

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
July 12, 2021
VIA REMOTE MEETING ACCESS ONLY

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vallone called the remote meeting to order at 7:02 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: Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Councilman Kevin Welsh, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD
Absent, as Excused: Councilman Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti
Absent:
Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo, Chief of Police, Michael DeCarolis

REPORTS

Councilman Kevin Welsh – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds

Councilman Welsh reported Somerset County would be maintaining the ballfield at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds.

Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

Councilwoman Tweedie reported the force main sewer work at 15 Far Hills Avenue and the inspection of the new manhole on Peapack Road was completed by the Borough Environmental Engineer, Natural Systems Utilities. She also noted the Borough's three-month rolling average of sewer purchased capacity was 59.69% and attributed this decrease to the ongoing maintenance of the inflow and infiltration throughout the system.

Councilman Ted McLean – Roads

Councilman McLean provided an update on the status of the road repair work on Lake Road and Hidden Valley Road as well as a review of the upcoming drainage work on Pennbrook Road.

Council President David Karner – Police

Council President Karner reviewed the June 2021 Police Report.

Councilman McLean commented that residents of the Polo Club expressed concern regarding the recent vehicle theft attempt and inquired if police patrol could be increased. Chief DeCarolis responded that patrols have been increased and Council President Karner commented on the quick response rate by the officers to this incident. A brief discussion ensued regarding recent vehicle thefts in the surrounding municipalities and it was recommended that a Nixle alert could be sent out to residents as a reminder to be aware of their surroundings as well as providing general safety guidelines.

Council President Karner reported Ms. Hicks has reached out to the PSE&G to ascertain the appropriate contact and process for the possible extension of the natural gas line along Peapack Road.

Lastly, Council President Karner stated he would be working with Councilman Welsh to review the rules and regulations for the use of the fairgrounds to ensure appropriate permitting is adhered to for large group gatherings.

Chief Michael DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis reported the police department was prepared for the Essex Horse Trials event this weekend.

Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Mayor Vallone confirmed the Essex Horse Trials event was scheduled for July 16, 17 & 18, 2021 at Moorland Farm as well as the Far Hills Race Meeting event which would be held on October 16, 2021. The VNA Rummage Sale was also planned to be held at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds on October 1-3, 2021 with the collection of donations occurring September 4-21, 2021.

Mayor Vallone stated during the recent inclement weather, he had been in contact with the municipal liaisons from JCP&L and PSE&G to ensure efficient and effective responses to outages in the Borough.

Mayor Vallone apprised the Council of a request from the Somerset County Prosecutor's office to host a mobile vaccine clinic at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds on July 14, 2021 from 3:00 - 7:00 pm. A brief discussion ensued with a general consensus to authorize the clinic subject to the submission of the appropriate insurance and indemnification documentation.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

06/28/21 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

06/28/21 – Executive Session Minutes

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

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 21-104 – Authorizing a Special Use and Large Event Permit – Essex Horse Trials
2. Resolution 21-105 – Authorizing Waiver of Temporary Sign Permit – Essex Horse Trials
3. Resolution 21-106 – Authorizing Refund Planning Board Escrow – B15 L8
4. Resolution 21-107 – Authorizing Payment of Bill List

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that Resolutions 21-104 through 21-107 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Karner, McLean, Tweedie, Welsh

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.*

Ms. Hicks informed members of the public that the Borough Council would be adhering to the five-minute time limit for public comment. Members of the public would be advised when one minute remained; and again when thirty seconds remained.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie, was unanimously carried to open the meeting to public comment.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills commented upon the verbal vs written contract regarding the commitment of the \$800,000.00 to \$900,000.00 price point for the 105 market rate for sale units at the Residences at Overleigh development.

Mr. Sordillo responded the Planning Board resolution would detail the conditions of approval for the development and should include the price point as testified to by the developer at the Planning Board meeting.

Janine Silberberg, 90 Hidden Valley Road, Far Hills expressed concern regarding the timing of the Planning Board meeting over the Fourth of July holiday as well as the limited amount of time afforded for questioning of the witnesses. She also commented upon the road condition of Hidden Valley Road.

Mayor Vallone responded to the scheduling of the Planning Board meeting near the holiday and stated that per statute, the Planning Board must hear applications within a certain timeframe of the filing of the application.

Mr. Sordillo responded the Borough Engineer and the Bedminster DPW Director had reviewed Hidden Valley Road and temporary repairs were being scheduled until the roadway could be repaved in the future.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills reiterated the importance of including the price point in a contract for the Residences at Overleigh development. He also inquired if the Borough Council oversees the Planning Board and expressed concern regarding the limited time afforded to the public to make comment and ask questions during the Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Sordillo responded that by statute the Planning Board must be a separate legal body and provided a general overview of the Planning Board procedures regarding comments and questions.

Councilwoman Tweedie responded that the Planning Board had a predetermined time limit of 10:00 p.m. and it was necessary to postpone the Residences at Overleigh presentation in order to address the remaining Planning Board agenda items.

Mr. Sordillo stated the Planning Board has the authority to recall a witness to appear at a subsequent meeting in order to continue the testimony and/or presentation to afford opportunity for public comment and questioning. He clarified that that was under the purview of the Planning Board and not the Borough Council.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills expressed his concern regarding the procedural protocol for public comment and questions demonstrated by the Planning Board attorney.

Mayor Vallone responded the Planning Board attorney followed the procedures in an accordance with the law and conducted the public comment and question portion of the meeting appropriately.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie, was unanimously carried to close the meeting to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 21-108 - Attorney-Client Privilege – Anticipated Litigation - Bernardsville Quarry Recycling Facility

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie, was unanimously carried that Resolution 21-108 be approved.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman McLean was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 07-26-21