

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
July 13, 2020
VIA CONFERENCE CALL ONLY

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vallone called the conference call meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and read the open public meetings statement in accordance with the law.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Vallone led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Councilman Richard Hand, Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Absent, as Excused:

Absent:

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

REPORTS

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

Councilman Hand reported that maintenance to the playground area was recently completed and the ballfield area was scheduled to be completed within the next few weeks. He expressed his appreciation to Council President Karner and Ms. Hicks for their efforts.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman McLean – Roads

Councilman McLean reported on the bicycle accident that occurred recently on Lake Road. A general discussion ensued regarding potential safety improvements to the roadway. It was noted that it was necessary to gain approval from Somerset County as the roadway connected two municipalities. Chief DeCarolis was asked to review the current signage for potential repair and/or replacement.

Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances, & Elections

No report.

Council President Karner – Police

Council President Karner expressed his appreciation to Councilman Hand and Ms. Hicks for their efforts in improving the playground and ballfield at the Fairgrounds.

He also reported that through a grant the Far Hills Police Department would be implementing DWI and Distracted Driver enforcement details in July and August 2020.

He informed the Council of a letter from the NJ Department of Corrections in which the Far Hills municipal detention facility was reviewed and found to be in full compliance. He noted that the Far Hills Police Department was commended for their efforts with this inspection.

Lastly, Council President Karner acknowledged the exemplary efforts of our Police Department during these challenging times.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis reported that tree trimming was being conducted on Douglas Road in anticipation of the bridge replacement project which was expected to commence on August 3, 2020.

Councilman Carty commented that there were several large dump trucks frequently traveling along Minebrook Road and asked Chief DeCarolis to look into the matter.

Mayor Vallone commented that that could be a result of the progression of the Quarry in Bernardsville. Mayor Vallone added that the Borough was vehemently opposed to the currently proposed traffic pattern as it would allow numerous trucks to traverse directly through Far Hills. He noted that Mr. Sordillo had submitted documentation to officially oppose the current traffic pattern associated with the Quarry.

Mayor Vallone

Mayor Vallone expressed his appreciation to the members of the Borough Council, Planning Board, Board of Health and municipal staff for their extraordinary efforts and resolve during these unprecedented times. He stated that the Borough is strong and that currently there are no Covid cases in Far Hills.

Mayor Vallone continued by informing the Council that Somerset County has certified the 2020 tax rates and the Borough's municipal tax rate for 2020 is 0.516. He noted that the total tax rate for Far Hills in 2020 is 1.357, noting no increase in the total tax rate from 2019.

Mayor Vallone continued that the Clarence Dillon Library opened today at 25% of capacity and guidelines for requiring masks and social distancing were administered. He acknowledged the efforts of Library Director, Ms. Marie Crenshaw in the development of the reopening plan.

He continued indicating Governor Murphy, via Executive Order 161, has maintained that outdoor gatherings limited to under 500 people were permissible; however, it was noted that this could decrease should the number of COVID cases continue to rise. Mayor Vallone informed the Council he was planning to meet with representatives of the numerous organizations that hold large events in the Borough as well as with school representatives to review potential reopening plans.

Mayor Vallone commented upon Governor Murphy's five billion dollar borrowing plan and its impact upon taxes for NJ residents.

Lastly, Mayor Vallone echoed the sentiments of Council President Karner regarding the accommodations afforded to the Police Department during the recent site inspection.

REGULAR AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
6/22/20 Regular Minutes

Motion by Councilman McLean, seconded by Councilman Hand was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content and release.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE 2020-10 – AN ORDINANCE GRANTING RENEWAL OF MUNICIPAL CONSENT TO COMCAST TO CONSTRUCT, CONNECT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A CABLE TELEVISION AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY.

Mr. Sordillo recommended that Ordinance 2020-10 be carried to the July 27, 2020 Borough Council meeting as the review by the Board of Public Utilities was still pending.

ORDINANCE 2020-12 - AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A GENERAL LAND USE PROHIBITION ON ALL RECREATIONAL AND MEDICAL MARIJUANA BUSINESSES AND ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Hand and unanimously carried to open the public hearing.

