

August 15, 2023, Council Meeting
Minutes

The second meeting of the Clarion Borough Council was held on August 15, 2023, in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library. President Lapinto called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers present were Mr. Garbarino, Ms. Roberts, Dr. Sanders Dédé, Mr. Aaron, Mr. Montana, Ms. Schmader, and President Lapinto. Mr. Colosimo, Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Mr. Sharrar, Solicitor Marshall, Chief Peck, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present. Mr. Preston was absent.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items Only

Speaking as a resident and not as a University representative, Ms. Brehen Kelley, 15 Campbell Avenue, voiced concern with the safety at the crosswalk near Tippin Gym on Greenville Avenue. Being the swimming coach at Clarion University, all day long accidents almost occur daily due to motorists stopping to allow people to cross. Right now, there are a lot of kids on campus for camps and clinics and with the students returning soon, Ms. Kelley is afraid that someone is going to get hit. In 2020, one of Ms. Kelley's parents was hit and injured badly, resulting with a broken back and her legs. Two years later, the parent is still recovering. Ms. Kelley walks to work each day about 5:30 a.m. It is dark and foggy at times, and Ms. Kelley has almost been hit numerous times despite hustling across it. A couple weeks ago, a red truck actually sped up like he/she was trying to hit her. Ms. Kelley reported there is a small yellow sign that states: 'State Law: Stop for Pedestrians' but is often blown over or covered with snow and sits on the sidewalk rather than in the middle of the road. In discussions with police officers and the Chief just prior to the meeting, if there is time, an officer sits in the area to watch the crosswalk with the hopes to slow traffic down. However, the manpower is not always available. The University Public Safety officers also sit by the Science Center to watch for speeders. The parent that was hit also discussed this with the University but was informed this was a state highway and the University couldn't do anything about it. Ms. Kelley suggested reflective paint, flashing lights, or different signage to help bring it to the attention of drivers. It almost seems that motorists don't think it's necessary at that intersection as it's a straight away with no stop signs. The speed limit is 35 mph; however, most people drive 65-70 mph even big trucks heading to I-80. Ms. Kelley offered to push for a grant or help out in any way. Since this is a state highway, Ms. Kelley isn't sure who would address it but wanted to bring her concern to Council.

Knowing this was coming up tonight, Chief Peck drove Greenville Avenue. The crosswalk at the curve has different signage than the one located at Tippin. Perhaps additional signage may help. This could be discussed by the Committee to see what other options may be available.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston commented PennDOT may need to be contacted as well.

President Lapinto reported the Committees will keep on this and discuss possible options.

ADMINISTRATION

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Schmader to approve Resolution #2023-477,

approving submission of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application to Clarion County in the amount of \$150,000 for Phase II of the South Sixth Avenue Reconstruction Project and committing Clarion Borough funds in the amount of \$15,000 as the local share for the application.

President Lapinto reported this is the same project that the Borough proposed last year, but it wasn't funded.

Hearing no questions, the motion carried with a vote of seven yeas.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Schmader, approving Clarion River Brewing's special event request for a road closure of Sixth Avenue from Main Street to Merle Road on Tuesday, September 5, 2023, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. for a car cruise, was carried with a vote of seven yeas.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving the Clarion County Coalition for Suicide Prevention's special event request for their annual Suicide Awareness Walk using the sidewalks on Thursday, September 14, 2023, beginning at 6 p.m., was carried with a vote of seven yeas.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Roberts to approve the request from Clarion County Economic Development Corporation for a letter of support from Clarion Borough for Clarion County Main Street Initiative – Keystone Communities Program, noting this is not a commitment of funds from the Borough.

President Lapinto stated that was already checked, and this is only for support.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston believes the CCEDC is applying to DCED for the funding in the amount of \$24,500.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yeas.

BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Sanders Dédé commented activity is going on with the playground and parking lot currently.

DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson stated there is a meeting coming up, but nothing to report at this time.

PUBLIC WORKS/STORM WATER AUTHORITY

Mr. Aaron believes the storm water inlet vac work is wrapped up now and went well. A report will be given next month on how it went.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated it was returned today.

PUBLIC SAFETY

On a motion by Dr. Sanders Dédé with a second by Mr. Garbarino to adopt Ordinance #2023-842, in re to entering into an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with Clarion Area School District

to provide a school police officer.

President Lapinto reported the Chief has been working on this since February.

Chief Peck agreed February/March.

Hearing no questions, the motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

LIBRARY REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson commented the one air conditioning unit was repaired and now the other one is having issues. Hopefully, it will be fixed soon, too.

HOUSING AND ZONING REPORT

On a motion by Ms. Schmader with a second by Mr. Aaron to give permission for the Solicitor to prepare and advertise Ordinance #2023-843, in re to entering into an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with Clarion Township to utilize the Clarion Borough's UCC Board of Appeals.

