

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday
April 13th, 2026**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

SUPPORTING STAFF PRESENT:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Scott Holbert, Township Special Counsel
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
Philip Wursta, Township Engineer

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 the Mayor, Council Members and Supporting Staff.

NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS:

Council President Tokmajian introduced Julia Horger a Senior from Conwell-Egan who won her third consecutive PIAA State Wrestling Championship. Julia captured the Gold in the 106lb. Division at the 2026 PIAA Girls’ Wrestling Championship in March of this year at the Giant Center in Hershey, PA. She achieved her third consecutive State Title, following previous wins in 2024 and 2025, solidifying her status as one of Pennsylvania’s top high school wrestlers.

The Mayor and Council presented a certificate to Ms. Horger for her wrestling achievement.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that **Council Vice President Sloane** had a family obligation and will be attending the meeting shortly.

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:**

Councilman Knowles motioned to approve the Council Meeting Minutes from March 23rd, 2026 as presented. **Council Secretary Wenzel** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

5. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE BENSELEM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (BEDC) ENGAGING TIP STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP AN ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR BENSELEM TOWNSHIP:**

Councilman Kisselback motioned to move agenda item #5 to agenda item #7A. Councilman Knowles seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

6. **CONSIDERATION AND PUBLIC HEARING ON AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 225 – VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC, ARTICLE III – PARKING REGULATIONS, SECTION 7 – PARKING, STOPPING, OR STANDING, APPENDIX SHALL BE AMENDED TO ADD THE FOLLOWING RESTRICTIONS:**

No Parking, Standing or Stopping Anytime Sign	Direction of Travel	Location
Tremont Avenue	Eastbound	3100 Block
Tremont Avenue	Westbound	3100 Block

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the Township Administration had received some complaints regarding the parking of tractor trailers, in some cases just the trailers and in some cases just the tractors along a portion of Tremont Avenue. As a result of that, the Administration directed the Traffic Safety Officer to perform a traffic evaluation. That evaluation verified that the complaints identified the serious parking issue causing site distance problems that all of the driveways along that stretch of road and recommended that both sides of the road be signed as “No Parking, Stopping or Standing Anytime” on both the Eastbound and Westbound sides of the 3100 block of Tremont Avenue.

As a result, the ordinance before Council this evening was prepared and properly advertised in the Bucks County Courier Times and is in a form acceptable for Council’s consideration and approval.

Council President Tokmajian asked if this request came in from local businesses?

Solicitor Pizzo indicated yes.

Council President Tokmajian asked if making this change, it will not affect their businesses?

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that what happens is Tractor Trailer Drivers who choose not to take advantage of the Truckstop's or other facilities available to them, find suitable space that will accommodate their truck. They will find different locations in the Township and park their truck overnight. When the Township becomes aware of them, the Township takes enforcement action and unfortunately when the Township deals with it in one location eventually, they will find another location. This has become the newest location in the Township.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that he knows there are a few homes in that area and asked if that will affect weekend parking for them.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the Ordinance will not affect those homes. It is that stretch where the light industrial businesses are located.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he is aware of the truck issue at Neshaminy Mall and remembers someone going to put in a site off of Bristol Pike by State Road to allow legal truck parking.

Councilman Knowles indicated that he remembers a few years ago that there was a guy from northeast Philly that was going to build a facility down by State and Street Road but supposedly backed out.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the project is still underway. He does have Land Development approvals for that project.

The Mayor indicated that the owner of that lot was just parking his truck there and the Township stopped him from doing that by siting him because he was supposed to develop that as a parking area for trucks.

Council Secretary Wenzel motioned to enforce Chapter 225 and to add the No Parking, Standing, Stopping Anytime sign on Tremont Avenue eastbound and westbound on the 3100 block of Tremont Avenue. **Councilman Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

7. **CONSIDERATION OF A MINOR SUBDIVISION FOR:**

Applicant:	Michael Alexander
Location:	Wunder Avenue
Proposed Use:	Single Family Dwelling
Zoning Classification:	R-2 Residential
Tax Parcel:	02-005-187-001

Solicitor Holbert indicated this was a residential 2 lot minor subdivision application represented by Attorney Michael Meginniss who is here on behalf of the applicant.

