

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
July 27, 2020
VIA CONFERENCE CALL ONLY

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vallone called the conference call meeting to order at 7:00 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 (arrived 7:30 p.m.), Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD
Absent, as Excused: Councilman Richard Hand
Absent:
Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Chief Michael DeCarolis, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo

REPORTS

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman McLean – Roads

Councilman McLean reported the Somerset County project for the replacement of the bridge on Douglas Road commenced on July 27, 2020 and was estimated to be completed in four months.

He indicated that the preconstruction meeting regarding the Ludlow Avenue and Dumont Road Drainage Project was held via a conference call on July 21, 2020. The project is anticipated to commence upon the completion of the utility markouts.

Councilman McLean commented that the maintenance of the road signage on Lake Road was still pending.

Lastly, he reported that the bid opening for the Mine Brook Road Improvements project, a joint project with Bernards Township, was scheduled for August 11, 2020.

Mayor Vallone added that the NJDOT was contacted regarding Lake Road and responded that due to Covid-19 restrictions, personnel were not currently available for an onsite review of the roadway. It was anticipated that a site visit could occur next month. Mayor Vallone acknowledged the efforts of Sergeant Kocur with the correspondence and photos submitted to the NJDOT.

Council President Karner inquired as to the start date for the Ludlow Avenue and Dumont Road Drainage project. Ms. Hicks responded that construction was anticipated to begin within the next month.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances, & Elections

Councilwoman Chimenti reported that she spoke with Court Administrator, Ms. Marjorie Freeman and Court sessions would continue to be held virtually. She noted that Ms. Adamo, the recently appointed Court Violations Clerk, has assimilated quickly to the Far Hills Court processes.

Councilwoman Chimenti reported Municipal Court deposits for June 2020 were \$5,140.00.

Council President Karner – Police

Council President Karner reported all was copasetic in the Borough. He stated that interviews for the Class II Special Officer were recently completed and himself and Councilman Carty would further review the resumes of the top candidates.

He offered his well wishes to Chief DeCarolis and his wife, Jen on the anticipated birth of their third child this week and indicated Sergeant Kocur would be available during the Chief's absence.

Mayor Vallone and members of the Borough Council also expressed their well wishes.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis thanked everyone for their kind thoughts.

He confirmed that Council President Karner and Councilman Carty would review the resumes of the top candidates for the Class II Officer position and the Borough's HR Consultant would also be involved in the process.

Mayor Vallone

Mayor Vallone expressed his appreciation to Councilman Hand, who unfortunately was unable to attend tonight's meeting, for overseeing the work done to the playground and ball field at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds. He noted that a routine maintenance schedule was being developed with the Bedminster DPW and the contracted landscapers for continual upkeep. Council President Karner also acknowledged the efforts of Ms. Hicks for the expeditious improvements to the Fairgrounds.

Mayor Vallone informed the Borough Council that he met with Mr. Dan Powell, CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association of Somerset Hills (VNA) and due to the current restrictions on group gatherings, the 2020 Fall Rummage Sale would not occur. He noted that the VNA and Atlantic Health, which acquired the VNA, were looking forward to holding the Rummage Sale in the Spring 2021.

Mayor Vallone briefly commented upon the events sponsored by the Far Hills Race Association and noted that Mr. Guy Torsilieri was in attendance this evening and would provide additional information during his presentation.

Lastly, he informed the Council that he met with the developer for the project at 27 Route 202 and it was anticipated that the project would be completed within the next month.

Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

REGULAR AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES

7/13/20 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

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 apprised the Council that the review of Ordinance 2020-10 by the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) was recently completed and some revisions to the verbiage in the Ordinance were required. As such, Ordinance 2020-10 would need to be re-introduced this evening and the public hearing would be held at the next Council meeting. Mr. Sordillo noted that there were no required changes to the originally negotiated terms.

Council President Karner inquired as to the term of the agreement. Mr. Sordillo responded that the term was ten (10) years and noted that due to continual changes in technology, the terms of these agreements have generally shortened in length. Mr. Sordillo also indicated that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has proposed regulations that may adversely affect a municipality's ability to negotiate these services in the future.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the negotiated benefits afforded to the Borough.

