

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
November 23, 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, 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, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo, and Chief of Police Michael DeCarolis

Mayor Vallone informed the Council that the certification of the election was received today from the Somerset County Clerk and congratulated Councilwoman Tweedie and Councilmen Carty and McLean on their reelection to the Far Hills Borough Council

OATH OF OFFICE

Ms. Hicks administered to Oath of Office to Councilman Ted McLean.

REPORTS

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman McLean – Roads

Councilman McLean provided an update on the road projects in the Borough. He noted that the Dumont Road Drainage and Ludlow Avenue Improvements Project has been completed and a resolution authorizing the change order reflecting a decrease in the total contract cost of \$2,490.00 is on the Agenda for tonight's meeting.

He reported that the Minebrook Road Improvements Project which is a joint project with Bernards Township and funded primarily through a NJDOT grant was underway with an anticipated completion by the end this month, weather dependent.

He continued by reporting the Somerset County project for the F1201 Bridge on Douglas Road was nearing completion and the road was anticipated to be reopened by mid December.

With regard to the Pennbrook Road project, the Borough was awarded \$250,000.00 from the NJDOT FY2021 Municipal Aid Program. The project will encompass approximately 0.31 miles with an anticipated project cost of \$349,483.85.

Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances & Elections

No report.

Council President Karner – Police

Council President Karner reviewed the October 2020 Police Report. He noted two candidates from the Far Hills Police Department had submitted resumes for the Corporal position and interviews would commence in December.

Council President Karner stated the next meeting of the planning committee for the 100th Anniversary Event would be held on December 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. and asked those interested in attending either in person or via Zoom to contact Ms. Hicks.

Councilman Carty inquired if the event was going to be limited to residents only and how that would be verified. Council President Karner responded that tickets would be available for purchase prior to the event and proof of residency would be required.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis reported that the no shave Movember event was successful and the officers may retain their facial hair until March 1, 2021.

Mayor Vallone

Mayor Vallone stated that a budget meeting was scheduled for November 24, 2020 and he and Councilman Carty would be meeting with CFO, Debra Stern to review the year-end budget.

He also informed the Council that he, Councilman McLean, Chief DeCarolis and Ms. Hicks would be attending a virtual meeting with the NJDOT regarding the Route 202/Raritan Bridge project on December 7, 2020.

Mayor Vallone reported, according to the latest reporting from the Somerset County Department of Health, there are three Covid-19 cases currently in the Borough of Far Hills. He reminded everyone to adhere to the CDC guidelines and to continue to wear a mask, wash hands frequently and to maintain social distancing.

Mayor Vallone reported that the Borough's affordable housing compliance hearing with Judge Miller and Fair Share Housing Center was held on November 17, 2020. He expressed his appreciation to Messrs. Sordillo and Banisch for their work in securing the certification of the Borough's Affordable Housing and Fair Share Plan. He indicated that this Court approval of the plan provides the Borough immunity from Builder's Remedy lawsuits through the third round, which ends in 2025.

Lastly, he personally wished everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving.

REGULAR AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES

11/23/20 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCE – PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE 2020-16 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$30,000.00 FOR FIRE COMPANY EQUIPMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty to open the public hearing.

Dr. George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to how a fire was put out without hydrants in the vicinity.

Ms. Karen Reilly, 7 Fox Hunt Court, Far Hills commented that there were no hydrants of Fox Hunt Court.

Council President Karner responded that a water truck would be utilized in those incidences. He also noted that pumper trucks were available through neighboring fire companies to utilize water from nearby lakes or pools.

Mayor Vallone added that the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department has a detailed overlay of the Borough to quickly identify the appropriate water sources and encouraged interested residents to reach out to the Fire Chief for more information.

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.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to close the public hearing.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty that Ordinance 2020-16 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2020-17 - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS TO TRANSFER AND DONATE THE REAL PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED AS BLOCK

8, LOTS 1.02 AND 1.03, BEING A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS 46 PEAPACK ROAD, TO THE MATHENY SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL, INC., FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROUP HOMES AS A MUNICIPALLY-SPONSORED AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. Sordillo noted a typographical correction to indicate Block 8 rather than Block 7 in the Ordinance.

He continued to provide a brief overview of the properties in the Borough's affordable housing plan. He also indicated that due to the timing for the funding for this project the Matheny Group requested that the property transfer be completed prior to year-end.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty that Ordinance 2020-17 be introduced.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 20-141 – Authorizing Waiver Sign Permit
Black Flower Agency/Far Hills Race Meeting Association
2. Resolution 20-142 – Authorizing Refund of Overpayment of Taxes – Various Accounts
3. Resolution 20-143 – Authorizing Release of Letter of Credit of the Lake & Game Club
in connection with the Dam Restoration Project
4. Resolution 20-144 – Authorizing Change Order #1 – Dumont Road Drainage & Ludlow
Avenue Road Improvements Project
5. Resolution 20-145 – Payment of Bill List

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of Resolution 20-143 indicating that in 1990 the Borough of Far Hills cosigned on the loan on behalf of the Ravine Lake and Game Club in order to receive a low interest loan for necessary repairs to the Ravine Lake Dam. The Borough has received documentation to indicate that the loan has been paid in full and the letter of credit could now be authorized for release.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty that Resolutions 20-141 through 20-145 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, 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 McLean to open the meeting for public comment.

Dr. George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the certification and approval process regarding the affordable housing compliance hearing held on November 17, 2020.

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the process and the certification by the courts of the Borough's Fair Share Housing Element Plan.

Mr. Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired about the status of the sewer treatment plan for the Errico Acres site and commented upon a lawsuit recently filed by Toll Brothers against the city of Summit for sewer connections in a neighboring town.

Dr. George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills also inquired into the sewer treatment study with the NJDEP for the Errico Acres site.

A brief discussion ensued with Mr. Sordillo stating that he was aware of the litigation and would be monitoring any reported decisions in the case. With regard to the Errico Acres site, the developer's application to the NJDEP called for on-site treatment facility and noted that Somerset County Planning Board recently responded to the NJDEP in favor of an on-site treatment facility. Mr. Sordillo commented that a final determination from the NJDEP may be delayed due to the pandemic.

Mr. Jack Koury, 11 Far Hills Avenue, Far Hills inquired about hosting a bulk trash pickup in the Borough. He also commented that Far Hills Avenue and Schley Road were in need of repaving and asked that these roads be considered for a project in 2021.

Councilwoman Tweedie responded that a bulk trash disposal had been offered in the past but due to instances of illegal dumping and the expense of disposal it was decided not to be continued.

Mayor Vallone responded that he and Councilman McLean would review Far Hills Avenue and Schley Road.

Dr. George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the materials for the bridge facade on the NJDOT Route 202/Raritan River project.

Ms. Karen Reilly, 7 Fox Hunt Court, Far Hills inquired as to the remaining deadlines for water, sewer and utility connections for the affordable housing projects.

Mr. Sordillo responded that utility connection deadlines would be the responsibility of the respective developer and would follow the procedures established through the Borough's Planning Board as governed by the Municipal Land Use Law.

Mr. Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills, inquired about funding for Lake Road improvements.

Mayor Vallone responded that drainage improvements on Pennbrook Road were necessary to be completed prior to any work being done on Lake Road; and the Borough recently received a NJDOT grant for improvements to Pennbrook Road.

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 20-146 - Attorney Client Privilege - Contract Negotiations - Affordable Housing Sewer Fees

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty and unanimously carried that Resolution 20-146 be approved.

Mr. Sordillo informed the public that no official action other than to adjourn the meeting would be taken after the conclusion of the Executive Session.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman McLean and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 12/14/20