

**BOROUGH OF GREEN TREE
COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 12, 2021**

Call to Order / Silence for Meditation / Pledge of Allegiance

Green Tree Borough Council met on Monday, July 12, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. in the Sycamore Room of the Green Tree Municipal Center, 10 West Manilla Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15220. Mr. Sampogna stated that the meeting was being recorded. Mr. Sampogna said that Council had met in Executive Session prior to this meeting regarding land usage.

He noted that the Council meeting is now also being live streamed, but it is not a two-way live stream. Those wishing to address Council during the Hearing of the Citizens must be in attendance in Council Chambers.

Mr. Sampogna said that the Finance Director Babette Legler's mother passed away last week. He asked residents to keep the Legler family in its thoughts.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Edward Schenck, Mayor
Mark Sampogna, President
David Lorenzini
John Novak
Ron Panza

Also Present:

Judy Miller, Borough Manager
Kate Diersen, Esq., Borough Solicitor
Colin Cleary, Chief of Police
Deborah N. Gawryla, Stenographer

Absent:

Rino Lindsey
David Rea
Arthur Tintori

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

June 7, 2021

Motion:

Mr. Novak made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lorenzini, to approve the June 7, 2021 Council meeting with the follow correction:

Under the Char West COG report, Mr. Novak said the name of the treasurer should be "Joe Colosimo."

Motion carried unanimously.

HEARING OF THE CITIZENS

Irving Firman, Attorney for Urban Communities and PA Hospitality, 401 Holiday Drive

Mr. Firman said that Urban Communities has a hearing pending with Green Tree's Zoning Hearing Board, but several of its executives and the current property owner are in attendance this evening to inform Council of this issue. Mr. Firman said that Mr. Kirk Howell, COO and General Counsel for Urban Communities, would be informing Council about what Urban Communities is proposing. He said that Mr. Mit Patel, owner of the former Crowne Plaza at 401 Holiday Drive, is also present and may be speaking as well.

Mr. Howell stated that Urban Communities is a market-rate, work force housing development. Urban Communities develops apartment communities for working, "gray-collar" workers. Mr. Howell defined "gray-collar" as a left-behind group of workers in the U.S. in terms of current housing. It is a step between white-collar and blue-collar, with some entry-level white-collar workers, first responders, teachers, nurses, etc., who have high standards, but are often either rent-poor by paying a higher rent than they can afford, being forced to live with roommates in housing situations to share costs, or living in substandard housing. Urban Communities offers individual unit housing with amenities in order to build a sense of community. Most of these communities host approximately 15 events per month, such as a Thanksgiving party, yoga, etc.

Mr. Howell said that Urban Communities does not accept Section 8 housing and it is all market-rate housing. The resident must qualify for a unit based upon his or her income, the ability to afford the rent, and a credit check. Urban Communities is a long-term holder and has been working toward putting their communities into a long-term investment trust.

Mr. Howell said that Urban Communities housing is self-managed with manager training that teaches them how to work with residents and learn how to treat residents. There are currently a number of Urban Communities properties in the area. The income range of residents is typically targeted to be between 80% to 120% of the median income in the area. Rent is determined based upon what can be afforded in the area and what amenities Urban Communities can provide.

Mr. David Sahel from Urban Communities said he currently manages approximately 150 units in the Pittsburgh region. There are currently 100 units in the Beechview area of Pittsburgh that are all studios and one-bedroom units. There is a market for what Urban Communities is trying to do.

