

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
June 12, 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, Council President Mary Chimenti, Councilman Peter J. Coccoziello, Jr. (via phone), Councilman David P. Karner, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Kevin P. Welsh

Absent, as Excused:

Absent:

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

REPORTS

Councilman Coccoziello – Roads

Councilman Coccoziello provided an update on the Pennbrook Road improvement project.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health & Sanitation

No report.

Councilman Carty – Finance & Insurance

No report.

Council President Chimenti – Laws & Ordinances

Council President Chimenti reported the Municipal Court receipts for May 2023 were \$5,008.82 with the municipal portion being \$1,770.00.

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

Councilman Karner provided an overview of the improvement projects being undertaken at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds, noting the basketball court was planned to be replaced this month.

He thanked the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department for providing the refreshments following the Memorial Day Parade which was held on May 29, 2023. The Miles for Matheny event was also well attended but noted there was some difficulty for the wheelchairs on the track due to the recently added stone dust and suggested that for next year, the track repairs be made after the Matheny event. Councilman Karner expressed his appreciation to Atlantic Health for the repairs to the track as well as the additional grass seeding at the fairgrounds.

Lastly, he indicated the Borough's first Movie Night was a success and expressed appreciation to Mr. Jack Koury and the Recreation Committee for all of their efforts.

Mayor Welsh added that plans were underway for another movie night this year as he would like to continue to utilize the fairgrounds for the enjoyment of all residents as it is the centerpiece of the Borough.

Councilman Rinzler – Police

Councilman Rinzler presented the May 2023 Police Report.

He noted he recently met with Councilmen Carty and Karner and conducted a preliminary review of the PBA contract which expires December 31, 2023.

He stated the new police SUV was currently being outfitted with the appropriate equipment.

Lastly, Councilman Rinzler reminded residents to lock their vehicles as criminals have been breaking into them and also gaining access into the home. There were several reports in the immediate area.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis echoed Councilman Rinzler adding that if residents see any suspicious activity to contact the police department immediately. He also reported Officer Jeon was currently attending training and has been a great addition to the department.

Mayor Welsh

Mayor Welsh echoed the sentiments regarding the many recent events in the Borough and stated it was great to see residents coming together.

He reported that the NJ League of Municipalities and the NJ Conference of Mayors are supporting the reinstatement of the Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief Fund (ETR) which would provide approximately \$350,000,000.00 back to New Jersey municipalities. He urged residents to contact their legislators and asked Ms. Hicks to post the details on the Borough website.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the increase of 23.6% in the state healthcare plan costs for municipalities in contrast to the only 5% increase in healthcare plan costs for the state.

REGULAR AGENDA PRESENTATIONS

Mine Brook Habitat Enhancement Project – Moorland Farm

Mr. Guy Torsilieri provided an overview of the stream enhancement project necessitated by the erosion of the Mine Brook at the Moorland Farm property. He also requested a refund of the \$750.00 application and inspection fees submitted to the Borough in February 2023 as he understood notification to the Borough was now not required for this project.

Mr. Torsilieri also reported on the Essex Horse Trials event which was held on June 4, 2023 and was well attended. With regard to the upcoming Far Hills Race Meeting event, to be held on October 21, 2023, a brief discussion ensued regarding the installation of temporary Verizon antennas on five of the existing speaker poles at Moorland Farm. The Borough had previously authorized a five-year special use permit for Verizon's installation of a Cell on Wheels (COW); however, it was unable to adequately handle the increase in cell usage during the event. Mr. Sordillo responded that plans would need to be submitted for review by the Borough before making a determination on the installation of the five antennas as well as the extension of term of the permit from five to ten years.

Raritan Valley Development Corporation

Mr. Bill Hotz, Principal, RVDC provided a status update on the construction of the affordable housing projects at 8 & 10 Peapack Road and 46 Peapack Road. He advised the Borough Council that construction was anticipated to be completed for the two rental units at 46 Peapack Road by August 2023.

