

Towanda Borough Planning Commission

Tuesday March 18, 2014

Minutes

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the council room of the Towanda Municipal Building located at 724 Main Street in Towanda.

Erin Groves called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Erin Groves, Evelyn Sherburne, Jim Lacek, Shannon Clark and Larry Kacyon, Jimmy Lacek

Members Absent: Mark Christini, Keith Long, Ed Ulatowski

Others Present: Kyle Lane, Borough Manager

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the June 18, 2013 meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission were approved on a motion made by Mr. Lacek and seconded by Mr. Kacyon.

New Business

Parking of Recreational Vehicles on Borough Streets: Ordinance Chapter 305

Mrs. Groves stated that Mr. Christini had sent an e-mail to both Mrs. Groves and Mr. Lacek regarding an issue with RVs being parked along the streets in the Borough. Mrs. Groves stated that there is already an ordinance regarding the parking of Recreational Vehicles on Borough Streets that is not being properly enforced. Mrs. Groves explained that code enforcement personnel are expected to uphold enforcement of Towanda Borough ordinances. Mrs. Groves explained that in order for an additional ordinance to be created, there must be a police study conducted regarding the issued and stating any accidents, casualties or damages caused by the situation at hand. An ordinance may not be created because of an annoyance or poor appearance.

Various members stated that there are multiple vehicles that are parked along the road that could be classified as recreational vehicles. As long as it is a registered, titled, inspected vehicle, it should not be an issue. RVs are not parked in the same spot all year. There is no spot on record that members could recall seeing a Recreational Vehicle causing an issue with traveling the roadways.

Mr. Lane explained that the main complaint was derived from school bus travel being made difficult where buses travel on Chestnut Street. One member suggested that there should be a set bus route for busses to exit the schools and enter Main Street or York Ave; perhaps this could be paired with the location of the crossing guard to help stop traffic and allow buses to enter onto the main roadways.

A motion was made by Mr. Lacek and seconded by Mrs. Groves that nothing will be done at this time regarding the parking of Recreational Vehicles on streets in Towanda Borough. If council would like to take any further action, they can revisit the issue. If anyone in the neighborhood has an issue with a vehicle making travel difficult on streets, they can call the Towanda Borough Police to solve the issue or approach the owner of the vehicle directly.

Review Current Snow Emergency Route- Ordinance Chapter 305. Temporary Parking Restrictions for Snow Removal and Street Cleaning (305-56 – 305-66)

A snow emergency route is created when the Mayor of Towanda makes a declaration of a snow emergency and on designated roads, parking is limited to one side of the street. Mrs. Sherburne extended the issue to include the logic behind the location of snow being dumped during snow emergencies. Sidewalks are being blocked by snow piles forcing children walking to school to walk in the street as opposed to the sidewalks. Mr. Lacek explained the difference between snow removal and snow plowing, as plowing moves the snow out of the drivable area of the streets, whereas removal takes snow away from the area.

Mr. Lane further explained that the direct issue at hand came from Bill Manville, the Emergency Coordinator, stating that the process of snow emergencies must be further examined. Currently, it must be advertised on the radio, television channels, newspaper etc. however, people still request personalized information regarding the declaration of snow emergencies. Mr. Lane feels that the borough should be proactive in planning for snow removal and when snow is expected, vehicles should be moved prior to the declaration of the snow emergency.

It was discussed that temporary signs should be utilized as signage would provide a "personalized" alert to residents and it would ensure that residents would be informed of the declaration of the snow emergency. Mrs. Groves stated that if an ordinance is in effect, it needs to be followed through to make it effective.

Mrs. Groves stated that it could be a positive solution to put a jacket over signs stating that it is a temporary snow emergency and cars should be parked on the other side of the road to allow for efficient snow removal. The Borough has the right to impose a ticket in the amount of \$25 to people parked in snow removal zones.

Essentially the issue is that there needs to be a more efficient way to alert people to a Snow Emergency and allow them to move their vehicles. Mr. Manville suggested that we should perhaps add Snow Emergencies to Code Red, which would then call, or text people who are registered into the system to move their vehicles. Mr. Lane stated that code red was effective for the water boil advisory that occurred in September, however, people outside of Towanda Borough were receiving the alerts. Mr. Manville also suggested that parking on the streets be parked on a side of the road based on the calendar date, for example, if it is an odd day, you will park on the corresponding side of the road in the event of snow.

Residents should be given a letter explaining the system to them, which will include a picture of the temporary sign and stating that when these signs are out, it means that all residents must park on the designated side of the street. Even and odd house numbers are consistent with a side of the street, which would make for an easy determination of which side of the street should be parked on.

It was agreed upon that plastic jackets for the signs would be a good solution along with larger, brightly colored signs with clear directions and a letter that explains how residents can be informed of a snow emergency and the parking procedure that should be followed. Additionally, alerts should be provided via newspaper, radio, television, code red and temporary signage. This would allow us to comply with the ordinance already created and will ensure that residents are all informed of proper procedures to follow. A newspaper article should be published explaining the procedure, listing snow emergency routes and how residents will be made aware.

A motion was made to enforce motions already in place and utilize temporary signs and code red to alert residents to snow emergency procedures. The motion was made by Mr. Lacek and seconded by Mrs. Sherburne.

Old Business:

Evelyn would like additional notice when a planning commission will be held.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Kacyon and seconded by Mrs. Clark.

Recorded by,

Diane M. Kulick
Borough Secretary/Treasurer
for April Q. Maynard