

April 21, 2026, Public Meeting

The Clarion Borough Council held a Public Meeting on April 21, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library, the purpose of the meeting was for The EADS Group to present the Second Avenue Project and answer any questions. Councilmembers present were Mr. Harbaugh, Ms. Whitling, Ms. Logue, Ms. Hampikian, Mr. Montana, and President Lapinto. Mr. Garbarino was not present. Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Mr. Colosimo, Mr. Preston, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present.

A list of those people in attendance is attached to the Official File Copy of these minutes.

President Lapinto called the hearing to order at 5:30 p.m.

President Lapinto stated the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the 2nd Avenue Project and introduced Mr. Greg Elliott, the project engineer.

Mr. Elliott, along with Mr. Ken Coleman also from The EADS Group, prepared an agenda to go through the project history, funding source, project scope and overview, anticipated project schedule, and then open it up for questions. Afterwards, two different locations are set up for them to discuss with anyone present what is being planned in front of his/her property. Project History: With the on-going development of the 2nd Avenue Community Park Project, which is now known as Freedoms Flame Park, Mr. Elliott informed everyone the Clarion Blueprint Community, Inc., Clarion Borough, and the Clarion Area School District recognized the need to implement improvements from the park to the school to enhance the appearance and increase public safety along this corridor. EADS completed a Concept Design and Construction Cost Estimate in the summer of 2023 and assisted the Borough with preparing a Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Grant Application in September of 2023. Project Funding: Mr. Elliott stated Clarion Borough was notified their application was selected for funding and accepted the grant award of \$1,500,000 in April 2025 to pay for the construction of the project. Engineering fees are being paid for by Clarion Borough, Clarion Borough Stormwater Authority, and the Clarion Area School District. Mr. Elliott commented PennDOT Engineering District 10-0 is providing administration and oversight of the development of Construction Drawings. The drawing format and design requirements have to comply with PennDOT's procedures. EADS is making regular submissions for review and approval by PennDOT throughout the design process. Project Scope and Overview: Mr. Elliott reported a scoping meeting was conducted in October 2024 with PennDOT personnel to discuss the project scope, constraints, utility clearance process, environmental clearance process, and potential temporary construction easements and rights-of-way. The project consists of new concrete sidewalk and curbing along both sides of 2nd Avenue from Liberty Street at the school up to George Road at the park. Mr. Elliott commented the project also consists of storm drainage repairs including three (3) new catch basins from Merle Road to Main Street., curb ramps with detectable warning surfaces, driveway transitions within the roadway right-of-way, decorative light standards, and street trees. The new light standards are not to replace the existing street lights but are to provide supplemental lighting for the sidewalks. No work will be completed along the cemetery to approximately Wood Street. Additionally, there are other sections along the corridor that are not included, mainly due to the

existing sidewalk being in good condition. Mr. Elliott asked Mr. Coleman to point out on the plans where those are at.

Mr. Coleman indicated on the large plans that the project start is at George Road and continues to the school and Liberty Street. No work is going to be done along the cemetery up and to this intersection of Wood Street. A curb ramp will be done there to bring it in compliance. Mr. Coleman pointed to other areas where the sidewalks are in good shape will not have anything done as well as no changes from Madison Road to Liberty Street (referring from Terry Bean's house to Liberty Street).

Mr. Coleman passed out smaller versions of the maps to those present. This was provided to Clarion Borough Council and the Mayor with their packet. A copy is attached to the Official File Copy of these minutes.

Moving on, Anticipated Project Schedule: Mr. Elliott pointed out this schedule is subject to change, but with what is known today, the plan is to select the contractor based on bids received this December with construction to start in the spring of 2027. Construction is expected to be completed in the fall of 2027. Up until a couple months ago, the schedule was to begin in April 2028. At that time, everyone thought more work would be necessary on private property, which would have resulted in PennDOT required right-of-way plans and agreements from the affected property owners. Although the design is still being finalized, it now appears the only work necessary outside the roadway right-of-way on the private property is the curb ramp construction at the school. PennDOT has permitted EADS to use a right of entry, temporary construction easement for that, for the construction of a curb ramp. Future Project Updates: Mr. Elliott verified any updates EADS would have would be posted on the Borough's website, which Mr. Colosimo agreed. Mr. Elliott asked for questions at this time.

