

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday  
February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ed Kisselback, Council President  
Joseph Knowles, Council Vice President  
Stacey Champion, Council Secretary  
Michelle Benitez, Council Member

**SUPPORTING PERSONNEL:**

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo  
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary  
Quinton Nearon, Senior Municipal Inspection Manager  
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor  
Phil Wursta, Township Engineer

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**The minutes are not verbatim but rather a synopsis of what transpired during the meeting, and while I do my best to attribute remarks and questions to the correct individual, there may be mistakes or omissions because of the “back and forth” dialogue and the lack of the use of the microphone.**

**1. OPENING OF THE MEETING:**

**Council President Kisselback** opened the meeting with a moment of silence and/or prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS, MAYOR AND STAFF:**

**Council President Kisselback** introduced the Mayor, Supporting Staff and Council Members.

**3. PRESENTATION OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL:**

Bensalem Resident, Christine King was honored with the “Carnegie Medal” for her heroic actions regarding the incident on I-95, when she came upon a man holding an 18-month-old child over the edge of an overpass threatening to drop her. Despite being told she would be shot by the assailant, Ms. King begged the man to give the child to her until police arrived.

Eric Zahren, Carnegie Hero Fund President, presented the “Carnegie Medal” to Ms. King.

Mr. King spoke on behalf of his wife who had throat surgery and thanked the governing body of Bensalem Township, as well as Carnegie, for taking the time to recognize her efforts for saving someone’s life.

**3A. PRESENTATION OF THE BENSALEM TOWNSHIP FIRE CHIEF:**

**Council President Kisselback** asked Council to amend the agenda to recognize the new hire, Fire Chief Mark Antozzeski.

**Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to amend the agenda to present the new Fire Chief. **Councilwoman Benitez** second and the motion carried 4-0.

**Director of Public Safety**, William McVey, indicated this is a historic moment for Bensalem Township. The process was a very extensive one that was led by the Mayor, the Director of Public Safety, William McVey and the Deputy Director of Public Safety, Robert Race along with the input of the Volunteer Fire Companies.

**Director McVey** presented a background of the Fire Chief, Mark Antozzeski, who has a Bachelor’s Degree in Fire Science, and a Masters Degree in Emergency Management. He has completed the Executive Fire Officers Training with the National Fire Academy. He served the United States Air Force with the rank of Sergeant and as a Firefighter, while stationed at McGuire’s Air Force Base. He spent 30 years at the Hamilton New Jersey Fire Department #20, which he was the Chief Officer; and has recently served for a year as the Chief Officer of Middletown Township.

The Mayor and Director McVey have full confidence in Fire Chief Antozzeski to lead the Township’s Fire Services into the future.

**Director McVey** introduced the first Fire Chief of Bensalem Township, Fire Chief Mark Antozzeski.

**Fire Chief Mark Antozzeski** thanked Council for the warm welcome. This is a very big step for Council and the Township. Fire Chief Antozzeski will bring his experiences to the Township as he goes forth.

**Councilwoman Benitez** indicated that they were very excited to have met with Fire Chief Antozzeski and look forward to what the Fire Chief is going to do moving forward.

**Council Vice President Knowles** indicated that he appreciated Fire Chief Antozzeski meeting with Council before the meeting as a “get to know you” session with the Fire Chief.

**Council President Kisselback** indicated that this has been a long time coming. It is something the Township has been working on for several years with the Mayor, Director of Public Safety and the Deputy Director of Public Safety, and welcomed the Fire Chief to his historic role.

**The Mayor** indicated that this has finally been accomplished and is very happy with the new edition to the Township, Fire Chief Antozzeski.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Council President Kisselback** indicated the Public Comment will be heard at the time the agenda item is heard. Seeing no one come forward the first of two Public Comments was closed.

5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

**Council Secretary Champion** motioned to approve the January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 Minutes. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**Council President Kisselback** inquired about Agenda #8 of the Minutes, and indicated that Council gave a Conditional Approval. Carrabba's was to supply the Proof of Notices sent to the adjacent properties.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated those proofs were provided to the Township the next day as requested by Council.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR THE IMAGINATION LAND INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND PROJECT:**

**Deputy Director of Administration, John Chaykowski** indicated the Township is requesting to submit for a Grant Application for the Imagination Land Playground renovations. The Township is looking to modernize the playground with replacing all of the equipment, along with the surface and redoing it with new inclusive items as well as more handicapped items, a Misting Area and a Shade Structure. The Township is requesting Council permission to submit the Grant Application.

**Councilwoman Benitez** asked how much the Grant was for.

**Deputy Director Chaykowski** indicated the maximum award for the Grant is \$250,000 and is estimating the project to be around \$530,000. It is a dollar for dollar match so the Township would be responsible for putting up the \$250,000.

**Council Secretary Champion** asked if the Township gets the grant does the Township have plans ready or is the Township waiting for the approval first.

**Deputy Director Chaykowski** indicated the Township has a CoStar vendor so the Township does not have to worry about bidding out the playground equipment, a design has already been set in place. This design has to be submitted with the Grant Application which opens April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Council Vice President Knowles** asked if there will be an increase for the access of kids with disabilities.

**Deputy Director Chaykowski** indicated the new playground design will actually include sights and sounds for people who have Autism as well as non-speech. There will be different boards and activities that they will be able to engage. There will be a playground merry-go-round that will be accessible for wheelchairs as well as old updated features.

**Councilwoman Benítez** motioned to approve the Resolution to apply for the Imagination Land Inclusive Playground Project as presented. **Council Vice President Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**Council President Kisselback** asked Solicitor Pizzo if there were any changes to the agenda.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated McDonald's is off for this evening. Solicitor Pizzo asked the Township Clerk, Debora McBreen, what was the Council Meeting date requested by the applicant so that they can continue to make the adjustments requested by the Township. Ms. McBreen indicated the applicant requested the item to be tabled to a date certain of March 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Council President Kisselback** asked Solicitor Pizzo if they would please address the Stormwater Management.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated that the Township Engineer, Mr. Wursta has more contact with them and would address that question.

**Engineer Wursta** indicated the Stormwater Management is one of the issues holding up the applicant coming before Council. Also, there are issues related to the emergency access that the applicant is working on.

7. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE TOWNSHIP'S FEE SCHEDULE FOR THE BUILDING AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT:**

**The Director of Building and Planning, Ken Farrall**, presented the revision to the Building and Planning, Fire Rescue Fee Schedule. The last significant change to the Fee schedule has been about 14 years. Although the Township is fee neutral in the charges they have, 14 years raises a lot of increase in fees that the Township has occurred and is trying to catch up.

**Council Secretary Champion** thanked Director Farrall for his time, effort and consideration in asking all of the questions Council produced.

**Council Vice President Knowles** thanked Director Farrall for putting a nice presentation together for Council to review.

**Councilwoman Benítez** thanked Director Farrall for his time and efforts.

**Council President Kisselback** indicated the increases that are being suggested and presented to Council is basically to cover the actual cost of doing business.

**Council Secretary Champion** motioned to approve the amending of the Township Fee Schedule for the Building and Planning Department. Council woman Benitez seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**8. CONSIDERATION OF A MINOR LAND DEVELOPMENT FOR:**

**Applicant:** McDonald’s USA, LLC  
**Location:** 1240 Bristol Pike  
**Proposed Use:** McDonald’s Restaurant w/Drive-Thru  
**Zoning Classification:** GC – General Commercial District  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-030-009-002

**Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to table agenda item #8, Consideration of a Minor Land Development for McDonald’s USA, 1240 Bristol Pike, TMP 02-030-009-002 to a date certain of March 25<sup>th</sup> per the applicant’s request. **Council Vice President Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**9. CONSIDERATION OF ESCROW RELEASES FOR:**

**A. Developers Request:** Gibson Holdings, LLC – Release #1  
**Location:** 1515 Gibson Road  
**Tax Parcel:** 2-54-5  
**Amount:** \$44,566.00

