

1 OLD FORGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
2 OLD FORGE, PENNSYLVANIA
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5 IN RE: COUNCIL WORK SESSION
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9 APRIL 4, 2023

10 7:00 P.M.

11 OLD FORGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
12 314 SOUTH MAIN STREET
13 OLD FORGE, PENNSYLVANIA
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18 COUNCIL MEMBERS:
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- 20 RUSSELL RINALDI, PRESIDENT
- 21 RICK NOTARI
- 22 LOUIS FEBBO
- 23 JAMES HOOVER
- 24 MICHAEL LETTIERI
- 25 WILLIAM RINALDI, ESQUIRE, SOLICITOR
- MARYLYNN BARTOLETTI, BOROUGH MANAGER
- ROBERT LEGG, MAYOR

Mark Wozniak
Official Court Reporter

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MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: I'd like to call the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

(The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Roll call, please, Bill.

ATTY. RINALDI: Ms. Avvisato is absent, Mr. Butler is absent. Mr. Febbo?

MR. FEBBO: Present.

ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Hoover?

MR. HOOVER: Here.

ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Lettieri?

MR. LETTIERI: Present.

ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Notari?

MR. NOTARI: Present.

ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Rinaldi?

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Here. Once again, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the work session of Old Forge Borough. Tonight is Tuesday, April 4th. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to go through our department heads, we'll hear from our council members, our chief of police, our solicitor for anything that we have coming

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up for our next meeting, which will be April 18th, Tuesday, at 7 p.m.

There's a public sign-in sheet that the chief has. If anyone from the public would like to address us we'll give you a few minutes at the end of the meeting.

With that said, we'll move first into our engineer. Our DPW manager is absent. Dave, anything for the regular meeting coming up?

MR. LOPATKA: I don't have anything. I will have the plans for Casper Street, which is the culvert replacement, and I'll have the plans for Keyser Avenue. I sent Marylynn the paving project drawings last week. I don't know if you guys got them.

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Yes, we got them. Thanks, Dave. Anybody have any questions for Dave?

MR. NOTARI: Dave, where do we stand with the senior center project?

MR. LOPATKA: I talked to her last week. They're supposed to have a checked set of drawings by Monday.

MR. NOTARI: Architect?

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MR. LOPATKA: Yes. So I'll get in touch with her, get an update.

MR. HOOVER: Dave, I spoke to her about Sonny Drive. We're going to see if the gas company has to do any work up there, too. Like I said, I don't know the date. We'll talk about it.

MR. LOPATKA: So I'm just wondering if we -- let's take a look at it. What we probably can do is put an alternate on the paving bid. Then we at least have a number for our portion of it. I don't know what the overall is, if you want to put a number on there for everything or how we want to do it.

MR. HOOVER: Well, we have to have the ability to do it. I think at least let them do the base restoration on the trench, then maybe we can just base the bad spots. Have somebody base the bad spots for us and then just overlay the road. If they do the base restoration on the trench they'll give us a check for \$43,000 to do the overlay.

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anyone else have anything for Dave? Thanks, Dave.

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Chief Dubernas, anything for the meeting coming up?

CHIEF DUBERNAS: I have nothing.

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anybody have any questions for the chief?

MR. NOTARI: How are our body cameras operating? Are they working?

CHIEF DUBERNAS: So far, so good. The technician will be here the week of April 28th to do our car cams.

MR. NOTARI: We're moving in the right direction. That's good. Thank you.

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anyone else for the chief? Thanks, Chief.

Mike Sokolowski, welcome aboard. Mike is our new code enforcement/zoning officer. First day was yesterday. Very glad to have you. Anything -- I know you just came aboard.

MR. SOKOLOWSKI: Just trying to get everything to work nice, get situated.

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: If you need anything from us you have all our numbers. We all know you personally. Anybody have any questions for Mike? Thanks, Mike.

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Attorney Rinaldi, anything for the meeting coming up?

ATTY. RINALDI: You'll have the zoning amendment will be on the agenda. We will not have the school deed or school MOU back yet because they're not going to vote on it until April 27th.

There will be a resolution to amend the budget to increase the salary for the zoning/code enforcement officer.

I believe those are the only items I have -- and approve the Saint Lawrence Church.

MR. FEBBO: Did you meet with Marylynn to get that?

ATTY. RINALDI: She's got it.

MR. FEBBO: We're using that facility right now. The historical society needs a place to operate and we have room down there for them. I'd like to bring that up at the meeting to have them work out of the church itself.

ATTY. RINALDI: But what space? I know the one floor where the kitchen is.

MR. FEBBO: No, up where we are.

1 ATTY. RINALDI: We did the whole
2 floor for you guys. Is there another
3 spot --

4 MR. FEBBO: We can accommodate them.
5 Likewise with the girls who play mahjong.
6 They're complaining about the senior
7 citizens center not being done. We can
8 accommodate them in there also, if it's okay
9 with council.

10 ATTY. RINALDI: Is it you guys
11 giving them the space or is the borough?

12 MR. FEBBO: We will. We'll give
13 them our space.

14 ATTY. RINALDI: I guess we can amend
15 it to put something in there. What do they
16 officially go by?

17 MR. NOTARI: Old Forge Historical
18 Society.

19 MR. HOOVER: What about the
20 insurance liability?

21 MR. FEBBO: That will all come under
22 us because everybody used to belong to that,
23 a majority of them. We have Dave Cherundolo
24 and Sal, they belong to the Sons of Italy
25 also. Our insurance covers any kind of

1 function that we run there. So that being
2 said, we can just piggyback them onto us.
3 Same thing with the mahjong. It shouldn't
4 be a big deal.

5 ATTY. RINALDI: I'll put it in the
6 use paragraph. Part of the use is for you
7 guys and for the historical society.

8 MR. NOTARI: The zoning amendment
9 will be for that property, the future Gress
10 property?

11 ATTY. RINALDI: Yes. That's it.

12 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anybody have
13 any questions for the solicitor? Thanks,
14 Bill.

15 All right, we'll move into public
16 comments. Bob Picarksi?

17 MR. PICARSKI: Update you guys. We
18 were talking the last time, this is a map.
19 It shows the disturbance of the land, and
20 the state is going to be down tomorrow or
21 Thursday.

22 MR. SOKOLOWSKI: I'll be down there
23 with them.

24 MR. PICARSKI: Also highlighted on
25 page three, the acreage is 1.22. I guess

1 some people went down and talked to the man
2 and he said he had less than an acre of
3 land. There's 1.22 acres.

4 MR. LOPATKA: What you're talking
5 about here is to determine the amount of
6 disturbance into that acreage.

7 MR. PICARSKI: The planning, zoning,
8 you guys got everything. So that's all I
9 have. I wanted to keep you updated.

10 MR. NOTARI: Appreciate it, Mr.
11 Picarski.

12 MR. LOPATKA: I did talk to his
13 engineer. He called me after the meeting
14 and said what do we need to do. I said you
15 need to put the plan together, submit it to
16 the borough, submit it to the conservation
17 district.

18 On top of that I said a plan is all
19 well and good, but the plan is a piece of
20 paper. It's actually putting the controls
21 in place and re-establishing vegetation that
22 they need to do. I haven't heard from him
23 since. I talked to him, but supposedly they
24 were supposed to put a plan together so they
25 can submit something to us.

1 MR. PICARSKI: They were moving
2 stuff around.

3 MR. LOPATKA: He called me. I don't
4 know what happened.

5 MR. FEBBO: How long ago did he call
6 you?

7 MR. LOPATKA: He called me the day
8 after the last meeting.

9 MR. FEBBO: You heard nothing from
10 him?

11 MR. LOPATKA: Not since. I
12 explained everything to him.

13 MR. SOKOLOWSKI: I'm going to meet
14 with them tomorrow or Thursday, with the
15 state.

16 MR. FEBBO: Jerry Styles?

17 MR. LOPATKA: That's the
18 conservation district. You can call them,
19 tell them to come down and do an inspection.
20 Lackawanna County Conservation District.
21 Over an acre they need a permit.

