

**BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**  
Borough Council Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
November 27, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Far Hills Municipal Building and read the open public meetings statement in accordance with the law.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Welsh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Councilman Peter J. Coccoziello, Jr., Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Kevin P. Welsh

Absent, as Excused: Council President David P. Karner, Councilman Rick Rinzler

Absent:

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Chief Michael DeCarolis, Borough Attorney Albert E. Cruz, Borough Engineer Paul Ferriero

**REPORTS**

**Councilman Coccoziello – Roads**

Councilman Coccoziello reported the milling and paving of the section of Lake Road, spanning from the intersection of Hidden Valley Road to the beginning of the lake by the dam, was recently completed. A brief discussion ensued regarding the paving on Lake Road and the recent improvements to Pennbrook Road which were well received by residents. Mayor Welsh added that the Borough recently was awarded a NJDOT grant for drainage and paving improvements to the section of Lake Road spanning from Route 202 to approximately the intersection of Hidden Valley Road.

He continued noting that he and Mayor Welsh reviewed the condition of each roadway throughout the Borough and would be preparing a long-term capital improvement plan. He added that ongoing maintenance, specifically the clearing of the storm drain inlets, was vital to the longevity of these road repairs.

Councilman Coccoziello stated that he, Mayor Welsh, and Council President Karner attended a virtual meeting on November 17, 2023 with representatives from the NJDOT regarding the proposed stone façade treatment the Borough had requested for the Route 202 bridge replacement project over the North Branch of the Raritan River. Mayor Jacobs of Bedminster Township attended and also supported a stone façade treatment. Councilman Coccoziello indicated the project was anticipated to commence in 2025 and would require a full road closure for approximately six months. The improvements also include a sidewalk and bike lane on both sides of the roadway.

**Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation**

No report.

**Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance**

No report.

## **Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws & Ordinances**

No report.

## **Chief DeCarolis**

Chief DeCarolis reported the advertisement for the police officer position was posted on the Borough website and resumes were being reviewed.

He informed the Borough Council that a tree had fallen across Route 202 near Lake Road and Fox Hunt Court necessitating the closure of the roadway for approximately two hours.

## **Mayor Welsh**

Mayor Welsh wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and expressed his appreciation to the members of the Borough Council for their dedication.

He invited everyone to attend the second annual Holiday Event which will be held on Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds. Former Mayor Vallone has been invited to officially light the tree this year. Mayor Welsh also extended his appreciation to the members of the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department for their assistance in hanging the lights on the tree and pavilion, especially noting Messrs. Steve and Matt Draheim.

Lastly, he reported he attended the NJ League of Municipalities Convention on November 15 and 16, 2023 which was a great opportunity to meet many of the Borough's partners as well as attend seminars and explore the products and services from numerous vendors.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

11/13/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Carty, was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content and release.

### **PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION**

Mayor Welsh shared an email that he received from Dr. Gains Mimms regarding the exemplary efforts of Officer Ryan Spender who responded to a medical emergency involving his wife, Brigitte. While the Mimms were unable to attend tonight's meeting, they wished to express their sincere appreciation to Officer Spender for his kindness, sensitivity, humanity, and ultimate professionalism.

Chief DeCarolis and Mayor Welsh presented a Certificate of Commendation to Officer Ryan Spender which was met with a round of applause.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION**

#### **ORDINANCE 2023-21 - AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS OF YARD WASTE THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**

Borough Engineer, Paul Ferriero provided a brief overview of Ordinance 2023-21 and indicated that the first five ordinances have been required of Tier A municipalities for several years. As the Borough has been recently reclassified from a Tier B to a Tier A municipality, it was one of the NJDEP stormwater permitting requirements to adopt these regulations.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the collection of leaves and it was noted that they are now prohibited to be blown in the street. Mr. Ferriero suggested that a letter from Mayor Welsh be sent to residents and businesses to provide a brief description of each ordinance and the required compliance regulations.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-21.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired how this ordinance would be implemented and enforced.

