

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

COUNCIL MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 15, 2016 – 7:30 P.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Pote called the meeting to order at 7:30 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 SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD.

ROLL CALL:

Joren [A] Black [P] Nehls [P] Gibbs [P] Mobus [P] Sopko [P]

Although not present at roll call Council President Joren arrived at 7:45 PM.

Also present were Attorney Albert Cruz, Administrator Tom Atkins, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 22 members of the public present

PROCLAMATION:

Mayor Pote read a proclamation thanking Valley Furniture on their Years of Service to the Borough of Watchung and presented it to Mr. Spencer Kipe. Mr. Kipe was most appreciative.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Anthony Iovino, Acari Iovino Architects, PC presented a schematic design and the current floor plans. He said he has consulted with and continues to work with the County on the floor plans. He gave a description of each side of the building, explaining that the children's portion will remain and the rest of the building will be demolished and rebuilt. Mr. Iovino requested as much input as possible from the committee in the next few weeks so he may get a final design together. Councilman Nehls thanked Mr. Iovino for all the work he has put into this project and said the Public Works Committee and the town should be proud of the results which meets the needs of the community. Councilman Nehls said the Public Works Committee would like to have approval from the Mayor and Council to prepare a contract for Mr. Iovino to continue on to the next phase. Mr. Iovino said it is possible for the plans to be ready for bid by the end of this year. Councilman Black thanked Mr. Iovino and asked if the main entrance could be made more modern and Councilman Gibbs agreed. Mr. Iovino said if more modern with more windows the cost would increase, and the interior layout is modern. Mayor Pote asked Mr. Iovino if the water issue in the basement will be addressed and if the retaining wall, bridge and walkway will be looked at. Mr. Iovino responded these will have to be discussed with the town engineer.

Tom Franklin, Wildwood Terrace, asked what the square footage was and Mr. Iovino said it was 9400 sf. Mr. Franklin then asked if the ceilings would be cathedral and also if the rock slope by the children's section will be addressed. Mr. Iovino said he does not have the actual design for ceiling at this time and the rock slope will be looked at.

Adel Rifaat, Woodledge Road, asked if the volume over the main space could have a mezzanine and Mr. Iovino said he had not looked at that as an option and it would all depend on the budget. Mr. Rifaat also said he would like to see stone rather than wood on the exterior and a simpler roof line.

Virginia Hartmann, Elsinore Drive, also said the siding should be something that requires little or no maintenance and different color.

Sondra Fechtner, Cardinal Drive, said the design is very attractive and asked if the original building is being demolished will the footprint be the same? Mr. Iovino said the footprint will be expanded. Ms. Fechtner also mentioned the concern for the traffic.

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, said she likes all but the front entrance and she mentioned there is a water problem on the upper level which should be looked at. She also remarked that the adult section is on a different level than the children's section so parents would not be able to leave the children and go to the adult section.

Stuart Homer, Sherwood Drive, asked how flexible is it to add more windows without increasing the cost. Mr. Iovino said this is still a work in progress and all suggestions and comments from this evening will be looked at.

Mayor Pote thanked residents for their comments and suggestions and asked if there are additional suggestions they should be sent to Mrs. DeRocco. Councilman Nehls said it is the Public Works Committee intention to move forward and they will wait for a proposal from Mr. Iovino for the next step. Mr. Iovino said the steps would be the design, development and construction process and he will be talking with the County Library and the Public Works Committee in regard to modifications. Once that is complete he will return with plans and numbers. He said this is a Spring project and hopefully it will go out to bid by January 2017.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Gibbs reported the Committee met on Monday, September 12th and discussed the findings in regard to options for health insurance and it was determined that the Borough would not be able to offer an equivalent insurance to the current State plan right now. He said the Committee also felt it did not make sense at this time to go to a different ambulance service and Councilman Sopko said Atlantic is providing adequate service but the Committee may look into shared service with Warren in the future. Councilman Gibbs also reported the Arts Center Lease will be sent to Mr. Cruz and then to the Council for comments and the Phillips field lease went to the Board of Education for their review and to ensure that the stipulation that 50% of capital costs would continue to be part of the agreement. Mr. Atkins said he is waiting for the Board of Education to return it and then it would be sent to Mr. Cruz. Councilman Gibbs said Mr. Bennett will be at Borough Hall more hours from September 1st through November 30th and this change will be assessed at the end of that period. Mr. Atkins said the extra hours are to enable Mr. Bennett to catch up on some items and for more interaction with the staff in that Department. Councilman Gibbs said the Committee discussed asking the Public Works Committee to consider completing a grant application to the NJ Department of Transportation Alternative Program for sidewalks from Bayberry to the Best Lake area. Council President Joren said she thought the Borough was only going to do macadam not the whole sidewalk and both Councilmen Nehls and Mobus said it is a new sidewalk. Council President Joren remarked the residents would then be responsible for snow removal. Mayor Pote said there could be issues with trees causing problems if the sidewalks are concrete. Councilman Mobus suggested submitting one grant application which would encompass sidewalks from Bayberry to the Ness property. Mr. Atkins asked if it is the consensus of the Mayor and Council to authorize Maser Consulting to prepare the documents for the grant application and if it is a Resolution should be passed at the October 6th meeting for them to do it. He said in the meantime he will speak with Mr. Herits and the grant person about it. Councilman Gibbs said the Committee is discussing the replacement of the vacant Administrative Assistant position.

