

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
November 13, 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, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Councilman Peter J. Cocoziello, Jr., Council President David P. Karner, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Kevin P. Welsh

Absent, as Excused:

Absent:

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Chief Michael DeCarolis, Borough Attorney Albert E. Cruz

REPORTS

Councilman Cocoziello – Roads

Councilman Cocoziello reported the section of Lake Road, spanning from the intersection of Hidden Valley Road to the beginning of the lake by the dam, was scheduled to be milled on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 and the paving of this section would commence on Monday, November 20, 2023, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. It was noted that this section was determined to be the most crucial area in need of repair and the work was being contracted through utilizing the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council (MCCPC) at a significant savings to the Borough.

He continued by announcing the Borough was recently notified of the NJDOT FY2024 Local Aid grant award for improvements to the infrastructure, drainage, and paving on the section of Lake Road spanning from Route 202 to the intersection of Hidden Valley Road.

Mayor Welsh expressed his appreciation to Councilman Cocoziello for his efforts in coordinating the mill and pave project with the contractor, Schifano Construction, through the MCCPC.

Councilman Cocoziello inquired as to the drainage inlet jetting and cleaning project for several streets in the Borough.

Ms. Hicks responded the Bedminster DPW was contacted and they were currently scheduling inlet cleaning projects two weeks out.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws & Ordinances

Councilwoman Chimenti reported for the month of October 2023 the Municipal Court receipts were \$4,207.90 with the Borough portion being \$1,875.12, noting an increase of approximately \$1,000.00 from last month. She informed the Borough Council that the Court session scheduled for November 14, 2023 needed to be cancelled due to staff illness.

Councilwoman Chimenti also provided a brief report on the Planning Board meeting held on November 6, 2023 pertaining to the status of the re-examination of the Master Plan and regulations. She noted that the Planning Board was currently reviewing several ordinances concerning solar panels, scenic corridors, and the subdivision of large properties. It was estimated that the ordinances and the re-examination of the Master Plan would be provided to the Borough Council for review during the first quarter of 2024.

Council President Karner – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds

Council President Karner expressed his appreciation to those that assisted with and attended the Veterans Day service on November 11, 2023.

He reported that Atlantic Health has restored the fields and track and planted grass seed at the fairgrounds. Efforts are continuing to update the existing signage at the fairgrounds which is anticipated to be completed spring 2024.

Council President Karner indicated he would be meeting with Mr. Quamme of Ferriero Engineering on November 18, 2023 to review the status of the NJDEP requirements for the potential expansion of the playground facilities at the fairgrounds.

Lastly, he stated the Recreation Committee was also meeting on November 18, 2023 to review the fairgrounds as well as to plan for the upcoming Holiday Event to be held on December 2, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Councilman Rinzler – Police

Councilman Rinzler reported that the Police Committee continues to meet regularly and the PBA contract negotiations are progressing.

He presented the October 2023 Police Report.

Councilman Rinzler stated a resident of the Polo Club expressed appreciation to both the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department and Far Hills Police Department for their prompt response to a smoke/fire alarm notification.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis reported that Detective Christopher Merkle had submitted a letter of resignation and his last day would be December 3, 2023, and recruitment efforts for another police officer have commenced.

He also informed the Borough Council that the grant funded high visibility DUI enforcement details would be commencing soon.

Mayor Welsh

Mayor Welsh also expressed his appreciation to Council President Karner, Councilmen Coccoziello and Rinzler and Councilwoman Chimenti for attending the Veterans Day service honoring our military service members.

He informed residents the annual leaf pickup was scheduled to commence on November 20, 2023 in the Village area.

Mayor Welsh invited everyone to attend the second annual Holiday Event which will be held on Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds. The event will feature the tree lighting, holiday music and complimentary refreshments. The rain date was scheduled for Sunday, December 3, 2023 at the same time.