Mike Meginniss on behalf of the applicant Mike Alexander who is present this evening regarding a minor subdivision and John Richardson from Dumack Engineering.

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that Mr. Alexander owns the property which is under a ½ acre and fronts along Wunder Avenue. The property is zoned in the R-2 District. The property is currently improved with the structure to the right side which is significant disrepair. The plan is to create two regularly shaped lots. The end result, once it is approved, would be the creation of two lots approximately 10,000 sq. ft. in size which would be served by public water and sewer and would possess two single family detached dwellings.

The applicant has worked with WK2 during the pendency of this project. The remaining review comments are quite minimal. Everything that is left is either a will comply and a waiver request relates to a fee in lieu.

Mr. Richardson indicated that the property is being divided into two separate residential lots. They are relatively equal in size. The site is currently at the belly of a drainage feature along Wunder Avenue and there is a weird little bump in the pavement which the Township recently installed some drainage improvements which consist of additional curb, drainage and additional piping.

There is a significant amount of water that drains down through the site from above. The applicant is planning on capturing that water in the rear lots of the residence so it doesn't drain through their entire yard. It will be captured in the rear and brought down and out to Wunder Avenue.

In terms of the drains that the applicant is creating, they are proposing a drywell in the front yard to manage the stormwater that would generate on site. The drywell will run out to the street to the existing storm drain that was recently installed by the Township.

As part of the land development the applicant is proposing street trees along the frontage. Water and sewer will be connected to the existing system along Wunder Avenue. The applicant has several waivers that they are requesting. The applicant is requesting a fee in lieu of curbs and sidewalks and road widening.

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that because of the time that it took from submission, to being before Council this evening, the Bucks County Planning Commission Review letter is dated in 2023. There have been subsequent plan submissions made to the Township since that review letter was tendered. Some of the comments in that review letter are now will complies such that the waiver requests the applicant is seeking are accurately depicted in the latest WK2 letter. The County Commission Planning letter was commenting regarding the street trees and the applicant is doing everything they can to plant street trees.

Because of the drywell feature, covering both lots, there will be a shared maintenance agreement that will be tendered to the Township Solicitor for review which would jointly obligate both property owners to make sure that is maintained in perpetuity in the future. That would also be noted within the O & M Agreement that is provided by the Township for stormwater maintenance and provide the Township with enforcement rights.

Councilman Kisselback asked about the stormwater management system.

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that typically for residential development, there is either an on-lot stormwater system or typically if you have a larger development then it is managed by an Association. Because this is a two-lot subdivision with a stormwater facility that covers both properties, in order to make sure they are maintained correctly, there will be an agreement that will provide enforcement rights to the Township. Also, an affirmative obligation on both property owners to maintain the stormwater facility.

Council President Tokmajian asked what is the value of doing that versus just requiring independent water management to each one of the single homes, then enforcing the Township Code if for some reason something goes wrong? Because he is not considering this a subdivision. The applicant is subdividing a lot and building two homes, it's not a development.

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that they were viewing it as an additive aspect to the Township to make sure that Lot A for whatever reason in the future wasn't maintaining the system because it crosses the property line, and Lot B, then both property owners, as it would be recorded against the property would be aware that this is an obligation. If it is the Township's preference just to make sure that the lot two property owner for their portion and lot one is responsible for their portion and is depicted in the Township review letters and O & M Agreements, that would be fine just as well.

Council President Tokmajian asked if that would get filed with the County with the Deed?

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that it does.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that if the issue is that the years go by and the homes get sold, a lot of the time the property owners are not aware of those agreements. Closing on a house, people do not read the fine print. He is skeptical of a single stormwater management system for two different properties.

Councilman Kisselback disagrees with that premise. Two homes that are sharing the same system and if one side of the system goes bad, are both owners responsible for the system?

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that this would be the same concept as when Council approves a shared driveway. Ultimately it is expected that each homeowner would take care of the part on their side. However, the agreement is written so that it outs the equal obligation to maintain on both home owners. The important thing here from the Townships perspective is that it is a single drywell that operates as a single stormwater management facility.

As far as the Township would typically be concerned with handling something like this, the obligation falls equally on both homeowners for the maintenance of the entirety. If the Township has to go out under the Operation and Maintenance Agreement to maintain it because the property owners failed to do so, the Township will look to both homeowners to be responsible for reimbursing the Township for its cost.

