

KITANNING BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

June 24, 2024

Council Chambers

Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

PRESENT: Andy Peters, William Baum, Amanda Slagle, Wilbur Stitt, Chris Schiano, Gerald Shuster and Les Ruffaner

ALSO PRESENT: Jordan Shuber, Betsy Hooks, Chief Joe Riskosky, Public Works Director Jim Mechling, Fire Marshall Earl Kline, Bill Braun, Grant Kanish, Rebecca Rupert, Joe Crissman and Armstrong County Commissioners, John Strate and Patrick Fabian.

Joyce, owner of Yamato's Restaurant, expressed her concerns regarding the losing of her employees due to the restaurant needing to be closed. She also mentioned that she continues to pay her employees and utilities and asked Council what the community or insurance can do to help them with the loss of revenue.

Daryl Erdos, business owner in Kittanning, asked if an engineer was able to look at the building at 204 Market Street. He received a letter 16 months ago stating that the building was going to be demolished and nothing had been done. His main concern is the safety of the community.

Chris Schiano stated that "through somebody's negligence, two businesses are in trouble". He made it clear that the goal of this meeting is one, the date that the building will be taken down and two, how to keep the businesses open.

Dave Cippel expressed concern about closure for an extended period of time, they were trying to figure out plans, should they need to relocate to a temporary location it would be a big move with all of the inventory and equipment. He asked to please keep an open line of communication.

Amanda Slagle let everyone know that she spoke with our contact at the Small Business Development Center of Clarion, they will work with any of the businesses being impacted at no cost. They will help with a strategy plan and help with coordinating emergency financing, business plans and marketing plans. She said that they would be knowledge center to help navigate this situation.

Jerry Shuster has made direct contact with State Representative Oberlander and the Armstrong County Commissioners regarding the situation and regards to financing. This is a very critical situation and in no way will the delay this process. They are making absolutely certain that no one is injured.

Grant Kanish with Bureau Veritas, stated that he has been doing this for 17 years and to date 2 buildings in Ford City collapsed without warning and there were no injuries. This (McConnell-Watterson building) is a ticking time bomb, this building, if it collapses, would kill people.

Les Ruffaner said that the first thing that we need to do is get protection over Yamato's and the sidewalks.

Alesia Wolfe, Vice President of Klingensmith's Healthcare wanted to report that last January they had a leak going down to the first floor, they found over 70 bricks that fell from the McConnell-Watterson building causing extensive damage to the roof. They built a decking to protect the roof and today, after looking at drone footage, there were more bricks that have fallen.

Jerry Shuster spoke on Joyces' behalf, saying that when this all happened on Saturday, she was not only extremely cooperative, but she was also very positive, and Jerry wanted to thank her for that.

The Council entered into an executive session at 6:45 p.m. and returned at 7:00 p.m.

- **A motion was made to search for and appoint Special Council to handle the McConnell-Watterson Street Building.**
Motion: Shuster Second: Ruffaner Opposed: None
- **A motion was made to task the Police and Jim Mechling to totally secure the area, to include the reinforced sidewalk protection from Jefferson Street to the other side of Yamato Restaurant and to look into padding for Yamato's Building.**
Motion: Schiano Second: Baum Opposed: None
- **A motion was made for William Braun from LSSE to evaluate the integrity of the building, the Codes Enforcement Officers and Grant Kanish of Bureau Veritas.**
Motion: Shuster Second: Slagle Opposed: None
- **A motion was made to task Betsy Hooks and Jim Mechling to seek bids for the emergency demolition pursuant to Borough Code.**
Motion: Schiano Second: Shuster Opposed: None
- **A motion was made that once the evaluation is completed by the engineer and codes enforcement, certified letters are to be sent out to the owners (Yamato and Klingensmith) to put them on notice as to the status of the process. A meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 26, 2024.**
Motion: Schiano Second: Baum Opposed: None

Jordan Shuber recommended that the Borough have a good partnership with the County.

John Strate wanted to let everyone know that the County will stand along side of the Borough to assist these two families that are being affected.

Chris Schiano let everyone know that the Council will do what they can to assist and will keep them informed as to everything that is going on.

Earl Kline asked if the building was accessible so that the County can put in a drone and take pictures to see the extent of the damages.

- **A motion was made to use the County's drone to investigate the inside of the property.**
Motion: Schiano Second: Stitt Opposed: None

Andy Peters requested that Bill Braun, Grant Kanish, and Rebecca Rupert to send a letter to the Borough Administrator with findings on the building so that we can get the process moving.

A motion by Stitt and 2nd by Shuster to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Betsy Hooks, Borough Administrator / Secretary and Treasurer