

**JOINT MEETING OF THE POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
AND THE POTTSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL
February 28, 2008 – 7:30 PM**

Introductions were made from both the Council President and the School Board President.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Mrs. Pargeon shared with the council the nature of the project and the committee would be seeking funds in September through a grant from Health and Wellness in which a study would be done to see what would be needed to create safe walking and biking routes to school since Pottstown School District is a completely walking district. She shared data regarding the need for children to get 60 minutes of physical activity each day to maintain a healthy lifestyle, but is hindered by safety and weather. When parents opt to drive their children to school, it creates traffic congestion. Childhood obesity is a problem. The committee needs the borough council's help. We are unable to obtain a grant from Penn Dot and we are unable to make changes to the sidewalks and areas that are considered dangerous. We would like to see designated, safe walking and biking routes established. This would allow children to walk each day to school the same way and there is safety in numbers. When the study is complete we hope the borough will be willing to help obtain a grant from Penn Dot towards the placement of speed bumps and flashing signs when children are going to school. We will also need the cooperation of the police department. They know the routes that are safe and dangerous. Mrs. Pargeon stated how excited she is to be here and is looking forward to working together.

Questions were welcomed and the borough wanted to know the cost involved in doing such a project. Mrs. Pargeon reported that in order to receive the grant to do the study, a letter of intent must come from the district. The district however, is conducting its own research before writing the letter. Once the study is complete, the borough can write a grant for the infrastructure materials. Mr. Hartman would like the borough to implement the grant and not just to be aware of the quest. The question of private and parochial schools and their input to the project was answered when it was explained that our current crossing guards service both public and private school students.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Terri Lampe prepared and presented a power point presentation regarding the Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan. Chairman, Harry Price, formed a task force from the community to development the strategic plan. The presentation showed how the task force plans to bring new business and employment to the borough. The plan emphasized the importance of attracting people from all over to our regional recreational amenities. Three main goals of the plan are to:

1. Strengthen Pottstown as a center business and employment
2. Enhance Pottstown's role and identity as the urban hub of our region
3. Improve the quality of life in Pottstown and its neighborhoods

The borough council will entertain the adoption of this presentation and allow the public to comment at the next Committee of the Whole Meeting. Mayor Thomas stated the strategic plan was very well presented and feels it was sincerely a community effort.

BOROUGH WORKING WITH SCHOOL DISTRICT TO OBTAIN PERMITS & INSPECTIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Mr. Huss reported that members of the community may have noticed many modular classrooms located at various elementary buildings. The modular classrooms were purchased at a very good price which in turn saved tax payers money. Mr. Huss is seeking the support of the Council to expedite the permit process, making sure all proper codes required are met. At this time, he feels the process has been drawn out too long. He and the district would like to use the much needed space as soon as possible.

APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATIONS & MEANS OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BOROUGH COUNCIL AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

President David Garner stated that email is a great, but informal way to communicate, however, all formal issues should be channeled through Mr. Raymond Lopez, Borough Manager, in writing. It was determined that formal issues for the School District should be channeled through Mrs. Linda Adams, Business Administrator. Questions were raised regarding the borough's website and Mr. Garner said the questions would be reviewed and addressed.

POSSIBLE REPRESENTATION OF SCHOOL BOARD ON THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Mrs. Pargeon made a formal request to have the Council consider adding two seats to the Planning Commission. She feels it is very important that a school board member be included because, we too, have a vested interest in the community. The Borough Solicitor, Mr. Charles Garner stated the council can amend the by-laws to increase the Planning Commission up to nine seats.

Mrs. Pargeon suggested that Mr. Dennis Wausnock be added to the Commission. Mr. Garner stated the request will be on the next Committee of the Whole Meeting.

OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Robert Hartman asked Mrs. Pargeon to bring the borough up to date on our elementary schools. Mrs. Pargeon informed the Council that the study for "Save our Lands, Save our Towns" has been completed. The Pennsylvania AIA came to Rupert Elementary School on Saturday, February 2nd where they had their 150th Anniversary Charette. Rupert is our oldest building and needs the most attention so it will be first on the renovations list. The School Board will be having an all day workshop on Saturday, April 12th to discuss plans for each elementary building. We hope to move quickly and have a formal request for an action plan at the first Committee of the Whole Meeting in May.

Mr. John Reber was asked to update attendees on the many things Parks & Recreation has been involved in. The Rickett Center is moving along, which is a priority for the Council, and it is hoped that a clear direction will be in place over the next few months. Mr. Reber stated he is proud to be a part of the Strategic Plan. He is making upgrades to the ball fields and parks throughout the borough.

Mr. Garner shared if the district requires the borough's support on legislation, they will be there to back them up. Mr. Krem would like to see Council step up once the district has a plan in place for our elementary buildings. Mr. Krem stated the borough's silence can be deafening.

Mr. Hartman encouraged the Council to write to our congressmen regarding the costing out study.

Mr. Gibson shared that the Community Center is not doing well since the district's absence. He asked the district to think about what they can do to improve the center since its directions does affect the community. A pattern must be established which will require a tone of commitment.

POSSIBLE MEETING DATE FOR THE NEXT JOINT MEETING

Mr. Huss suggested that the next joint meeting be held in September, which is six months from now. The Board will come up with a date and will get back to the Council.

Mr. Garner thanked the School Board for hosting the meeting and will reciprocate by hosting the September meeting. He thanked his staff who attended this evening. He stated that communication is the key for moving things forward and the Council is willing to listen to make changes and he is looking forward to working together.

Mr. Huss thanked everyone for coming and offered special thanks to the responsible staff member for making all of the necessary arrangements. The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Linda S. Adams
School Board Secretary

Raymond W. Lopez
Pottstown Borough Manager