22 MR. FEBBO: I think what he said was
23 he has over the acreage but he didn't
24 disturb it all. Again, that's not my forte.
25 That's planning and zoning.

1 MR. LOPATKA: Same thing I told the
2 engineer. I said you need to get a survey
3 for the extent of the disturbance. I
4 haven't heard from him since.

5 MR. NOTARI: He disturbed everything
6 but the front part of the property.

7 MR. PICARSKI: That's because it's
8 blacktopped.

9 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Once Mike gets
10 down there and meets with him we'll make
11 sure he takes a look at it. Thanks, Bob.

12 A.J. Cimino?

13 MR. CIMINO: I'm trying to get gas
14 in my mother's house. Jimmy knows the
15 situation. It's 137 James Street. Every
16 house has gas. The gas company won't
17 proceed unless they get a letter saying it's
18 okay to cut the road.

19 MR. HOOVER: I called the gas
20 company.

21 MR. CIMINO: He told me to come here
22 because you have to approve a letter going
23 to UGI.

24 MR. HOOVER: I told UGI they didn't
25 need a letter because it's not a road that's

1 unmaintained, unnamed. I don't know
2 procedurally what you guys have to do. If
3 you have to vote on it first, send stuff to
4 the neighbors.

5 ATTY. RINALDI: Well, did you get a
6 title search?

7 MR. PANUSKY: I don't need a title
8 search. It's two paper alleys never
9 maintained or paved.

10 ATTY. RINALDI: You should get
11 somebody to do a title search. It will tell
12 you who owns --

13 MR. PANUSKY: I know who owns all
14 these properties.

15 ATTY. RINALDI: It will say who owns
16 that street.

17 MR. PANUSKY: It's borough. Never
18 maintained after 20 years. I put my
19 driveway through the center of it.

20 ATTY. RINALDI: I'm saying it's not
21 the borough. We didn't get a deed of
22 dedication, so it's not ours. There's
23 nothing we can vacate. If you find out from
24 the title search who laid this out. You'd
25 have to get everybody in that development to

1 sign a deed over to you.

2 MR. PANUSKY: I just maintain them
3 now. They're still going to be open.
4 Everybody gets half that touched it. Right?

5 ATTY. RINALDI: No. That's only if
6 it's a borough street. It's not a borough
7 street. That's why you need a title search.
8 It will tell you who owns this, who laid it
9 out, how many people have an interest in it.
10 They can't vacate a street they don't own.
11 I would call a lawyer. They'll tell you
12 what you need, the land owners,
13 descriptions. Then you've got to get
14 everybody to sign off.

15 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: What's your
16 end game? Do you want to pave it?

17 MR. PANUSKY: The one part I do to
18 the rear of my barn.

19 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Pave it
20 yourself?

21 MR. PANUSKY: Yeah.

22 ATTY. RINALDI: You can probably
23 pave it. It's a paper street. There's
24 probably a subdivision map that laid out
25 those roads. You'll be able to figure out

1 whose signature you need. Everybody that
2 bought a lot in that development has a right
3 to those roads.

4 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: You want to
5 pave --

6 MR. PANUSKY: Just the one going
7 down.

8 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Who has access
9 to the one that you want to pave?

10 MR. PANUSKY: My brother, Chris
11 Shaffer and the new guy that bought the
12 Lisowski property.

13 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Then he would
14 only need the three of them.

15 ATTY. RINALDI: You're talking about
16 everybody in the development.

17 MR. FEBBO: Who owns the railroad
18 bed?

19 MR. PANUSKY: Kevin. He bought the
20 place off of Chickey on Sibley Avenue.

21 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Thanks, Mark.
22 Robert Zukauskus?

23 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Good evening. I
24 just want to acknowledge my two neighbors,
25 Rose Ann Artabane and Ann Monacalli. Rose

1 Ann's mother, she was the oldest member of
2 our neighborhood. She passed away. Now Ms.
3 Monacalli is the senior representative of
4 the neighborhood.

