out he's been standing for a while.

President Lapinto apologized and stated to go ahead now.

Mr. Lundy feels no one wants to hear from him as he was standing and everybody continued to discuss something that cannot be solved here. Mr. Lundy asked how anyone can get behind this project if there aren't any plans to look at. Owning a house in Clarion for 10 years and, before that renting in Manhattan where he didn't have to deal with this kind of thing, Mr. Lundy loves this community and wants to see any improvements that can be made. Residing at the corner of Liberty Street and 2nd Avenue, there are two times during the school day when everything is jammed on that Liberty. Mr. Lundy commented this is going to affect him in some way and isn't sure if it will be good or bad. What's on his mind though is how can anyone get on board of a something without seeing any plans? If the Borough has jurisdiction over what happens, how will the residents know if he/she will have his/her best interest on his/her minds?

Mr. Miles noted it might not be his best interest but a greater whole best interest.

Mr. Lundy understands not necessarily his best interest but he belongs to the whole. What works

for one may not work for everybody else. Mr. Lundy doesn't want to stop something that will be good for the community, his neighbors, or students. Years ago, Mr. Lundy considered putting an apartment above his two garages. After going to the Borough and providing plans, the cost was more than he thought it would be and there were too many restrictions that prohibited him from doing it. Mr. Lundy stressed the main thing is how can the residents get behind this opportunity without seeing any plans? If it's as good as Mr. Miles and Mr. McConnell are saying it's going to be, the residents will get behind this idea. Without plans, Mr. Lundy will not jump on the band wagon.

Mr. Miles understands as a citizen he is wondering 'what's going to be taken away from you' or 'what damage is this going to cause for you'.

Mr. Lundy stated that is not his first thought nor is the money. If the Borough cannot afford it, then it will not happen.

Mr. Miles knows that the residents' tax dollars are not enough money to circulate and keep this community together. Opportunities have to be taken that will bring outside money into this community. If not, the funding will just go to Pittsburgh or Philadelphia or areas nowhere near Clarion and will have no effect on Clarion at all. Mr. Miles pointed out Clarion doesn't have enough money to put engineering plans and drawings on a shelf and be ready when the money is there. What can be done is to describe what the goal of this grant project would be, which is why the community needs to work together to bring these dollars into this community. That way the tax dollars will be multiplied by 10 fold. For every \$1 spent, the municipality will get \$10 in grant revenue. Mr. Miles commented this is a heck of a benefit. If the approach is to engineer every opportunity and every project and let it sit on the shelf, this area will never get off the ground level of making things happen.

Ms. Guntrum asked how much money this free park is supposed to bring in? Everybody was up in arms about losing the Borough pool. Ms. Guntrum could see the pool from her house and stated it was never packed except for nights when there were fireworks or summer school. That's why the question how much will this bring into the community when the Borough tried to run a pool for how long and just couldn't afford to keep it fixed up and running.

Mr. Miles believes this park has the potential to bring in a large amount of revenue. The Blueprint Community intends to work with the school districts and other organizations to have 3-on-3 tournaments, volleyball tournaments; and hockey tournaments. The feeling is this will draw people from Pittsburgh and Erie to the area to stay for the whole day, a weekend, or even for a holiday and go out to eat and shop on Main Street, which will bring outside money into the community.

Mr. McConnell pointed out the Borough doesn't own the park, the Clarion Blueprint Community does. Like Mr. Miles stated, people drive hundreds of miles to go play hockey in Cleveland, Kittanning, or Pittsburgh and he/she can be drawn to this area instead. Mr. McConnell asked why everyone thinks so many people go to the winter classics for NHL and stated it's because it is outside, fun, cool, and a very neat experience.

President Lapinto informed everyone that only 25% of this entire Borough is taxed, and this Council

sitting around here have done everything possible not to raise taxes. The \$150,000 engineer fee could go up. If this project would be awarded and during the process of installation of sidewalks graves are run into, it will be a nightmare. Archeological people will have to come in, which is a whole other problem. President Lapinto stated she brought Blueprint to this community and was instrumental in getting Mr. Miles and Mr. McConnell appointed to the committee, which makes her feel kind of torn. President Lapinto supports them 100%. However, as an elected official of Clarion Borough, each member has to be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers. President Lapinto stated that's where she is at right now and doesn't know if anybody else has comments.

