

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
September 12, 2022
IN PERSON MEETING AT MUNICIPAL BUILDING

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Karner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and read the open public meetings statement in accordance with the law.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Karner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Chimenti, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Councilman Kevin Welsh, Mayor David Karner
Absent, as excused: Councilman Ted McLean
Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Police Chief Michael DeCarolis, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Retirement of Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

On behalf of the Borough Council, Mayor Karner read the following statement honoring the service of Mayor Paul J. Vallone MD

Thank you to the departing - Borough of Far Hills Mayor, Paul J. Vallone.

Effective July 15, 2022, Mayor Paul J. Vallone resigned from his Mayoral ship to attend to his wife Janis' medical conditions. He served this Borough of Far Hills unselfishly and admirably for over a decade, eleven and one-half years to be exact. Our first in-person meeting was the plan to pay tribute to Mayor Vallone personally. Virtual meetings seem to lack true feelings of expressed sincere recognition during his eleven and one-half years of exemplary service to the borough where he orchestrated many great accomplishments.

Improved and maintained the borough's financial position over the years. Paying off all old debt and keeping the borough fiscally responsible. Keeping the Far Hills Tax Rate in the lowest 5% of all the municipalities in New Jersey.

Improved and maintained the borough's structural position. Unlimited focus paid to the following: Far Hills Administration (Borough Council, Borough Clerk, Borough Employees, Borough Attorneys, Borough Planners & Engineers), Far Hills Police Department, the Far Hills Road & Repair Infrastructure, Far Hills Fairgrounds, Somerset Hills VNA Rummage Sale relations, Far Hills Race Meeting Association, and many other areas that generated tremendous resources for the borough and residents of Far Hills.

A super thank you to Mayor Vallone for all his initial hard work and tenacity in complying with responsibilities presented to the borough by the Affordable Housing Group here in New Jersey. Particularly tedious and laborious because of the unwavering decisiveness of the New Jersey Supreme

Court. This alone accounted for numerous (hundreds) of hours in Trenton and other locations here in New Jersey campaigning for the rights of all Far Hills citizens.

Mayor Vallone introduced the Borough of Far Hills to the State of New Jersey through his presence and service on the Executive Committee for the New Jersey Conference of Mayors and service on the Legislative Committee for the New Jersey League of Municipalities. He was the voice of Far Hills in local, county, and state arenas where it was effective and meaningful. He was involved.

Emergency Management of the borough was also a position that Mayor Vallone did not take lightly, as he navigated the borough through two major, 100-year storms in Sandy and Ida, as well as many other smaller threats from nature. His familiarity with all emergency service personnel as well as NJ state utilities leadership promoted communication, protocol, and security while weathering these storms.

Appointing Mrs. Vallone to recreate the struggling recreation committee and together with the mayor's budget allocations, lead the improvements to the J. Malcolm Belcher fairgrounds.

Mayor Vallone, as the Mayor of Far Hills, your appointed Council President since day one of your Mayorship, the residents, the Far Hills Borough Council, and I have had the benefit of your leadership for eleven and one-half years. On behalf of the Borough Council, Far Hills borough employees, attorneys, engineers, planners and most importantly, the residents of this fine borough, Far Hills, New Jersey, we appreciate you and all you have accomplished to make Far Hills a better place to live.

Thank you for your service and my prayers to Janis for her continued health improvement and recovery. Janis is in Deidre's and my prayers. God Bless!

REPORTS

Council President Kevin Welsh – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds

Council President Welsh stated the AVN Rummage Sale was underway as the collection of donations commenced this weekend with the rummage sale to be held October 7-9, 2022. He noted during the installation of the tents, the water line was inadvertently punctured resulting in having to install a temporary bib. More permanent repairs would be scheduled following the rummage sale.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances & Elections

Councilwoman Chimenti stated Court Administrator Marjorie Freeman was expected to return to work in early October. She reported the Court proceedings were continuing to be held via Zoom and were running smoothly and acknowledged the efforts of Deputy Court Administrator Cathy Adamo and Municipal Judge Katty Wong-Taylor.

Councilman Rinzler - Police

Councilman Rinzler reviewed the August 2022 Police Report. He informed the Borough Council that one of the police vehicles was being outfitted to acknowledge Breast Cancer Awareness in October. He noted the Police Department was currently designing a new patch for their uniforms.

He also expressed appreciation to Chief DeCarolis for providing a review of the Far Hills Police Department Headquarters.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis informed the Borough Council he would be meeting with the representatives from the Far Hills Race Meeting Association in preparation for the Race Event to be held on October 15, 2022.