President Lapinto asked anybody on Council for questions first.

Not being on Council at the time this was approved and from the school district and everybody's standpoint, Mr. Harbaugh asked what made 2nd Avenue identified for being addressed for the safety part?

Ms. Logue inquired if Mr. Harbaugh has walked up there since the installation of the new park?

Mr. Harbaugh has but encouraged Ms. Logue to stand on Boundary Street where the curb is during pick up and drop off times for kids.

Right now, Ms. Logue stated there is a definite issue walking from the school, and even from her house, as there is not a sidewalk completely to the park. It is very dangerous.

When living in Applewood, Mr. Harbaugh pointed out he walked every day to school and football practices and is not trying to dismiss picking and choosing or even arguing with Ms. Logue. When Mr. Harbaugh hears safety, and it's coming from the school, Boundary Street is a deathtrap. It amazes him every day that there is not a head-on collision, a kid hit, or somebody falling and

getting hurt. Two years ago, there was an accident with a woman getting a compound fracture, because the road was so tight. If this project is being done based on safety, Mr. Harbaugh begs anyone to stand on the corner on Boundary Street. There is a blind spot, the crosswalk got paved over, no sidewalk either way, a marsh on one side with nothing but mud on the other. Every day taking his kids to and from school, Mr. Harbaugh takes it easy around that bend.

Ms. Logue thinks there has been an uptick of walking and believes another safety concern is with the light fixtures?

Mr. Elliott noted the light fixtures, areas of sidewalks where there is separation in grade, trip hazards, and complying with ADA were all factors when submitting this grant. Being in competition with other municipalities, the grant application was submitted to be the most attractive to the grant readers. Mr. Elliott commented the attractive story included how the connection to the park from the school and increased traffic that the park will create on this corridor resulted in receiving the \$1.5 million grant.

Living there, Ms. Logue knows it has already created an increase in traffic. What Mr. Harbaugh is stating about Boundary is valid, and Ms. Logue stated she would support another project down the road. This can be taken to committee for additional discuss. It is really a great idea.

Mr. Harbaugh just didn't know if Council was trying to justify something unnecessarily, as those comments have been relayed to him.

Hearing no other questions from Council and the Mayor, President Lapinto asked anyone in the public for questions and asked each to stand, state his/her name and address for the record, and, per Council's policy, each will be given 3 minutes.

Mr. Phil Kiser, corner of South Street and Second Avenue, stated they do not have sidewalk at all and, after 30 years, will now have to take care of 200' of 5' wide sidewalks, unless someone is going to come and help clear it when it gets covered with snow. The plan indicates part of their driveway will be used, and Mr. Kiser stressed the bigger problem is he will lose his parking spot, where he has parked for 30 years.

Mr. Elliott asked Mr. Kiser to stay to discuss his situation afterwards.

Mr. Kiser agreed to stay until the end but questioned why couldn't the sidewalk be moved out into the road? Parking is possible there now, which no one uses. So, why couldn't 4' of that be used for the sidewalk? If that were done, the parking would not be affected.

Mr. Elliott reported the sidewalk cannot be put within the roadway, or cart way.

President Lapinto noted that is a PennDOT street, and the Borough receives a turn-back fee for it.

Mr. Elliott asked Mr. Kiser if he understands that where he parks is not his property. It is the Borough's right-of-way.

Mr. Kiser can show Mr. Elliott 100 people parking on Borough right-of-way right now and asked why he was being singled out?

Mr. Elliott agreed that may be, but the sidewalk has to be completed as part of this project. EADS prepared it by doing it within the Borough's right-of-way. However, Mr. Elliott is happy to look at the plans with Mr. Kiser afterwards.