5 The last meeting I mentioned the
6 Turkey/Syria earthquake relief. If anybody
7 can consider donating to this it will help
8 the people out tremendously.

9 Just one thing. I have a friend on
10 Oak Street. He has a motorcycle shop.
11 Drunken Monkeys. He said if you need any
12 kind of vehicle service, like, after an
13 emergency call or something, if you have to
14 get your vehicle serviced he's willing to
15 maybe give you a good price on servicing the
16 borough vehicles.

17 Now I'm back to the Junkin' Monkeys.
18 January the judge gave this guy five days to
19 clean up his mess and it is still there. So
20 I'm wondering where the fines are for this
21 guy because --

22 MR. NOTARI: What is still there?

23 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: The junk is in back
24 of the garage. Do you want to see it?

25 MR. NOTARI: I've seen it ad

1 nauseam. I just want to know because in
2 front of the building it's crystal clean.

3 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Yes, and the stuff
4 from the front went in the back. It didn't
5 go to a landfill. He transferred to the
6 back.

7 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Is this the
8 stuff that's under the tarp?

9 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: It's not under the
10 tarp no more. I can show you.

11 MR. NOTARI: How do you get back
12 there?

13 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: There's railroad
14 tracks right behind the house.

15 MR. NOTARI: Which you're not
16 supposed to be on.

17 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: The railroad has no
18 problem with me being there. I walk to
19 Pittston every day. It takes me four hours.
20 The railroad doesn't bother me.

21 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Mr. Zukauskas,
22 are you speaking of the wooden table?

23 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Besides the table
24 there's a grill, there's other stuff behind
25 there.

1 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: This is the
2 grill right there?

3 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: This is like a slap
4 in the face. There's gas cans there several
5 months. He knows that -- where's the fire
6 chief? Why is there gas cans there?

7 MR. NOTARI: That grill was covered,
8 wasn't it? Like you have in your back yard.

9 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: It's not covered.
10 It's blowing --

11 MR. NOTARI: Didn't you have a
12 grill --

13 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Excuse me, I have
14 the floor. May I speak?

15 MR. NOTARI: Back up just a little
16 so the stenographer can hear you.

17 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Do you want the
18 picture again?

19 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: No, I saw the
20 pictures.

21 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Now, the judge
22 ordered this guy five days to clean up the
23 property, so he moved the stuff from the
24 front to the back. That's not cleaning up.
25 Attorney Rinaldi will back me up on this.

1 At the court hearing the Junkin' Monkeys
2 asked the judge I have these ladders that I
3 use in the day, can I leave these outside
4 the garage, and the judge said no, you put
5 your stuff inside the garage. The judge
6 didn't want any stuff outside of that
7 building. So he put it in the back now.
8 Some of his stuff is still outside the
9 building. If he wants to keep that grill or
10 that table put it inside the garage. It
11 belongs in a landfill. The judge ordered
12 him to put --

13 MR. NOTARI: It's a grill. My grill
14 is outside 365 days a year.

15 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: The judge ordered --

16 MR. NOTARI: It's behind my house.

17 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: The judge ordered
18 that stuff to be put in the garage. The
19 judge didn't want any stuff outside of that
20 building. Is that correct?

21 ATTY. RINALDI: He just ordered the
22 junk to be removed. He didn't say your
23 personal grill or your picnic table.
24 There's no ordinance that covers a grill and
25 a picnic table outside.

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MR. ZUKAUSKAS: It is junk.

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: If it's considered junk to you it doesn't have to be considered junk to the zoning officer or the ordinance or the fire chief. It's a grill that's covered that everybody -- most people in town has in their back yard.

MR. ZUKAUSKAS: It's a work table, it's whatever you want. But the judge said no, the stuff goes inside the garage. The judge -- because I said to the judge what about the stuff inside the garage? He said we're not talking about it. We're talking about stuff outside. That's what the judge said.

MR. NOTARI: Mr. Zukauskas, have you asked the judge?

MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Yes.

MR. NOTARI: You've gone down to the office?

MR. ZUKAUSKAS: January 10th we were there. That's the last time. I don't go to the judge's office.

MR. NOTARI: You come here every meeting.

1 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: That's the purpose
2 of this meeting, isn't it?

3 MR. NOTARI: To hear you talk about
4 the same thing over and over again? No,
5 it's not. It's not. It's been taken care
6 of. If it's not taken care of to your
7 satisfaction we will send the code
8 enforcement officer down to look at it
9 again. All right? If he finds anything
10 wrong with it he will file the proper
11 paperwork with the judge.

12 If you think that it has not been
13 taken care of to the judge's expectations,
14 well, then, complain to the judge.

15 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: You mean to tell me
16 I have to go to the judge and say judge --
17 I'll show the judge these pictures. Judge,
18 do you think this is clean? You said that
19 this guy has to put his stuff in the garage.
20 Judge, do you think this is clean?

21 MR. NOTARI: My answer is yes.

22 MR. FEBBO: Mr. Zukauskas, can you
23 see this stuff from your house?

24 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: No.

25 MR. FEBBO: Then why do you get

1 MR. FEBBO: He cleaned up the junk,
2 so-called junk.

3 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: He put it in back of
4 the garage.

5 MR. FEBBO: No, that's not junk.
6 That's his grill.

7 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: A grill and
8 picnic table.

9 MR. FEBBO: Let's back up here. We
10 have a new zoning officer. Let's have him
11 check the lot that he complained about
12 originally where the so-called junk was
13 piling up. If it's okay with him, it's
14 going to be okay with us, and it's got to be
15 okay with you because this is getting
16 ridiculous.

17 MR. HOOVER: There's a building down
18 the street from the Junkin' Monkeys, down
19 the street with a mattress leaning up
20 against the building. Why isn't anybody
21 complaining about that? That mattress has
22 been outside for years.

23 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: I don't know, and
24 that's not my -- my complaint is about the
25 junk right across the street from my house.

1 MR. NOTARI: Do you live in the back
2 yard of his house?

3 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: I live right across
4 the street from this house.

5 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: You don't want
6 the guy to have a grill in his back yard --

7 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: No, I'm not saying
8 that. I want his stuff to be inside the
9 garage.

10 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: You want his
11 grill and his picnic table to be in his
12 garage?

13 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Whatever is behind
14 the garage I want inside the garage like the
15 judge had ordered. Nothing should be
16 outside the garage covered with tarp.

17 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: But a picnic
18 table and a grill belong out back. You want
19 it in his house?

20 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: It should be in the
21 garage.

22 MR. LETTIERI: Why should it be in
23 the garage?

24 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Because the judge
25 wants it in there.

1 MR. FEBBO: He said junk. You
2 better define what junk is.

3 ATTY. RINALDI: We cited him for
4 having junk there. We didn't cite him for
5 having a picnic table and a grill. We cited
6 him for all the junk in front.

7 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: So what do I have to
8 do in order for him to get the stuff that's
9 in the back into the garage or on --

10 ATTY. RINALDI: We don't have an
11 order that says you can't put your grill in
12 the back.

13 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: There's rodents,
14 there's skunks, there's rats --

15 MR. FEBBO: Mr. Zukauskas, do you
16 know what you're going to do? You're going
17 to open yourself up to a lawsuit for
18 harassment.

19 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: I'm not harassing
20 him.

21 MR. FEBBO: You're harassing him.
22 This guy has a right to live like everybody
23 else does.

24 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Of course he does,
25 but has no right to throw his junk out.

1 MR. FEBBO: He obliged you and did
2 everything he was ordered to do.

3 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: I don't think so.

4 MR. FEBBO: That's your
5 interpretation. We all side on his side.
6 I'm tired of it.

7 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: So you're telling me
8 there's going to be no fines for this guy?

9 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: How can we
10 fine him for a grill and a picnic table in
11 his back yard? You'd have to fine everybody
12 in the borough of Old Forge.

