

MUNICIPALITY OF MONROEVILLE

CITIZENS' NIGHT MEETING

MAY 2, 2023

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nick Gresock at 7 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

The Recording Secretary, Sharon McIndoe, called roll and the following were present: Mayor Gresock, Joe Hyzy, Eric Poach, Bob Stevenson, Steve Wolfram, Mike Adams, Bob Williams, Dennis Biondo, Tim Little, Bob Wratcher, Josie Rock, Paul Hugus, Joe Sedlak and Paul Whealdon.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ANY MUNICIPAL ITEM

Mayor Gresock reported this is a time for citizens' remarks and comments for any municipal item which includes the draft zoning ordinance. He explained this is for taxpayers and residents and he stated the comments are to be kept to a five-minute time period. He added any comments after the five minutes will not be included in the record.

LOIS DRUMHELLER

Mrs. Lois Drumheller, resident, came forward to express her concerns. She gave a detailed review of the April 4, 2023 Public Hearing on the proposed zoning ordinance. She reported Mayor Gresock presided over the public hearing but omitted swearing in the public on the zoning ordinance. She reviewed how the public waited for an hour while a paid consultant presented zoning information which would have been more appropriately provided at a March meeting. She stated more ordinance related misinformation was also published twice by the Times Express on April 5 and April 11. She read from the article, she quoted Mr. Whealdon, "the draft ordinance lists oil and gas development as a conditional use in the conservancy, landfill and M-2 zoning districts so as to avoid exclusionary zoning". She claimed the statement is false and the Times Express has not returned any calls or emails calling for a correction. She stated there was never a threat for exclusion zoning before or after the changes were made to the green spaces and landfill. She cited another quote from Mr. Whealdon about why the landfill and conservancy zones had to allow for oil and gas, "we could be sued and we could end up in court and a judge or the DA in another case can tell us where to put it". She stated that statement is false. She reported Monroeville on October 10, 2017 put oil and gas operations as a conditional use in the M-2 Industrial Zone where it has been for over five years without violating by concept of exclusionary zoning. She asserted Monroeville has a comprehensive plan that is multi-municipal which includes Churchill, Monroeville and Wilkins and ensures that the municipality does not violate Section 1103 of the Municipal Planning Code and puts to rest the exclusionary zoning argument because Churchill, Wilkins and Monroeville all provide for oil and gas development. She pointed out Monroeville already keeps oil and gas operations from being exclusionary. She referred to an example of it at the end of the April 11, 2023 Council Business Meeting. She suggested there were deceptive remarks made

by Solicitor Wrtcher and she referred to remarks that were a hasty generalization based on insufficient evidence as to why the public should have no reason to think Monroeville gave improper notice to the public. She read his statement. She felt the solicitor and mayor are incorrect in their recollection that Pitcairn had decided to have a representative at this public hearing. She suggested it was clear by watching the public hearing that it was Mayor Gresock who decided that one member of Pitcairn Council should represent all of Pitcairn who was Mr. Thomas Dick.

Mrs. Drumheller suggested improper notification violates Section 502 of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) which recognizes that changes in land use would negatively impact residents that live within one half mile and all those people have standing.

Mrs. Drumheller felt the recent public hearing which drew standing-room only capacity had nothing to do with Monroeville notifying residents but had more to do with the efforts put forth by an organization, Protect PT. She reported they phone banked Monroeville residents and announced the meeting through social media, post cards were mailed to affected neighborhoods, public education was provided to the public in person and they canvased the neighborhoods near the landfill and conservancy areas. She stated it was the citizenry that notified communities like Pitcairn of the potential affects of moving oil and gas operations conditionally on a hugely expanded landfill zoning change.

Mrs. Drumheller reported she reviewed some exchanges obtained by a right-to-know law and she felt it paints a picture of who was really making changes to the zoning ordinance for oil and gas. She reviewed some of the emails and spoke over her five-minute time period.

