

July 23, 2024
Kutztown, PA

A workshop meeting of the Kutztown Borough Council began at 6:06 p.m., and was held in the Kutztown Community Library, with the following members of Borough Council present: Mr. Kevin Snyder, Ms. Lisa Ladd-Kidder, Mr. George Kusterer, Mr. Frederick Engelhardt, and the Mayor, Mr. James Schlegel. Councilman Ed Seyler arrived at 7:00 p.m. Councilman Derek Mace was absent. Mr. Gabriel Khalife, Borough Manager/Treasurer; Ms. Gina M. Wiand, Borough Secretary/Public Relations and Marketing Director; Police Chief Mike Clery; Public Works Superintendent Brian Bailey; Electric Superintendent Steve Diehl; Code Enforcement Officer Josh Young; Planning Commission member Pat Snyder; and Kutztown Fire Chief Todd Evans were also present.

Mr. Khalife began the meeting by stating that we were gathered to discuss the current conditions and options for the municipal complex.

Mr. Bailey gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding Borough building issues. Regarding the Shoe building, Mr. Bailey said that the roof is in very bad condition. He mentioned that there is a possibility of selling it to Dewey Meadow Foods.

Regarding the Public Works buildings, of which there are four parts, Mr. Bailey said that most of the roofing is also in very bad condition. He stated that some contractors would not even provide a quote to repair it, while others said they would seal it.

Out of four portions of the Public Works buildings, the cost would be \$201,160.00 to repair only two portions. This amount does not include other problems with the buildings, just the roofing.

Mr. Bailey showed plans for new location ideas for the Public Works buildings, noting that the three-phase plan was drafted in 2012, for an estimate of almost \$4 million.

He also showed an idea for a new building that could possibly be built at the current location like one that he and Mr. Diehl saw in Coplay, PA.

In addition, he showed an idea for a possible new building at the 504-512 E. Main Street.

Mr. Diehl noted that he wants to keep equipment under cover that should not be exposed to the elements.

President Snyder asked about pricing of the E. Main Street location, and Mr. Bailey said that it was at \$250,000.00 the last time he checked.

Mr. Bailey also mentioned the possibility of building new at the Borough Farm.

Another option, 242 N. Whiteoak Street, was mentioned to house Borough Hall staff and Community Development Office staff. The listed price is currently \$399,000.00.

The Moyer property, at 105 E. Main Street, was also mentioned, but it was noted that the parking lot was sold.

Mr. Young said that interested parties would need to reach out to the County, as the property will likely be turned over after a hearing in September.

Mr. Khalife noted that the Borough offered \$325,00.00 two years ago and was turned down.

President Snyder suggested using the land the Borough purchased next door as a parking lot and combining police and fire departments at the fire house.

Mr. Young agreed, saying there is a lot of unused land at the firehouse.

Mr. Bailey showed wish lists for the Shoe building, Public Works buildings, and Borough Hall that were compiled in 2018.

Ms. Ladd-Kidder asked about the usability of each of the sections of the Public Works buildings, and if we could knock down part of it while retaining the others.

Mr. Bailey replied that he does not think it will work very well since there is only one salvageable section that is already almost 25 years old.

Ms. Ladd-Kidder stated that she would like to move forward with looking into buying the building on N. Whiteoak Street.

Mr. Kusterer agreed that purchasing that building would solve a lot of problems, and Chief Clery asked what problems it solves.

Mr. Bailey explained that Borough Hall and Community Development could move to N. Whiteoak Street, which would allow the police to utilize the existing Borough Hall after Public Works gets a new footprint.

Mr. Khalife cautioned Council that they are going to spend money no matter what the plan is.

He suggested that they could purchase the N. Whiteoak Street property for Borough Hall and the Community Development Office, and that a building similar to the one in Coplay would be ideal for Public Works if it could be designed to fit our needs.

President Snyder asked how long the N. Whiteoak Street property has been empty, and Mr. Diehl said it has been about three years.

Ms. Ladd-Kidder asked if the Borough would do an inspection first, and Mr. Khalife replied that it would be treated like buying a house. He noted that the Borough's

in-house talent could do a preliminary review and that we could also use Barry Issett to inspect it.

Mr. Khalife warned that the longer a decision is put off, the more costly it becomes, and he gave examples of the upcoming Community Development Office rent agreement.

He explained that he would prefer to see the Borough take out a loan or a bond versus spending the cash that is saved, because the debt would be supported by what is in the bank. He noted that the Borough is in good shape regarding debt.

Mr. Kusterer asked how to move forward with the N. Whiteoak Street building, and Mr. Khalife said he would make an appointment with the realtor. He noted that if the Borough gets this building, it needs to be part of a plan that considers timing, logistics, and no interruption of services.

He reminded Council again that it will be costly, and that it was done for the Water and Wastewater departments as well.

He mentioned that police would need to be taken care of after the rest is done.

Ms. Pat Snyder mentioned that the Planning Commission talked about contacting the County's Blighted Property Committee regarding the Moyer Building.

Mr. Young noted that the Shoe building is in a floodplain.

Mr. Deihl commented that he does not think it makes financial sense to fix the Shoe building or the Public Works buildings.

Mr. Khalife stated that the plan will be to contact the realtor for 242 N. Whiteoak Street and for Mr. Diehl to contact the Coplay engineer from Acela to discuss what design could work for Borough Public Works.

Chief Clery stated that Council needs to think about the property at the park where the Grange building is located.

Mayor Schlegel said that if the Grange goes under, the national organization will get the property.

Regarding the current police department, Chief Clery stated that they have outgrown the space, but they can continue to make do with what they have. He is not in favor of utilizing the upstairs at Borough Hall because it does not provide for a good communications flow.

He also noted that they would like to become an accredited department, but they cannot achieve that with their current space and layout.

Mr. Khalife said that the Borough can look into rebuilding at a later time.

The meeting ended at 7:17 p.m.

Prepared and Attested by: Gina M. Wiand
Borough Secretary