13 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: The judge wanted
14 that stuff inside the garage just like he
15 wanted the ladders and stuff inside the
16 garage.

17 MS. MONACALLI: I live at the 1100
18 block of South Main Street. The first house
19 past the river. Bobby lives at the last
20 house on the 1100 block. There are three
21 houses on our block -- now, we're talking
22 about the Main Street. I'm a volunteer for
23 Telespond. I drive all over the place.
24 When I drive through Taylor, on the Main
25 Street you don't see any garbage and broken

1 houses and stuff. It's neat. Why can't our
2 Main Street be neat? There's three houses
3 on that street, I don't think anybody's
4 living in them. I see a hole in the roof of
5 one of the houses. Is there anything we can
6 do about that?

7 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: We can send
8 the zoning officer by any property in the
9 borough of Old Forge you would like him to
10 look at.

11 MS. MONACALLI: They're empty. My
12 opinion, they should be knocked down. Maybe
13 somebody could buy the property and put a
14 nice house there.

15 MR. NOTARI: Do you know what
16 address it is?

17 MS. MONACALLI: Well, if mine's
18 1107 -- I don't know. Maybe 1121. Then the
19 other two are across the street.

20 MR. FEBBO: You live next to
21 Lorenzi's empty lot?

22 MS. MONACALLI: I live right on the
23 Main Street.

24 MR. FEBBO: The empty lot. Is that
25 not blighted?

1 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Absolutely not.
2 There's no junk there. Absolutely not.

3 MR. FEBBO: I see a car there, empty
4 shed there.

5 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: The car is for sale.

6 MR. FEBBO: Like the one that was
7 across the street that you complained about?

8 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: I'm not complaining
9 about a car. The Junkin' Monkey had two
10 junk vehicles there which he drove off.
11 Might I ask one more thing?

12 MR. NOTARI: No. Ms. Monacalli has
13 the floor.

14 MS. MONACALLI: We're talking about
15 the Main Street.

16 MR. FEBBO: That is on Main Street.

17 MR. NOTARI: We have a new code
18 enforcement officer, Mr. Sokolowski. He is
19 going to start looking at properties
20 throughout the town. He just started
21 yesterday. He can become your new best
22 friend.

23 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Do you own any
24 property in our neighborhood, Mr. Rinaldi?

25 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: I do. I have

1 a property down on the right side of South
2 Main Street.

3 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: Can I have the
4 address of that property?

5 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: I'd have to
6 look it up. It's me and a partner and it's
7 in court right now. It's been in court for
8 a while.

9 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: So how can I find
10 out the number of that property? I'd like
11 to know what the address of that property
12 is.

13 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: I would have
14 to get the address off of Gary, the tax
15 collector, or I would have to call the
16 partner of mine and get the address.

17 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: If I call you
18 tomorrow can you give me that address?

19 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Absolutely.
20 Do you have my cell number?

21 MR. ZUKAUSKAS: No.

22 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Rose, did you
23 want to speak?

24 MS. ARTABANE: Well, I'm part of
25 this, what's happening. But I have to share

1 that I've lived most of my life -- I'm a
2 neighbor to Bob across the street that goes
3 over to Connell, and I'm very satisfied with
4 being neighbors on Main Street, yes. All
5 the work that he has done to his property,
6 everything that he's trying to improve his
7 property with, I certainly respect what it
8 is that he's doing and I'm here being a
9 support to him.

10 I know the family, the Junk Monkey
11 people. I know all of that. I don't mean
12 to be degrading or whatever, but I'd like to
13 keep our neighborhood a good neighborhood.
14 And, yes, the mattress that has been there
15 at the house across the street, yeah, we
16 need to deal with that, too.

17 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Like
18 Councilman Notari said, Mr. Sokolowski just
19 started. He knows that he has a big job in
20 front of him, he knows it's a big task, and
21 we want him to get out there and we want him
22 to police as far as code enforcement
23 policing and zoning and he's going to. He's
24 going to get out there. He has a lot of
25 stuff to do, but he will get out there. We

1 even talked about hiring a part-time person
2 to start helping with some of the commercial
3 properties in town to get them registered
4 for landlords, property managers, owners,
5 tenants. A way to keep track of all the
6 rentals that are going on in town as well.