The Agreement sort of forces the old adage "Good fences makes good neighbors". The Agreement is to make sure you don't have one property owner saying no and the other one saying yes.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that the first time they have a fight and they don't take care of it, you have an issue. That is going to be part of the problem. Are the inlets staying or are they being eliminated?

Mr. Richardson indicated that they were proposed inlets.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that there is fencing along the front with the trees, is the fence being eliminated because of the trees?

Mr. Richardson indicated that the fencing is being eliminated.

Council Vice President Sloane asked the Township Engineer, Phil Wursta, if the drywell is going to work, will it be effective? The soil is clay and does not absorb any of the stormwater which is the reason a lot of our roads and yards get flooded. If it is possible, or does it make sense to split that into two different drywells, one for each property and they operate independently. Or, is this more conducive? He foresees lots of problems between neighbors fighting over who actually is responsible and financially responsible if something goes wrong. Time and time again he has seen things like this in the Township, like shared driveways and stuff, he would prefer to avoid that situation which is reason why he is asking about splitting them up potentially.

Engineer Wursta indicated the specifics of the two together and the stormwater as it is laid out by the applicant should be effective, should work. The issue of the thing together is simply to make sure that the Township can intervene and take advantage as Mr. Pizzo had suggested to have the Township fix it. If someone has a fight and stormwater impacts the other one, then the Township can come in and do something about it. If you have two, it will work as well. But it'll be separate individual ones if one doesn't maintain what they are supposed to maintain then the Township would need another type of operating agreement to be able to go in and say the Township is going to take care of that.

Council President Tokmajian indicated to the Township Engineer, if you have one basin that's in the front yard that is combined the elevation of those two properties, theoretically you would expect that the southern property is going to get the impact of the water coming from the northern property. Then asked if it wouldn't make more sense to try and capture as much water as you could in that northern home before it hits that second home?

Engineer Wursta indicated that for the specifics of the design he would think that Mr. Richardson should comment on that.

Mr. Richardson indicated that the drainage is actually not along throughout the road so much. It's more from the rear of the lots to out to the street. It is more of 90° with to what Council President Tokmajian was just referring to. In addition, in regards to splitting it up or leaving it how the applicant has it where it is one. The applicant indicated that he likes to allow the drywells to some outlet. They don't have to be filled up and everything infiltrates or if you have some kind of humongous abnormally large storm that would potentially overflow them because they're beyond the design parameters. There is an existing pipe that runs down along the frontage, they didn't want to take a pipe from their lot directly out to the street.

In fact, the Township Engineer office asked the applicant not to do that. The applicant wanted to be able to drain this drywell out the street. They couldn't come out and connect into the pipe

indicated on the plans. The applicant had to come down to where the existing inlets are. What the applicant did by linking it together is they can have one outlet out to the street.

Councilman Knowles indicated that there is only an outlet on the house to the right.

Mr. Richardson indicated that only lot two has an outlet out to the street.

Council President Tokmajian asked if that is going to be able to handle the flow of both of those homes?

Mr. Richardson indicated that the design has been reviewed by the Township Engineer. The applicant will provide calculations for that.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that what Mr. Richardson was saying is that instead, if you looked at doing it the other way, you would have two outlets come from each of those properties. The one northern property you would hope that would hit that drain that's at that street at the southern property.

Mr. Richardson believes that what Council President Tokmajian is asking is if they let it bubble up out of the drywell and then across to the next lot?

Council President Tokmajian indicated no, if they had it independent of each other there would be two outlets come out of each one onto the street.

Engineer Wursta indicated that the way they were looking at this at the time was that it is not needed. This is the most efficient way to do it.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that the moment the second one clogs and it backs up and if something happens this neighbor is going to be fighting with the other neighbor. It is not the most neighbor friendly system; it is a shared property.

Mr. Richardson indicated that they did a soil test and one of the reasons that the drywell appears so large relative to the size of the houses or driveway is because there is a layer of relatively beneficial soils for infiltration, but they are not very deep. The system has to be squished down so it spreads it out, which is actually beneficial. That is what the PADEP recommends. It is one of the reasons why the system looks so big on paper because it is not overly deep and spread out to keep it shallow where they have infiltration rates.

