

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011 - 7:30 P.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Gerald Mobus called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A.10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG and a MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR TROOPS

ROLL CALL

Joren [P] Black [P] Franklin [P] Pote [P] Nehls [P] Cassidy [P]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, Engineer Tom Herits, and Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

There were 23 members of the public present.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Franklin said he met with the Finance Department and spoke to CFO Bill Hance about cutting down on some operational costs, and that he will soon be making some recommendations. He reported the Administration and Finance Committee met on Saturday and discussed some personnel issues. Councilman Franklin said the Borough has received a reduction of almost \$20,000. on a low interest loan received through the NJEIT, who refinance on behalf of the Borough when possible.

2. Police - Councilwoman Joren reported Chief Wenzel is back from the FBI Academy, and said he wishes to commend Lt. Joe Cina on the incredible job he did in his absence. She announced that the school "drop-offs" seem to be going smoothly and that the Police will again follow the school buses. Council President Joren also reported the County is making a change in the speed limit on Somerset Street, which should be in effect by October. She also announced the Youth Services Commission held a movie night in conjunction with the PTO's "ice cream social" and reported it was very well attended.

3. Public Works - Councilman Nehls reported the Public Works Department responded to 85 service calls, and 90 work orders. He said the new aerators were installed, however, were turned-off briefly due to the storm preparation. He reported Hurricane Irene damage to the tennis courts and the playground at Mobus Field. He said he and consulting Engineer Lee Purcell met with residents of Johnston Drive last night, to discuss a potential sewer project. Councilman Nehls said that the Committee met last Friday to discuss a storm water issue on Mountain Drive, and are consulting with Borough Engineer Tom Herits on possible better ways to treat and manage storm water. He said the Borough is looking long-term to tie into North Plainfield's sewer system, and added that North Plainfield is very receptive but residents need to be patient as this will take time to design. In the meantime, options are being discussed. He said Mr. Berse's video was very enlightening, and this stormwater is a major issue and needs to be addressed first. Engineer Herits said the retention of the rocks will also be addressed.

4. Buildings and Grounds; Recreation - In Councilwoman Cassidy's absence, Councilman Black reported he attended a Committee meeting on Saturday morning, and that the new boiler has been replaced with the Energy Grant money.

5. Public Affairs - Public Affairs, Councilman Nehls said the Board of Health will be meeting on the 19th, and announced the 911 Memorial Ceremony was very well attended. He thanked Assembly people Jon Bramnick and Nancy Munoz, along with Boy Scout Troop #32, Reverend Barbara Peters, Ruth Sachariah, Anastasia Rick, the Girl Scouts, Bob Burns, Andy Baldassarre, the Fire Department, Rescue Squad and the Police Department, for laying the wreath. He also thanked Linda Monetti for putting the program together. Councilman Nehls said the Borough's piece of steel from the World Trade Center was also on display, and reached out to our residents for any suggestions on the best way to memorialize it.

6. Fire - Councilman Black said many volunteers from the Fire Department went to the convention in Wildwood last week and they attended many seminars. He said the Department is looking to acquire saws and a ventilation system, and that they will be executing a pump test with three other towns – North Plainfield, Green Brook and Warren. He thanked Weldon Quarry for donating an old home for training purposes.

7. Laws/Ordinances - Councilman Pote thanked Councilman Nehls for hosting the 911 Memorial Ceremony. He reported the Planning Board met on Tuesday and flag lots were discussed. He said the Laws and Ordinance Committee will be meeting next week to review the Planning Board's recommendation, and also revisions to the tree ordinance. He said he is also scheduling a Library Advisory Study Committee meeting soon.

REPORTS - OTHER:

8. Engineer - Engineer Tom Herits reported the contractor is getting the contract and appropriate bonds together for the Ridge Road project, and soon he will be scheduling a pre-construction meeting. He said the renovations to the Texier House have begun, and the Historical Committee is very happy. He said he is working on the next round of DOT applications and they will be filed electronically. Mr. Herits said he met with the residents of Valley Drive, and to date, 4 of the 7 residents in the proposed project are in favor. He said he will be meeting with Bob Burns tomorrow to discuss Washington Rock Road.

9. Police Chief - No report presented.

10. Fire Department - No report presented.

11. Rescue Squad - Representing the Rescue Squad, Don Monetti reported the following: a nominating committee has been formed to select the officers for 2012; a second round of fund raising letters have gone out; the squad is working on rebuilding their website; and the details of this year's Tree of Light's celebration are being discussed. He reported the Squad answered 40 calls during the month of August, and the top responders were Adam Wexler, Ross Innocenti, Lysandra Plotkin, Don Monetti, and Noah Monetti. On behalf of Captain Robert Winston, Mr. Monetti said the Squad was quite involved in Hurricane Irene, from the preparation to manning crews through the storm. On August 25th, at the request of the Somerset County OEM, the squad sent a crew to Atlantic County as part of the evacuation efforts ordered by Governor Christie. He said throughout the storm, the Squad worked closely with the Fire Chief, the Police Department and the Borough's OEM office.

12. Attorney - Mr. Cruz said he has one item for discussion in Executive Session.

13. Administrator - Administrator Atkins congratulated Chief Wenzel on his graduation from the FBI Academy, referring to it as the "world series" of police training. He said he attended his first meeting of the Somerset County Administrators and shared services and budget issues were discussed. Mr. Atkins reported he and Mayor Mobus will be attending a seminar next week pertaining to "governing with less but doing more."