7 Michael Mathers and Mark Bauer?

8 MR. MATHERS: Our purpose tonight is
9 to present to the board an application to
10 become a vendor, a franchisee for video here
11 in your township. We have about a million
12 subscribers throughout the country. We used
13 to be called RCN. We're in the Allentown
14 area, York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago,
15 Washington, we have operations in Texas and
16 on the west coast, the northwest. Right now
17 we're operating in Plains, Laflin, Jenkins
18 and Pittston City. We did that in 2021, and
19 2022 we built Hughestown, Duryea, Avoca,
20 West Pittston and Exeter, and in 2023 our
21 object is to build Taylor and Old Forge.

22 Now, we are a communications
23 company, so we are allowed to go into a town
24 and offer internet and phone, but in order
25 to offer video we need to get a franchise

1 agreement with the township as you would
2 have with Comcast.

3 MR. NOTARI: When you say video are
4 you speaking TV?

5 MR. MATHERS: Yes. When we went
6 into Hughestown we didn't have a franchise
7 agreement, so for six months we only offered
8 internet and phone. We just got our
9 franchise agreement with them about a month
10 ago. We've already approached. We had a
11 meeting with them about a month ago.
12 They've been pretty receptive. We also have
13 an agreement with Wyoming and West Wyoming,
14 and we have a -- we're building up in
15 Scranton.

16 Now, the difference between us and
17 Comcast -- and it will only be in this area
18 because in the Allentown area and most of
19 our other markets we're a cable company
20 only. So when we came up here we decided we
21 were going to build a fiber optic network,
22 so everything is basically fiber to
23 everyone's home, which offers a lot of
24 possibilities for speed, reliability and a
25 lot less wiring in homes. Mark is the

1 service installation manager, so he can
2 answer any questions on that part of it.

3 But the real reason we're here
4 tonight is to, again, start the dialog going
5 about acquiring a franchise with your town.
6 In most cases what we've done is work
7 through your solicitor, and we've used the
8 Comcast agreement you have as kind of a
9 guideline or a map and it works the same
10 way. We offer a franchise fee, just like
11 Comcast does. Like I said, the best thing
12 about us is we're a fiber optic network up
13 here. You might have seen us. We've been
14 building up in Taylor for about the last
15 month and a half. We'll be coming down here
16 into Old Forge and connect the system in
17 Wilkes-Barre and the system in Scranton.
18 You'll start to see our trucks out there.

19 Now, we won't be doing any
20 underground work until we have a franchise
21 with the township, so all the work will be
22 on the PPL poles at this time.

23 MR. LETTIERI: Comcast has fiber
24 optics as well, don't they?

25 MR. BAUER: They have fiber optics

1 but they switch it over to cable on the
2 pole.

3 MR. LETTIERI: The transition would
4 be --

5 MR. BAUER: We wouldn't even touch
6 their stuff even in your home. The fiber
7 would come to your house. It's about the
8 size of speaker wire that comes to your
9 house. We come into your house and then go
10 into what's called an ONT, which is
11 considered a modem. From the modem we go
12 into either your own router or we offer
13 Heros, which actually is a mesh system. So
14 we can put in as many as we need to make
15 sure wireless coverage is throughout your
16 whole house. If you decide to get TV, all
17 our TV boxes are wireless, so we actually do
18 no disruption in the house except for the
19 one entry with the fiber.

20 MR. MATHERS: Couple advantages to
21 the fiber. First of all, I'm sure you've
22 heard the story when the kids get off the
23 school bus and everybody's internet goes
24 down. What we do -- and Comcast -- we have
25 a piece of fiber that's located and handles

1 maybe anywhere from 200 to 500 units. So
2 the coax cable goes into there and then it's
3 sent on fiber back out. In our case every
4 homeowner that's a subscriber has a piece of
5 fiber, so you're not sharing the internet
6 with anybody else. You're a direct path to
7 our home.

