

**BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**  
Borough Council Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
March 11, 2024

**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.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Councilman Peter J. Coccoziello, Jr., Council President David P. Karner, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Councilman Charles P. Schwester, Mayor Kevin P. Welsh

Absent, as Excused:

Absent:

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Albert Cruz, Special Counsel Nancy Holm, Police Chief Michael DeCarolis

**REPORTS**

**Councilman Carty – Police**

Councilman Carty cautioned residents to lock their cars and homes as he relayed an incident of an armed robbery that recently occurred in Bernardsville. The victim was held at knifepoint in his home and then forced to go to a nearby bank and withdraw money from the ATM. The suspect, an 18-year-old Bernardsville resident, was apprehended by the police.

Mayor Welsh echoed these concerns noting the severity of these crimes that were once vehicular thefts have now progressed to armed home invasions.

**Councilwoman Chimenti – Health & Sanitation**

Councilwoman Chimenti reminded the Borough Council that a tour of the sewer pumping station located in Bedminster would be held on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. She indicated that she had previously taken the tour and found it informative as it provided a practical understanding of the operations which serve Far Hills, Bedminster, and Peapack & Gladstone.

**Councilman Coccoziello - Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds**

Councilman Coccoziello reported the installation of the new waterline at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds began today, noting it was necessary to relocate the waterline due to damage sustained during prior installations of the tents for the Atlantic Visiting Nurse Rummage Sale. Torsilieri, Inc. has been contracted by Atlantic Health Systems to complete this work.

He continued reporting that the Planning Board was currently in the process of the Reexamination of the Master Plan which must be completed every ten (10) years. He indicated that a public hearing was scheduled for the April 1, 2024 Planning Board meeting where the preliminary investigation for an area in need of redevelopment would be presented.

Councilman Coccoziello informed the Borough Council that NJ American Water petitioned the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) in January 2024 for a 17.5% rate increase based upon capital improvement

projects that were undertaken. He referenced the websites for several utility companies that offer energy saving products at substantially reduced pricing.

#### **Council President Karner – Laws & Ordinances**

Council President Karner reported the Municipal Court receipts for February 2024 were \$5,022.23 with the Municipal portion being \$2,523.74.

#### **Councilman Rinzler – Finance & Insurance**

Councilman Rinzler reported he would be attending the Joint Insurance Fund meeting on March 14, 2024. He noted that for two consecutive years, the Borough has had no loss time injuries and was in full compliance with insurance regulations.

#### **Councilman Schwester – Roads**

Councilman Schwester reported the roads were generally in good condition. He indicated that there was a section of Dumont Road that has had issues with recurring water surfacing through the roadway. It was purportedly from an underground source and remediation efforts were being reviewed by the Borough Engineer, Boswell Engineering prior to the commencement of the road paving project.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Kimbolton Development as a concern was raised that the remaining trees, which were previously marked with orange paint for removal, could now inadvertently be cut down if this demarcations were not removed. Councilman Rinzler added that the trees were supposed to create a buffer and shield the view of the development from Route 202. Mayor Welsh commented he has been in contact with the developer and it was recommended that the orange paint could be power washed off and not damage the tree.

Councilman Schwester also commented upon the curb at the entrance of the development not being consistent with the other residential curbs in the Borough. Mayor Welsh concurred that the finished curb height should be approximately five (5) inches and consistent throughout the Borough.

#### **Chief DeCarolis**

Chief DeCarolis informed the Borough Council that one of the Matheny residents had recently been a victim of scam and lost his money when trying to purchase a PlayStation 5 online. Upon hearing about this unfortunate incident, members of the Northern Somerset PBA Local #139 decided to purchase him a new PlayStation 5 which was delivered on March 8, 2024 by members of the Far Hills Police Department.

#### **Mayor Welsh**

Mayor Welsh stated that he has met with CFO, Debra Stern to review the 2024 Budget and reminded members of the Borough Council to submit their respective budget requests as soon as possible.

He stated that a letter and petition, with over sixty (60) signatures, was sent to Somerset County supporting a study to lower the speed limit on Peapack Road. Mayor Welsh acknowledged the efforts of resident Mr. Mike Collins, who spearheaded the petition.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Moorland Farm Events 2024**

Mr. Guy Torsilieri provided a brief overview of the events scheduled for this year which include the following: Skeet Flurry Shooting event on May 9, 2024, Essex Horse Trials and the Peter Chesson Memorial Classic Car Show on June 2, 2024, and the Far Hills Race Meeting on October 19, 2024.

Mr. Torsilieri reviewed the permit fees paid for the various events and noted that despite attendance decreasing below 30,000 for several years, which would have only required a permit fee of \$5,000.00, the Far Hills Race Meeting Association has continued to pay the \$25,000.00 fee, normally associated with the larger attendance, in support of the Borough. He inquired if the \$25,000.00 permit fee paid this year could also cover the permit fee for the Essex Horse Trials anticipated to be \$1,500.00. Mr. Torsilieri continued by noting that through the Skeet Flurry Shooting event donations were made to several organization including the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department and Far Hills Bedminster First Aid Squad.

A brief discussion ensued and there was a general consensus in favor of waiving the fees for the smaller events in 2024, however, all applicable permit applications would still be required to be submitted. Mr. Cruz recommended a resolution be considered at the next meeting to memorialize the event fee waivers.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

2/26/2024 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

2/26/2024 – Executive Session Minutes

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

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **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 24-074 – Professional Services Contract, Borough Planner  
Banisch Associates, Inc.
2. Resolution 24-075 – Professional Services Contract, Stormwater Management  
Stormwater Compliance Solutions, LLC
3. Resolution 24-076 – Professional Services Contract, Planning Services  
Clarke Caton Hintz, PC
4. Resolution 24-077 – Emergency Temporary Appropriation
5. Resolution 24-078 – Authorizing Settlement  
Peace & Quiet Farms vs. Borough of Far Hills
6. Resolution 24-079 – Authorizing Appointment - Temporary Building Inspector
7. Resolution 24-080 – Authorizing Temporary Increase in Hours – Electrical Subcode Official
8. Resolution 24-081 – Payment of Bill List

Councilman Rinzler inquired if there was a monetary settlement in the Peace & Quiet Farm litigation. Mayor Welsh responded that there was no monetary settlement.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 24-074 through 24-081 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Cocoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Schwester

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

## **DISCUSSION**

Mayoral Board Appointment – 2024

Mayor Welsh stated that Suzanne Humbert had tenured her resignation as a Class IV member of the Planning Board, effective immediately. As a result, Andrea Harvey currently serving as the Alternate #1 on the Planning Board, is appointed to the Class IV seat, vacated by Suzanne Humbert for the unexpired term, expiring 12/31/2024. Dr. Brian Schwartz is appointed to the Alternate #1 seat, vacated by Andrea Harvey for the unexpired term, expiring 12/31/2024.

**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.*

Mayor Welsh opened the meeting for public comment.

Don Hewitt, Dumont Road, Far Hills inquired about utilizing Zoom for the Borough's public meetings.

Mayor Welsh responded there were technical difficulties with hybrid meetings and stated that the Borough would continue to hold meetings in-person only.

There was brief discussion regarding hybrid meetings and it was suggested that only televising the meetings on YouTube be researched.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the meeting for public comment.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Welsh read Resolution 24-082 into the record.

### **Resolution 24-082 – Attorney Client Privilege – Potential Litigation – Kimbolton Development**

**WHEREAS**, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

**WHEREAS**, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Far Hills, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of an action upon the specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matters to be discussed are as follows:
  - Attorney Client Privilege – Potential Litigation – Kimbolton Development
3. It is anticipated that the minutes on the subject matter of the closed session will be made public upon conclusion, dismissal, or settlement of litigation; or final resolution of agreements on personnel matters; and in any event, when appropriate pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-7 and 4-13.
4. The Council will come back into open session and may take further action.
5. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

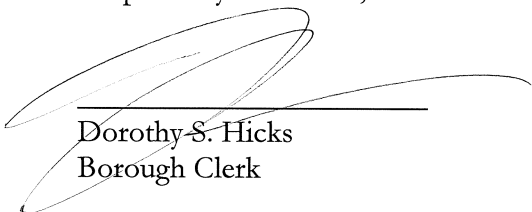
Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti and unanimously carried to approve Resolution 24-082.

#### **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED – 3/25/2024



Dorothy S. Hicks  
Borough Clerk