

**BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN PARK  
BOROUGH COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022**

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A work session of the Borough Council of the Borough of Franklin Park was held on Wednesday, October 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Building, 2344 West Ingomar Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237. The meeting was also held virtually via remote audio and video conferencing.

Council President John Parks called the meeting to order.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

Jiang Li .....present  
Brian S. Malkin .....present  
Lucas R. Myslinski, Vice President .....present  
Uday Palled .....present  
John P. Parks, President .....present  
Thomas C. Schwartzmier, Second Vice President .....present  
Junior Councilperson Ava DiGiacomo .....present  
Mayor Dennis E. O'Keefe .....present

**ENGINEER:**

Shawn Wingrove, Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering, Inc. ....present  
Justin Wagner, Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc. ....present

**SOLICITOR:**

Robert Max Junker, Babst Calland .....present

**STAFF:**

Zach Brower, Recreation Program Director .....present  
Gary Bucuren, Superintendent of Public Works.....present  
Cindy Crain, Finance Director/Borough Treasurer .....present  
Rege Ebner, Borough Manager .....present  
Walt Healy, Police Chief .....present  
Jim Huff, Manager of Golf Course & Parks Facilities .....present  
Cathy Krummert, Borough Secretary .....present  
Tim Phillips, Building Inspector/Zoning Officer.....present

**AUDIENCE:** 6 (1 in person and 5 via Zoom)

**REVIEW OF BOROUGH PENSION PLANS** – Jason Staley of Schneider Downs had previously provided investment reports. He joined the meeting via Zoom to discuss the market and to review the performance of the General Employees' and Police Pension Plans through September 28, 2022.

**UPDATE REGARDING BIG SEWICKLEY CREEK ROAD PROPERTY** – Architect Steve Paxton was present and noted that last year he had prepared a report regarding the existing structures on this property. He then looked at the log cabin to see what could be done with the building. He noted that with the help of the public works department, they were able to open up some holes in the building, both on the walls and around the foundations, to determine the conditions. The holes in the walls revealed that there are logs in the original log cabin and also the addition. They were trying to find out how old the building was, and when they removed the many layers of wallpaper, they found newspaper on the back of the wallpaper dated 1832. They found that the floor structure is made of logs in both the log cabin and the addition. They did not find out anything more about the roof structure, other than it is logs. They found that there is a stone foundation sitting on dirt with nothing underneath. This explains why the building settled and moved the way it did. A structural engineer has looked at the building. Public works was asked to open a corner on the inside of the building from the first floor to the second floor to the roof so they can see how all the pieces and parts come together, but this has not yet been completed. If we continue with the restoration of the log cabin, the best solution would be to jack up the building and pour a new foundation underneath. Mr. Paxton then presented his plans

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for the proposed renovation and expansion of the log house. The plans include mechanical systems for both the log cabin and addition, a merchandise area, outdoor restroom facilities, janitor's closet, small office, storage, conference area, inside restrooms, warming kitchen and a gallery space. Mr. Paxton indicated that he could provide a cost estimate in approximately one month or so. There was then discussion regarding the information provided by Mr. Paxton, and he answered questions. Mr. Ebner noted that the proposed renovation and expansion would be done in phases, and we would need funding to assist with the costs. If the county-wide trail system goes through, people could stop in to use the restrooms and possibly make a purchase. This will not be included in the 2023 budget.

**OLD BUSINESS** - None

**AGENDA REVIEW** – Mr. Junker very briefly reviewed the items on the October 19, 2022 regular meeting agenda. Chief Healy noted that the Civil Service Commission has tentatively scheduled a meeting on November 3, 2022.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Report by Cindy Crain, Finance Director/Borough Treasurer

- The Budget hearings will be held on Saturday at 8 a.m.

Report by Gary Bucuren, Superintendent of Public Works

- They finished paving in the Nicholson Woods Plan and sealed the joints.
- They are acquiring and stocking the materials they will need to start the stormwater project on Reis Run Road.

Report by Tim Phillips, Building Inspector/Zoning Officer

- The Planning Commission will once again review the Cardinal Ridge Plan under Old Business. The YMCA has not revised their materials for their proposed pavilion, and they will not be back on the agenda. There will also be a pre-application on the agenda submitted by the owners of the Franklin Village Shopping Center to subdivide an outparcel on the property.
- The Zoning Hearing Board will consider the Jason Davies application again.
- He has provided Mr. Junker with the 2018 Fire Prevention Code and Property Maintenance Code to update the Borough ordinances.

Report by Zach Brower, Recreation Program Director

- He asked for direction from Council regarding the replacement of broken playground equipment in Old Orchard Park. He has found some musical flowers that would bolt into the existing supports where the broken equipment was removed. The children would use a small mallet to play soft musical tones on the flowers. The other option would be a picnic table, but he would prefer to replace a playground element with another playground element. Council discussed and concurred to purchase the musical flowers.
- As previously requested, Mr. Brower provided information for different types of sun shades to be placed in two locations within the Blueberry Patch playground (one 4-post shade and 2 cantilever shades). Council discussed and concurred to move forward with purchasing the 4-post shade now and purchasing the 2 cantilever shades in the spring.
- Mr. Parks noted that the pickleball courts in Old Orchard Park have been a controversial issue. This past year we entered into a compromise to require the use of quiet pickleballs in this park. Since that time, pickleball players have expressed concerns regarding the use of the quiet balls, and neighbors have expressed concerns regarding violations when players use the regular pickleballs. Since the courts close for the season from November 1<sup>st</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>, we will continue "as is" for the rest of the season. Council discussed and agreed to revisit this issue in early 2023, when the neighbors and pickleball players will both be invited to meet to discuss the options and where we go from there. Mr. Schwartzmier noted that one of the neighbors recently thanked the Borough for the rules that were put in place to reduce the pickleball noise.

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Report by Jim Huff, Manager of Golf Course & Parks Facilities

- They had reached out to other local golf courses to investigate other options for the Scholarship Golf Outing. It was determined that Shannopin Country Club is still the best location, and prices will not increase for next year. The date of the Golf Outing will be moved up by one week to July 24<sup>th</sup> since the first week of August is a very busy week with National Night Out and a Council work session.
- The new mower should be delivered this week.

Report by Shawn Wingrove, Borough Engineer

- N&N submitted a pay request for the first chunk of work for the 2023 Curb & Gutter Project.
- He received notification from the developer at Taylor Ridge Apartments that they are scheduled to pave next week in preparation for road dedication.
- He received a bond reduction request for the Bliss Development, and he will review and provide a recommendation prior to the regular meeting.

Report by Justin Wagner, Stormwater Engineer

- A pre-application meeting with DEP for the Fish Run MS4 Project has been scheduled on October 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Wagner asked if there had been any progress locating the owner of the parcel owned by Franklin Properties. Mr. Junker noted that they have had no luck finding the owner, and possible options were then discussed to condemn or obtain ownership of the property. Mr. Wagner indicated that DEP would require this information prior to reviewing the application.

**SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE DRAFT ORDINANCE** – Following the discussion last month, Mr. Junker and staff discussed the ordinance further and made amendments. Mr. Parks expressed concerns regarding the implications of the ordinance and the cost to residents. He suggested that residents be made aware of the proposed ordinance. Council discussed and it was noted that sidewalk repair has always been the responsibility of the resident, although many residents are not aware of their responsibility. The current ordinance requires that sidewalks must be maintained to new standards, and the amended ordinance actually softens the restrictions. Council discussed different ways to educate residents regarding sidewalk maintenance, and it was decided to start with education through the Borough website, printed and electronic newsletters, the new resident packet and through the Homeowners' Associations. Council will proceed with introducing the ordinance at the October 19<sup>th</sup> regular meeting for enactment at the November regular meeting. Following the ordinance introduction, an announcement will be made to the public to inform them that they are responsible for maintaining their sidewalks and the ordinance is changing the standard for sidewalk maintenance to include objective criteria rather than requiring pristine conditions.

**MANAGER'S REPORT DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- Bicentennial planning update – Mr. Ebner, Mr. Schwartzmier, Mr. Brower, Mr. Nock, Ms. Platt and Mr. Rooney met last week. They are putting together a promotional packet and will be seeking sponsors for various events. The actual celebration will be held on the same day as the Festival in the Park. The River City Brass Band will play for 45 minutes which would carry through the fireworks. They will come out next week to take a look at the space to determine what they will need in terms of stage size and a sound system. We would like to sign a contract with them as soon as possible to lock them in. They are also discussing the possibility of holding a history program each quarter where Franklin Park's history would be broken up into 50 year increments. We would display some of the artifacts that we have and serve refreshments. They are discussing upgrades to the Blueberry Hill Park trail to make it a veterans' trail. They hope to have it dedicated in the fall of next year. Mr. Rooney believes he could schedule Rocky Bleier to attend, and we could have a veterans' breakfast, possibly at Diamond Run, prior to the dedication. We need to upgrade and expand the Blueberry trail, and LSSE is working on the design. They are trying to come up with some dates so they can move forward with promotional materials. They are hoping to raise \$50,000 in support, but the goal is \$5,000. They are moving forward as quickly as possible to get everything in place.