DAVID MINTZ

Mr. David Mintz, a resident, came forward to reiterate some of the issues that Mrs. Drumheller brought up. He agreed there was a misrepresentation of the idea that Mr. Dick was the representative of Pitcairn at the public hearing and Mayor Gresock suggested he would be the representative for the people of Pitcairn. Mayor Gresock asserted that he gave him the choice. Mr. Mintz stressed that Mr. Dick did not present himself as a representative of Pitcairn but it came from the mayor. Mayor Gresock stated he gave him the choice and he agreed. He pointed out there were other members of Pitcairn Council and the Mayor were present at the meeting. Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Mintz reported he studied the communications they received from the right-to-know. He referred to the issue of where the 1,200-foot setback came from and suggested from those communications no one really knows. He stated something that is in writing came out from somewhere then the exclusionary idea was discussed along with the 1,500 feet and the size of M-2 and the size of the landfill. He noted the considerable differences in the sizes and how various setbacks would not fit in the smaller one being M2 but would fit in the landfill with the 4,000-foot diameter. He suggested if it stays the way it was voted by council in October 2017, the 500-foot setback fits and it is not exclusionary. He explained when he canvased the neighborhoods and spoke to people about whether there would be any problem with exclusionary issues which have not happened for the last five years because Monroeville provides for it in that zone with the 500-foot setback. He suggested discussing a different setback because no one knows where it came from. He felt Monroeville would not be exclusionary for various reasons if it is kept the way it is and the landfill does not change size. He stated whether there is fracking or not in the landfill area it affects the communities around it including Pitcairn and Monroeville neighborhoods. He reported they had meetings with people from Pitcairn, the

municipal manager and the residents and no one indicated that they had been notified. He felt there was a concern from the people around the landfill about the amount of notification they received. He referred to Protect PT and the work with the mailings and two public education sessions at the library and suggested everyone was learning about it from them. He again stated there is some concern about the amount of notification some people could have received.

Mr. Mintz was hopeful that this was not the last time people would be allowed to make public comments about the zoning ordinance. He assumed the next council meeting after this meeting it would be allowed.

BILL SHOPES

Mr. Bill Shopes, a resident of Madden Drive, came forward to express his concerns. He submitted a petition to not tar and chip his street because it would be easier and less harmful.

ELISA BECK

Dr. Lisa Beck, a resident, came forward to express her concerns. She hoped everyone would feel better soon and she was hopeful that we can open lines of affective transparent and appropriate communication. She reported she is saddened when she watches the meetings virtually and when she attends the meetings in person. She indicated that there are several issues in that very long document that she has not reviewed that was just released last month. She mentioned something about hospitals being allowed in other areas of Monroeville or healthcare. She indicated she would not mind if healthcare was wellness care. She was concerned that North American Martyrs has been purchased by Forbes Hospital or Allegheny Health Network.

Dr. Beck inquired where the 5G Towers will be located in the community and if the zoning is changed whether the 5G Towers will be allowed near residential households.

Dr. Beck reported she inquired about emergency responses and Councilman Poach did response. She stated it is a complicated issue and there have been hazardous situations at the rail yard located a mile from her house. She was still curious about the response if a train derailed on its way to the Petro Chemical Plant 30 miles from away.

Dr. Beck concurred with Mrs. Drumheller and Mr. Mintz that in 2016—2018 Sustainable Monroeville has worked on this fracking issue. She referred anyone interested to sustainablemonroeville.blogspot.com to review the history of this issue.

Dr. Beck thanked Councilman Poach for adding an agenda item for next month. She wanted to offer some awards as the founder of Sustainable Monroeville to at least five or six people who have worked diligently on this issue for at least a decade. She wanted to honor some individuals that have been looking out for the wellness of this community. She encouraged people to donate to Protect PT, Protect Penn Township and Trafford. She suggested generous donations to Reimagine the Turtle Creek Watershed and Airsheds Communities Plus, and to go to reimaginetcwac.org so they can get straight and transparent information about the issues that affect our human health and the health of all animals, plants and critters.

ADJOURNMENT

No one else came forward to give public comment at this time. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy J. Little
Municipal Manager

TJL/sam