Ms. Guntrum would like to hear from other Councilmembers to on what he/she is thinking.

If you own property on 2nd Avenue, Mr. Garbarino stated everyone can sit here and sugar coat this, but it is going to suck. If the \$150,000 would have to be paid upfront, Mr. Garbarino may feel differently. Mr. Miles is a very good speaker and diplomatic. But one think that wasn't harped on is that this street is going to go bad and will result in more than \$150,000 wrapped up in it. If Mr. Garbarino didn't believe that, he wouldn't be supportive.

President Lapinto commented everyone thought the paving would be approved. However, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston watched a webinar and found out the grant will only pave what is disturbed.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston asked the presenters the question if sidewalks, curbs, storm water, tree removal/replacement, lighting, and pavement would all qualify, which the answer was all of it would be except the paving. If a bicycle lane would be on the roadway, paving may be permitted. Also, beautification projects are not to be included either so the fencing between the sidewalk and cemetery may not be permitted.

Mr. Miles reported a large portion of that street was repaved by Pennsylvania American Water. The only section not repaved was the east portion of the South Street. Complete milling and paving of the road may not qualify. To install a new set of curbs, you would have to go from the face of the curb 18" out into the street at minimum. Then you would have to reestablish that by putting in base, binder, and top. So, those portions would be paved up to curb face. Second Avenue has a good structure unlike Wood or South Streets where you can feel the bricks underneath the pavement. Mr. Miles thinks the project would have just as much beauty as if done in a timely manner without a full street overlay. In sections where drainage is impacted negatively, it would without a doubt have to be included in construction for paving.

Mr. Aaron stated the Storm Water Authority Board already had that section on a future list of projects and could be about \$50,000. However, if it was part of this project, that would be a definite benefit to the community.

Mr. Miles noted he has never seen a grant say no grass or trees can be included.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated the presenters agreed trees were okay. However, the fencing and welcoming arch that were mentioned may not be unless it is

worded just right. Because money is a concern, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston asked the presenters if a school district could be the applicant instead of the municipality. The answer was it could in conjunction with the Borough.

As far as the fence, Mr. Miles thinks it is a necessary piece that needs included not just because it will be beautiful. No one wants to see people gathering in an area as sacred as the cemetery. If it is not feasible through this grant, then maybe another one could be found to handle it.

Ms. Roberts questioned as to if the County is willing to pay for Delta to prepare the application. If not, the Borough would have to come up with additional \$10,000 to pay Delta.

President Lapinto thought there was a firm commitment through the County.

Mr. McConnell stated that conversation is still going on with the County. The County has an umbrella contract with Delta and are allowing Delta to submit the application.

Mr. Miles noted the cost will be about \$13,000.

Ms. Roberts stated that application fee would be an upfront cost in order to file a preliminary application by July 17th.

Mr. Miles verified those discussions have taken place and strongly feels that portion will be completed without any Borough expense. However, the Borough has to be the one to ask the County. For anyone to commit to the Borough and this opportunity, Mr. Miles commented the Borough must make the commitment to apply first. Once that happens, everyone can work with the community to get more involved and help from other entities to make this work.

Ms. Roberts thinks the Borough is waiting on the County. If none of the other entities want to come in, Ms. Roberts repeated it will be the Borough's grant and will be hard to come up with the costs.

Mr. Miles understands that and stated Mr. McConnell and he have done everything they can at this point. The Borough Council has to go out and speak with the County directly on this project. The County is excited about this opportunity and feels it would be a great project. Also, the County did not believe that anybody else was applying through the County. It's the right project for the application. Mr. Miles informed everyone the Grand Avenue Project was a Multimodal Transportation Grant that was achieved in cooperation of a lot of individuals and volunteers to work with the Borough and County, resulting in being successful to receive \$750-770,000. It has taken 4 years to complete the work after receiving award of the grant. That grant approved all the curbs and sidewalks to be redone, all the storm sewer pipe was replaced; new street lights installed, straightened out a corridor of road that had a dog leg in it, and the repaving of the entire cartway from Veterans Road to Payne Street. Whether people think it looks good or not, that was all covered by the grant. If the Borough would have had to pay for the storm sewers alone, it may have been well over \$300,000 for an individual project. Mr. Miles stressed there was a huge amount of cooperation in what he believes to be a fantastic project. The only regret about that project is the County asked if the Borough was interested in applying again as a continuation project. Mr. Miles

understands the Borough declined the opportunity. Again, that was a County project that did not cost the Borough anything. Every Borough resident, every business owner in the Borough received a huge tax break in the fact that the County were able to apply for this grant and be awarded so that the money did not come out of his/her pockets.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston pointed out the Miles' asked the Borough to apply for this grant initially and it was denied. When the County applied, it was then awarded.