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- Dumpster enclosures – LSSE had prepared plans for enclosing the cardboard dumpsters and the dumpsters near the public works building. The dumpsters near the public works building will be placed on a concrete pad and will be enclosed with fencing to prevent people from dumping random items in the dumpsters. The six cardboard dumpsters will be replaced with two roll off containers that should reduce the sound, and we can control how often they are serviced and the time of day they are serviced. We will not pursue enclosing the cardboard roll off dumpsters at this time.
- Request for Montgomery Road water district – A petition was received from residents who live on the lower section of Montgomery Road (from Royal Oak Drive to McAleer Road) asking for public water. Two people have failing wells and others are interested in public water. Mr. Ebner noted that if two-thirds or more of the residents sign a petition, it starts the process for the Borough to reach out to West View Water Authority (WVWA) to have them do a study and prepare a cost estimate for installing a water line along the road. Council discussed, and Mr. Ebner will reach out to WVWA to discuss the next step of the process.
- Scout volunteer projects – Mr. Ebner informed Council of several proposed Scout projects: (1) An Eagle Scout candidate is exploring building a little free library that may be installed at the municipal building; (2) A Girl Scout troop has acquired a little free library that they want to clean up and donate. This may be installed in Old Orchard Park. Northland Library will work with municipalities to stock little free libraries, and the Borough would install and maintain the libraries. (3) A Girl Scout is interested in doing an analysis of Old Orchard Park as her Gold Star project to determine what current grass areas could be treed or returned to nature. This would be better for the environment and would reduce maintenance costs. (4) A Girl Scout troop is interested in designing and planting a pollinator garden at the municipal building.
- Audubon Society proposal for Old Orchard Park – Mr. Parks inquired about the status of the Audubon Society's review of an overgrown area in Old Orchard Park. Mr. Ebner noted that they had determined that there is canary grass which is an invasive species. They will come out and meet with Mr. Huff to show him where the canary grass is located. They recommend spraying it in the fall, cutting it back in the spring and then spraying it again next fall. Once the canary grass is gone, we can move forward with creating a pollinator and bird habitat.
- Update on memorial program – The memorial benches have been installed and three trees have been planted in Old Orchard Park and Blueberry Hill Park. The plaques will be mounted in the near future.
- Update on Graff property purchase – The property purchase was finalized, and the Borough now owns the property.

**REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**

- **Mayor O'Keefe** acknowledged Donna Platt for upgrading the newsletter, designing it in-house and reducing costs. Spotted lantern flies are in the Borough and there was discussion that most residents are already aware of them. No further action will be taken. A resident of Sandhurst Drive informed the Mayor that he has good cell service in that area with MobileOne. There was discussion regarding the study that is being done regarding cell service in the Borough. It was noted that many cell towers are owned by third parties, and they lease space on their towers. The Mayor received a complaint from a resident regarding a neighbor's compost pile of grass clippings located near his property line and visible to other neighbors. Mr. Phillips had indicated that there is nothing the Borough can do currently to address the issue. Mr. Junker will investigate if there are options the Borough could adopt for enforcement.
- **Ava DiGiacomo, Junior Council Person** noted that she learned about the Spotted Lantern Fly in her Environmental Science class, and she would like to educate residents and children on ways to slow the growth of their population and eliminate them. Council concurred and will put her in touch with the Environmental Advisory Council and Tree Pittsburgh.

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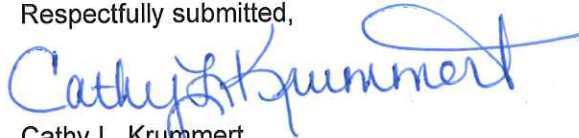
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- Dr. Li thanked the public works employees for the excellent work paving the Nicholson Woods Plan. He suggested posting informational signs in the parks to provide helpful information for Borough residents. Council discussed and it was noted that the Technology Advisory Committee is looking into ways to effectively communicate with residents.
- Mr. Schwartzmier noted that property on Wexford Run Road has been cleared on both sides of Route 910 for development, and the Borough should monitor the area for stormwater issues since they cleared property from Route 910 to the Borough line.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – An executive session was held to discuss a personnel matter, the Odorisio litigation, the Yochus litigation and the Bliss potential litigation.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Cathy L. Krummert  
Borough Secretary