Mayor Pote thanked Councilman Gibbs for hosting the 911 ceremony. Councilman Gibbs said one resident said they thought the ceremony brought together the essence of Watchung.

2. Police – No Report

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Councilman Nehls reported the Public Works Department has been repairing potholes in preparation for the winter, vegetation has been cut by the sidewalk on Bayberry Lane, and the Somerset County Vac truck cleared numerous basin and stormwater pipes in the Borough. Mr. Nehls also said clean-up has started at the Ness Farm with the removal of the chicken coop. He said the Department also repaired a roof leak at Borough Hall and an outside vendor (ServPro) came and removed a mold problem in a utility closet at Borough Hall. Councilman Nehls then gave a report for the Engineer, in Mr. Herits' absence. He said the Knollwood project is complete and the maintenance bond has been received. Councilman Nehls said Mr. Herits will be meeting with Weldon and their Attorney to discuss the Salt Storage unit. He also said the Borough will be moving forward to repair the basketball court. Councilman Black said plans for the firehouse have been sent to the Construction Official for approval and then Mr. Herits will put specifications together to go out to bid. Mayor Pote questioned the timeline for the 911 memorial and Councilman Nehls said site plans have been completed by Mr. Herits and Mr. Don Monetti took them to his engineer for review and Mr. Herits is working on the landscape plans. He said once the architect signs off the Borough can get the foundation in place.

4. Public Affairs:

Open Space – No Report

Environmental – Councilman Sopko had no report but said the next meeting is September 26th.

Recreation – Councilman Mobus reported the Commission met Wednesday night. He said the movie night/ice cream social was very successful and upcoming events include the annual Jerry Mobus Fishing Derby on September 17 at 9 am and the Harvest Festival on October 29th (rain date October 30th) from 2 to 5 pm. He said other programs include Ladies Volleyball starting September 26 through June 5th at Valley View School from 7-9 pm and adult pickup basketball starting October 7th through June 9th, Fridays, 7 – 9 pm, also at Valley View School.

Historical – Councilman Mobus reported the Committee met last evening and there was one issue which must be addressed regarding History Day. The Committee does not have anyone available that day to have the museum open since most members have other commitments. Dorothy Addario said the members felt since they will be doing the Weekend Journey through the Past on October 8th and 9th this would be too much for them. Mayor Pote asked that the Committee try to have someone available to open that day and Ms. Addario said she will ask to see if something can be done.

Board of Health – No report – the next meeting is scheduled for October 19th at 7:00 PM

5. Fire – Councilman Black thanked all members of the Fire Department who participated in the 911 Ceremony. He also reported Fire Prevention week starts October 16th and asked if the Public Works Department would assist giving a “facelift” to the meeting room. Councilman Black also said a vehicle for the Department was discussed and he spoke to Licardi and Crown Cadillac to see if there was a possibility for a donation. Councilman Gibbs said he is not in support to buy a new vehicle when vehicles from the Police Department which will no longer be used by them could be used by other departments.