Mr. Miles reported the first time when Terra Works applied for the grant it was for the entire corridor of Grand Avenue from Veteran Drive to Heidrick Street. Harrisburg relayed that was too big of a project and too comprehensive. Also, it did not have enough surrounding government support. With the County and Borough working together, it makes the application stronger. So, the second time around, the County had Delta Development prepare the application and it was a great success.

Ms. Guntrum stated a lot of the residents are on fixed income with pensions and social security and cannot afford any extra taxes.

When he was on Council, Mr. Crooks heard those same comments. Taxes are for the Borough, County, and school district, and Clarion Borough hasn't raised taxes in a very long time; at least for 7 years.

Defending the Borough, President Lapinto reported for what can be done with 25% taxable property is amazing. Residents have a full-time police department, the volunteer fire department is fully funded, and the Borough is the biggest contributor to the library.

Mr. Miles informed everyone the idea is to have Delta Development work with the County and Borough to complete the application under the blanket umbrella contract of the County. Without the County working with Delta, the Grand Avenue Project would never have worked out. No one by any means is trying to go against the Borough or the residents. Mr. Miles commented the goal is to bridge the gap of funding to replace the infrastructure for this whole corridor. If the application is awarded, the Borough could turn their tax revenue into a lot of benefits to the community.

Mr. McConnell also noted there is a group of volunteers that want to beautify Clarion. The individuals are not paid and are taking time away from their families to help apply to administer a grant for \$1.5 million that is not going to benefit them in any other way than to make the town he/she lives in beautiful. Mr. McConnell stressed this is not to get the credit or get under anyone's skin, it's just to get the community to work together to start to make Clarion a nice place to live.

Dr. Sanders Dédé supports the project, because it is bringing dollars, jobs, and recreation to the community. Clarion needs to be doing something. Dr. Sanders Dédé inquired if Clarion doesn't do it, who is going to? The Borough has not put anything into the 2nd Avenue Park. The Blueprint Community, which is a 501c3 entity, has purchased the property with Janice Horn's assistance and applied for fundraising and grants to do what has been done to date.

Ms. Guntrum hopes this really does bring in business and people to the area.

Dr. Sanders Dédé commented you have to prepare for it and try to attract people to this area.

Mr. McConnell added this opportunity may not come for another 3-7 years.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated the webinar stated the intention is this grant will be open every 2 years. The Safe Routes to School Program goes under TA Set-Aside Funds now. The project has to be within 2 miles of the school. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston asked if the reviewers will take into consideration that it will be helping CL School District that is beyond that distance?

Mr. Miles doesn't think it would disqualify the grant in any way. In fact, it would show that the Borough is working with another entity. If this application is not successful, then that's fantastic news that the grant would open again in a couple years. However, Mr. Miles does not necessarily believe it will be.

Mr. McConnell feel it could only help. The State is spending tax dollars like crazy, and this money will be spent somewhere, why not here?

Mr. Aaron thinks it's pretty obvious that he supports the project. Hearing that it will be open every 2 years makes it an opportunity to build on as well. If this one is awarded and the State sees how great it turns out, it may increase the chances of continuing projects to move down through town to improve it entirely. Mr. Aaron apologized for his earlier comment and does not wish to tell residents what to do but thinks it is very important to start to improve town to attract people to come to Clarion. Mr. Aaron pointed out you clean your house before you get company. This is an opportunity to begin to improve a street; and, hopefully, one-by-one after that. Mr. Aaron noted the check will not be written to EADS on Day 1 so there is a chance to work with others to find funding.

President Lapinto informed everyone this is another grant that is pay forward and the reimbursement comes afterwards. That will be tough.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston added that was the main concern that individuals listening to the webinar gave as reasons not to submit an application for this grant. If awarded, the presenter mentioned that is something that could be written into the agreement so the money would be in the entity's hands before the payment is sent.

