

AVONDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 4, 2025
7:00 PM

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Morgan, Mike Essmaker, Stephanie Reichert, Janet Watts, and Lucas Ortiz. Mayor Susan Rzucidlo, Treasurer Joan McVaugh and Administrator Sharon Norris were also in attendance along with six members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER – President Paul Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT – There was no public comment.

BUSINESS

Consideration of Transfer of Liquor License at 82 Pennsylvania Avenue and authorization to advertise Resolution of transfer from Parkesburg to 82 Pennsylvania Avondale, Avondale Borough - Mr. Mike Essmaker made a motion that Council authorize the Solicitor to advertise this Resolution for consideration at the March 18th meeting. Mr. Lucas Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

MAYORS REPORT

The Mayor reported on the following:

- PennDOT and the potholes on Route 41 between 4th and 5th Street. She explained PennDOT's process for repairing potholes as she understands it.
- Unleashed dogs in the community – Residents reported a dog on the loose in the Carillon Community. The State of Pennsylvania requires that dogs be kept on a leash. Borough residents should be abiding by that law. Residents should contact the police if they see a dog running loose and don't know the owner or are afraid to approach the dog. The police would issue a non-traffic citation to the owner which includes a fine. In Court, the judge would assign the amount of the fine. The Borough does not have a specific ordinance covering leashed dogs and the consensus of the Council is that following the state law is sufficient.
- The Borough will apply for a multimodal grant for road repair.
- Ms. Reichert and the Mayor will be meeting with the Engineer on March 5 to discuss invoicing.
- Ms. Reichert and the Mayor discussed improvement suggestions to the intersection of State/First/Pennsylvania Avenue which the Mayor has submitted to PennDOT.
- Ms. Lutz, 408 Pennsylvania Avenue asked for confirmation on the location of the stray dog(s). She was concerned about the safety of her small children.

OTHER

Parking in Carillon – no update.

Road opening permits – Currently, the Borough ordinance states that the Engineer must approve Road Opening Permits. However, there are times when the road opening is simple, and the Public Works Director is able to issue the permit. He can determine whether the permit application details are straight forward or whether it is more complex and would require review by the Engineer. Currently, the Public Works Director inspects the finished road work once the road has been closed up. Ms. Norris will speak to the Code Official for Ordinance language when the time comes to update the ordinance. The consensus of Council is that this should be added to the list of ordinance changes.

Resident Suggestion to fill in quarry pond on Indian Run Road – A resident approached the Mayor about improving the look of this pond by filling it in. Mr. Morgan explained that the former Council also discussed this. The pond is actually a spring and would be difficult to just fill in. It is also now a sanctuary for wildlife such as fish, turtles, birds and geese. Everyone agreed that the algae is an issue, and the existing solar bubbler is useless. The Mayor discussed a grant available for which beautifying the quarry pond could be eligible. The Council will continue to discuss this as new information becomes available.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Treasurer McVaugh noted that the 2025 Liquid Fuels allotment has been received. The fund is now up to approx. \$180,000. Utility payments are not coming in as quickly as last year and tax revenue is down by approx. \$30,000 compared to the same time last year. The Council discussed Aqua payments and checking the Treasurer's books.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Essmaker made a motion to approve the February 18, 2025, minutes as presented. Ms. Watts seconded the motion. Minutes were approved by a 5-0 vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Vision 2030: Mapping our Vision for Tomorrow – Mr. Morgan announced that the Webb property signs will be up soon, and the group will continue to clear the trails on the property. When asked about this property, Paul explained the location (off Indian Run behind the quarry). It is 3.6 acres. The Borough hopes to receive reimbursement through two grants; one through the State and one through the County. Mr. Morgan discussed the property behind the sewer plant, noting that it is being considered for preservation by Natural Lands Trust along with the parcel adjacent to that in London Grove.

Ms. Reichert talked about her vision of a more walkable Borough, fixing the intersection of First/State and Pennsylvania Avenue including an upgraded crosswalk that will allow pedestrians to cross safely. The Council discussed grant opportunities.

Avondale Veterans Memorial Park – Dedication for the new park on Pomeroy Avenue will be on May 31st. The monument company will be working on this monument this week. The park will be renamed the “The Avondale Veterans Memorial Park.”

Ms. Watts asked for an update on the “Welcome to the Borough” sign at Old Baltimore Pike

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Borough Council meeting is Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 7 PM.