President Lapinto called on Mr. Sharrar to explain.

When any municipality opted into the Uniformed Construction Code where a third-party agency enforces their building permits, Mr. Sharrar stated the township and/or borough was required to adopt an ordinance, which included a clause to create a Board of Appeals. That way, if someone disagrees with a denial of a building permit, the applicant has the right to appeal. Mr. Sharrar commented Clarion Township does not have a UCC Board of Appeals, which was brought to light when the Township denied a permit for Clarion-Limestone School District. So, the Township reached out to the Borough to see if an agreement could be arranged to use Clarion Borough's UCC Board of Appeals. Upon a request by Council, Mr. Sharrar scheduled a meeting with the UCC Board of Appeals and agreed to act as the Township's Board as long as the Borough permits it.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston pointed out the UCC Board of Appeals submitted a letter, which was included in the packet for Council's review.

Ms. Roberts asked if the UCC Board of Appeals already does this with another municipality?

Mr. Sharrar stated yes, Limestone Township. It won't cost the Borough anything as the townships pay for all expenses associated with the hearing.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston added Clarion Township's secretary relayed that the Township will pay the Borough for the advertising fees for the ordinance and also be adopting a resolution so that it is valid. There is no hurry to do this; however, if it could be advertised and adopted September 5th, that would be great.

Mr. Sharrar reiterated Clarion Township just never appointed a Board of Appeals.

Hearing no more questions, the motion carried with a vote of seven yeas.

RECREATION REPORT

Ms. Roberts had nothing to report.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston announced Mr. Sam Lynch, the Borough's Financial Consultant, was in today to get all the audit papers together and in order. Mr. Lynch will be meeting with the audit team next week and hand over all the materials. Once the auditor forwards a list of all the items to test for 2022, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston will pull it. Hopefully, the audit will be done mid-September.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Fulmer had nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Non-Agenda Items

Mr. Phil Kiser, 202 South Street, stated he and his wife were out of town for the last meeting but understands that the 2nd Avenue Project was discussed. The Kisers' wished to make an appearance to let Councilmembers know they have definite concerns with this project. Someone mentioned the idea of walking the entire street, and the Kisers would like to be involved.

President Lapinto relayed Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston and she have driven the area numerous times, and Mr. Montana walked it with the engineer.

Walking and running that area, Mr. Garbarino agreed everything the Kisers' did over the years will be disseminated.

At the previous meeting, Mr. Kiser understood the residents may be involved when it gets to the point of getting all the engineering plans together. Mr. Kiser stressed he and his wife just want to stay on top of this project.

President Lapinto commented the project, as presented to Council, was submitted and was estimated at over \$2 million in construction.

Mr. Kiser stated it's growing, which scares him.

When Mr. Montana walked with the engineer, Ms. Roberts relayed that several areas could be eliminated as certain sections of sidewalk did not need to be installed; for instance, by the cemetery. This was Blueprint Community's wish list, but the scope very well might change.

Mr. Kiser prefers the sidewalks on the cemetery side and not on their side.

As indicated in the newspaper article, Mr. Montana recommended Councilmembers should meet as a group with the different owners on Second Avenue from Liberty Street to the cemetery. Walking that area definitely opened Mr. Montana's eyes and changed his point of view. The only thing that should be done at the cemetery is the removal of the old slate sidewalk slabs as tree roots are lifting them. Mr. Montana doesn't feel there is a need for a sidewalk in front of the cemetery. If the full 30' right-of-way is used from the center line on 2nd Avenue in front of Mr. Terry Bean's home, the porch would be eliminated. The engineer stated that entire area does not need utilized. Moving up to the Hager property where Ice-O is located, lines could be painted on the pavement so it could be left as it. Under ADA, Mr. Montana informed everyone the sidewalk only needs to be 36". The idea for a 6' sidewalk is to have a pickup and/or side-by-side plow the snow. However, the sidewalk may need to be thicker. Mr. Montana stressed there is a lot for Council to understand first of all and meet with the property owners.

Mr. Kiser agreed.

President Lapinto received a call from her dentist, and this project would take part of the entrance to that office. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston received a call with concerns on graves.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston agreed. The individual is going to reach out to Mr. Montana to go to the cemetery to look at the area.

President Lapinto thinks Public Works should also go along. The Borough has not received notification that it was funded or asked for a complete application. Things are obviously going to change. President Lapinto advised the Kisers to stay aware.

Mr. Kiser stated that is their plan.

At this time, Mike, Teresa, and Cameron Lapinto presented a birthday cake to celebrate President Lapinto's 80th birthday, with everyone singing Happy Birthday.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Schmader, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary