

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
September 26, 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: Deputy Borough Clerk Samantha D'Antuono, Police Chief Michael DeCarolis, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo

REPORTS

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

Council President Welsh provided a brief update regarding the boiler at the Municipal Building which had failed and required replacement. He stated replacement of the unit would take place in the next few weeks as parts required have been unavailable.

Council President Welsh stated remediation of overgrown brush has cleared the sidewalk area of Peapack Road. He stated remediation of overgrown brush continues to be a topic of discussion on Railroad Avenue as NJ Transit has denied ownership and further evaluation was being conducted. Council President Welsh indicated various remediation options were being considered.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

Councilwoman Tweedie stated the STAB meeting scheduled for September 27, 2022 had been cancelled and will be rescheduled. Councilwoman Tweedie expressed optimism regarding the prospect of further information regarding the Malinowski grant.

Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances & Elections

Councilwoman Chimenti stated Court Administrator Marjorie Freeman was expected to return to work October 1, 2022. She stated Ms. Freeman expressed much gratitude for the support she received from numerous Borough personnel and elected officials in her absence.

Councilwoman reported the Court proceedings were continuing to be held via Zoom as Municipal Judge Katty Wong-Taylor explained the Vicinage was denying in-person court hearings. She explained, only cases that met specific criteria would be held in-person until further notice.

Councilman Rinzler - Police

Councilman Rinzler informed the Borough Council that one of the police vehicles was outfitted to acknowledge Breast Cancer Awareness indicating there is a QR code on the vehicle that provides access for breast cancer screening information. He stated the vehicle will be displayed at the upcoming Race Meeting at Moorland Farm to be held on October 15, 2022 as well as throughout the Borough.

Councilman Rinzler added members of the Police Department will be permitted to display modest facial hair from October 2022 through April of 2023.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis informed the Borough Council the Police Department is prepared for multiple large events to be held in the Borough during the month of October 2022. He stated traffic control was provided for the Atlantic Visiting Nurse Rummage Sale as traffic concerns arose and traffic control would continue for the remainder of the donation period as excess vehicles are anticipated.

He reported an initial meeting was held with Guy Torsilieri, Ron Kennedy and additional representatives from the Far Hills Race Meeting Association in preparation for the Far Hills Race Meeting Event to be held on October 15, 2022. He stated additional meetings would be held prior to the event which would include additional resources utilized for Law Enforcement purposes during the event. Chief DeCarolis stated Mr. Torsilieri confirmed all betting for the Race Meeting will take place via cell phone only which would aid in eliminating congestion in multiple areas on the day of the event.

Mayor Karner

Mayor Karner expressed anticipation for the return of the Court Administrator Marjorie Freeman and acknowledged the efforts of Deputy Court Administrator Cathy Adamo in the absence of Ms. Freeman. Mayor Karner welcomed Deputy Borough Clerk Samantha D'Antuono in lieu of Borough Clerk Dorothy Hicks who was enjoying leave as she traveled across the country. Mayor Karner added, a small token of appreciation will be provided to Ms. Freeman upon her return on behalf of the Borough, in addition to a small get together spearheaded by Councilwoman Chimenti with staff to welcome her back.

Mayor Karner stated the drainage issue on the sidewalk adjacent to the Polo Club continued to be a topic of discussion with Mr. Rodney McCatharn, Acting DPW Director, Bedminster Township.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

9/12/22 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

9/12/22 – Executive Session Minutes

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

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 22-131 – Authorizing Payment of Sewer and Property Taxes-Affordable Housing Restricted Unit
2. Resolution 22-132 – Authorizing Waiver of Sign Permit – Far Hills Race Meeting, Inc. Association
3. Resolution 22-133 – Authorizing Large Event Permit – Far Hills Race Meeting, Inc.
4. Resolution 22-134 – Authorizing Purchase of Lion Turnout Gear-Witmer Public Safety Group Inc.
5. Resolution 22-135 – Authorizing Escrow Refund – Planning Board – B23 L5
6. Resolution 22-136 – Authorizing Waiver of Sign Permit – Far Hills Garden Club
7. Resolution 22-137 – Authorizing Payment of Bill List

Motion by Council President Welsh, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 22-131 through 22-137 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Rinzler, Tweedie, Welsh

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.*

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Council President Welsh 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.

Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo stated the Borough Council had decided to move forward with an independent firm to conduct the financial impact study. He indicated the Borough had already received proposals and were currently vetting the companies that provided submissions. Mr. Sordillo stated that each company offers a specific expertise which would be taken into consideration during this process. Mayor Karner added, more than one firm would be considered to perform the study if necessary.

Mr. Schwester requested clarification on the tax payments authorized by Borough Council Resolution 22-131. Mr. Sordillo explained this was a temporary solution to prevent the existing affordable housing unit(s) from going into foreclosure. He stated, the Borough would recuperate the funds upon sale of the unit in the form of a tax lien.

Dr. George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills requested confirmation on the authority responsible for selecting the independent firm to perform the financial impact study.

Mayor Karner responded, the applicant has agreed to be responsible for financing the financial impact study with a firm both parties agree to. He stated more than one firm may perform the study if the Borough Council deems it necessary. Mr. Sordillo stated the applicant has agreed to allow the funds from escrow to be utilized for the financial impact study. Mr. Sordillo reiterated the applicant is not obligated to fund the financial impact study as this is not a redevelopment project however the applicant has agreed to utilize escrow funds. Mr. Sordillo confirmed, should the Borough utilize a firm not agreed upon with the applicant, the Borough may continue with the financial impact study utilizing

Borough funds while simultaneously utilizing a firm to which both the Borough and applicant agree upon, with escrow funding.

Dr. Mellendick queried the professional relationship status between the Borough and newly appointed judge replacing Judge Miller. Mr. Sordillo stated a meeting is anticipated to occur in the upcoming weeks as the final conditions for the Judgement of Repose are met. Dr. Mellendick requested clarification on the 55 conditions that were included in the approval from the Planning Board for the Residences at Overleigh, specifically the frequency of notification to the public that the conditions have been met. Attorney Sordillo indicated public hearings are not a requirement for all of the conditions of the Planning Board approval. Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the approval process pertaining to the requirements of public hearings. Mayor Karner added, the Borough Council acts on behalf of the residents in the Borough and encouraged continued input from any Borough residents.

Dr. Mellendick queried the process for evaluating overgrown trees on Lake Road. Mayor Karner stated JCP&L assessed trees in the Borough, removing limbs that may cause an interruption to service. Mayor Karner reminded residents of the Borough ordinance governing the resident's responsibility for maintaining trees on their property.

Don Hewitt, 23 Dumont Road, Far Hills expressed concern regarding Lake Road and Pennbrook Road vegetation overgrowth. Mayor Karner indicated the situation will be evaluated the Bedminster DPW will be notified.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills offered aid in cost deferment regarding the financial impact study. Mayor Karner thanked Mr. Schwester for his offer.

Jeanette Vogel, 5 Spring Street, Far Hills addressed a concern regarding vehicles disregarding pedestrians attempting to utilize the crosswalks on Peapack Road. Mayor Karner commended Ms. Vogel for reiterating a hazardous concern. Brief discussion ensued resulting in Chief DeCarolis confirming an increase in enforcement will be forthcoming. There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to close the meeting to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 22-138

- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Affordable Housing Litigation
- Contract Negotiations – Lease – Atlantic Visiting Nurse

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Council President Welsh was unanimously carried to approve Resolution 22-138.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Welsh, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Samantha D'Antuono
Deputy Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 10/11/2022