

Borough of Alburtis

Meeting Minutes

June 28, 2023

The June 28, 2023, meeting of Borough Council was called to order by Council President Ron DeIaco at 7:10 p.m. in the Borough Hall, 260 Franklin Street, Alburtis, PA. The meeting was also live streamed on Zoom.

Council members in attendance:

Ron DeIaco Steve Hill Mehmet Birtek Chad Atkins
Hector Moss Ashlynn Rivera John Aleszczyk

Associates of Alburtis in attendance:

Dave Knerr, Solicitor Stephen Nemeth, Borough Manager
Kathleen Palmer, Mayor Mike Preston, Borough Engineer

Visitors in attendance: Gary DeRoner, Jason Bartos, Howie Savacool, Nan Perna,
Kourtnie Mumma, Chad Neel, William Risavy, Brooke, Janelle, Olivia Marble,
Thomas M, Nicole Gailo- Jandl John McRoberts- Pidcock

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Ron informed the public that the Council held an Executive Session prior to the meeting at 6:58pm and concluded at 7:09pm. After the pledge, Ron DeIaco mentioned that since we just had Memorial Day, it’s a time to honor those that sacrificed themselves so that we can have freedoms. Ron DeIaco mentioned that one of his closest friends was moved to hospice recently, served in Vietnam. Ron DeIaco wanted to thank those that serve our country.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Gary DeRoner asked Stephen Nemeth how many road signs he removed from Franklin St., Stephen mentioned that he picked up one sign. Gary mentioned that there is another one sitting on Franklin St., further down towards the gym. Ron DeIaco mentioned it will be picked up after the meeting.

Jason Bartos- mentioned for the last twenty years his neighbors and him have been having an issue with speeders. Hates to say it that council members, employees, and police officers all do it, thought it was important to lead by example. Every response is that there is very little that can be done. Kathy Palmer responded by saying we can always put more officers on at a time, because if we are watching for trucks down the street makes it hard to watch for speeders up the street. Also, since we are not allowed to use radar, it prevents us from doing much with speeding. Steve Hill mentioned that he is surprised more people don’t complain to state reps because Pennsylvania is the only state in the country that doesn’t allow municipalities to use radar; the only way to measure speeding is painting two lines on the road and a stopwatch. Jason Bartos mentioned that he received a ticket for not stopping long enough at a stop sign; claiming it was a rolling stop. Ron DeIaco asked Kathy if she could ask the chief to place somebody in the zone to monitor the speeds. Jason Bartos requested if a 4 way stop sign could be added to the intersection of Franklin and Lauren. Stephen Nemeth mentioned that he will reach out to a few state reps to see where they are on the radar topic and will reach out to Penn Dot about the stop sign.

Nan Perna- mentioned that one of her neighbors’ parks over the sidewalk and when in the past that she mentioned it to an officer, she was informed that the officers were told not to enforce this by council throughout the borough. Steve Hill requested that she write the officer’s name down that told her this, this way the statement could be addressed and discussed with the officer.

MAYOR’S REPORT – No report or comment.

MEETING MINUTES OF June 14, 2023 – Chad Atkins made a motion to approve the Minutes of June 14, 2023, Mehmet Birtek 2nd, and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0

DeIaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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BILLS FOR PAYMENT – June 28, 2023 – Steve Hill made a motion to pay the bills of June 28, 2023, Chad Atkins 2nd, and followed by a nonunanimous vote followed, concluding with a 6-1 vote in favor of the motion.

Delaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- nay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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FISCAL CONSULTANT’S REPORT – John Aleszczyk mentioned that he has a few comments on the report. It mentions that we are waiting on grants, but we won’t be receiving reimbursement this year. So, we aren’t getting the grants back, cash flow wise we are hemorrhaging the bicentennial village project we aren’t getting this year. Franklin Street we are not getting this year. The issue this is that any grants that we get the Bid is more than the grant; engineering comes out of our pocket. The biggest concerns coming into the year are that we have so many projects, and how much it would cost. Ron Delaco said you can look at it that way or you can look at it that way or you can see that we are improving the community. John said we are improving private property curbing and sidewalk is not the borough responsibility; Ron mentioned the grant is a curb and sidewalk grant, John said not the additional part, Ron asked what additional part John said all the engineering, Ron said you can’t build it without the engineers. Mehmet Birtek mentioned he watches the cashflow, if we continue this trend, we will need to raise taxes; but also sees the positive that we are improving the community. John said the main issue is we need to manage the grants better. Nan Perna mentioned that if much of it had been should have been addressed 40 years ago when we started coming up here complaining about it. Mehmet asked if before the next meeting can we sit down with the treasurer and have a private meeting, look at the cash flow, look at every project, and outline a project summary. Mehmet Birtek made a motion to approve the Minutes of June 28, 2023, Hector Moss 2nd, and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0

Delaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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Jaindl request for zoning map amendment- John McRoberts from Pidcock company, submitted request for two lots at the hills at Lockridge west lots 85 and 86 currently an L1; would like to rezone to R3 to be compatible with the rest of the properties. Over the last 20 years nothing has materialized, currently the L1 allows for warehousing and parking areas. Hoping to extend the R3; set the industrial area to the north of the railroad tracks. Portion of lot 86 would remain open space since it is in the flood plain. To make this change several steps would still need to be taken; recommended to the planning commission, then to the LV planning commission, advertise to have a hearing to adopt the change. The solicitor would then have to draft an ordinance. Steve Hill mentioned that the major concern was the flood plain. Dave Knerr mentioned the empty space would be useful to them. Mehmet Birtek asked if lot 85 is not in the flood zone. John McRoberts mentioned that they would not be developing in the 100-year flood plain. Mehmet Birtek mentioned that he looked on FEMA site and those lots are listed as in the flood plain. has personally seen that area flood. How would that be addressed? John McRoberts 100-year flood plain would require an engineer study; in 2018 was the last study, it has since been updated, before any development can be touched in a flood plain must get FEMA approval. John McRoberts mentioned tonight they are hoping to just get the menu of options of what they can do with the land. By changing the map, it allows them to reevaluate what could happen on the site and how to address the flood plain. Just asking for is to change the map, John Aleszczyk mentioned if we don’t change the map, you still would need to address the flood plain prior to building. Dave Knerr mentioned you have a zoning process, and you have a land development process stating what engineering work will need to be done. The bigger question is you will have to decide what goes in there. Will have on site stormwater management. Dave mentioned that they maxed out the land space in the places they shared. John McRoberts mentioned correctly; and that is nowhere near the final project, they have months of planning to go. The first step is to find out if we are staying industrial or changing to residential before they go too far down the design style. Dave mentioned that our light industrial district is more so a light commercial district; What they are telling you is that for the last 20 years that they have been attempting to market it that way and doesn’t work, if we keep it that way that they cannot develop it which is creating a hardship. This is at the really early stages that

