

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
October 13, 2008

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Monday, October 13, 2008, in the State College Municipal Building, Room 304, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Ms. Goreham called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Elizabeth A. Goreham, President of Council
Ronald Filippelli
Donald M. Hahn
Theresa D. Lafer
Silvi Lawrence
Peter Morris
James L. Rosenberger

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Borough Manager; Roger A. Dunlap, Assistant Borough Manager; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Beth A. Johnston, Human Resources Director; Herman L. Slaybaugh, Planner/Zoning Officer; Sheila Carl, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public Hour. Brent White from the Interfraternity Council announced a Haunted House to be held at Acacia fraternity on October 30, 2008.

Joanne Tosti-Vasey, President of NOW, spoke regarding the employment anti-discrimination ordinance passed by Council in December 2007. Ms. Tosti-Vasey requested some changes be made to the ordinance.

Chris Morell of Safeguard Old State suggested a committee of Borough officials and Penn State students be developed.

Open Agenda/Projects Report. Council was provided with an updated list of current and anticipated projects. Council was also given a list of upcoming agenda items.

Mr. Filippelli provided Council with a handout on ideas and ways to make the Borough more attractive for prospective homeowners.

Council questioned the status of the proposed modifications for East College Avenue zoning regulations. Staff explained both the Planning Commission and staff have been busy working on other zoning matters and stated the proposed modifications are tentatively scheduled for December or early 2009.

Introduction of Officers with Off Campus Student Union (OCSU). Pat Gordon, President of OCSU, introduced the Meghan Furey, Vice President of Programming; Angela Pietschmann, Treasurer; and Laura Peters, Philanthropy Chair.

Mr. Gordon also discussed the OCSU programs and activities.

Report from Penn State on Crows. Phillip Melnick, Director of Buildings and Grounds, and Paul Ruskin, Communication Coordinator Customer Service Coordinator, both with the Office of Physical Plant at Penn State, attended the meeting to discuss plans for the relocation of the crows that are roosting on campus.

Mr. Melnick explained over the last couple of years there has been a large population of crows arriving in October and roosting on campus until mid March, making the roosting areas unsanitary. Penn State has been discussing different alternatives to relocate the crows and has designated "no roosting" zones. Mr. Melnick stated the plan is to scare crows from "no roosting" areas by using pyrotechnics and hanging effigies in the areas where the crows tend to roost. This will signal the crows that these areas are not safe.

Mr. Melnick stated Penn State will work with the Borough to make this process successful for both campus and Borough residents.

Regulation of Feral Cats. At previous meetings, Council discussed the possible regulation of feral cats in the Borough. The Board of Health advised that there was not enough evidence to justify regulation of cats because of the limited public health danger. Staff has recommended that Council not adopt regulations to control feral cats.

Council agreed the Borough's role should be to educate the public on how to care for cats and the avenues available if a cat owner no longer wishes to have a cat as a pet. The Borough website could include this information as well as how to properly catch a feral cat and where to borrow a "have a heart" trap.

Council also suggested contacting PAWS to help with the education efforts and landlords to help educate tenants.

Regulation of Chickens. At a previous meeting, Council instructed staff to prepare an amendment that would allow the keeping of hens at single family homes. To effect the change, two ordinances are needed; change the animal regulations, and change the zoning regulations. Council was provided with a summary sheet and the two separate ordinances.

Linda Hendrickson of 128 Hillcrest Avenue expressed her concerns regarding chickens and avian flu and questioned if the chickens would have to be vaccinated.

Lisa Baumgartner of 129 Ridge Avenue stated she was happy with the ordinances that have been drafted but would prefer a permit not be required. Ms. Baumgartner stated she attended the College Heights annual neighborhood meeting but was not aware a vote on the proposed chicken ordinance was going to take place until it was quickly done at the end of the meeting.

Jane Liszka of 610 North Burrowes Street questioned the enforcement side of the ordinances, how it would work and who would enforce the regulations. Ms. Liszka stated the permit fee should cover the cost of enforcement.

Council also questioned the dwelling types that would be permitted to have chickens. Staff explained it could only be a single family house and not a duplex, but it could be a rental property.

Nina Fellin of 539 E. Foster Avenue stated she once owned chickens while renting and the landlord did not want her to have the chickens so he added a per chicken fee to her lease.

Heide Beaver of 1108 S. Pugh Street stated two families within a block of her home had chickens and she had been unaware of the chickens. She does not have an issue with the chickens.

Jamie Perry of 145 Ellen Avenue is a non chicken owner but has a neighbor who has chickens. Her neighbors have been responsible and she is confident people will be able to properly maintain their chickens.

Blair Malcolm of 1218 S. Pugh Street stated he was thankful for staff's time in preparing the ordinances and feels the chickens are a good lesson to show children where their food comes from. He also stated having chickens is a way to be more "green" and thinks it encourages people to live in the Borough.

Council instructed staff to prepare ordinances allowing for up to four chickens and requiring owners to get a permit for the chickens.

COG Finance Committee Report. Council discussed the COG Finance Committee's review of the COG budget. Council noted salary increases for COG and Borough employees are important but Council would have to prioritize projects and funding for the coming year to insure salary increases were possible.

There being no further business, Council adjourned at 10:16 p.m. to an executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary