

KENHORST BOROUGH COUNCIL

JUNE 5, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

President Roger Weidenheimer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll-call. Present: Mayor Nickolas Hatzas and Council members Anthony Avilla, Jeffrey Smith, Vincent Gagliardo, and Kerry Grassley. Absent: Scott Stamm and Pete O'Brien.

Also in attendance: Cindy Castner, Borough Manager, Fire Chief/Public Works Superintendent, Dwayne Hart, Shawn Schwartz, McCarthy Engineering, Jill Nagy, Solicitor, and Lt. Contreras, Reading Police Department.

Taking minutes was Tara Mountford, Secretary/Treasurer.

The following residents of the Borough and members of public were present: Patrick Kozak, Janice Johnston, Charles and Sylvia Clauser, and Patick Manning. Also in attendance was Jeremy Haymaker from Berks Nature.

President Weidenheimer opened the floor for any persons wishing to be heard.

Jeremy Haymaker from Berks Nature brought the following before Council: Mr. Haymaker wanted to update Council on the crosswalk improvement project on Route 625 that Berks Nature has initiated.

Janice Johnston of Haig Boulevard brought the following before Council: Ms. Johnston expressed her concerns and issues involving her neighbors and President Weidenheimer stated that her concerns would be addressed with the Property Maintenance Inspector and Kraft Codes.

PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

- ♦ ***Approval of Minutes:*** *President Weidenheimer asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the April 29th workshop meeting and the May 1st council meeting. Councilman Grassley made a motion to approve the minutes, with Councilman Smith offering a second. Motion passed unanimously.*

BOROUGH REPORTS

- ♦ **Mayor's Report:** Mayor Hatzas reported the total of the fines collected in May was \$387.06.
- ♦ **Reading Police Department Report:** Lt. Contreras provided a report of activity for the month of May.
- ♦ **Kenhorst VFD Report:** Chief Hart reported a total of 64 calls for the month of May.
- ♦ **Financial Report:** *President Weidenheimer asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer's and financial reports for May. Councilman Gagliardo made a motion with Councilman Smith offering a second. Motion passed unanimously.*
- ♦ **Codes & Emergency Services:** No report.
- ♦ **Personnel:** No report.
- ♦ **Property & Buildings:** No report.
- ♦ **Sanitation:** No report.
- ♦ **Streets:** Councilman Grassley reported on the streets that have been approved for paving this year.

He also had a conversation with Bill Murray from Reading Area Water Authority regarding the Crowder Avenue project and it's not in their budget this year to do more work. Delaying it would be at the Borough's own risk but Councilman Grassley recommends doing what can be done for now and looking at it again in the future.

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY REPORTS

- ◆ **Parks & Playground:** No report.
- ◆ **Sanitary Sewers & Stormwater:** No report.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

- ◆ **Solicitor's Report:** Solicitor Nagy stated that the Borough hasn't had any input into the location of the mid-block crossing improvements that Berks Nature is planning. They provided the Borough with a grant agreement to sign, but it appears that there is a direct conflict with the planned crossing and the entrance for the future Weaver's Hardware store. She also stated that even though Berks Nature would pay for the crosswalk improvements via the grant, the Borough would actually own the crosswalk and beacons, and that PennDOT would require an ongoing maintenance agreement with the Borough. Ms. Nagy is hesitant for the Borough to move forward until there is more clarity on the issues. Ms. Nagy reached out to PennDOT and the consultant working with Berks Nature to discuss.
- ◆ **Engineer's Report:** No report.
- ◆ **Borough Manager's Report:** Ms. Castner reported that Humane PA sent a list of their visits to the park for their Pay-What-You-Can clinics, and that there were 123 dog visits and 39 cat visits. They administered 131 distemper shots, 79 rabies vaccines, and 43 microchips. Ms. Castner said that the residents really respond positively to this program. They are done for 2025 and hopefully will return next year.

Ms. Castner also stated that she addressed the mayor's concern regarding faded road markings and asked Public Works to refresh the lines at all of the areas of concern.

OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- ◆ **Borough Tree Report:** After reviewing the report from Bartlett Tree Experts, Councilman Grassley suggested taking down all 19 trees at the same time and to have the trimmings done right away as well. ***President Weidenheimer asked for a motion to approve the tree removal/trimmings as suggested. Councilman Grassley made a motion with Councilman Gagliardo offering a second. Motion approved.***

NEW BUSINESS

- ◆ **2025 Street Project:** Councilman Grassley stated that we are moving forward with the repair of the streets. President Weidenheimer further clarified that the streets to be repaired are as follows:

Fern: New Holland to Daniels

Hoover: Fern to the Alleyway

Kenhorst Boulevard: Haig to Bellefonte

H&K Group, Inc. was the lowest bidder at \$162,024.11. There was discussion of a previous dealing with a company that H&K purchased, that resulted in legal action between the Borough and H&K. ***President Weidenheimer asked for a motion to approve the award of the 2025 street project bid to H&K Group. Councilman Grassley made the motion and Councilman Smith offered a second. Motion passed with 4 yeas to 1 nay. Mayor Hatzas asked that the record reflects his objection on behalf of the residents of the Borough.***

- ◆ Solicitor Nagy announced that after being the Borough's solicitor for 14 years, working diligently for Council and also contributing to the fire company and community organizations, it no longer behooves her or her firm to continue to represent Borough Council. Ms. Nagy cited unprofessional and inappropriate remarks and smears directed at her and questioning her competence, made by Councilman Gagliardo while she wasn't present, as the reason for her departure. She further stated that she has seen email exchanges between Vince, the Mayor, and Ms. Castner, that were completely unprofessional and that she is unwilling to risk her reputation by continuing to work for an organization that allows that behavior to persist without justification or remedy. Ms. Nagy stated that this will be her last meeting but that she will absolutely help Ms. Castner with whatever she may need until a replacement is found.
- ◆ **Crowder Avenue Project:** Councilman Grassley reiterated that he spoke with Bill Murray from Reading Area Water Authority and that RAWA doesn't have the money in their budget this year for these repairs and that they also have a backlog of work. Councilman Grassley recommended doing what the Borough has budgeted for this year and then look at it for next year or the following year. ***Councilman Grassley made a motion and President Weidenheimer asked for a second. Councilman Smith offered a second and motion was approved.***
- ◆ **Motorized Skateboards and Bikes:** Solicitor Nagy stated that motorized scooters and bicycles, from a state law standpoint and the Motor Vehicle Code, have to be fully licensed or the police can cite them if they're on Borough streets. The Borough could pass an ordinance that prohibits them on Borough sidewalks if Council so chooses. Lt. Contreras stated that even non-motorized bicycles must follow traffic rules and that basically as long as the motorized bikes and scooters are following traffic rules on the road, there isn't anything that the Borough can do. He also stated that the bikes that are under 50 cc's aren't really the issue and that it's more a problem with the homemade motorized bikes and their speed.

FINAL REMARKS AND REMINDERS

- ◆ President Weidenheimer reported that he received an email from the President of the Ken Grill Pool that said they are moving along with their improvements and that their year has been successful so far.
- ◆ Next Workshop Meeting – Tuesday July 1st, 2025 at 7:00 PM
- ◆ Next Council Meeting – Thursday July 3rd, 2025 at 7:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business Council adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tara K. Mountford
Secretary/Treasurer