Motion by Councilman McLean, seconded by Councilman Carty that Ordinance 2020-10 be introduced.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

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 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 20-103 – Authorizing Temporary Parking at J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds - Nelson Tree Service
2. Resolution 20-104 – Authorizing Submission of Strategic Plan and Acceptance of Award SHMAYSC Fiscal Year 2020-2021
3. Resolution 20-105 – Payment of Bill List

Ms. Hicks and Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of Resolution 20-103 and the arrangement with Nelson Tree Service. Council President Karner also commented upon these negotiations and commended Ms. Hicks for her efforts.

Ms. Hicks provided a brief overview of Resolution 20-104 and outlined the grant application process and the changes due to the delay in the State and County budget adoptions.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Resolutions 20-103 through 20-105 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION

Moorland Farm – Mr. Guy Torsilieri

Mr. Torsilieri provided an update on the status of the Steeplechase Event currently scheduled for October 17, 2020. He indicated that whether to hold the event this year would be based upon the Governor's Executive Orders and a decision would be made by Labor Day.

Councilman Carty inquired if the Steeplechase would continue without the public attending. Mr. Torsilieri responded that that was being considered but would most likely not be economically feasible to do so.

Mr. Torsilieri continued by presenting, for the Borough Council's consideration, a drive-in movie night to be held at Moorland Farm on September 10-12, 2020, which he indicated, would support local charities and help to maintain the property. He added that the event was being co-sponsored by a Fortune 100 company.

A general discussion ensued regarding the logistics of the event, police control, compliance with the Borough's ordinances and state health guidelines. Mr. Torsilieri indicated two hundred (200) vehicles were anticipated each night and the event would commence at dusk and end at approximately 11:30 p.m. He added that vehicles would be socially distanced and attendees would not be permitted to leave their vehicles during the event. He added that plans were being considered for concession boxes to be prepared by local merchants and provided to attendees upon entry.

Councilwoman Chimenti inquired how the event would handle inclement weather. Mr. Torsilieri responded that the event was three days and he hoped that any cancellation due to the weather would allow for rescheduling for another evening.

Mr. Sordillo commented that on a legal basis, he was confident that the event could comply with the Borough's Ordinances, State and County Board of Health guidelines and the Governor's Executive Orders.

Mr. Torsilieri indicated that attendees would also be required to sign a waiver in order to attend the event and that that indemnity could extend to the Borough of Far Hills.

Mr. Sordillo advised that based upon the presentation this evening, a memorializing resolution authorizing the event could be presented at the next Council meeting.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that based upon the presentation this evening, a drive-in movie event to be held at Moorland Farm on September 10-12, 2020 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

Matheny Group Home – Design Element Review

Ms. Hicks indicated that the sample boards for the siding and roof colors were not available in time for tonight's meeting; however, links to the websites had been provided for review by the Borough Council. She indicated that the review and recommendation of a color selection by the Borough Council was a compliance requirement of the Planning Board Resolution.

A brief discussion ensued resulting in a decision to delay the review until the sample boards could be made available.

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, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to open the meeting for public comment.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the application process for the Comcast Cable Franchise and if other cable providers could also submit an application. He also commented upon the intermittent cell and Internet reception along Lake Road.

Mr. Sordillo provided a general overview of the Comcast Cable Franchise application process, which was a similar process for other cable providers. He indicated that Verizon had separately negotiated a statewide franchise agreement and was not required to file an application with the individual municipalities, as other cable providers were required to do. He also noted that the agreement with Comcast was for cable television service only.

Mayor Vallone suggested that the representatives from the cellular service companies could be contacted to review the current reception throughout the Borough for possible remediation

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman McLean to close the meeting for public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 20-106 - Attorney Client Privilege – Potential Litigation - Bernardsville Quarry

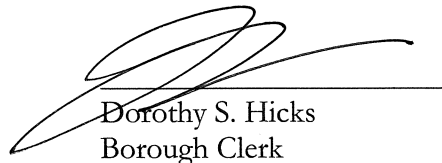
Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti and unanimously carried that Resolution 20-106 be approved.

Mr. Sordillo advised that the Borough Council did not intend to take any action other than to adjourn the meeting when returning to open session.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 8-10-2020