Mr. Ferriero responded that there is a requirement for education of borough personnel as well as to disseminate this information to the public. The ordinance provides that a notice of violation or summons could be issued by the Far Hills Police Department or other designated personnel.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-21.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-21 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

#### **ORDINANCE 2023-22 – AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING WILDLIFE FEEDING ON PUBLIC PROPERTY THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**

Mr. Ferriero provided a brief overview of Ordinance 2023-22.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-22.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-22.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-22 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

**ORDINANCE 2023-23 – AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS FOR PRIVATE STORM DRAIN INLET RETROFITTING THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**

Mr. Ferriero provided a brief overview of the regulations for retrofitting storm drain inlets on private property.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the notification requirements to business owners and property managers pertaining to the regulations of the storm drain inlets on their private property associated with a paving project. It was noted there was also general information and FAQ's regarding these changes in the stormwater permitting process on the NJDEP website. Ms. Hicks added there was also a dedicated stormwater management page on the Borough website and once these ordinances are adopted by the Borough Council, they will be added to the page.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-23.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired if a permit was required for paving.

Mr. Ferriero responded that a permit was not required for paving projects.

Don Hewitt, 23 Dumont Road, Far Hills sought clarification regarding the lot and impervious coverage limitations for paving projects.

Mr. Ferriero responded that there were limitations pertaining to lot coverage requirements and a zoning permit may be required if the current impervious coverage was increased.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-23.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-23 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

**ORDINANCE 2023-24 – AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING THE IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF WASTE IN THE STORM SEWER SYSTEM OWNED OR OPERATED BY THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**

Mr. Ferriero provided an overview of the ordinance and waste items such as litter, paint, oil that were prohibited from being disposed in the storm sewer system. It was noted that gutter leaders, flushing water lines, sump pump discharge, air conditioning condensate, irrigation water and residential car washing were permitted to be discharged into the storm sewer system.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-24.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired why it was called a storm sewer system as he believed it was not a sewer.

Mr. Ferriero clarified that “storm sewer system” was the correct nomenclature as defined in the MS4 permit.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-24.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-24 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

**ORDINANCE 2023-25 – AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING ILLICIT CONNECTIONS TO THE MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM(S) OPERATED BY THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**

Mr. Ferriero provided a brief overview of the types of illicit connections into the storm sewer system such as a sanitary connection, wastewater from a washing machine or a salon hair washing sink. Mr. Ferriero indicated that these connections would need to be made into the sanitary sewer system and not into the storm sewer system.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-25.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired if these illicit connections were being done by the contractors installing the equipment and if there was any connections to the ground water associated with the Kimbolton (Errico Acres) development.

Mr. Ferriero responded the older connections were typically a problem and explained the difference between ground water and an illicit connection discharge. He further explained that the Kimbolton development does not connect to the Borough’s MS4 system. He briefly reviewed the functioning of the onsite sewerage treatment facility at the development as well as the operating and monitoring requirements of the NJDEP and Health Department.

Councilman Coccoziello sought clarification as to the wording of the “separate” storm sewer system in this ordinance.

Mr. Ferriero explained that the MS4 is the generic term for the Borough’s storm sewer system and explained the difference between the sanitary sewer system and the storm sewer system as well as defined what constituted an illicit connection.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-25.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-25 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

### **ORDINANCE 2023-26 – AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS TO THE STORAGE OF SALT ON PRIVATE PROPERTY THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**

Mr. Ferriero indicated that this was the first of two new ordinances now being required under the Tier A permitting regulations. He reiterated that the previous five ordinances have been long established in the storm water permitting process but were now required by the Borough of Far Hills due to the change from a Tier B to a Tier A municipality.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-26.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-26.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-26 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The items listed within the consent agenda portion of the meeting have been referred to the Borough Council for reading and study; a copy placed on the table in the meeting room and is considered routine and will be enacted with one motion the Borough Council with no separate discussion. If separate discussion is required, the item may be removed from the agenda by Borough Council action and placed on the regular agenda under new business.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. Resolution 23-178 – Accepting Resignation – Police Detective
2. Resolution 23-179 – Authorizing Refund of Planning Board Escrow
3. Resolution 23-180 – Awarding Contract – Snow Removal and Ice Control Services  
Baza Landscaping