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that in communicating with Mr. Alexander as to what the ideal design would be is if the Township's preference is that these are bifurcated and they're two separate systems that applicant does not particularly care which would be an accurate statement.

Councilman Knowles indicated that the applicant can make a pipe off of lot one and put that into lot two.

Mr. Richardson indicated that they can split the drywell, give it like a 5 ft. break at the property line, bring out the drywell from lot one. It would still have to cross lot two, but it would be just a pipe as an outlet pipe and bring it over to where the inlets are. The applicant can split the drywells apart.

Councilman Kisselback asked how different is this than just initiating a homeowner's agreement?

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that it is the same concept, it just obviously would relate to two properties instead of a development.

Councilman Kisselback asked if there is anything else that can be added to the homeowner's agreement that would supplement that part of it?

Solicitor Meginniss indicated on top of the agreement between the two property owners, the Township would still have a separate O & M agreement that would be supplied but would also have to be recorded against the property. That is what provides the Township with independent enforcement rights. There would be two documents, one would be the Standard O & M agreement with the specifics outlined and the other would be a bilateral agreement between the private property owners, in the event this is the systems that is maintained.

Councilman Knowles indicated that if you split the system, which the majority of the board seems to be consistent, then you need an agreement with lot one and an agreement with lot two, two separate agreements and then you're done, right?

Solicitor Meginniss indicated yes.

Council President Tokmajian indicated in terms of stormwater management, was there any consideration for putting raingardens in the backyard to try to mitigate the flow from the backyard to the front?

Mr. Richardson indicated that they generally try to avoid rain gardens. Most of the time he has been involved in numerous projects where raingardens were designed and then the homeowners get tired of them. There is a lot of maintenance and they tend to fail over time and draw mosquitos. Mr. Richardson regularly gets called in to redesign rain gardens after about 5 to 10 years, he generally likes to do drywells instead of raingardens.

Councilman Knowles asked Mr. Richardson if he could divide these tonight? Or does he have to go back and redo the plans and come back to Council?

Mr. Richardson indicated that in order to divide the drywell to provide some separation at the property line, they would have to revise the plans and revise the calculations. Conceptually it's going to be similar. It would still be a drywell along the front.

Council President Tokmajian asked Solicitor Pizzo or Solicitor Holbert if Council decides to move forward with splitting this, would he recommend that Council table the item? Or would it be acceptable that it be contingent on approval of the water management by the Township Engineer?

Solicitor Holbert indicated that this is something that Council could do, it would be a conditional approval. Council could approve it subject to condition exactly that the applicant properly divide the stormwater management, create two systems, calculations are reviewed and approved by the Township Engineer.

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that it would not require any additional waivers signed by the Township.

Councilman Kisselback needed an explanation regarding what it means on the Bucks County Planning Commission on page 2 Section B, 196-31 (k) to permit 14-hour drainage time from the end of the design storm instead of the required 24-72 hour required drainage time?

Mr. Richardson indicated that it was based on an older plan. That plan has been revised with the plan that is currently in front of Council. That waiver no longer applies.

Council President Tokmajian indicated just to clarify that the complete waivers listed on the WK2 review letter and they are all still accurate as submitted this evening.

Councilman Knowles indicated if Council does these waivers, are the amounts already determined as to what is owed or are they going to be based on approval from the Township Engineer?

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that the amounts are noted in the body of the plan.

Council Secretary Wenzel referred to a review letter dated in 2023 from then Battalion Chief Sponheimer to submit that with address request to the Township and further asked it has been completed?

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that it would be completed after it has been approved and then an address would be assigned.

Council Vice President Sloane asked how do these lots compare in size to the neighboring properties?

Solicitor Meginniss indicated that he knew that the minimum lot size is 7,500.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated not the minimum but the actual lot sizes of the neighborhood.

Mr. Richardson showed an aerial photograph of the neighborhood and their proposed site is in the middle of the photograph and indicated that the lot size was pretty typical for the area.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this project. The following constituents came forward:

Linda Dudek, 4880 Wunder Avenue, lives directly across the street from this project and her main concern is the water. 10-15 years ago, a house was built on the extension of that property and immediately the flooding became worse. The Township came in and put in more stormwater drains. This Winter, the only reason the stormwater drains worked because her husband had to clear the drains. Are the neighbors going to clear them over there? It is a concern because if they don't clear the drains the water is going to go into her garage.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that with the Township land development. The developer is required to ensure that they put in place stormwater management to handle the

increase in the impervious space. As you can see, all of Council has been asking questions about the stormwater management because they are very concerned about flooding as well.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that it sounds like there might be less an issue with the particular property as it is with maintaining the existing stormwater drains.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that when there is an issue and they get clogged up they would encourage her to reach out to the Township.

Raymond Dudek, 4880 Wunder Avenue, indicated that one of the problems with his property is because you have slopes coming down on both sides. There was a really bad storm in early 2000 and then it dumped really hard, it literally filled up that street and it got into their garage about 6 inches of water. The neighbor next door at 4890 the water went into their home up over their step, he thinks they sit a little lower than their home. He is really worried about another bad storm and if it happened once, it could happen again. Another concern is the dirt they are going to use, are they building it up, are they slopping it? Will it push water over to his side? Plus, if the houses are built at the same level as his house, then they are going to get flooded out for sure.

Council President Tokmajian asked how the drainage was doing lately.

Mr. Dudek indicated that it was draining well, but if you get a bad storm, maybe not so well.

Solicitor Meginniss thought it important to make the neighbors feel a little bit better and indicated that unlike a lot of applications they actually have a reduction currently with this proposal of impervious surface on this site. A couple of years ago when you would submit a land development application, you would say that you are reducing impervious surface, that should allow the applicant to not to have to install any stormwater controls because they're going to get less runoff after they develop this than they are presently because they're cutting impervious surface and adding green space.

But in this instance, they are in addition to reducing the impervious surface, they have designed the stormwater controls as if this was just grass right now. For anyone who's experiencing runoff and they might be relative to the site now. They are getting a reduction of impervious when it is right now. Then on top of that, the stormwater controls are designed to pretend like this is a meadow presently. If he was a neighbor along Wunder Avenue he would be hardened by the fact that there is both a reduction on top of the stormwater system.

Council President Tokmajian asked Solicitor Meginniss to please explain what he means by that he is reducing the impervious and is there a foundation that is on that second property?

Mr. Richardson indicated that everything that has the cross or the hatch lines in it on the plan, that's all-impervious surface.

Solicitor Meginniss added that it should be a big improvement.

Council Vice President Sloane motioned to approve the minor subdivision of Wunder Avenue property, TMP 02-005-187-001 with the requested waivers:

1. Sec. 201-41.(d).9 to not require all existing sewer lines, water lines, fire hydrants, utility transmission lines, culverts, bridges, railroads, or other manmade features within the

proposed subdivision and/or land development within 400 feet of the boundaries of the proposed subdivision and/or land development.

2. Sec. 201-87.(a). To permit a combined preliminary/final subdivision.
3. Sec.201-104.(b).(1). To provide frontage widening and curbing.
4. Sec. 201-110.(b). to not require the curbs and cartway widening.
5. Sec. 201-111.(a). Sidewalks with a fee in lieu of for curbs and sidewalks.
6. Sec. 196-61.(b).(1). To permit HDPE and PVC pipes instead of Reinforced Concrete Pipes, and to allow pipes smaller than 18”.

All of this is conditional on a revised stormwater management that reflects bifurcated drywells or bifurcated stormwater management facilities on each independent property subject to the review and approval by the Township Engineer.

And a fee in lieu of for the not widening of the roadway.

Councilman Kisselback seconded.

Council President Tokmajian asked Solicitor Holbert if he could just ensure that everything was captured for the motion.

Solicitor Holbert checked all the required fees and indicated that there is a fee in lieu of \$2,000 for the recreational land. There is a fee in lieu of for the widening and curbing. There is also a fee in lieu of not to install sidewalks. Traffic Impact Fee in the amount of \$597.82.

Council Vice President Sloane amended his motion to make sure all of those fees are included.

Councilman Kisselback amended his seconded motion.

Township Engineer Wursta indicated to make sure that includes everything in the Township Engineer’s letter regarding fees.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated a will comply with everything in the Township Engineer’s letter dated April 6th, 2026. As well as will comply with any remaining issues form the Bucks County Planning Commission letter dated November 29th, 2023.