Mr. Mit Patel, current owner of the former Crowne Plaza Hotel, said he and his family purchased the hotel in 2009 when it was in foreclosure. He has invested a substantial amount of money into the hotel since then. Over the years since the purchase there have been a tremendous number of new hotels that have moved into the Pittsburgh region, which has had a negative impact on the occupancy levels for his property. He has looked at a number of different uses for the hotel that could be a good use for the overall community. Mr. Patel said he is a resident of Green Tree and the original reason for acquiring the property was because he lived in the borough. He thought it would be a great opportunity for him, but it has not panned out. He said he would like to see the property succeed in the community. Currently a group has been leasing rooms at the hotel, but it has not been an ideal situation. However, the group currently leasing rooms has expressed interest in purchasing the property, but Mr. Patel does not believe that is the best use. Mr. Patel said he has visited Urban Communities' Phoenix headquarters and has gotten to know the executives who run the business. He has seen some of the other Urban Communities properties and feels that they are doing a good job and would be the best use for the property in Green Tree.

Ms. Diersen said that Urban Communities would be bringing their requests before the Zoning Hearing Board next month. Zoning Hearing Board is an independent group from Council and the board will make a decision at that time, based upon evidence and testimony that is presented at that meeting. The information presented this evening would not be part of that decision.

Aldo R. Colautti, 143 Sheldon Avenue

Mr. Colautti thanked Council for resuming in-person meetings. Mr. Colautti said he wished to commend the Green Tree Police Department for their quick response to an emergency at his home in April 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic. At that time, a 65-foot tall tree fell on the roof of Mr. Colautti's home during a severe thunderstorm at 2:00 a.m. and completely blocked the front

door. A neighbor called the police and Officer Diamond responded. Officer Diamond showed quick thinking to telephone Mr. Colautti first before making his way to the back door in the storm. Officer Diamond pounded on the door and notified Mr. Colautti of the emergency and made sure that he was unhurt.

Mr. Colautti said he had attended Chief Cleary's recent Coffee With A Cop on June 5th, where he was able to personally thank Chief Cleary and Officer Diamond for the excellent police response. Mr. Colautti said he was speaking this evening in order to make the Mayor and Council aware of his positive police experience, especially in light of discussions concerning a possible police department merger or consolidation.

Katrina Harmel, 1390 Glencoe Avenue

Ms. Harmel said that she often helps hold fundraising events for the KO Lady Eagles Softball, sometimes at the various Green Tree fields and sometimes at the high school or other fields. A portion of the money from these fundraisers goes towards a scholarship for a KO student. Ms. Harmel wanted to know who to contact to schedule field time in Green Tree. Ms. Miller said that Hemlock II ball field would be under construction starting at the end of the month and be out of use for approximately one year. She said to send an email request for specific fields, dates and times for field usage to fields@greentreeboro.com.

MAYOR'S REPORT - Mayor Schenck

- A.** Mayor Schenck said he was glad to see that the Council meetings would now be live streamed. This will give residents who are unable to attend in person the ability to view Council meetings and provide additional borough transparency.
- B.** Mayor Schenck stated that Green Tree Officer Kevin Diamond, Officer Ryan Bacci, Chief Colin Cleary and his wife, ran the Law Enforcement Torch Run on June 7th, raising \$1,399 for Special Olympics.
- C.** Mayor Schenck said the Police Department was audited by the Pennsylvania Juvenile Courts Judges Commission and passed. Part of the report read, "The Green Tree Police Department appears to be in full compliance with the core protections identified within the Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2002. I commend you for your hard work and dedication toward insuring juveniles are being handled in a manner that is consistent with federal requirements."
- D.** Mayor Schenck stated that he had attended three events in the past month:
 - 50th Anniversary of the Green Tree Garden Club. A new wind sculpture, donated by Green Tree Rotary, and the opening of the Presidents' Garden, were dedicated. Several Council members were in attendance, along with Ms. Miller and many other Garden Club members and residents. The Garden Club has done a lot to improve the appearance of the Municipal Center Park. Mayor Schenck thanked them for their efforts.
 - Flag Day Ceremony with the American Legion Post #823. He thanked the American Legion and the Green Tree Volunteer Fire Company for sponsoring this event. Mayor Schenck noted that the Green Tree Volunteer Fire Company's annual picnic is coming up on July 31st, but he sends his regrets that he will not be able to attend.

- Green Tree Bike Rodeo - Mayor Schenck said that the Recreation Committee and its Director Jen Mathie along with the Green Tree Police Department sponsored this event with approximately 25 children in attendance. Bike helmets were distributed to those in attendance and three bikes were raffled off as part of the event. Officer Bacci and Officer Diamond showed up on their time off to take part in the Bike Rodeo. Officer Gavlik and Officer Mondzelewski were also present along with Chief Cleary. Mayor Schenck thanked the Green Tree Recreation Committee for putting together this fun event.
- E. Mayor Schenck said that National Night Out would be held on August 3rd from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Green Tree Fire Department. The police, fire company, and MRTSA will be in attendance.
- F. Mayor Schenck thanked the Green Tree Police Department for the fine work they provide. He detailed some of the work they have done recently without any injuries to the officers or other individuals.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Mr. Sampogna

- A. Mr. Sampogna said he attended a Three Rivers Wet Weather meeting that discussed the municipal rain gauge system and how to access regional rainfall data. There are over 30 rain gauges in Allegheny County and one in Westmoreland County. They have collected and logged data in 15 minutes intervals since 2001. One of the gauges is in Green Tree Borough. Some of the equipment they use has reached the end of its useful life and is no longer supported by the manufacturer, so there are plans in place and funds allocated to replace the rain gauges.
- B. Mr. Sampogna reported that attendance at this year's Farmers Market has been down somewhat because of inclement weather on Thursdays. The Concert in the Park was canceled last week and will be rescheduled in August.

REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

A. PLANNING & ZONING - Mr. Lorenzini

- 1. Mr. Lorenzini reported that Planning Commission would be holding its first in-person meeting since the pandemic.
- 2. Mr. Lorenzini thanked Public Works and the Administration Department for the quick response he received in notifying them of various problems on borough properties, sidewalk maintenance, and fire hydrants.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY - Mr. Lindsey

In Mr. Lindsey's absence, there was no Public Safety report this evening.

C. STREETS & PUBLIC HEALTH - Mr. Novak

1. Resolution #1282

Mr. Novak said that adoption of this resolution would allow the borough to be eligible for pre- and post-disaster funds.

Motion:

Mr. Novak made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lorenzini, to adopt Resolution #1282 adopting the Allegheny County 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Mr. Sampogna said that he and the former borough manager had attended several meetings several years ago at the Allegheny County Emergency Management facility regarding a hazard mitigation plan mandated by the federal government and administered through PEMA (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency) and Allegheny County. Every municipality in Allegheny County must adopt its individual Hazard Mitigation Plan. The County has developed a Hazard Mitigation Plan for county municipalities to adopt to county-wide.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Novak	Yes
Mr. Lorenzini	Yes
Mr. Panza	Yes
Mr. Sampogna	Yes

Motion carried unanimously.

D. PUBLIC PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT - Mr. Rea

In Mr. Rea's absence this evening, there was no Public Property report.

E. FINANCE - Mr. Tintori

Mr. Lorenzini presented the Finance report this evening in Mr. Tintori's absence.

1. Motion:

Mr. Lorenzini made a motion, seconded by Mr. Novak, to ratify the actions of the Borough Manager in paying the June 2021 invoices from the General Fund totaling \$98,609.47, Sanitary Sewer Maintenance Fund totaling \$369.00, Farmers Market totaling \$181.00, Payroll Account totaling \$226,167.66, and Educational Service Agency totaling \$3,373.15.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Motion:

Mr. Lorenzini made a motion, seconded by Mr. Novak, to approve payment of the July 2021 invoices from the General Fund totaling \$90,031.80, and Capital Projects totaling \$27,994.00.

Mr. Lorenzini asked for details regarding the Capital Projects item for radar installation. Ms. Miller replied that she would have to look into this item and let him know tomorrow about the details.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Resolution #1283

Authorizing submission of Grant Application through the PA DCED Multimodal Transportation Fund to be used for engineering and reconstruction of the Trumbull Drive Bridge.

Motion:

Mr. Lorenzini made a motion, seconded by Mr. Novak, to adopt Resolution #1283 authorizing submission of a grant application through the PA DCED Multimodal

Transportation Fund from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the Trumbull Drive Bridge Replacement Project.

Mr. Lorenzini asked for a more detailed explanation of this project. Ms. Miller stated that this is the same source of funding that was used for Mansfield Avenue and Greentree Road sidewalk projects. It provides funding for transportation projects only. The Trumbull Drive Bridge Replacement Project will cost approximately \$6.5 million and the borough is hoping to get financial assistance for replacement of this critical piece of borough infrastructure through this fund. Upon approval of the resolution, the grant application will be sent out to the state by the end of the month. The application includes some engineering information that is being completed before it can be sent.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Lorenzini	Yes
Mr. Novak	Yes
Mr. Panza	Yes
Mr. Sampogna	Yes

Motion carried unanimously.

F. RECREATION & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS - Mr. Panza

1. Mr. Panza thanked Chief Cleary for the Police Department's recent shooting response, which was quick and thorough. He thanked the Chief for keeping Council and Mayor in the loop regarding the details of the incident so they could offer information to concerned residents.
2. Mr. Panza said a resident asked him about the cancellation of the Rain Barrel Workshop. Ms. Miller said she would check with the Recreation Director regarding the reason for the program's cancellation and whether it would be rescheduled and get back to Mr. Panza.
3. Mr. Panza said some residents have reported that the showers at the pool are not operating. Ms. Miller said she had also gotten that same question from a resident. She spoke to the Director of Public Works who immediately addressed the issue and put the showers back in working condition about a week or two ago.

Mr. Panza asked if showering before entering a swimming pool is a state law. Ms. Diersen did not believe that showering before swimming is required.

4. Mayor Schenck asked about the status of Octoberfest. Mr. Panza said that the preparation and planning for Octoberfest is almost a year-long project. The committee was unable to start planning in early 2021 because of the pandemic. As a result, there will be no Octoberfest this year, but the committee hopes to start planning again for Octoberfest 2022. There is an outstanding contract with one band that was supposed to play in 2020 and they agreed to extend the contract for one year. The committee must decide whether to have the band play as a Concert in the Park in a stand-alone concert in September.

Mr. Panza said that he hoped that some previous individuals who had helped with Octoberfest in the past might be willing to come back and assist with the 2022 Octoberfest.

LIAISON REPORTS

A. Char West COG - Mr. Novak

Mr. Novak reported that the COG would be holding its first in-person meeting since the pandemic in September in North Fayette.

B. Library - Mr. Sampogna

Mr. Sampogna said the Library Board voted at its most recent meeting to use the accounting services provided by the Allegheny County Library Association (ACLA), which will bring the library's accounting practices into conformance with suggestions from the borough's auditor. The transition to the new system should be in place by August.

Mr. Sampogna said that library hours have been expanded from the previous pandemic hours of operation: Mondays 10-8, Wednesdays 1-8, and Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays 10-5.

Mr. Sampogna reminded residents that the Summer Reading Challenge is underway for all ages. He said to register and track reading habits all summer and other activities online to earn points and badges and enter to win gift cards.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT - Ms. Diersen

Ms. Diersen had nothing to report at this time.

MANAGER'S REPORT - Ms. Miller

A. Ms. Miller said the school district tax bills have been delayed because the school district has not yet established the current millage rate. Once the millage rate has been determined and the borough receives that information, the bills will be printed and mailed to residents.

Mr. Lorenzini asked if the tax due date would be later as a result of the delay in mailing the tax bills. Ms. Miller said that is worthy of consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Mr. Panza made a motion, seconded by Mr. Novak, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mark Sampogna, President

Judy Miller, Borough Manager