Bubble Palooza II is June 28, 2025, from 10-1 and this year there will be games for all ages.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people participated in public comment:

Marissa Paolicelli, 410 Pennsylvania Avenue

Vince Paolicelli, 410 Pennsylvania Avenue

Lucia Lutz, 408 Pennsylvania Avenue

Kate Maxwell, 401 Pennsylvania Avenue

Chad Davis, 132 Pennsylvania Avenue

These residents spoke about the potholes in front of their houses and the damage that the heavy traffic and traffic hitting the potholes has caused in their homes. The vibrations have increased exponentially in the last 3 years with residents seeing major changes to their walls, suspecting possible structural damage. These residents expressed great dismay over their homes changing right before their eyes with expensive repairs and upgrades undone by the constant stream of heavy, fast traffic that rumbles by and hits potholes.

When PennDOT came to fix the potholes, they dug and hit some water. They did not test the water and the Borough's water operator was unable to get to the location in time to test the water before PennDOT closed the road up. PennDOT told some of the residents that they were not returning to do any more repairs because In PennDOT's words, “it is the Borough's responsibility to find and fix the apparent leak.” The Borough's stand is that this is a PennDOT owned and maintained road and it is up to PennDOT to show the borough that the water is from the Borough's water system. The area in front of Sunoco has very similar road and pothole issues and there is no water pipe there.

The Mayor suggests a meeting with Representative Chris Sappey and Senator John Kane to determine how to keep moving forward. The residents continued to express their concerns citing that these are their homes, their investments, their community and the speed of the issues that are occurring is quickly increasing.

The residents asked:

- 1) What we can do to slow traffic down. The Borough requested that PennDOT reduce the speed limit to 25 but all we can do is request PennDOT to do that. The Borough will ask the Regional Police to increase their patrol in this area and also to put up their speed tracking sign.
- 2) What to do about the vibrations from the J-brakes?
- 3) Who can address the safety issues with regard to crossing the street,
- 4) There has been a big increase in the intensity of vibrations caused by truck, J-brake and car traffic vibrations in the last few years. The group wants to make clear that these are their homes, and their homes are very important to them, and they would like to see a resolution to these issues that are severely affecting their quality of life and the value of their homes.
- 5) Mayor Susan will contact PennDOT and ask for another meeting.
- 6) They discussed the method they used to repair the pothole which is felt to not be a permanent fix.

- 7) Mr., Paolicelli spoke to the rapidly increasing deterioration of his home with cracks forming more quickly and bigger in size. He has been in contact with PennDOT and the state representative. Mayor Susan also recommended contacting Senator Kane's office.

PennDOT told Ms. Paolicelli and Ms. Maxwell that they are not coming back to fix the potholes. The Council reiterated that this is PennDOT's road and PennDOT's issue and responsibility to fix things. The Borough would like PennDOT to do the core sampling as this is a PennDOT road.

The group discussed a petition; the recommendation is that the residents continue to contact Christine Sappey's office and Senator John Kane's office.

Ms. Paolicelli is going to contact the Governor's office. The consensus is that it can only help.

They talked about the challenges of re-routing traffic, the intersection of First and PA Avenue and bridge repair.

The residents will contact other homeowners along Pennsylvania Avenue.

They discussed the Route 41 Bypass that's been in discussion for many years and now it is no longer an option.

In summary, they all love their homes and love the community, but they can't continue to exist this way and watch their homes continue to deteriorate.

Some ideas to slow down traffic: requesting the State Police to place a car right above the Borough to slow down speed or add flashing lights similar to what Chatham has up.

Mr. Paolicelli will be collecting names and phone numbers of neighbors on Pennsylvania Avenue and will continue to contact the higher-up elected officials. They are not going to let this slide to the back burner. Mrs. Paolicelli is going to provide the photos that PennDOT provided to her of the repair of the potholes.

Moving on from the PennDOT issue, this group had additional questions as follows:

What is the status of sidewalks? Resident have trouble navigating the streets and sidewalks due to their poor condition. The Mayor and Council talked again about the multimodal grant and the process involved in getting permission from property owners to repair sidewalks and the challenge to bring the new sidewalks up to ADA standards. Trees are also an issue with sidewalks. Mr. Davis asked if the Borough had a report card on how they are doing with grants and the consensus is that the Borough is securing the proper grants and making wise and cost-effective upgrades with these grant monies.

ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Mr. Essmaker, seconded by Mr. Morgan the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM to go into Executive Session to discuss possible litigation over non payment of utility bills.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Norris

Sharon Norris, Secretary