we need to think about. Do you want to move forward to a residential or not? Mehmet mentioned the plans given to them look ugly, Hills at Lockridge have a certain appearance to them; He believes that the residents would appreciate a convenience store; this way they don't have to travel to Weis for a gallon of milk and come back. Would rather see business come into the community while Alburtis is losing business, we need more business. Would recommend that that we keep it a L1 and tomorrow he knows an investor that would open a kindergarten center or a convenience store. With more traffic coming down scenic wants to see more business. As somebody that lost more than a half million in a flood due to hurricane Sandy, he worries about his neighbors; when you put another pen in a glass of water it affects the entire surrounding area. This is an important topic for all the residents. Mehmet recommends that they keep it an L1 and try to bring in businesses. John McRoberts mentioned that they have tried. John Aleszczyk mentioned that he believes that adding additional housing will raise the flooding and already having a bridge out on church st is an issue. Hector Moss mentioned that he believes that a convenience store would work well there. John McRoberts mentioned that they have tried since 2004. Understands that earlier it mentioned that based on designed of property would change the scope of drainage. With the creek right there, where would the water go, you are talking major construction. You would be encroaching on the state park and causing damage. He encourages keeping it as is. Ron DeIaco mentioned that yes, the water is the main issue what ever ends up being zoned there will have to deal with the water. The Question is 20 years and haven't been able to find an investor. Hector mentioned that he has been living here for 20 years and he has never seen it advertised for that lot. No public notices, no signs stating that it is zoned for commercial, or footage available. How would it be known that it's available? John McRoberts mentioned we work with a number of brokers, Jandl has a number of sites when somebody wants to install a convenience store such as wawa, rutters, and turkey hill. The Jaindls take them on a tour and give them the listening, this site being one of them. Hector mentioned ehh, he finds it impossible that a convenience store or gas station has not snagged either of those spots up. Hector said he finds it hard to believe that a major company wouldn't want that land. Kathy Palmer mentioned but we don't know, Hector mentioned he has not seen any publication. Do we know what landowners do to market their properties? Hector Moss said, well no but don't show up here making the statement that you did something for 20 years and not show proof of that. Chad Atkins mentioned that he would agree with Hector and Mehmet doesn't see the need to change the map. John Aleszczyk that he doesn't want to move it along until he sees plans. Dave Knerr mentioned that nothing is final until you pass the ordinance. Hector Moss made the motion to remain an L1, 2nd by Mehmet Birtek and was followed by unanimous vote. Motion to remain an L1 passes 7-0

DeIaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss- yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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Flow meter revisited-Stephen Nemeth mentioned that this was a continuation of the last meeting of the flow meter. This is a full breakdown of the different options; John Aleszczyk mentioned that since we need to watch the budget let's table this until we get a better cash flow. Ron DeIaco agrees and stated that we add this into next year's budget.

Updated list of grants on hand- John Aleszczyk mentioned a couple of things we need to start to see the bids listed and the comparison on the engineers currently at 133,000 in the Franklin Street grant. Bicentennial Village currently at 83,000 in engineering. Chestnut Street 98,000 in engineering we are eating almost 400,000. Really must watch the cash flow, based upon the recent history we are going at about 50% of the grant.

Bicentennial village estimates- Ron DeIaco mentioned what this is supposed to be is, we wanted to get as close as we can to an estimate. Ron mentioned by looking at this we can be in the ballpark, if the bids come back too high, we do not have to accept them. John Aleszczyk main issue is that the engineering prices list 139,000 and we already spent 83,000 in engineering. Hector Moss asked Mike Preston; what is the estimate of the engineering. John mentioned that we are already at 83,000. Mike Preston said that we are two thirds of the way done with the engineers' work on this project. Mehmet Birtek mentioned that we can forecast better on a project. Mike Preston mentioned that something that can be done a little differently will be a base bid and an add alternate bid. John Aleszczyk asked if we have a breakdown per property. Mike mentioned that we do have a breakdown, every section of the project is going to be different levels of grade. John mentioned that the

caldesac within Roberts, Stephen Nemeth mentioned when they conducted their walk, they already agreed to cut out that portion. Steve Hill mentioned that Mike Preston did a really good job on the spreadsheet of the estimates.

Police grant award- \$258,733.00– Stephen Nemeth mentioned that the police department received its grant for 258,733.00 to go towards radio system. Stephen Nemeth mentioned that this puts our borough ahead of the game since the county is planning to have a full upgrade of the radio communication system by 2026.

Macungie Ambulance open house update – Stephen Nemeth stated that at the last meeting he was requested to set up a date for the future for an open house. Stephen Nemeth mentioned that they settled on a date of May 18th, 2024, 11-1pm at Lockridge Park Pavilion

Ron DeIaco mentioned that we would be going into an executive session for litigation matters, with no intention of voting after.

A motion to adjourn at 8:21 p.m. was made by Chad Atkins, 2nd by Mehmet Birtek and a unanimous vote followed. Meeting minutes were taken and submitted by Stephen Nemeth, Borough Manager.