President Lapinto feels this webinar was really a bundle of information.

If the Borough would receive this grant and couldn't take it for some reason, Ms. Guntrum asked if the Borough would have a lesser chance to get one in the next open period? In other words, would the State hold that against Clarion?

President Lapinto stated yes.

Mr. Miles stated Clarion won't get a second chance. There have been other projects that have gone through the entire stages and then at the last minute was not able to happen. That happens with every community.

Ms. Schmader questioned what if the Borough waited to apply in 2 years; that wouldn't hurt the Borough, as an application was never submitted.

Mr. Miles stated that might be the State's intention to open this every 2 years, but, in a lot of cases, that doesn't happen. Personally, Mr. Miles doesn't think it will. A lot can happen in 2 years. The last time this was available was in 2018 and was 5 years prior to that if not more. At that point, a lot of momentum could be lost, which is what makes grants happen. Mr. Miles commented it's communities working together. Also, waiting another 2 years means the costs could go up considerably. There is just a lot of risk. Right now, Mr. Miles stressed the grant is open.

Ms. Schmader verified it is ultimately up to the Borough to decide what exactly is included in the grant; for instance, the size of the sidewalks, and could work with the residents. In other words, the sidewalks wouldn't necessarily have to be 6' wide and maybe could just be redone as is?

Mr. McConnell agreed the Borough would be in control.

Mr. Miles mentioned 60" is the minimum for ADA requirements. The reason 6' was mentioned were for mechanical plowing and people to be able to walk side-by-side. But the discussion on the size is purely a Borough discussion.

Mr. Bean asked if the purpose is really to get the sidewalk down in front of the 2nd Avenue Park.

Mr. Miles stated no. The Blueprint Community will be installing sidewalks in front of the park on their own. The sidewalks in this grant will have a tie-in point so there is a good, safe route.

President Lapinto asked the residents if he/she is in favor of this or not?

Ms. Guntrum thinks it would be great as long as the residents have some say in the matter, especially those that will be affected the most, in how the project will be laid out.

If there is no upfront cost, Mr. Bean thinks there is no harm in applying for the grant but would like to know if the County will cover the cost for the application preparation?

Mr. Miles announced that is what he will push for to get this application prepared under the blanket contract with the County. If that isn't feasible, that might be a dealbreaker right there.

President Lapinto realizes this is a preliminary application but asked if support letters will be necessary to submit with it by July 17th?

Mr. Miles offered to assist Borough representatives to approach other townships, school districts, and residents, to get support letters and possible funding to show the benefit will be not just be to the Borough but also outside areas.

President Lapinto stated this grant opened, and there was a short period of turn around time. That is why the residents just received notification last week. Council wanted to be up front and hear from everyone that will be affected.

Ms. Roberts agreed the Borough wanted to keep everyone in the loop so that residents could hear first hand what was being discussed and how it may affect his/her property by something Council would ultimately be choosing to do. Council wanted to hear his/her input.

Ms. Bonnie Stehle, 202 Liberty Street, very much favors this project but will not be affected as much as some of her other neighbors. Clarion, in general, is declining and a lot of property owners are not keeping his/her homes up the way they should be. Ms. Stehle believes what Mr. Miles and Mr. McConnell is saying that this will be a great way to increase the tax dollars through the town and will benefit everyone one. Ms. Stehle understands other people's point of view as well though.

Ms. Burghardt thinks the potential for growth is exciting and feels everyone needs to have some faith in these people that are working so hard in taking their time to find opportunities. It also sounds as though there is some room to have input along the way. Right now, Ms. Burghardt feels this would be an excellent shot and certainly supports it.

Ms. Barb Runyan might support if it Mr. McConnell cleans her sidewalk and pays her taxes.

President Lapinto asked if Council is ready to make a motion?

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Mr. Aaron for Clarion Borough to apply for the PennDOT TA Set-Aside Funds Safe Routes to School Program. The motion carried after the following roll call vote: Mr. Garbarino, yes; Ms. Roberts, yes; Dr. Sanders Dédé, yes; Mr. Aaron, yes; and Ms. Schmader, yes. As a note, President Lapinto could not vote as she was Acting Mayor.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Schmader, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary