

ASHLEY BOROUGH

Donald Sipple, Sr., Mayor

John Gibbons, Council Chair
Donald Sipple, Jr. Council Vice Chair
Frank Sorokach

Gerald Maldonado
Donna Schappert
Brian Casey

Ashleypa.net

Greg Gulick, Borough Manager

William E. Vinsko, Jr., Esquire, Solicitor

ASHLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES JUNE 11, 2019

49 West Cemetery Street, Ashley, Pennsylvania

Meeting Start Time: **6:32 PM**

Meeting End Time: **7:55 PM**

Attendance:

Gerald Maldonado-	Present
Frank Sorokach-	Present
Donna Schappert-	Present
Brian Casey-	Present
Donald Sipple -	Present
John Gibbons-	Present
Mayor Donald Sipple, Sr.-	Present
Borough Manager, Greg Gulick -	Present
Police Chief David Fedorczyk-	Present
Solicitor William E. Vinsko, Jr. -	Present
Andrew Kratz, Code Officer-	Absent

Meeting was called to Order by Council President **John Gibbons**. **Attorney Vinsko** called roll call for the Council, Mayor and Borough Officials. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENTATIONS:

GERALD MALDONADO –

1. **High Grass and Weeds Problems -- Mr. Maldonado** stated that he has been contacting landlords in the Borough regarding high grass problems. He asked for assistance with 122-126 Main Street. The Road Crew cut the grass and he wants the Borough to send a bill. There is an empty lot and one lot with a structure. Two (2) citations have been issued. Also, there is black mold at 124-126. Sheetrock has been left out for years. **Mr. Sipple** stated that out-of-town landlords are required to have

property managers. There is an ordinance passed in 2018 that addresses these issues. **Mr. Gulick** stated that he contacted the owner personally and told her specifically that she needs to have a property manager. She responded that she had one but he did not do the job and overcharged her.

2. **Poll on Ross Street – Mr. Maldonado** identified a pool issue on Ross Street wherein the owner built a pool on a platform held up by cinder blocks. **Mr. Gibbons** confirmed that letters were sent and citations are being issued on Friday, June 14, 2019. Allegedly the owner is a contractor, but the platform is sagging and it extends out onto the sidewalk. Similarly, **Mr. Gibbons** stated that there is a similar code issue on Conyngham Street. **Andy Kratz** cited them this morning and they have to rip out the drywall so that **Mr. Kratz** can view the wiring and plumbing.
3. **Garbage Left Out On Main Street – Mr. Maldonado** identified that there is a property near Charlie’s Bar that has garbage left out. He spoke with **Mr. Hess** about the issue and he is addressing it. **Mr. Gibbons** advised that he has asked **Attorney Vinsko** to look into a sidewalk ordinance to address activities which may not be permitted on a Borough Sidewalk. The Borough has had issues with people and businesses holding events on the sidewalks.
4. **Little League and Softball Fields – Mr. Maldonado** saw cars driving through the area of the softball fields and little league fields and the board was unaware of any activity. He also stated that he was contacted by a group that wants to clean and use the softball field. **Mr. Gibbons** followed that he was contacted by Francisco Gonzalez from Wilkes-Barre, who recently purchased property in Ashley. He will pay for the cleanup of the softball field and use it for tournaments. **Mr. Maldonado** stated that he is on the Recreation Committee and he was not made aware of what was going on. **Mr. Barberio** asked if **Mr. Gibbons** and **Mr. Maldonado** were talking about the same group or two separate groups. **Mr. Maldonado** confirmed it was two separate groups. **Mr. Gibbons** responded to a question from the audience that the softball field is currently used for practice, but that is all. He explained what was necessary to get the field up and running for use. He also confirmed that he and **Mr. Casey** personally checked the lights and they do work, despite statements to the contrary. **Mr. Gibbons** advised that there could possibly be night games there. **Mr. Maldonado** wants to get volunteers to do some work and clean up the fields. Resident **David Watkins** said that fellow Resident **Wayne Grilz, Jr.** is arranging for prisoners to come up within the next few weeks to paint the dugouts, etc. **Mr. Gibbons** reiterated it would be best to get everyone in the same room to address the issues and make the fields usable for everyone.

FRANK SOROKACH –

1. **Jason Fitzgerald – Mr. Sorokach** said that Mr. Fitzgerald received the contract from the Borough but has not been to a meeting since. He feels that if he is getting a salary, he should be at the Borough meetings. He asked if anyone had a status on anything. **Mr. Gibbons** gave an outline of the status of various grants and projects, and confirmed

that Mr. Fitzgerald is, in fact, working on several things for the Borough. Specifically, he is working on the new park. The National Park Service received the information and then stated that they need additional information. He is also working on the next phase of the Main Street Project and the LSA Grant. There is currently \$350,000 coming in. The Borough is at a stand still on the Sulphur Run Project. **Mr. Maldonado** stated that, with regard to Sulphur Run, the engineers did the surveys and it is now time to get the easements. **Mr. Gibbons** responded that it was his understanding that the Borough had to wait for the environmental studies and that the Borough was advised not to spend money until those came back. **Mr. Maldonado** stated that was not the case and that the engineers are taking care of the environmental issues. **Mr. Sorokach** called upon **Clyde Harvey**, the recording secretary of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and asked if he had anything to report. **Mr. Harvey** said “no” as they have not had a meeting. They are not having meetings until the grant money comes in.

2. **Resolution 54 – for new street signs for the Borough** – **Mr. Sorokach** asked Mr. Gulick if that was the same grant provided by **Mr. Maldonado**. **Mr. Gulick** said no, as the paperwork that **Mr. Maldonado** provided to him had expired. **Mr. Maldonado** stated that the paperwork did not expire.

DONNA SCHAPPERT – Nothing for this meeting

BRIAN CASEY – Mr. Casey asked that a resolution be considered this evening for the use of the parking lot adjacent to the former town hall building be authorized for use for the public for no more than 25 cars. A resident asked about who will monitor the lot for ensuring that only 25 cars park there. **Mr. Gibbons** suggested that the Borough take action to surface the lot so that only 25 cars can park, and that the ambulance can get out onto the road. **Mr. Sorokach** asked **Mr. Martinelli**, the owner of the Grand Bank, what his plans were for the old pharmacy (29 Main Street) that he purchased. **Mr. Martinelli** confirmed that his plans were specified clearly in the bid he submitted last month. However, he will either rehab it or demolish it. **Mr. Maldonado** then asked the same question and **Mr. Martinelli** provided the same answer. **Mr. Maldonado** asked if the ambulance was still operating. **Mr. Sipple** responded that they are “on their way out.” **Mr. Sorokach** stated that the property committee should be involved with this issue. **Mr. Gibbons** outlined three (3) different property issues with these parcels: (1) the old railroad land; (2) the ambulance property and (3) the old town hall. **Mr. Ronald Wickizer** stated that he does not agree with the 25 car issue. **Mr. Gibbons** explained that he placed cones there over the weekend and they were consistently moved or taken. He could not use the gate either because it is a two-man job. **Mr. Ronald Fedorczyk** stated that as a member of the Ashley Zoning Hearing Board that there is no PennDOT approval for 25 cars and that any resolution is going against the zoning. He then asked “why have a zoning hearing board?” **Mr. Gibbons** responded by saying that **Andy Kratz** said it is correctly permitted for 25 cars. **Mr. Barberio** asked if it was currently zoned for public parking. **Attorney Vinsko** stated that he would contact PennDOT to obtain information on the permit.

DONALD SIPPLE – **Mr. Sipple** would like authorization to explore a Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial and would like to seek prices and a design.

JOHN GIBBONS – **Mr. Gibbons** outlined three (3) culvert projects in the Borough and identified them by number:

Culvert 1 – In Carey’s Patch owned by the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority. The RA is looking to potentially transfer this to a non-profit organization unassociated with the Borough to assume the control, ownership and liability for the same.

Culvert 2 – Cook Street. This one is owned by PennDOT and has been the subject of many complaints with kids and adults who are disorderly gathering out there.

Culvert 3 – Sivley Street. The Borough contacted A+E Group and they have a cost estimate of \$550,000. They are waiting for other groups to provide the information and the documentation for additional cost estimates.

Mr. Gibbons also confirmed that the firetruck arrived.

MAYOR DONALD SIPPLE – Nothing for this meeting.

GREG GULICK, BOROUGH MANAGER – Gave the Financial Report. **Mr. Gibbons** asked about the air packs for the Fire Department. **Mr. Gulick** explained that the Borough reached out to **Bob Morgan** at **Congressman Cartwright’s** Office to see if the ruling on the census can be reversed. The Borough is losing grant money which was used for firefighting air packs. **Mr. Gibbons** announced that if we cannot get it reversed we will have to look for another revenue stream or grant to get the matter addressed. He confirmed that “we don’t want the fire department to be stuck.”

POLICE CHIEF FEDORCZYK – **Chief Fedorczyk** gave the Police Report. Additionally, he presented a handicapped parking sign application for 38 Cemetery Street, Ashley.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee reports.

PUBLIC COMMENT

M. CONKLIN – Asked why the Borough applied for a grant to rip down the culvert in Carey’s Patch. **Mr. Sorokach** stated that it was not a political issue. **Mr. Sipple** confirmed, along with **Mr. Maldonado** that the Borough did not get the grant nor apply for it. It was the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority, as they were the owner. Another resident stated that he had heard rumors and then heard there was a grant to tear it down. **Mr. Maldonado** stated it was a safety

issue. The resident responded that the structure was ok, but there were concerns about things falling from the top and the fact that there was no fence. **Mr. Maldonado** said he was correct, but the things falling and the fence issue were safety issues.

RONALD WICKIZER – He is concerned as a zoning hearing board member that he is being overridden by **Andy Kratz** the zoning officer. He does not agree with 25 cars parked at the municipal lot.

MS. MECH – She is concerned that there is a cave in on Preston Street. **Mr. Maldonado** stated that it was addressed and he contacted her to verify before the meeting.

RESIDENT – Raised a concern about 42 Carey Street. There are still problems for over a year. The fence is falling down, the pine tree is falling down and there are several violations that you can see from the street. It was supposed to be looked into last year. He wanted to know why **Mr. Kratz** was not present for the meetings.

LEGISLATION

RESOLUTION 52 OF 2018 – A Resolution authorizing the May, 2019, payroll in the amount of \$35,622.40.

Date: June 11, 2019

Motion: **DONNA SCHAPPER** Second: **DONALD SIPPLE**

Donald Sipple –	Y	Donna Schappert -	Y	PASS
Brian Casey -	Y	Frank Sorokach -	Y	
Gerald Maldonado -	Y	John Gibbons -	Y	

RESOLUTION 53 OF 2019 – A Resolution authorizing the May, 2019, bills in the amount of \$28,488.52.

Date: June 11, 2019

Motion: **DONNA SCHAPPERT** Second: **FRANK SOROKACH**

Donald Sipple –	Y	Donna Schappert -	Y	PASS
Brian Casey -	Y	Frank Sorokach -	Y	
Gerald Maldonado -	Y	John Gibbons -	Y	

RESOLUTION 54 OF 2019 – A Resolution authorizing the Borough to apply for a PennDOT grant to replace street signs.

Date: June 11, 2019

Motion: **DONALD SIPPLE** Second: **FRANK SOROKACH**

Donald Sipple –	Y	Donna Schappert -	Y	PASS
Brian Casey -	Y	Frank Sorokach -	Y	
Gerald Maldonado -	Y	John Gibbons -	Y	

RESOLUTION 55 OF 2019 – A Resolution authorizing the Borough permit use of the municipal parking lot adjacent to the old town hall building off the Main Street (to the right) for 25 cars, subject to confirmation that the PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit is still valid and in effect.

Date: June 11, 2019

Motion: **DONNA SCHAPPERT** Second: **BRIAN CASEY**

Donald Sipple –	Y	Donna Schappert -	Y	PASS
Brian Casey -	Y	Frank Sorokach -	Y	
Gerald Maldonado -	Y	John Gibbons -	Y	

RESOLUTION 56 OF 2019 – A Resolution to approve a handicapped sign to be placed at 38 Cemetery Street, Ashley.

Date: June 11, 2019

Motion: **DONALD SIPPLE** Second: **DONNA SCHAPPERT**

Donald Sipple –	Y	Donna Schappert -	Y	PASS
Brian Casey -	Y	Frank Sorokach -	Y	
Gerald Maldonado -	Y	John Gibbons -	Y	

Meeting Ended at 7:55 PM.

#####