8 Also what we have is what they call
9 a symmetrical, so your download and up
10 speeds are the same. There's no variation.
11 Of course, the best advantage to your
12 residents is the fact that now you have
13 competition. So right now Comcast is the
14 only game in town. We're all looking for
15 competition because that's going to lower
16 everybody's price and make it a more level
17 playing field.

18 MR. HOOVER: What if there's an area
19 where the only pole you have is where
20 there's lights on?

21 MR. MATHERS: So your electric and
22 everything is underground? If we acquire a
23 franchise, then we can use the township
24 right-of-ways to go down the street to bring
25 it in. We've done probably over a thousand,

1 1,500 underground homes so far in the area.

2 MR. HOOVER: How deep is the cable
3 underground?

4 MR. MATHERS: Usually about a foot.
5 If we go under roads we're three foot, when
6 we go under driveways, two feet under the
7 driveways. We just start with your Comcast
8 franchise agreement just to kind of use that
9 to negotiate the whole thing. We're not
10 looking to get anything more than you've
11 given them. As I said, we offer the same
12 franchise fee. I don't know what you're
13 getting from them. We offer up to five
14 percent, which might be what you're getting
15 from Comcast. But that's up to you because
16 that might have to come from your taxpayers.
17 Some towns only charge three percent, but by
18 law we can't pay more than five percent.

19 We also offer courtesy services to
20 the township. If you wanted internet here
21 in the building or video we would supply
22 that at no cost. We've done baseball
23 fields, parks, fire department, police
24 department to all the different towns,
25 depending on what they've asked for.

1 Usually they get three to five courtesy
2 accounts. So if you have a couple with
3 Comcast and a couple with us you can get a
4 lot done, save some money.

5 As a new customer you're going to
6 get a better price than you're getting from
7 your old cable company. In two years you
8 might say well, you're getting pretty high
9 now and you contact Comcast and become a
10 customer from Comcast and they're going to
11 lower your bill. So it's kind of a game.
12 Once you have competition you start playing
13 the game. But it does keep the playing
14 field level.

15 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Sounds good.

16 MR. NOTARI: Thanks for coming in.

17 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Mrs.
18 Strassick?

19 MRS. STRASSICK: My question was for
20 Joe Lenceski. Obviously he's not here. Did
21 he contact Earthworks? He was supposed to
22 contact them.

23 MR. LOPATKA: They were supposed to
24 get a written proposal back to Joe. I
25 haven't talked to him. I don't know. They

1 gave him a price. He was going to call and
2 get a written proposal.

3 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: We approved
4 it. We agreed on it at the last meeting.
5 Joe was on vacation but he's back now.
6 Marylynn will have him check tomorrow when
7 he gets back to the office.

8 We'll go down the table, see if any
9 members have anything before we adjourn the
10 meeting. Councilman Febbo?

11 MR. FEBBO: No.

12 MR. LETTIERI: Just one thing. I
13 wanted to talk to Marylynn. Ancillary items
14 that we've been -- for instance, the clock,
15 the dedicated benches, furniture in the
16 hallway, stuff like that, if we can maybe
17 get an update. It's not forgotten about?

18 MS. BARTOLETTI: No. It's on the
19 list.

20 MR. LETTIERI: We haven't talked
21 about it in a while. I'm good.

22 MR. NOTARI: I have nothing.

23 MR. HOOVER: I have nothing.

24 MS. BARTOLETTI: I don't have
25 anything.

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MR. HOOVER: I'm good.

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: I have nothing as well. The chair would entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. NOTARI: I'll make that motion.

MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: By Councilman Notari. All in favor?

(Unanimous. Meeting adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that I attended the foregoing proceeding, took stenographic notes of the same, that the foregoing, consisting of 42 pages, is a true and correct copy, done to the best of my ability, of same and the whole thereof.

Mark Wozniak
Official Court Reporter

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