He indicated he would be attending a virtual meeting on November 17, 2023 at 10:00 am with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to review the stone façade, previously requested by the Borough, for the bridge replacement project over the N. Branch of the Raritan River on Route 202. Also planning to attend are Council President Karner, Councilman Coccoziello, Ms. Hicks, Borough Engineer, Paul Ferriero as well as Bedminster Mayor Larry Jacobs and Clerk/Administrator Robin Ray.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

10/23/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

11/2/2023 – Special Meeting Minutes

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

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

Mr. Cruz provided a brief overview of the following ordinances which were required by the NJDEP due to the Borough's stormwater permit classification being changed from a Tier B to a Tier A which includes additional mandatory requirements. He provided a brief overview of the changes in the new regulations as well as the compliance now being required of the Borough. The form and substance of the ordinances follow the NJDEP templates and were primarily focused upon private properties. Lastly, he indicated that the adoption of these ordinances were key components of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan which must be completed by January 1, 2024 in order for the Borough to receive the \$50,000.00 remaining portion of the \$75,000.00 NJDEP grant provided to prior Tier B municipalities. Mr. Cruz also provided a brief overview of another grant program offered through the Highlands Council which the resolution authorizing the application was on tonight's agenda.

Councilman Coccoziello inquired if applying for the Highlands Council grant further obligated the Borough to the Highlands Council requirements. He also inquired as to the stormwater permitting processes and report analysis for the Borough.

Mr. Cruz responded that applying for the grant did not inadvertently obligate the Borough to the Highlands Council requirements. With regard to the specifics for the stormwater permitting process and analysis, Mr. Cruz deferred to the Borough Engineer.

ORDINANCE 2023-21 - AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS OF YARD WASTE THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to introduce Ordinance 2023-21.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 2023-22 – AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING WILDLIFE FEEDING ON PUBLIC PROPERTY THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS

Councilman Rinzler inquired as to the enforcement of these ordinances. He inquired who should be contacted if, for example, the feeding of wildlife on public property was observed. It was recommended that anyone witnessing any violations of these or any Borough ordinances should contact the Far Hills Police Department.

Councilwoman Tweedie commented that this ordinance classifies feral cats as wildlife and recalled an incident several years ago regarding residents of the Polo Club feeding feral kittens and the considerable expense to the Borough to rescue and treat them.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to introduce Ordinance 2023-22.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 2023-23 – AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS FOR PRIVATE STORM DRAIN INLET RETROFITTING THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS

A brief discussion ensued regarding Ordinance 2023-23 and the requirements for retrofitting storm drains at private developments such as the Polo Club and Kimbolton.

Mayor Welsh responded that the Kimbolton development had already met the more stringent NJDEP requirements for the storm drain inlets. Ms. Hicks commented that a notification to the management company at the Polo Club and Kimbolton would be sent upon the adoption of the ordinance. Mayor Welsh added that Borough Engineer, Paul Ferriero would be attending the November 27, 2023 to respond to any inquires during the public hearing for each these ordinances.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to introduce Ordinance 2023-23.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 2023-24 – AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING THE IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF WASTE IN THE STORM SEWER SYSTEM OWNED OR OPERATED BY THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler to introduce Ordinance 2023-24.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 2023-25 – AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING ILLICIT CONNECTIONS TO THE MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM(S) OPERATED BY THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to introduce Ordinance 2023-25.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 2023-26 – AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS TO THE STORAGE OF SALT ON PRIVATE PROPERTY THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler to introduce Ordinance 2023-26.

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.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 23-173 – Authorizing Health Benefits Waiver Program
New Jersey State Health Benefits Plan
2. Resolution 23-174 – Authorizing Financial Incentive Program
New Jersey State Health Benefits Plan

3. Resolution 23-175 – Authorizing Submission of Grant Application
Highlands Council - MS4 Stormwater Permit
4. Resolution 23-176 – Authorizing Sign Permit Waiver – Far Hills Garden Club
5. Resolution 23-177 – Payment of Bill List

Mayor Welsh provided a brief overview of the resolutions on the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Hicks clarified that the grant application to the Highlands Council was for an additional grant of \$29,000.00 and was separate from the NJDEP grant.

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Council President Karner that Resolutions 23-173 through 23-177 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.*

Council President Karner acknowledged the efforts of Councilwoman Chimenti and the Far Hills Garden Club for their beautification projects throughout the Borough. He especially noted the new fall plantings at the Matheny Group Home. Mayor Welsh agreed and added that the plantings at the municipal building and train station have been well received by the community. Councilwoman Chimenti responded that the plantings at the Matheny Group Home were a community project initiative by the Garden Club and indicated approximately 1000 bulbs were recently planted at the municipal building

Mayor Welsh opened the meeting to public comment.


There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the meeting to public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 11-27-2023