Mr. Kiser inquired if the electric will be underground? The Kisers paid more to ensure that they didn't have any overhead wires.

Mr. Elliott verified new installation will be underground. The existing utilities will remain overhead.

Mr. Richard Wilson, 100 South Third Avenue, reported none of the neighbors were ever notified there was going to be a park built behind their properties. Secondly, once the sidewalk is installed, Mr. Wilson agrees with Mr. Kiser that he will not have anywhere to park other than in the garage. Also, the lights were to be turned off at night but are not.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston asked Mr. Wilson if he is referring to the lights in the park? If so, that is not the Borough's project.

Mr. Wilson stated yes. The work lights shine brighter than the street lights. Mr. Wilson disagrees with the sidewalk completely, feels they can be kept less than 3 feet, and run it over to where it used to be when there was a cemetery sidewalk.

Ms. Amanda Hepinger, on behalf of Rivertown Excavating, pointed out they just recently purchased the corner lot at 2nd and Main Street on the north side. The previous owner on the map is listed as SHN Inc. Ms. Hepinger reported the new owners have a lot of ideas to develop business and get more people involved with entrepreneurial ideas. The lot is fairly small. Understanding that is the Borough's right-of-way, Ms. Hepinger stressed the main concern is access off of 2nd Avenue. Historically, that property used to have a gas station and apartment building on it. Access was available from Main Street and 2nd Avenue. The owners wish to keep that access off of 2nd Avenue so that there can be development. Ms. Hepinger commented they wish to create business in the Borough, not to compete with local business, but to add additional business. If that access on 2nd Avenue is removed, it will impede what the owners wish to do. Ms. Hepinger asked Council and the engineers to look at that lot to see if it would be possible to enable vehicular traffic in and out from 2nd Avenue. The sidewalk being added is fine, but a curb will make that impossible.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated this is the vacant lot at 2nd and Main Street along 2nd Avenue directly across from the housing units.

Ms. Logue thinks that is projected as all curb and doesn't include an actual sidewalk. If the engineers are able to provide an access along 2nd Avenue, Ms. Logue asked Ms. Hepinger if that would help?

Mr. Hepinger stated absolutely.

Mr. Elliott commented that may be possible but would have to meet PennDOT's standards and approval.

Mr. Kiser stated Barb Runyan and Bridget Divins, sitting in front of him, wonder what's going to be in front of their house.

Ms. Logue stated nothing is planned in front of Ms. Runyan's house but is not sure about Ms. Divins.

Ms. Bridget Divins, 26 South 2nd Avenue, asked if there would be an increase to the sidewalks in front of her house?

Mr. Montana informed the engineers Ms. Divins' property is just down from Wood Street towards Main Street across from Peace Dental.

Mr. Coleman stated that is Property #12 and thinks that sidewalk will be replaced and will be 5'.

Ms. Divins questioned why hers will be wider and others aren't being touched?

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston believes the area from Wood Street towards the cemetery was supposed to have a sidewalk as well. However, after looking at the plans, Council noticed that there was not a safe way to cross the street. That sidewalk would have led to nothing. In other words, pedestrians would have had to cross the street in order to get to the sidewalk in front of the Kisers and continue up to the park. Council asked the engineers to remove that area. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston commented that would have created a safety issue. The idea is for pedestrians to cross from the stop sign past Ms. Divins to the ones by Peace Dental and continue up to the park.

Ms. Divins stated the bottom line is her sidewalk has been widened and widened and widened and doesn't want that any more. It's getting too close to her house and creating privacy issues. Ms. Divins' feels she probably has the smallest lot in Clarion Borough, and now the engineers want to take more of it.

Mr. Elliott commented that may not be the case, and it is the Borough's right-of-way that would be taken, if any.

Ms. Divins stressed she is not happy about it.