4. Resolution 23-181 – Awarding Contract – Employee Assistance Program  
AHS Hospital Corp.
5. Resolution 23-182 – Payment of Bill List

Regarding the snow removal contract, Councilman Coccoziello inquired how the number of inches of snowfall was verified. Ms. Hicks responded that the National Weather Service report was utilized.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Resolutions 23-178 through 23-182 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – *The Mayor and Council welcome comments from any member of the public. To help facilitate an orderly meeting and to permit the opportunity for anyone who wishes to be heard, speakers shall limit their comments to 5 minutes.*

Mayor Welsh opened the meeting to public comment.

Don Hewitt, 23 Dumont Road, Far Hills commented upon the discussion at a prior Planning Board meeting regarding establishing easements on large lots, similar to Moorland Farm in the Borough and expressed concern as to the potential negative impact upon the value of the property.

Mayor Welsh responded the Planning Board, as required, was in the process of reviewing the Borough's Master Plan and any changes would require the adoption of an ordinance by the Borough Council.

Mr. Cruz added that the Master Plan was just that, a plan, which would be implemented through land use ordinances adopted by the Borough Council. He further explained that ordinances must follow the proper noticing and public hearing requirements governed by state statute.

A general discussion ensued regarding Green Acres and Open Space requirements pertaining to conservation easements and the potential constraints that could be placed upon a property owner under these programs.

Councilman Coccoziello suggested that the review of the Master Plan be extended to a subcommittee comprised of elected officials, professionals, business owners and residents to ensure the goals and objectives for the Borough were considered from all perspectives. He also mentioned the less restrictive components of utilizing a land trust for conservation easements and stated that a visual depiction of these details and easements might be beneficial to fully understanding the impact.

Councilwoman Chimenti commented that the Planning Board was thoroughly reviewing the elements of the Master Plan and there have been lengthy discussions at several meetings regarding the conservation easements in particular and comments from the public are always welcome.

Mayor Welsh concurred with Councilwoman Chimenti indicating that the Master Plan review has been a topic of discussion at the last four or five Planning Board meetings.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the timing for the completion of the Master Plan review as well as the regulations regarding appointments to the Planning Board.

Mayor Welsh responded that he anticipated the Master Plan review would be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the deadline for the Master Plan review.

Mr. Cruz responded the Master Plan must be reviewed every ten (10) years as required by state statute and it was noted that the Borough's Master Plan review was already two years past due. The Planning Board serves as an independent body from the Borough Council and the members are mayoral appointments.

Mr. Ferriero stated that the Master Plan consists of recommendations that are presented to the Borough Council which could then be enacted through the adoption of the respective ordinances.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills sought clarification as to the dismissal of members appointed to the Planning Board as well as the appointment of the Planning Board attorney.

Mr. Cruz responded that members can not be removed from the Planning Board by the Borough Council without just cause and the Planning Board was responsible for the appointment of the Planning Board attorney. He further reviewed the terms of the appointments for the different member classes.

A brief discussion ensued regarding members of the Borough Council attending Planning Board meetings. Mr. Cruz stated that while members of the Borough Council were not legally prohibited from attending a Planning Board meeting his recommendation would be that a governing body member must exercise caution when attending a Planning Board meeting and to be clear that they are attending as a resident and not as a member of the Borough Council.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to close public comment.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

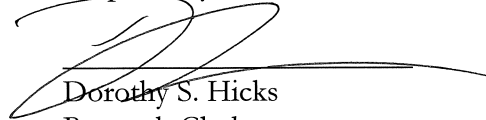
**Resolution 23-183** - Pending Litigation - Peace and Quiet Farm, LLC v. Borough of Far Hills

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilman Coccoziello and unanimously carried to approve Resolution 23-183.

## **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Dorothy S. Hicks  
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 12-11-2023