Solicitor Holbert added the submission of legal descriptions for the new lots in advance of the deeds for his review.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated including the required descriptions there for legal review.

Councilman Kisselback amended his seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Council President Tokmajian asked the Dudeks if they foresee any particular issues to reach out to the Township Building and Planning, or the Mayor's office with any issues post development or during construction, please reach out and let someone know.

7A. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE BENSLEM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (BEDC) ENGAGING TIP STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP AN ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR BENSLEM TOWNSHIP:**

Robert Norkus, Executive Director of the Bensalem Economic Development Corporation indicated that Bensalem Township is faced with what most communities in the country and a lot of the ones around the world are faced with and that is a new economy. It has changed things radically and know where we are in that transition, but we really don't know where we are going. It's not finished yet.

With that in mind, the effect that it has on our communities is substantial and we find that as an organization we really have to adapt. We have to change. The best companies are now looking at communities where labor is available. That is just one small example of the difference in what they have been doing as economic developers are faced with. That holds true for the Chamber of Commerce and similar organizations.

Mr. Norkus suggested to the thirteen EDC board members that they turn to some expertise and found through a bidding process, they were able to get about five or six substantial companies to answer their submission for analysis. After the interviews with the firms, they settled on TIP Strategies, which is out of Houston.

The goal is to come up with a plan that will not get stacked on a shelf., but with something that is orchestrated for implementation. TIP Strategies is familiar with the issue, they specialize in it.

The EDC had to apply for an application for a Grant and file it with the state of Pennsylvania as soon as possible. The application is quite an ordeal that consists of a checklist and a guide. Unfortunately, in that process, although the EDC provided a Resolution, it was noted that a Resolution from the Council of the municipality applying for that Grant needed to be issued.

Mr. Norkus provided a draft Resolution based on similar Resolutions that Council has supplied to the State. The EDC is not asking for anything from Council other than support and there is no funding from the Township.

The Grant that the EDC is applying for is a 50/50 Grant. If awarded, it will pay for half of the consultant fee. The consultants service should continue into the first quarter of 2027 and will be very extensive. It will involve the Township, the residents and primary stakeholders.

Mr. Norkus had sent an email to Council which addresses the purpose, the background and the need and why the EDC choose TIP Strategies and the role of the EDC and the core focus areas. It also highlighted the benefit and financial responsibility and a recommendation. The

recommendation was that Council approve a pretty straight-forward Resolution so that Mr. Norkus can submit it to the State late, but in time for the approval process.

Council President Tokmajian inquired about the 50/50 Grant and the cost being \$110,000 and asked if it is a 50/50 Grant who covers the other half?

Mr. Norkus indicated that the EDC is covering the cost.

Council President Tokmajian asked if the study will have any negative or positive impact of any of the currently ongoing projects within Bensalem?

Mr. Norkus indicated that it would have a positive impact, not a negative impact.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he is aware that the Township does a Comprehensive Plan. Will this coordinate and look at the Comprehensive Plan?

Mr. Norkus indicated that as far as he knows the Comprehensive Plan is not completed for its current cycle. TIP Strategies will analyze any Comprehensive Plan existing or previous. As a caveat the EDC is paying TIP Strategies to help reorganize the EDC in keeping with the new economy in the future and the fee for that is \$10,000 which the EDC will be paying for that fee.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that he liked the strategy. It mentioned one of the key components identifications of industry clusters aligned with community strengths. He would also like to identify where the weak areas are and did see that being one of the core focus areas and would like Mr. Norkus to comment to that. It also talks about commercial and corridor revitalization in repositioning aging commercial properties, reuse of underutilized site. There are a lot of vacant properties in the Township, even vacant commercial spaces and was wondering how all this fits into that, trying to identify those as potential targets and what potential uses and things like that. And asked if all of that gets incorporated?

Mr. Norkus indicated absolutely, which is one of the core goals of the whole thing is aging. TIP Strategies will help to strategically figure these things out.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that it mentions to provide regular reporting to the Township Council and asked Mr. Norkus what that cadence of reporting will look like.

Mr. Norkus indicated that he is kind of fanatical about that kind of stuff, and said that he would not want to inundate Council, but would assure them that as time goes by that there would not be much that they won't be aware of.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that one of the last things in Mr. Norkus' memo that raised his hackles a little bit was that the authorization will send a signal that "Bensalem is open for business" and was curious as to what that statement means.

Mr. Norkus indicated that we are open for business in a business sense. TIP Strategies perception is whether or not Bensalem is open for business or not. Do we have walls up? Do we have a plan? What is Bensalem going to look like in 10-15 years? Intelligent people are going to answer these questions.

Council Vice President Sloane asked if they will look at the Township's Municipal Code and look at what the Township's barriers to business?

Mr. Norkus indicated absolutely; it is in TIP Strategies contract.

Councilman Kisselback indicated that basically this is covering commercial, industrial, home, apartments and institutional, then expressed, whoever comes in first gets the location?

Mr. Norkus indicated not necessarily because part of the attraction has always been a little bit happenstance. People ask for a Trader Joe's, they want this one and that one. Its aspirational but the Township is not going to get a Wegman's. The search is dependent on the analysis of several criteria. The Township wants to make an educated approach towards businesses that the Township wants to attract. There has to be a reasoning for which businesses the Township wants to attract.

The Mayor indicated that the stakeholders are important in this. Council is a stakeholder. There will be different people come aboard, whether it is real estate or whatever you can see that can help. It is going to be comprehensive and will not happen overnight.

Mr. Norkus indicated there are stakeholders that are not directly involved as stakeholders, there's a fringe around that. They'll be involved too. The community will be involved.

The Mayor indicated that Council will be aware of the stakeholders that come on board.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he wanted to make sure that it's not ultimately replacing the Comprehensive Plan and that it is going to be a valuable addition to that Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Norkus indicated about 2 ½ years ago the EDC, at their own expense, paid \$25,000 to a New York firm, HR&A, to come to Bensalem to do a SWOT analysis which is a strategic planning tool to evaluate an organization's internal strengths and weaknesses alongside external opportunities and threats to guide decision-making and strategy developemnt.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that typically, when he sees something like this in regards to a plan, but then all of a sudden nothing is going to happen. We are using taxpayer dollars to fund something that will never be.

Mr. Norkus indicated that the Township is not using taxpayer dollars. These funds are the EDC funds which are a product of EDC investments. They do not want to misappropriate any spending's for something that would sit on the shelf. In the contract with TIP Strategies,

it is noted that it's designed for implementation. TIP Strategies engage from day one with implementation as they move forward as a goal.

Council Secretary Wenzel asked what the turn-around time for them to do this and when do they start?

Mr. Norkus indicated that they were speculating that they would finish in December, but that was predicated on them starting in March. Now, it looks to be the first quarter of 2027.

Council Secretary Wenzel's concern is with this, TIP Strategies comes back and says to revitalize and revamp Bensalem they would need to develop the mall, develop Armstrong property, put in bike lanes, put in sidewalks. A lot of that, it's a realistic feature but at the same time without developers the Township can't handle that. The Township is not buying property and building buildings on it. He sees some value but not a whole lot of value in this. At no cost to the taxpayers, that is fine, go for it. If the Township does this and their pinpoints comeback and they say based on historic data Bensalem thrived in the 90's and early 2000's with a thriving mall, so, redevelop the mall. Bensalem thrived with XY and Z, the population of Bensalem has gone up and there is a need for more sidewalks and bike lanes. His main concern is the plan is contingent on a lot of variables. If they say redevelop the mall and the mall never gets redeveloped then what could be done? There are too many things that just don't sit right.

Mr. Norkus indicated that he already held their feet to the fire on that point. Right from the get-go there is an understanding, for example, he asked TIP Strategies the question if we have a mall owned by somebody who lives remotely that is a cash cow farm and not taking care of maintenance, they could care less about anything. How do we get them to change? That's what we need to know. We don't need to know what needs to be changed, we need to know how we pressure them.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that not only is it going to identify areas of redevelopment, but it's also going to help point direction in terms of how we effectuate that redevelopment has to be.

Mr. Norkus indicated that we know better than anybody what needs to be done. We want to know how to do it. One other caveat is the necessity of a mall. The property where the mall was is something that can create a new standard.