Mr. Coleman doesn't think that the sidewalk will be any wider. If it needs to be wider, the grass would be a little bit smaller between the sidewalk and curb area. If the sidewalk is already 5', then it would only be replaced.

Again, not trying to be that person, Mr. Harbaugh hears the engineers saying 'I think' and 'I don't know', and no pun intended, there are no concrete statements being made on the sidewalk park. How up-to-date are these plans everyone is looking at today?

Mr. Elliott knows the new sidewalk is 5' wide. What the engineers are not sure about is the existing width of everyone's sidewalk.

Mr. Harbaugh questioned if that wouldn't have been beneficial to bring the measurements so everyone was clear on what will happen with their sidewalks and property?

Mr. Elliott informed everyone these are the most recent plans. The information of the current widths of the existing sidewalks is available on the survey.

Not trying to be that guy or sound like Captain America, Mr. Harbaugh pointed out everyone that is sitting on Council got elected to look out for the people of Clarion Borough and wants them to have the most up-to-date information.

Mr. Elliott announced the plans presented tonight are the most up-to-date but are not the complete ones yet. All the new sidewalk is 5'. The existing sidewalk varies, and that information is not available right now but can be looked into.

Ms. Logue thinks the most important thing the engineers reported tonight is that no rights-of-way are going to be required. That means the project will not be going on any private property. It is going within the Borough's right-of-way. Usually when a PennDOT project is completed, there are a number of rights-of-way needed. Nothing is going to change that much other than the Kisers, which the right-of-way is there now, was there when they purchased it, and always will be there. While Ms. Logue understands that will affect the Kisers parking spot, she also understands that intersection is really dangerous. The school is going to start using that park, little kids are walking up there and trying to avoid cars, and personally she almost got hit the other day with her dog right there. Ms. Logue doesn't want to see that kind of stuff and doesn't want the pedestrians trampling through the Kisers' property, because they take such great care of it. These are her main concerns.

Mr. Terry Bean, 204 North 2nd Avenue, verified the engineer stated the sidewalk will be widened towards the road?

Mr. Coleman agreed in that particular location it looked as though it would go towards the road. Normally, that is the ideal situation. EADS is trying to remain consistent with the corridor as well so that you are not jogging in and out.

President Lapinto pointed out Mr. Bean voiced concern about his property at the very start. With an addition of a sidewalk in his area, his porch would have had to have been removed.

Mr. Montana agreed and that was removed from the project.

If the widening can go towards the road, Mr. Bean doesn't think the residents would be concerned. Also, the houses were built long before anybody even thought about any of this. Their front yards aren't very big.

Because the right-of-way line in relation to the existing sidewalk varies, Mr. Elliott doesn't think this blanket statement can be made.

Mr. Bean understands that, but an inch means a lot and is a big concern. Houses cannot be moved.

Mr. Elliott mentioned that a scoping meeting was held October 2024 with PennDOT. At that meeting, it was thought there would be multiple areas that work would need to be done on private property. If that was the case, PennDOT's right-of-way plan process would have had to be completed. Being this far along, it does not seem that will be the case. Mr. Elliott thinks the only private property affected is down at the school where a curb ramp needs constructed. If the school is agreeable, a right-of-entry form needs to be signed giving permission for a temporary construction to enter the property.

Mr. Matt Allio, 416 Elss Street, informed everyone that he takes his son to the park. They walk from Elss Street using the sidewalk, enter the cemetery and walk through it, and then exist and use the left-hand edge of Applewood Valley Road by the pines to get access to the park. Mr. Allio inquired if there are plans for the sidewalk to go farther down 2nd Avenue?

President Lapinto and Ms. Logue reported that is out of the Borough.

Mr. Montana stated it is very confusing and is Clarion Township.

Mr. Allio clarified no sidewalks will go in that area?

President Lapinto agreed.

Hearing no more comments or questions, President Lapinto adjourned the Public Meeting at 6:08 p.m. and stated the plans can be reviewed with the engineers.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/
Borough Secretary