

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
December 14, 2020
VIA CONFERENCE CALL ONLY

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vallone called the conference call meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and read the open public meetings statement in accordance with the law.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Vallone led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilman Richard Hand, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Absent, as Excused: Councilman Joseph Carty

Absent

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo, and Chief of Police Michael DeCarolis

REPORTS

Councilman Hand – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds

No report.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman McLean – Roads

Councilman McLean provided an update on the road projects indicating that the Minebrook Road Improvements Project, a joint project with Bernards Township and funded primarily through a NJDOT grant, was completed today. A brief discussion ensued regarding extras requested from the contractor due to delays in paving caused by the intermittent school-bussing schedule.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances & Elections

Councilwoman Chimenti reported the Municipal Court was adjourned until the end of the year.

She also acknowledged the resignation of Ms. Brenda Zimmerman who has served as the Borough's Deputy Court Administrator for more than ten years. Ms. Hicks noted that a retirement gift basket was sent to Ms. Zimmerman on behalf of the Borough.

Mayor Vallone also commended the dedication and professionalism of Ms. Zimmerman.

Council President Karner – Police

Council President Karner reviewed the November 2020 Police Report.

He noted two candidates from the Far Hills Police Department were interviewed for the Corporal position and a selection would be finalized soon.

Council President Karner shared a letter from a Mrs. Kaimer who expressed her appreciation and commended the efforts of Detective Kamieniecki.

He also provided an update on the Borough's 100th Anniversary celebration to be held on May 15, 2021 and encouraged everyone to mark their calendars.

Lastly, he provided a brief overview of the drainage issues regarding several properties along Dumont Road and DeMun Place that remain problematic despite the drainage improvement project recently completed by the Borough. He suggested that connections into the older drainage system by property owners in this area be restricted. He noted that he has had many discussions with the property owners and indicated that the residents would be submitting a formal letter to the Borough. A brief discussion ensued regarding the Peapack Gladstone Bank property owned by Nervine Associates and the adjoining properties pertaining to the existing drainage system.

Mr. Sordillo advised that regulations would need be in the form of an ordinance, which could require a site plan approval by the Planning Board for any new improvements that were planned to drain into the existing system.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis reported that the American Express Holiday Lights event held at Moorland Farm was running well with minimal impact on traffic. He also provided a brief overview of the Drive Sober End of Year Mobilization Grant, which provides the police department with funding for additional hours for this enforcement detail.

Mayor Vallone

Mayor Vallone commented that the holiday light event was well received by residents and was already sold out for the coming weekend.

He apprised the Council of the conference call meeting with the NJDOT, held on December 7, 2020 regarding the Route 202 Bridge over the N. Branch of the Raritan River. The anticipated construction start date was in 2024, however, he noted that there would be additional meetings and information would be presented to the public in the future.

Mayor Vallone acknowledged the increases in Covid cases in Somerset County and throughout the Country and reminded everyone to remain vigilant in their precautionary measures.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

11/23/20 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content and release.

11/23/20 – Executive Session Minutes

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content only.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCE – PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE 2020-17 - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS TO TRANSFER AND DONATE THE REAL PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED AS BLOCK 8, LOTS 1.02 AND 1.03, BEING A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS 46 PEAPACK ROAD, TO THE MATHENY SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL, INC., FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROUP HOMES AS A MUNICIPALLY-SPONSORED AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the Ordinance and an update on the status of the Matheny Group home project.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to open the public hearing.

There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Hicks advised that the notice of the public hearing was published in the newspaper of record, and that no communication, either written or verbal was received regarding the Ordinance.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to close the public hearing.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that Ordinance 2020-17 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

Council President Karner inquired if Mr. Richard Alonso from Matheny had contacted the Borough regarding a photo shoot opportunity. Ms. Hicks responded that she was not aware of any inquiry.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2020-18 – AN ORDINANCE REPEALING ORDINANCE 2016-09 AND REPLACING SAME WITH REVISED AND UPDATED REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEWER FEES, RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND SEWER CONNECTIONS WITHIN SECTIONS OF THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS.

Mr. Sordillo provided an overview of the Ordinance and indicated that changes were necessary due some recent requests for adjustments as a result of water leaks. Mayor Vallone acknowledged the efforts of Councilwoman Tweedie, the Borough Sewer Consultant, Mr. Stern, Borough Tax Collector, Ms. McKenna, Ms. Hicks and Mr. Sordillo.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that Ordinance 2020-18 be adopted.

Roll Call:
Aye: Chimenti, Hand, Karner, Tweedie
Nay:
Abstain:
Recused: McLean
Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 20-147 – Confirming Resignation – Deputy Court Administrator
2. Resolution 20-148 – Authorizing Chapter 159 Grant
2020 Drive Sober End of Year Mobilization
3. Resolution 20-149 – Authorizing Transfer of Funds
4. Resolution 20-150 – Payment of the Bill List

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Resolutions 20-147 through 20-150 be approved.

Roll Call:
Aye: Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie
Nay:
Abstain:
Recused:
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.*

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to open the meeting for public comment.

Ms. Carol Bianchi, JCP&L External Affairs Representative provided a review of the various infrastructure improvements made by JCP&L to increase reliability and service to the residents of Far Hills. She also provided an update on the tree-trimming program that would occur in February 2021.

Ms. Karen Reilly, 7 Fox Hunt Court, Far Hills inquired as to the notification process for positive Covid cases in the Borough.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Hand to close the meeting for public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 20-151 - Attorney Client Privilege - Contract Negotiation - Affordable Housing Sewer Fees

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie and unanimously carried that Resolution 20-151 be approved.

Mr. Sordillo informed the public that no official action other than to adjourn the meeting would be taken after the conclusion of the Executive Session.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Hand and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dorothy S. Hicks', written over a horizontal line.

Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED - 12/28/2020