Councilman McLean commented that while he was in favor of Ordinance 2020-12, he felt that state approval was inevitable. A brief discussion ensued regarding the accessibility of marijuana in neighboring municipalities, local hospitals and medical facilities resulting in a general support of the opposition to marijuana businesses and establishments in the Borough.

Council President Karner inquired if the individuals, who made comments regarding the ordinance at the July 13, 2020 meeting, represented any local organizations as they were not Far Hills residents.

Mr. Sordillo responded that representatives from several marijuana advocacy groups have frequently attended the governing body meetings in numerous municipalities.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills expressed his support of Ordinance 2020-12.

Rick Rinzler, 11 Hurlingham Club Road, Far Hills commented that the Planning Board found that Ordinance 2020-12 was not inconsistent with the Borough's Master Plan.

There were no further comments from the public.

Ms. Hicks advised that the notice of the public hearing was published in the newspaper of record, and that no communication, either written or verbal was received regarding the Ordinance.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Hand and unanimously carried to close the public hearing.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2020-12 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

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 and are considered routine and will be enacted with one motion of 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 20-096 – Authorizing Special Item of Revenue
2020 DWI Grant
2. Resolution 20-097 – Authorizing Special Item of Revenue
2020 Distracted Driving Crackdown Grant
3. Resolution 20-098 – Dedication by Rider
Donations and Contributions – Celebration of Public Events
4. Resolution 20-099 – Authorizing a Procurement Card Program
5. Resolution 20-100 – Authorizing Issuance of Towing License – Tom Delucas Towing, Inc.
6. Resolution 20-101 – Authorizing Release of Performance Surety – 27 Route 202 FH, LLC
7. Resolution 20-102 – Payment of Bill List

Chief DeCarolis provided a brief overview of the enforcement details under the DWI and Distracted Driving Crackdown grants.

Mayor Vallone stated that via Resolution 20-098 an account would be established to accept donations in support of the Borough's 100th Anniversary celebration event. He added that Council President Karner and his wife, Janis Pulton-Vallone were co-chairing the event and encourage support from businesses and residents.

Ms. Hicks provided a brief overview of the Procurement Card Program and the efforts to streamline the Borough's purchasing processes.

Motion by Councilman Hand, seconded by Council President Karner that Resolutions 20-096 through 20-102 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

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 Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Hand and unanimously carried to open the meeting to public comment.

Council President Karner provided additional details on the Borough of Far Hills 100th Anniversary event which was scheduled for May 15, 2021. He indicated that there would be a parade and a country style picnic at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds. Tickets would be nominal and financial support from residents and businesses was encouraged.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired into the recent action by the Borough Council regarding environmental studies, perc tests and a sewer treatment facility at the Errico Acres site.

Mr. Sordillo responded that the only action the Borough Council had recently taken was to consent to the submission of a Water Quality Management Plan Amendment Application for the Errico Acres site to the NJDEP and Somerset County. The resolution authorizing this consent was approved at the June 22, 2020 Borough Council meeting, and emphasized that the Borough was only authorizing the submission of the application to those agencies. Mr. Sordillo indicated that any results of testing conducted on the site would need to be provided to the Borough Council and Planning Board approval would still be required, regardless of any approvals from Somerset County or the NJDEP.

Rick Rinzler, 410 Hurlingham Club Road, Far Hills inquired if there were any plans to consolidate the Far Hills Police Department as a possible consolidation of the Municipal Court was previously mentioned.

Mayor Vallone responded that there were no plans for any shared services agreements for the Far Hills Police Department. He added that the Borough's Municipal Court was performing well and should the need arise in the future, a shared services could be considered.

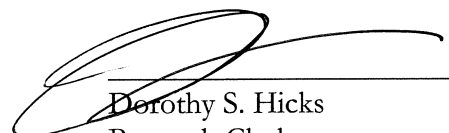
There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Hand and unanimously carried to close the meeting to public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Hand and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 7-27-2020