Clerk Michelle DeRocco reminded all that the deadline for responses to attend the annual League of Municipalities Convention is September 30th, and that a formal picture of the full Governing Body is scheduled to be taken at 7:00 PM on October 13th, prior to the scheduled Council meeting.

Mayor Mobus commended and thanked all of the Borough's emergency service teams for their efforts before, during, and after Hurricane Irene.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda listed below was unanimously accepted, following a motion by Councilwoman Joren, a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye".

Approval of the following Council minutes:
September 8, 2011

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Police Activity Report - August, 2011
Building Department Report - August, 2011

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #59 - Connell East LLC 9/12/11 Notice of public hearing on September 22, 2011 before Township of Berkeley Heights Zoning Board re: application to construct solar canopies on property located at 50 Connell Drive c: M & C, TEA, TH, DS
- #60 - Township of Montgomery 9/13/11 Resolution supporting proposed amendment to the Open Public Records Law, to preserve its original content c: M & C, TEA
- #61 - Black Rock Realty Advisors, Inc. 9/12/11 Notice of public hearing on September 21, 2011 before the Borough of North Plainfield Zoning Board to consider settlement of litigation arising from Applicant's request to remove age restriction on the lease holders of the units (Crystal Ridge) located in North Plainfield, and that requires transportation be provided to students c: M & C, TEA, AC
- #62 - Township of Warren 9/15/11 Notice of adoption of Ordinance 11-13 pertaining to definitions and re

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda resolutions listed below were unanimously accepted, following a motion by Councilwoman Joren, a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye".

- R1:09/22/11 Appointment to Public Works Department - Michael Giordano
- R2: Purchases Over \$2,000. - EMR Power System, LLC; Behavioral Medicine Consultant
- R3: Authorize Shared Service Agreement - Municipal Court Administrator and Support Services / Borough of North Plainfield
- R4: Resolution Authorizing the Approval and Execution of a Settlement Agreement
- R5: Authorize Execution of Agreement to Accept Public Works Commodities and Services through Cooperative and Joint Purchasing - Somerset County
- R6: Authorized Clerk to issue Raffle License - Watchung Educational Foundation
- R7: Honoring Dr. Richard Wellbrock for his 36 years of Service - Scout Troop 32

NON-CONSENT AGENDA: Items listed below will be individually addressed and acted upon accordingly. Council reserves the right to refer an item to Committee for further review and discussion.

NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

Councilman Franklin moved R8, a second was made by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye".

- R8:09/22/11 Payment of Bills

PUBLIC PORTION

Doug Berse, Mountain Drive, stressed the urgency to have something done to North Drive. Councilman Nehls said millings will be used to fill in the pot holes as a temporary fix, and Engineer Tom Herits said the millings can be topped with asphalt, if authorized by the Council. Mr. Berse questioned the time frame and Councilman Nehls explained that cost estimates need to be obtained, and if it is under the bid threshold, it may be able to be done soon - if it needs to go through the bidding process, it may take a while. Mobus said preliminary field work must be done. Councilman Nehls clarified that there are two issues – one is the stormwater, and the other is whether or not the town will repair these roads. He clarified that the town will not take over or repair private roads. Councilman Nehls said the Public Works Committee will be discussing options and will keep the residents informed.

Denise Oliver, Edgemont Road, said the Borough is adding to the deterioration of her road, by allowing the stormwater to drain onto it, so while yes, Edgemont is private, the Borough is responsible for some of the deterioration.

Robert Hess, Edgemont Road, said the Borough is dumping water from 2 outlets behind their homes and eventually on to his street. He said whoever allowed the stormwater to run down this way from Johnston Drive, and the Engineer who approved it, should be responsible. Mr. Hess said he has lost trees from the run-off, and residents cars are being ruined by rocks and potholes. He said a sewer or a pump station should have been installed.

Tslila Cohen, Mountain Drive, said since the pipes for the stormwater were put in, her home has been destroyed 3 times over. She said there was always run-off but never like this. She said her damage is beyond reasonable and the water run-off remedy must be expedited, before the winter comes. Mrs. Cohen asked if residents can attend any meeting when these concerns are addressed, and Councilman Nehls said he will keep the residents informed.

Janet Kirpan, East Drive, said the water problem on Edgemont causes problems for her on East Drive and even with a sump pump it is a frustrating problem.

Janet Tsampikos, Mountain Drive, asked if North Drive is maintained by the Borough and Councilman Nehls said it is.

Mr. Herits said gabions can be installed, explaining a gabion is a wire basket-like mesh to keep the rocks from falling.

Mary Ciccolella spoke of property maintenance issues on Johnston Drive, and Administrator Atkins said he would discuss her concerns with Zoning Enforcement Officer Ed Bennett. Mrs. Ciccolella indicated that she would develop a list identifying her concerns.

There being no one else from the public desiring to be heard, Mayor Mobus closed the Public Portion.

Council President Joren moved R9, a second was made by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye".

R9:09/22/11 Executive Session: Personnel - Mayor and Council

Upon return to regular session at 9:49 P.M. all members previously present were again in attendance.

A motion was moved by Councilman Pote, and seconded by Councilman Nehls, to authorize the Borough's Labor Attorney to perform a personnel investigation in response to a CEPA claim. Upon roll call, the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye".

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:51 P.M. to the call of the Chair and to the next scheduled meeting to be held at 7:30 P.M. on Thursday, October 13, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Clerk