

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
May 23, 2022
Via Remote Meeting Access Only

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vallone called the remote meeting to order at 7:00 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 Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Councilman Kevin Welsh, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Absent, as Excused:

Absent:

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

REPORTS

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

Councilman Welsh provided an update on the improvements to the J. Malcolm Belcher fairgrounds and expressed his appreciation to the Recreation Committee for their efforts with a special thanks to Mr. Jerry Bird.

He noted the playground area needed weeding and suggested the Borough's contracted landscaper be contacted.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

Councilwoman Tweedie reported that due to significant rainfall in April and May, the percentage of purchased sewer capacity increased to 83% for the three-month rolling average and noted that if it increases to 90% then the user agreement with the EDC requires the Borough to impose a sewer moratorium on any additional connections.

Mr. Sordillo advised that the previously issued sewer moratorium was still in effect.

Councilman McLean – Roads

Councilman McLean inquired as to the timing of the construction for improvements to Pennbrook Road.

It was noted that the Borough Engineer was currently preparing the bid specifications and the project was anticipated to be awarded in Fall 2022.

Councilman Carty – Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances & Elections

Councilwoman Chimenti reported Judge Wong-Taylor has received requests to hold in-person court sessions at the Far Hills municipal building for select detailed cases.

A brief discussion ensued resulting in approval to hold in-person court sessions for select cases only pending authorization from the Somerset Court Vicinage 13 and coordination with Chief DeCarolis to ensure appropriate police coverage.

Council President Karner – Police

Council President Karner reported the Miles for Matheny event was scheduled for June 4, 2022 at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds.

He also stated the police department was currently participating in a distracted driver enforcement detail for the month of May. Lastly, he stated everything was copasetic in the Borough.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis provided additional details on the distracted driver enforcement detail. He also stated preparations were underway for the police coverage of the Miles for Matheny event.

Mayor Vallone

Mayor Vallone encouraged everyone to attend the Memorial Day parade to be held on Monday, May 30, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. Following the memorial services in Bedminster and Far Hills, refreshments would be provided at the J. Malcolm Belcher fairgrounds.

He also apprised the Borough Council of Senate Bill S2103 and Assembly Bill A1294 which were proposing changes to the municipality's authority regarding planning and zoning and the development of the Master Plan. He encouraged residents to contact their representatives to oppose this legislation. Ms. Hicks was asked to post this information on the Borough website.

Lastly, he expressed his appreciation to the Recreation Committee for their efforts in the improvements to the fairgrounds.

Councilman Carty inquired as to the cost for the repairs to the track after the Atlantic Visiting Nurse (AVN) rummage sale. Mayor Vallone responded that after lengthy discussions with representatives from the AVN, the Borough would be contributing approximately 40% of the total cost.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5/9/22 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE 2022-06 - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS TO TRANSFER AND DONATE THE REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS BLOCK 8, LOT 1, BEING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 46 PEAPACK ROAD, TO RARITAN VALLEY DEVELOPMENT CORP. FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE

HOUSING AS A MUNICIPALLY SPONSORED AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the Ordinance.

Motion by Mayor Vallone, seconded by Council President Karner was unanimously carried to open the public hearing.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired about the validity of the Reverter clause with the Matheny Group Home development due to the relocation of the Matheny School and Hospital from Bernardsville to Raritan.

Mr. Sordillo responded the relocation of the Matheny School and Hospital would have no bearing on the validity of the Reverter clause in the Borough's agreement and noted that Matheny operates group homes and facilities throughout the state of New Jersey.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired if the Reverter clause was being treated as a second mortgage for Raritan Valley Development Corporation (RVDC) pertaining to the 46 Peapack Road property. He also inquired why the property was being donated by the Borough to RVDC.

Mr. Sordillo provided an explanation of the Reverter clause in the agreement between the Borough and RVDC and confirmed that the Borough would not be providing any additional financial assistance to the developer. With regard to the donation of the property, RVDC would be building and operating the affordable housing units. It was determined to be in the best interest of the Borough at the time to not own or maintain the affordable housing units. Mr. Sordillo further indicated that the development of 46 Peapack Road was presented at prior Planning Board meetings and RVDC received the requisite approvals.

Mayor Vallone added that the Borough purchased that property with the intent of it being utilized for affordable housing purposes. The development of the Matheny group homes and the planned apartments with RVDC has greatly assisted the Borough in meeting its affordable housing obligations.

There were no further 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, was unanimously carried to close the public hearing.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that Ordinance 2022-06 be adopted.

Due to computer technical difficulties, Councilman McLean was unable to participate in the remainder of the meeting.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, Tweedie, Welsh

Nay:

Abstain:
Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS
ORDINANCES
INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2022-07 - AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$114,000.00 FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to introduce Ordinance 2022-07.

Roll Call:
Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, Tweedie, Welsh
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 22-078 – Authorizing Purchase of a Pierce Enforcer Pumper Truck
2. Resolution 22-079 – Authorizing Refund for the Overpayment of Taxes – Various Accounts
3. Resolution 22-080 – Authorizing Waiver Temporary Sign Permit – Miles for Matheny
4. Resolution 22-081 – Payment of Bill List

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Welsh that Resolutions 22-078 through 22-081 be approved.

Roll Call:
Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, Tweedie, Welsh
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion Carried.

Council President Karner commented that the installation of the signage for the Matheny event was delayed due to Matheny's late submission of the sign application and the required waiver request.

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 Chimenti to open the meeting to public comment.

Mark Vogel, 5 Spring Street, Far Hills commented there were two orange garbage bags near the river at the fairgrounds. He also inquired as to the current population of the Borough of Far Hills.

A brief discussion ensued resulting in the determination that the garbage bags may have been inadvertently left behind following the stream cleanup in April sponsored by the Raritan Headwaters Association (RHA). Ms. Hicks was asked to contact RHA to make arrangements for the proper disposal of the garbage.

The Borough website indicates 924 residents per the 2020 Census.

Don Hewitt, 23 Dumont Road, Far Hills inquired about the Borough's contributions for radio equipment for the Far Hills Bedminster First Aid Squad.

Mayor Vallone responded that the Borough makes an annual donation to the Far Hills Bedminster First Aid Squad. Council President Karner responded the Borough has been responsive to funding requests from both the first aid squad and fire department.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired about the pending legislation before the NJ Assembly and Senate previously mentioned by Mayor Vallone and if a task force would be established.

Mayor Vallone responded that he was just recently made aware of the proposed legislation and brought it to the attention of the Borough Council and it would continue to be monitored.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to close the meeting to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 22-082

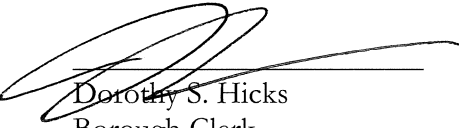
- Attorney Client Privilege - Contract Negotiation – Road Improvement Projects

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti and unanimously carried to approve Resolution 22-082.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 6/13/22