

Eagles Mere Borough

Minutes

June 21, 2017

Special Meeting

The Eagles Mere Borough Council meeting was called to order at 7 PM on the above date by President Feese with the following Council members & Mayor Werner in attendance: V.P. Christelle Loftus, Bob Spahr, Matt Andrews, Dave Werner, John Huhn & Richard Liebert. Secretary/Treasurer Wilson was also present along with 21 guests in the gallery.

Business Conducted – The president opened and stated the reason for this special meeting. The speed limit ordinance amendment that was approved by Council on June 5, 2017 was vetoed by the Mayor. President Feese asked that the public hold any questions or comments until the end of the meeting and to keep their interactions to only a few minutes. He then turned the meeting over to Mayor Werner.

Mayor Werner opened her presentation by reminding everyone that they [she and the council] are public servants charged with public safety. She noted that she had spent several days doing research and many hours talking to individuals related to this topic. She prepared handouts and outlined her assertion that the council had rushed the reduced speed limit amendment to a vote.

She presented statistics from the Long-Range Planning Study (1998) as well as the Lake Road Safety Study (2001) as examples of what should be done before initiating this kind of legislation. These reports were the basis for the Council setting the speed limit at 30Mph for all borough streets in 2001. She asked why this wasn't done this time.

Mayor Werner also pointed out that the recent report presented by Wendy Kelly, an engineer employed by LTAP for PennDOT, wasn't done at the peak of the summer season. It was done at the request of Borough Officials to verify the 30MPH speed limit is appropriate for surrounding residential land use and high pedestrian activity, particularly during the summer season [taken from Kelly's memo]. Her report concluded that safe running speed going westbound averaged 27.1mph and eastbound at 28.3. She suggested that a posted 25 mph speed limit would coincide with the predominant residential land use along Pennsylvania Ave. Her report went on to define where signs were to be placed and other recommendations that could improve safety. Mayor Werner also mentioned several alternate safety improvements and whether new devices might be a better solution. Why hadn't these been investigated and considered. She also suggested EMA and EMAA be more involved to address safety at the beach. Overall, she made the point that the ordinance amendment was not based on sufficient information, public input or the Long-Range plan's suggestion to keep ordinances simple. She asked that discussions be continued to include all of the afore mentioned ideas and suggestions that promote traffic calming and safety at the beach area.

Council members offered several comments that included a reiteration that Wendy Kelly gave them expert advice at their invitation. Council's decision on this issue was based on Ms. Kelly's report on local conditions and reasonable safety as opposed to the risk. They were dealing with a specific issue and acted on it responsibly. It was

noted that the Long-Range Plan and the Lake Road Study proved that many of the suggested traffic calming solutions in those reports would not work in Eagles Mere. There was no need to go through all of those studies and costs again. Another Council Member stated that although there are other traffic calming remedies, reducing speed limits is still effective to improve safety. Ms. Kelly wasn't here at the peak of pedestrian and traffic season, but took into consideration the mixed traffic that uses those streets. The Infrastructure Committee also conferred with the Street Superintendent. After reviewing all the options, it was obvious that a reduced speed offered the best solution open to them. It was additionally stated that the ordinance may be flawed because it was incomplete. It didn't include other streets that may have similar problems and should possibly be considered as well for the 25mph limit. It was agreed that other streets may need the speed adjusted, but this was tabled for a later meeting. Mr. Huhn went on record to thank Council for their comments; for being pro-active, not re-active.

The public was then invited to participate. Jack Leo stated he saw no difference with other towns who have 30mph limits and 30mph is perfectly safe around the lake. Peter Glaubitz noted legal ramifications questioning whether any speed limit can be enforced. Claudia Leo suggested that other signage be added just during the summer season. Bob Zelten questioned the need for lowered speed limits as there have been few accidents and most of them, in his opinion, were related to careless practices rather than speeding. He suggested this may be a 'feel good' solution. Susan Glaubitz stated that it is easier to drive at a single speed than to constantly be pushing the gas pedal and brake to maintain the correct speed.

Everyone's comments were taken into consideration before a second vote was called for. On a motion from Mr. Huhn, seconded by Ms. Loftus a second vote was taken on the amendment to lower the speed limit on Pennsylvania, Lakewood Avenues, and Mt. View Lane to 25mph.

The vote was recorded as follows:

David Werner-No

Robert Spahr-Yes

Christelle Loftus-Yes

John Huhn-Yes

Richard Liebert-Yes

Mathew Andrews-Yes

William Feese-Yes

The Mayor's veto was overturned by a 6-1 vote.

President Feese adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kay L. Wilson

Secretary/Treasurer