Regarding 8 & 10 Peapack Road, Mr. Hotz explained the delays associated with complying with the new floodplain regulations and the impact on the affordable units permitted at the property. He stated that he recently received the resolution compliance letter from Ferriero Engineering and would proceed with obtaining the necessary permits with construction anticipated to commence on July 24, 2023 and to be completed Spring 2024.

Councilman Rinzler inquired as to the progress achieved so far in relation to the payments made by the Borough to RVDC. Mr. Hotz responded that the payments were to compensate for the devaluation of the property when it was reclassified as affordable housing as provided in the affordable housing agreement.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the drainage issues on DeMun Place and Dumont Road with Councilman Karner asking Mr. Hotz if the construction project at 8 & 10 Peapack Road would impact the current drainage. Mr. Hotz responded the project would not involve the drainage and explained that as his property is at the end of the line, being on the corner of Dumont and Peapack Roads, his basement continues to flood.

Mr. Hotz, as a condition of the Planning Board resolution compliance, reviewed the architectural design for 8 & 10 Peapack Road, including the color of building and awnings; white and blue, respectively. A brief discussion ensued resulting in Mr. Hotz being asked to provide the color samples for review and approval by the Borough Council. Mr. Sordillo advised a resolution would be necessary to authorize this approval.

Mayor Welsh stated that due to the delays in construction, the Borough would be delaying the third of four payments until at least the framing and roofing were completed at 8 & 10 Peapack Road. Mr. Hotz was agreeable to the delay in the payment.

Atlantic Health - Atlantic Visiting Nurse Rummage Sale

Mr. Travis Holm, Finance Manager, Atlantic Health provided a brief overview of the Spring 2023 Rummage Sale. A brief discussion ensued regarding improvements to the flow of traffic during the donation process; outstanding electrical upgrades to the main barn; the relocation of the water main from Peapack Road and improvements to the post-sale clean-up process of the fairgrounds.

Messrs. Torsilieri, Hotz and Holm left the meeting at this time.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5/22/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

5/22/2023 – Executive Session Minutes

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

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2023-07 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$10,000.00 FOR POLICE EQUIPMENT

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Councilman Karner that Ordinance 2023-07 be introduced.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 2023-08 – AN ORDINANCE TO FIX AND DETERMINE THE SALARIES, WAGES OR COMPENSATION TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Council President Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-08 be introduced.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, 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.

CONSENT AGENDA

RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 23-113 – Professional Services Contract, Stormwater Management
Stormwater Compliance Solutions, LLC
2. Resolution 23-114 – Authorizing Submission – NJDOT FY2024 Grant Application
Lake Road Improvements – Section 2
3. Resolution 23-115 – Authorizing Refund of Overpayment of Taxes
4. Resolution 23-116 – Payment of Bill List

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 23-113 through 23-116 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, 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.*

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to open the meeting to public comment.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the improvements planned for Lake Road. He also commented that several cars were parking on the peninsula adjacent to the waterfall along Lake Road.

Mayor Welsh responded the road was planned to be milled and paved in two sections and grant applications have been submitted to the NJDOT for their FY2023 and FY2024 award cycle.

Chief DeCarolis confirmed that parking in that area of Lake Road was not permitted.

Don Hewitt, 23 Dumont Road, Far Hills inquired as to the status of his request to have Borough Council meetings live streamed.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the various types of virtual meetings and the technology required.

Doug Sutton, Butler's Pantry Tracksides, acknowledged his attendance at the Borough Council meeting as required by the lease agreement.

There were no further comments from the public.

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

Councilman Karner inquired as to the status of the property owned by Jet Set Sports located at 196 Route 202.

A brief discussion ensued resulting in a consensus to establish a subcommittee to review the proposed uses for the property.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Resolution 23-117

- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Far Hills in Crisis, Inc.
- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Peace and Quiet Farm, LLC
- Contract Negotiations – PBA Contract
- Contract Negotiations – Borough Attorney


Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler and unanimously carried to approve Resolution 23-117.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Karner and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED – 6-26-2023



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk