

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday
March 23rd, 2026**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Tokmajian, Jr., Council President
Jesse Sloane, Council Vice President – via Zoom
Joe Wenzel, Jr., Council Secretary
Ed Kisselback, Council Member
Joseph Knowles, Council Member

SUPPORTING STAFF PRESENT:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Ken Ferris, Township Solicitor
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
Philip Wursta, Township Engineer
Judge Michael Gallagher

PLEASE NOTE:

The minutes are not verbatim but rather a synopsis of what transpired during the meeting, and while I do my best to attribute remarks and questions to the correct individual, there may be mistakes or omissions because of the “back and forth” dialogue and the lack of the use of their microphone.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING:

Council President Tokmajian opened the meeting with a moment of silence and/or prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS, MAYOR AND STAFF:

Council President Tokmajian introduced Council Members and Supporting Staff.

NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS:

Council President Tokmajian introduced the Bensalem Cheer Squad, the Rambler Aces. They have won the Spirit Brands National Championship 14U Grand Champion. The Mayor and Council President Tokmajian joined Couch Robinson for the presentation of certificates to the cheerleaders.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Council President Tokmajian indicated the Public Comment will be heard at the time the agenda item is heard. Seeing no one come forward the first of two Public Comments was closed.

4. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Council Vice President Sloane motioned to approve the Council Meeting Minutes from March 9th, 2026 as presented. **Councilman Kisselback** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

5. **ADVICE AND CONSENT OF MAYORAL APPOINTMENT OF (4) FOUR MEMBERS TO THE CODE APPEALS BOARD FOR A (3) THREE YEAR TERM:**

The Mayor recommended Matthew Takita, Shawn Cannon, George Pegram and Muhammad Shafiq for a three-year term.

Councilman Kisselback motioned to accept the nominees as presented by the Mayor. **Council Vice President Sloane** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Judge Gallagher swore in the four members to the Code Appeals board for a three-year term.

6. **CONSIDERATION AND PUBLIC HEARING ON AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING, AMENDING AND RE-ESTABLISHING THE RESPONSIBLE CONTRACTOR ORDINANCE:**

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that there was an Executive Session held with Council immediately prior to this evening's meeting. The duration of the Executive Session was about 15 minutes. Present were the five members of Council, the Mayor, the Township Engineer, Solicitor Ferris and Solicitor Pizzo. Discussed was a single matter of pending litigation. No official action was taken during the Executive Session and no official action will be required at this evening's meeting as a result of that Executive Session.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that there was some discussion at the first Council meeting in January regarding proposed amendments to the Responsible Contractor Ordinance. Those changes are reflected in the Ordinance presented this evening. The Ordinance has been properly advertised in the Bucks County Courier Times in advance of consideration on the Ordinance.

What the changes do, consistent with the conversation in January, are they amend the existing Township Responsible Contractor Ordinance. Currently it requires that the contractor, doing work for the Township, has to participate in an Apprenticeship Program, a Class A Program that has successfully graduated Apprentices to Journeyman status in three of the prior five years.

The amendment to the Ordinance will now require that at least 70% of the craft employees or workers employed on the project have to be either Journeymen or have successfully completed

a Class A Apprenticeship Program or currently be Apprentices in a registered Class A Program for the trade in which they are employed.

It was always understood to be the case, but the language has been cleaned up to make sure that it's clear that all craft employees and workers employed on a project are assigned work only in the craft or trade in which they are employed.

As to the requirements regarding these employees and the number of employees, it has been added in the language that now says not only the workers who are working on site have to comply with all of these requirements, but any work that is being done consistent or as part of the job. Manufacturing of equipment or parts off site, employees doing that work will also have to comply with the requirements of the Townships Responsible Contractor Ordinance.

For example, the Mechanical Contractor for the job is now having, instead of duct work being done on site, it is being done offsite and being brought to the work site. The worker is doing the work offsite manufacturing that duct work. Also, everything has to comply with the Township's Responsible Contractor Ordinance as well.

Finally, and very importantly, the Township has upgraded the training and safety requirements in the Ordinance. All of the craft workers or craft employees on a job have to have completed, at a minimum, the 10-hour OSHA Construction Training Course for Safety. Consistent with the suggestion from Councilman Wenzel at the January meeting all supervisory personnel on a project have to have complied with the 30-hour OSHA Construction Training Course. Similarly for a prime contractor, at least one of the employees, in addition to supervisory employees, at least one other employee on the job has to have completed the 30-hour Construction Training Course.

Beyond that, a few tidies here and there, a few clean-ups of items that have been noted over the years that might need to be made consistent with how things are in fact being done on a day-to-day basis. Those are the substantial changes to the Ordinance.

Solicitor Pizzo has reviewed the Ordinance with the Building Trades and a few contractors and Mr. Flagg's office. Everybody has given it a thumbs up. It is in a condition acceptable for Council's consideration.

Council Secretary Wenzel motioned to move forward with adopting the Responsible Contractor Ordinance.

Council Vice President Sloane agreed that it was consistent with what they had discussed in the January meeting. The effort there in reaching out to various contractors and the Building Trades is what Council was looking and hoping for.

Councilman Kisselback commented that anytime the Township has anything done, it is done with Union personnel. The best value going for the work being done is by using the Union personnel.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this Ordinance.

The following constituent came forward:

Matt Trzaska, 1150 Wayland Avenue, thanked Council for being good stewards of the taxpayer and constituents' money in Bensalem to ensure that every project here has a highly trained skilled workforce in putting safety, transparency and accountability on every project and setting high standards. Mr. Trzaska appreciates Council for having the foresight and the courage to do that.

Seeing no one else come forward, the Public Comment portion was closed.

Council Secretary Wenzel motioned to adopt the Responsible Contractor Ordinance for Bensalem Township. **Council Vice President Sloane** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

7. **CONSIDERATION OF A LAND DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION AGREEMENT FOR:**

Applicant:	Gibson Holdings, LLC
Site Information:	1515 Gibson Road
Tax Parcel:	24-054-005

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that as happens from time to time on land development projects within the Township the anticipated date of completion set forth in the Developers Agreement is approaching. There's still some work to be done by the Developer and has requested approval of a Land Development Extension Agreement for 1515 Gibson Road.

This is a five-house subdivision with the cul-de-sac off of Gibson Road. The houses are now fully occupied. There are minor items that need to be completed. Chief among them are dedication of the public improvements either to the Township or the Homeowners Association and the Developer believes the wearing course of the cul-de-sac street still needs to be done. We are approaching the time of year that the weather will allow that to be completed.

The Developer has asked for a very modest extension out to July 22nd of this year to complete everything that still needs to be done out there. The Engineer and the Administration believe that to be an appropriate amount of time to complete everything that remains.

Councilman Kisselback asked what was it that the Solicitor mentioned about the Homeowners Association.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that there is a Homeowners Association that will be taking ownership of all of the open space, the stormwater management facilities that aren't located in the street. All of those are to be owned and maintained by the Homeowners Association. The road was constructed to Township specifications and therefore is appropriate for dedication to the Township.

Councilman Kisselback indicated that he did not want to accept the dedication of the road.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the Township may not, but will go back and revisit that. It is one of the open issues remaining to be dealt with.

Council Kisselback indicated that his position would be the Homeowners Association should take care of the streets that are within their development itself.

Councilman Knowles believes that was already set whether that happens or not.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that ultimately it is the Township's call.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that the applicant was pretty much looking for an extension to finish work that needs to be completed due to weather.

Council Vice President Sloane asked if the previous agreement expired?

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the extension would be out to July of 2026. Typically, the Developer fills out the form and that is why there may be some inconsistencies. But, if Council is approving it, the extension would be until July 22nd, 2026.

Solicitor Pizzo will make sure that the agreement reflects the July 22nd, 2026 unquestionably before it's signed by the Township.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there is a scenario where there's an agreement not made based off of the dedication?

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that he would come back to Council if there's a question as to how that is going to play out.

Council Vice President Sloane motioned to approve an extension to the Land Development Agreement until July 22nd, 2026 for Gibson Holdings, LLC, 1515 Gibson Road, Tax Parcel 24-054-005. **Councilman Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak. Seeing no one come forward the second Public Comment portion was closed.

9. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Councilman Knowles wished everyone happy holidays! Happy Passover and Happy Easter.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that the "Night of Champions" seems to be a big hit. Anyone out in the public who would like to be acknowledged for their successes please let us know.

Council Vice President Sloane wished everyone a Happy Easter, Happy Passover. Enjoy the Spring season. It's finally starting to get warmer and looking forward to the change of season.

Councilman Kisselback wanted to wish all of our Jewish friends to enjoy your family with Passover and a Happy Easter.

Solicitor Pizzo echoed everyone's sentiments regarding Easter and Passover.

The Mayor wished everyone a Happy Passover and a Happy Easter. The Mayor noticed that the next meeting is on April 13th which is the Mayor's birthday and jokingly said that he expects signs all over the place indicating his 89th birthday! The Mayor indicated that he celebrated with his sister her 101st birthday! Thursday, March 26th is Opening Day for the *Phillies* the weather is going to cooperate with a temperature of 75°. The Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 21st was amazing and it took the kids only a total of 7 minutes to pick up the 7,000 eggs that were distributed on the lawn. Amphitheater opens up in May and there are a lot of great things happening here in Bensalem. Thanked Council and the Administration working together.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that the Amphitheater Season Passes are on sale for the upcoming concert series.

The Mayor indicated good news on the sales of the Amphitheater Season Passes, there has been more Bensalem residents purchasing the Season Passes than they have in years past!

Council President Tokmajian wished everyone a Happy Easter and a Happy Passover. To Councilman Wenzel's point about recognizing our youth, there is a lot of negativity and in any chance that we can recognize all of the accomplishments across this Township with our youth it is so important that we do acknowledge those achievements. It is a wonderful thing to have the youth that represent Bensalem in such great ways. The Bensalem High School Mock Trial Team have won the Regionals and are on their way to the State Championship. They are one of fourteen teams in the entire State that are going to be competing in Harrisburg and we all wish them lots and lots of luck! We have fabulous talent here in Bensalem and it is great to see our youth thriving and succeeding!

10. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other business to discuss, **Council Secretary Wenzel** motioned to adjourn, **Councilman Knowles** seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of March 23rd, 2026 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

www.bensalenpa.gov

or

www.youtube.com

Respectfully Submitted,

Debora F. McBreen
Recording Secretary