He stated the police radar sign has been installed along Peapack Road and indicated most citizens were driving within the speed limit. Chief DeCarolis expressed his appreciation to the Bedminster DPW for their assistance with relocating the sign.

With regard to the outfitting of the police car for Breast Cancer Awareness, the vehicle would also have a QR code which would provide access to breast cancer screening information.

Lastly, he reported the Somerset County Police Chiefs Association was sponsoring training for five candidates interested in becoming a police officer.

Mayor Karner

Mayor Karner reported he recently toured the Miller Lane Pumping Station with Mr. Rodney McCatharn, Acting DPW Director, Bedminster Township and reviewed the repairs that would be made utilizing the recently awarded grant funding. He noted the pumping facility provides sewer services to Bedminster, Far Hills and Peapack and Gladstone.

He also reviewed the drainage issue on the sidewalk adjacent to the Polo Club with Mr. Rodney McCatharn, Acting DPW Director, Bedminster Township. Mr. McCatharn proposed the removal of several sections of the sidewalk in order to increase the base material to improve the drainage. A cost estimate was currently being prepared for consideration by the Borough.

Mayor Karner stated an additional appointment to the Planning Board was on the agenda later this evening and also briefly reviewed the topics to be discussed in Executive Session.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

8/22/22 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

8/22/22 – Executive Session Minutes

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

PRESENTATION

Far Hills Race Meeting Association, Inc. – Guy Torsilieri, Co-Chair

Mr. Guy Torsilieri provided an overview of the Race Event scheduled for October 15, 2022 at Moorland Farm.

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 22-123 – Appointment – Planning Board
2. Resolution 22-124 – Authorizing Raffle License – Far Hills Race Meeting Association, Inc.
3. Resolution 22-125 – Appointment Temporary Qualified Purchasing Agent
and Temporary Acting Borough Clerk
4. Resolution 22-126 – Authorizing Waiver for Temporary Sign Permit – AVN Sale Fall 2022
5. Resolution 22-127 – Authorizing Serving of Alcohol at Fairgrounds – Volunteer Luncheon
AVN Sale Fall 2022
6. Resolution 22-128 – Support of NJDOT Route 202 Bridge over the North Branch of the
Raritan River Repair/Replacement Project
7. Resolution 22-129– Authorizing Payment of Bill List

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Resolutions 22-123 through 22-129 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Rinzler, Tweedie, Welsh

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION

Public Meeting Venue Policy

Council President Welsh stated the Borough Council would be monitoring the Far Hills Covid exposure report generated by the Somerset County Department of Health. If the report indicated a high exposure rate, a determination would be made whether to return temporarily to remote meetings. Adequate notice would be provided to residents via the website and the meeting agenda.

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 Welsh, seconded by Councilman Rinzler to open the meeting to public comment.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the status of the financial impact study for the Errico Acres/Residences at Overleigh development. He also referenced a recent article in the Bernardsville News regarding an affordable housing project in the Borough of Bernardsville which utilized the firm he had originally recommended to the Borough.

Mayor Karner responded the Borough Council would be reviewing the analysis recently conducted by the Borough Tax Assessor, Ed Kerwin and decide whether to proceed with contracting with an independent firm to conduct the financial impact study. He added that the qualifications of several companies were concurrently being reviewed should that be the determination of the Council.

Dr. George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills echoed the comment from Mr. Schwester regarding the importance of a financial impact study for the Errico Acres/Residences at Overleigh development

and inquired if the Executive Session minutes were available to the public. He also asked if the public would have an opportunity to review the affordable housing documents before the Borough Council authorized them.

Mr. Sordillo responded the Executive Session minutes would be released when the matter being discussed was reviewed and considered no longer deemed confidential. With regard to the affordable housing documents, Mr. Sordillo explained during a public meeting the Borough Council via resolution or ordinance, authorizes the Mayor to sign the documents.

Don Hewitt, 23 Dumont Road, Far Hills expressed concern regarding approximately one hundred political signs placed along Peapack Road and referenced the Borough's current sign ordinance. He also stated he was having difficulty finding the email addresses for the Borough Council on the website.

Mr. Sordillo indicated that while the ordinance provided restrictions on commercial signage, there was an exception for the installation of political signs which was also supported by case law.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Council President Welsh to close the meeting to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 22-130

- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Affordable Housing Litigation
- Contract Negotiations – Lease – Atlantic Visiting Nurse
- Contract Negotiations – Lease – Butler's Pantry Trackage Restaurant

Motion by Council President Welsh, seconded by Councilman Rinzler was unanimously carried to approve Resolution 22-130.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Welsh, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 9/26/2022