Huntingdon Borough Public Hearing Meeting Minutes

The Huntingdon Borough Public Hearing meeting was held in the Borough Council Room, 530 Washington Street, Huntingdon, PA on Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

The guest present were Jennifer Clark, Gary Cramer, Betty Quarry, Ted Aurand, James Decker, David Quarry, Linda Goodman, Tim Goss, Valerie Copenhaver, Elizabeth Homan, Mathew Domschrode, Joseph Thompson, Erin Baskin, Courtney Robinson, Marsha Kyper, Becky McGrath, Brittany Dehaven, Glenn Dehaven, Kathe Kozak, Bryan Butler, Mackenzie Kuncher Renee Lloyd, James Troha and Dustin Border.

The members of Borough Council present were President James Bair, Vice-President David Fortson, Councilman Robert Jackson, Councilman David Wessels, Councilwoman DeeDee Brown (on phone), Councilwoman Jennifer Powell, Borough Engineer Andy Glitzer, Borough Solicitor Richard Wilson, Mayor Thomas Yoder, Chief of Police Charles Streightiff, Borough Manager Chris Stevens, and Borough Secretary Richard King.

President James Bair called the public hearing to order at 6:00 PM.

Borough Solicitor Richard Wilson said the purpose of this public hearing was to interact with Borough Council on the sale of the Weaver Park Softball Field to Juniata College.

Richard Wilson said a Non-Binding Letter of Intent to Sell was drawn up between the Administrative Committee of Borough Council and Juniata College to sell the softball field located adjacent to Weaver Park on terms and conditions.

Richard Wilson said that Juniata College had the softball field appraised, and the appraisal value came in at $185,000.

Richard Wilson said that Borough Council came back with an offer of $200,000.

Richard Wilson said that this property will be from the sidewalk to the softball field.

Richard Wilson said that Juniata College has agreed to pay all cost for engineering services, plans, subdivision of the parcels and deeds.

Richard Wilson said the pavilion is staying and if Juniata College decides to remove this and tear this down, they will pay for all cost and will place another pavilion where we want it.

Richard Wilson said if they decide to remove the monument, that they will pay the expenses of moving this.

Richard Wilson said that the girls’ softball league will continue to use this field and if not, then this property will be conveyed back to the borough.

Richard Wilson said there will be no additional expenses for the leagues’ liability insurance paid to Juniata College.

Richard Wilson said that this Non-Binding Letter of Intent to Sell was signed by Juniata College Counsel David Andrews, Esquire.

Richard Wilson said that Juniata College will be investing money into this softball field.

Richard Wilson then asked President of Juniata College James Troha to speak.

James Troha thanked everyone for allowing him to speak.

James Troha said that he is sure that this is the right path for the community, that he lives in the borough and this is a win, win situation for the community.

James Troha said that Juniata College had owned this softball field back in 1939 and sold it to Huntingdon Borough for $1.

James Troha said this property was gifted by the McIlroy family to Juniata College.

James Troha said that Juniata College has partnered with Huntingdon Borough on many projects, and we want to invest in this.

James Troha said why $200,000.

James Troha said that Juniata College wants to continue to improve and enhance this softball field by improving the infield, dugouts, add a press box and to host other schools to come and play.

James Troha said if Juniata College owns this field, then they have resources to invest in the borough and enhance the softball field.

James Troha said that we could then have collegian 3 leagues play here.

James Troha said this is a better solution to help enhance the softball field.

James Troha said there will be cameras, surveillance by public safety checks, signage property of Juniata College.

James Troha said we have a donor that is interested in donating money to this, and the softball field would then be named after this donor.

President James Bair recognized the guest present and asked for them to speak for up to five (5) minutes.

Ted Aurand, 949 Selana Drive, said this is an opportunity for a facility, that both sides need to settle this, use common sense, and build a trust between both parties. Ted said that when Juniata College sold this to the borough, what was their vision. Ted said that Juniata College is important to the community. Ted said that you need to listen to each other and solve the problem.