**Quinton Nearon, Senior Municipal Inspection Manager**, indicated the applicant is requesting a release of \$44,566.00.

**Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve the Escrow Release for Gibson Holdings, LLC, 1515 Gibson Road, TMP 2-54-5 in the amount of \$44,566.00, subject to an audit by the Finance Department. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**B. Developer’s Request:** Amazon.com Services, LLC – Release #2  
**Location:** 777 Winks Lane & 445 Winks Lane  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-079-009, 079-005, 079-008, 079-028, 079-029, 079-030, 079-031, 079-010-001  
**Amount:** \$189,457.75

**Quinton Nearon, Senior Municipal Inspection Manager**, indicated the applicant is requesting a release of \$189,457.75.

An adjustment to the agenda was requested by Councilwoman Benitez to show the proper amount of the Escrow Release request.

**Mr. Nearon**, indicated there are minor adjustments that need to be addressed.

**Council Vice President Knowles** inquired about the egress and the traffic signals.

**Council Secretary Champion** inquired about the wooden fence behind where the three residential homes were demolished.

**Mr. Nearon** indicated he would look into the wooden fence.

**Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to approve Agenda Item 9B, Amazon.com Services, LLC, Release #2, 777 Winks Lane & 445 Winks Lane, TMP's 02-079-009, 079-005, 079-008, 079-028, 079-029, 079-030, 079-031, 079-010-001. **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

10. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR ACT NO. 537, PA SEWAGE FACILITIES ACT, PLAN REVISION FOR NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT OF A PARCEL OF LAND IDENTIFIED AS 1311 BRISTOL PIKE:**

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated the change in use has necessitated additional sewage capacity for that project. It has been reviewed by Bucks County Water and Sewer and requires the Townships approval of this Resolution, and then DEP will go ahead and finalize.

**Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve the Resolution for 1311 Bristol Pike 537 PA Sewage Facilities Act. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and motion carried 4-0.

11. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR ACT NO. 537, PA SEWAGE FACILITIES ACT, PLAN REVISION FOR NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT OF A PARCEL OF LAND IDENTIFIED AS DVR CARE:**

**Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve the Resolution for Act 537 PA Sewage Facilities, for the land identified as DVR Care as presented. **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

12. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Council President Kisselback** asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to come forward. Seeing no one come forward, the second Public Comment Portion was closed.

13. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated a month or two ago Council authorized him to appear before the Zoning Hearing Board in support of an application for Mar Mar Builders, for certain variances associated with their property on Byberry Road. The Zoning Hearing Board denied the request, and it is a wait and see, if the applicant takes an appeal or not and moves in a different direction. If Council would like to discuss this further, it is the Solicitor's suggestion they do so in an Executive Session, since now it is a matter of potential litigation.

To Ms. Champions' indication of the Bucks County St. Patrick's Day Parade, Steve Aldrich, one of Bensalem's own, is the Grand Marshall of the Parade, kudos.

**The Mayor** indicated we have another month of snow, so fingers are crossed and so far, so good! We will be in the 60's this week...baseball weather. The Mayor reiterated the Swearing-In of the new Fire Chief which is a historic event for Bensalem; and is confident the safety of the community is in good hands. The Mayor indicated his wife is Irish and she did a DNA to find out just how much Irish ,and the results showed she has a little Scottish in her. Now she has to visit Scotland, they have been to Ireland a few times but now it's off to Scotland.

**Councilwoman Benitez** is looking forward to attending the Bensalem High School 100th Anniversary Gala this weekend. Congratulated the new Fire Chief.

**Council Vice President Knowles** congratulated the new Fire Chief. Spring is on the way, St. Patrick's Day is March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Council Secretary Champion** indicated the Philadelphia St. Patrick's Day Parade is on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The following weekend is the Bucks County St. Patrick's Day Parade that goes through Fairless Hills. February is Black History Month. Looking forward to Spring and the planting season.

**Council President Kisselback** congratulated the Township's first Fire Chief, Mark Antozzeski.

**14. ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

[www.bensalempa.gov](http://www.bensalempa.gov)

or

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

Respectfully submitted,

Debora F. McBreen  
Recording Secretary/Council Clerk