Councilman Knowles indicated that he liked the name of the company, TIP Strategies because he thinks this is going to be "tips" for us. He indicated that he hopes Mr. Norkus understands that if the study says we need to do certain things and even if the EDC is enthusiastic about it, the Administration and Council also have to agree that we are doing these things. It is not a mandate that we have to do these things. These are going to be suggestions and "tips" of what they think it would be best for us to move forward. But the community of Bensalem, the Mayor, Council will need to agree that these are steps and are a good idea. We will learn what is a good idea and what is not such a good idea.

Mr. Norkus indicated that he may sound a little redundant in this sense, regarding stakeholders, Council is a stakeholder, the Administration is a stakeholder. If you are in it from the beginning, you have a voice and are encouraged to express your concerns. You can expect that TIPS Strategies is going to give you a satisfactory answer. If not, we are stuck and if we are stuck, we have to push until we move forward again.

Councilman Knowles wanted to make sure that this is not a mandate that they're going to give us. This is going to be a suggestion and work along that gives us a lot of great ideas and a lot of thought pattern about what we should do for the future. Hopefully, we will learn a lot from this and be able to move forward.

Mr. Norkus indicated that TIP Strategies is a credible company who deals with it all of the time.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the Resolution before Council was submitted by the Solicitor to the EDC and he had an opportunity to review it and it is perfectly fine.

Council President Tokmajian asked Solicitor Pizzo if he saw the language of the Grant?

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that he did not, but it is his understanding that consistent with the Resolution, that the Township is not obligated to provide any funding should the Grant be awarded, and as is true with any Grant that might be awarded by the State. Once it comes through for whatever reason, where the Township is involved, the Township would always have the ability to say yes, say no, what have you. But in this case, the Grant application is through the EDC. All that Council is doing is telling the State that they are on board.

Council President Tokmajian indicated, so conversely then, if the Grant is not awarded, he is assuming that they are executing an agreement with TIP Strategies based off of the contingency of the Grant being approved. And if it is not approved, then we would have no financial requirement or obligation to TIP Strategies.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that when you are saying "we" the contract is between the EDC and TIP Strategies. The Township is not a party to the contract and is not a signatory to the contract.

Mr. Norkus indicated that they are not going to execute any contract until they know.

Councilman Knowles indicated that it made him feel good that Mr. Norkus put in the last paragraph that nothing in this Resolution shall be considered as obligating the Township to expend funds unless until such expenditures are separately organized by the Township Council in accordance with applicable law.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he understands that, he was just looking on behalf of and wanted clarification from the Council.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that at some point Council may want to contribute funds. At the moment Council is obligated to nothing, just showing your support.

Council Vice President Sloane motioned to approve the Resolution expressing support for the Bensalem Economic Development Corporation engaging TIP Strategies to develop an economic revitalization plan for Bensalem Township. **Councilman Kisselback** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he is looking forward to an update regarding TIP Strategies.

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:**

Engineer Wursta indicated that he heard it was someone's birthday today.

Councilman Knowles indicated that he appreciated all of Council's input regarding TIP Strategies and was looking forward to the study.

Council Secretary Wenzel wished the Mayor a Happy Birthday!

Council Vice President Sloane thanked everyone for their patience and flexibility tonight. It was Valley Elementary School Spring Band Concert and his son was playing in the band. Wished the Mayor a Happy Birthday!

Councilman Kisselback wished the Mayor a Happy Birthday!

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the bodies of the other two Iron Workers that were killed in Wednesday's tragedy were recovered today. Asked everyone to keep the families of those three individuals in their thoughts and prayers. Wished the Mayor a Happy Birthday!

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he wanted to be transparent with the board and the public. This past, Friday he met with the Mayor, the Director of Public Safety and the Director of Administration to begin the proactive budget discussions continuing the commitment that was shared at the first Council meeting. To work collaboratively with the Administration. It was a productive and constructive conversation focused on alignment, long-term planning and maintaining fiscal discipline as they look ahead to the future priorities here in Bensalem.

The Mayor thanked everyone for wishing him a Happy Birthday and presenting him with a cake. The Mayor's sincere wish was that they have the opportunity to have a good long healthy life.

Bensalem celebrated its 300th birthday back in 1992 and the country is celebrating its 250th anniversary of freedom this year.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of April 13th, 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**