

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
August 9, 2021
VIA REMOTE MEETING ACCESS ONLY

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vallone called the remote 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, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Councilman Kevin Welsh, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Absent, as Excused:

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 the condition of the ballfield and playground at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds were vastly improved and expressed his appreciation to Ms. Hicks for her assistance in coordinating the improvements with Somerset County. Mayor Vallone also expressed his appreciation and noted that several residents were recently enjoying the facilities.

Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman Ted McLean – Roads

Councilman McLean reported it was anticipated Somerset County would be milling and paving Peapack Road in the Fall 2021 and noted the preconstruction meeting was scheduled for August 10, 2021 via Zoom. Mayor Vallone asked Councilman McLean to keep the Council apprised of the dates and times for the commencement of this paving project in order to inform our residents.

Councilman Joseph Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Mary Chimenti – Laws and Ordinances

No report. She commented Somerset County has been patching potholes along Lake Road. Mayor Vallone responded Ms. Hicks has been working with Somerset County for road repairs throughout the Borough and noted Bedminster DPW Director, John Mantz had recently announced his retirement.

Council President David Karner – Police

Council President Karner commended Councilman Welsh for his efforts regarding the improvements to the fairgrounds.

Council President Karner suggested a letter of appreciation, on behalf of the Mayor and Borough Council, should be sent to John Mantz. Ms. Hicks was asked to prepare the letter.

He continued by reporting that due to scheduling conflicts the meeting with PSE&G was not currently possible and suggested that residents residing along Peapack Road interested in connecting to natural gas service contact PSE&G directly. He also asked Councilman McLean to advise Somerset County, during the preconstruction meeting for the milling and paving of Peapack Road, of this potential connection and subsequent disturbance of the roadway.

Council President Karner apprised the Council of an incident which occurred on July 31, 2021 involving a resident being hit by a train near the Far Hills station. He commended the efforts of all emergency services involved and noted the exemplary work of Far Hills Officer Andrew Perez.

Lastly, Council President Karner reviewed the July 2021 Police Report.

Chief Michael DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis also acknowledged the efforts of local and state law enforcement and emergency services who responded to the train incident and noted a press release was recently issued.

Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Mayor Vallone stated that out of an abundance of caution and due to the delta variant and recent increase in Covid cases, all Far Hills public meetings would continue to be held via Zoom until further notice.

He apprised the Borough Council regarding the architectural rendering for the Pulte/Residences at Overleigh development presented at the August 2, 2021 Planning Board meeting. Mayor Vallone indicated he would be reaching out to the developer as the materials, craftsmanship and amenities presented were not up to the expected quality and in general, the overall presentation was underwhelming.

Councilwoman Tweedie, who also serves on the Planning Board, concurred with Mayor Vallone regarding the assessment of the presentation.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

07/26/21 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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 Consent Agenda by Borough Council action and placed on the Regular Agenda under New Business.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 21-111 – Authorizing Alcohol at Fairgrounds - VNA Sale Fall 2021
2. Resolution 21-112 – Authorizing Waiver for Sign Permit - VNA Sale Fall 2021
3. Resolution 21-113 – Authorizing Extension of Grace Period – 3rd Quarter Taxes
4. Resolution 21-114 – Authorizing Work Schedule and Salary Increase
Administrative Assistant - Police
5. Resolution 21-115 – Authorizing Payment of Bill List

With regard to Resolution 21-112, Ms. Hicks indicated that a waiver was required as the installation of the signs exceeded both the time and size limitation permitted by ordinance.

With regard to Resolution 21-113, Ms. Hicks apprised the Borough Council due to a delay in the mailing of the tax bills a grace period until August 31, 2021 was necessary. She noted payments received after August 31, 2021 would have interest calculated from August 1, 2021.

With regard to Resolution 21-114, Chief DeCarolis expressed his appreciation to the Borough Council for considering the increase in hours and rate of pay for his assistant, Marisa Kennedy and acknowledged that she has been with the Borough for three years and was a true asset to the police department.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman McLean that Resolutions 21-111 through 21-115 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, 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.*

Council President Karner asked Ms. Hicks to post the contact and application information regarding the PSE&G gas service connection on the Borough website.

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.

Karen Reilly, 7 Fox Hunt Court, Far Hills commented upon the prevalence of the Spotted Lantern Fly and inquired if there was any action at the local level. She concurred with Mayor Vallone's assessment of the architectural presentation for the Pulte/Residences at Overleigh and commented upon the density of the development and the increase in impervious surfaces. She also commented

that she and several neighbors had recently applied for a natural gas connection with PSE&G and based upon the expected revenue the connection costs were anticipated to be minimal.

Mayor Vallone responded that the developer had applied for an NJDEP permit which was outside the purview of the Borough of Far Hills. With regard to the density, he noted that the original proposal was for 175 units and through several meetings and negotiations the number of units was greatly reduced. Ms. Hicks was asked to provide additional details regarding the Spotted Lantern Fly on the Borough website.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills expressed his appreciation to the Mayor and Council for recognizing the expected level of quality for the Pulte/Residences at Overleigh development. He commented upon the current layout of the for-sale units and the lack of windows for the interior units and suggested a reduction in the number of units to provide a more palatial layout. He also suggested the developer could provide a virtual tour of the proposed units at the next Planning Board meeting. Lastly, he inquired as to a financial impact study for this development and offered to cover the expenses for an independent financial analysis.

Mayor Vallone responded the Borough would remain financially net-positive regarding this development and the allocation to the developer was to offset the age-restriction on the for-sale units.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the public comment process during the Planning Board meetings and inquired if the professionals would be required to return to a subsequent meeting to provide ample opportunity for all residents to comment and/or ask questions. He also inquired as to the determination of the \$6,000.00 allocation per unit over a ten-year period to offset the age restriction on the for-sale units. Lastly, he inquired if the discussions between the Borough professionals and the developer for the Pulte/Residences at Overleigh project would be made available to the public.

Mayor Vallone responded that there would be ample opportunities for public comment during the Planning Board meetings. He responded that the financial offset allocation for the age restriction was reviewed by the Borough professionals and was a vital component to the viability of the project as well as to limit the potential property tax impact to Borough residents.

Mr. Sordillo responded the Borough Planner provided a summary of the meetings between the professionals during the Planning Board meeting and any proposed changes to the application must be approved by the Planning Board.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills expressed his dismay regarding a comment made during the August 2, 2021 Planning Board meeting indicating the Pulte/Residences at Overleigh development was the look of the new Far Hills.

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.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED - 08/23/21