Jennifer Clark, 214 17th Street, asked when this field is sold, will they be responsible for tax purposes.

Borough Manager Chris Stevens said that Juniata College pays a lot of taxes on their properties.

James Troha said it is voluntary that the college pays taxes, but they do not have to. James said they buy properties to house students, and this is considered a 501 C 3 status for education purposes. James said that he is happy to have a conversation and maybe consider this.

Linda Goodman, 9 19th Street, said she has a list of the properties that Juniata College owns but does not know the amount of property taxes they pay. Linda said that they will be taking half of the basketball court. Linda said that the town does not know they can use this field if Juniata College owns this field, that you should consider leasing it.

Linda Goodman then talked about a softball league that plays by the little league field and there are times you can’t play on this.

Vice-President David Fortson said he knows of this softball league and the little league said they can use the field, and they are proud to use this field. David said this league even says this is their field. David said the Weaver Park softball field can be used any given time David said the borough is going to make out, that nothing is going to change about using the field and people need to stop listening to Facebook.

James Troha said he is here because of the social media stuff out there.

James Troha said we have property where we can build a softball field if we need to, if the community doesn’t want this. James said we can continue to use the field until the new field is built. James said this solution makes sense.

Ted Aurand said to think of our children and recreation, and he can’t put a figure on this.

James Troha said the Richard Wilson had shared details with you on this and what the current purposes can be used for. James said that we can’t build a dorm on this property. James said that he is responsible to his board of trustees. James said this was a fair price above market price.

Valerie Coppenhaver, 2461 Moore Street, asked if the $200,000 is guaranteed to be used for the children.

Vice-President David Fortson said that he is chairman of the Parks, Recreation & Public Property, and said this money will be used for the children.

David Fortson then spoke about the skate park at Portstown Park and said that the new equipment was placed, and it didn’t take long to be vandalized.

David Fortson said he looks out for the Borough of Huntingdon and the children, and he will guarantee that the money is used for the children.

Marsha Kyper, 621 7th Street, asked if this money was going to be earmarked for recreation.

Vice-President David Fortson said yes.

Marsha Kyper said she has worked in the parks and now there will be money available to do things.

James Decker, 3247 Cold Springs Road, said he doesn’t want this taken the wrong way, but what is the purpose and benefit of sell this softball field to Juniata College. James said to put this into a lease agreement.

Vice-President David Fortson said that the borough maintains this right now and they are limited on the amount of time to do upkeep on the property. David said that Juniata College maintains the softball field right now and if this didn’t happen then we would be using taxpayers’ money to do upkeep to the softball field. David said that Juniata College cannot do any upgrade to this unless they own it.

James Decker said we don’t have to improve the softball field.

Mayor Thomas Yoder said this is a utilized facility, the borough will get $200,000 to enhance our parks, and that we will be helping our neighbors out. Thomas said this is a win, win situation.

James Decker said a lease agreement is the better way of solving the problem.

Mayor Thomas Yoder said this will help Juniata College and the borough.

Borough Solicitor Richard Wilson said if council wants to vote on this, it will be in the agreement that if the girls softball league are not allowed to use the field or if Juniata College does not want the field anymore, then it will revert back to the borough, in the deed and Juniata College cannot back out.

James Troha said we are negotiating on this, and you can give or take, the borough gives up ownership of the softball field, the money goes to the borough, and there is still access to the field. James said this will be better for Juniata College.

James Troha said there is a possibility if Juniata College owned the softball field, that there will be turf placed and lighting.

President James Bair said we need to adjourn this public hearing due to the Borough Council meeting starting shortly. James said we can talk about this more in the council meeting if you want.

After no further business the public hearing was adjourned at 6:59 PM.

Minutes submitted by,  
  
  
  
Richard S. King  
Borough Secretary