6. Laws/Ordinances – Council President Joren had no report but Mr. Cruz is working on some items from the last meeting. She also reported there is an Ordinance in place for “catch & release” at Watchung Lake and a large sign is there. However, it does not cover Best Lake.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – No Report

8. Police Chief – No Report

9. Fire Department –No Report

10. Rescue Squad – Councilman Sopko reported there was a meeting on Tuesday at which time Donald Monetti was elected as the new President to replace Logan Taylor who resigned. Councilman Sopko wished to recognize Mr. Taylor for his service on the Rescue Squad. He also said Mr. Monetti will come to the Council meeting to give a report in October.

11. Emergency Management – No Report

12. Attorney – No report except there are three items for executive session

13. Clerk – Mrs. DeRocco reported the County OEM is having a meeting to discuss emergency procedures if there is an issue on Election Day. She said she will discuss with Gary Greves. Mrs. DeRocco also thanked both Councilman Gibbs and Mobus for volunteering at the Shop- Rite National Hunger Month event on September 21st. Ms. DeRocco also reported that Buffalo Wild Wings is planning a 5K race on October 30th and would like the Mayor and members of the Council to participate. Councilman Mobus said Buffalo Wild Wings has been very generous with donations for various recreation events.

14. Administrator – No Report.

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PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY
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Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, asked for an explanation on R6 and Mr. Atkins briefly explained the necessity for this to be done.
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A Public Hearing on Ordinance OR:16/10 entitled: **“AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PARTIAL FUNDING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF A FIRE TRUCK FOR THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND APPROPRIATING \$44,000.00 THEREFOR FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND.”** was held

Councilman Gibbs moved a public hearing be held with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

With no one from the public wishing to be heard Councilman Gibbs moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

R1:09/15/16 Adoption of OR:16/10 - Capital Ordinance for Fire Department Apparatus

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NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda items listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Joren and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

Approval of the following Council minutes:
September 1, 2016, Regular and Executive Sessions

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Building Department Report – August, 2016

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #31 - Township of Warren 9/8/16 Notice of Introduction and Public Hearing on October 27, 2016 in regard to 14 (fourteen) Zoning Ordinances No.’s 16-15 through 16-28 (Full Copies are Available in the Clerk’s Office) c: M & C, TEA, Pl. Board, Bd. of Adj.
- #32 - Borough of Somerville 9/12/16 Resolution in support of H.R.814, known as the “Thin Blue Line Act” c: M&C, TEA

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda Resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Joren and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

R2:09/15/16 Purchases Over \$2,000. – Seashore Amusements (Rec. – Harvest Festival games)
Helecon, Inc. (Rec. – Basketball Ct. Renovation)
Finne Building & Investment (Roads – Catch Basin Work)

R3: Appointment to Recreation Commission / Alternate Member – Otto Hartman

R4: Authorizing Return of Application Fee/ Zoning Permit (s/b Green Brook)

R5: Authorizing Payment in the Amount of \$5,000.00 for Joint Vicinage 13 Defense Costs in the Matter of the Mt. Laurel Declaratory Judgement Actions filed in Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren Counties

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NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: 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.

Ordinance OR:16/11 entitled **“AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING A SIDEWALK EASEMENT FOR A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT BLOCK 2401, LOTS 3.01 AND 3.02 ON THE TAX MAP OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, COMMONLY KNOWN AS 210 MOUNTAIN BOULEVARD”** was introduced. Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be adopted on first reading and directed the Clerk to publish the ordinance and notice of Public Hearing. Public Hearing to be held October 6, 2016.

Council President Joren moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, "aye."

R6:09/15/16 Introduction of OR:16/11 – Accepting a Sidewalk Easement / 210 Mountain Boulevard

Councilman Gibbs introduced Resolution R7, Councilman Nehls seconded the motion and upon Roll Call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, "aye."

R7: Payment of Bills

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PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION
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Dorothy Addario, Rock Avenue, wished to clarify that Atlantic Ambulance service only covers Monday-Friday during the day the rest of the time, nights and weekends, are covered by the members of the Volunteer Rescue Squad. Ms. Addario also wanted to thank Spencer Kipe and his family for first originally donating the large wood sign to the Rescue Squad and restoring the gold leaf on sign.

Tom Franklin, Wildwood Terrace, mentioned the field stone wall in front of Borough Hall looks terrible and probably when it is repaired it will have to be capped in order to prevent water seeping in again. He also said there is a large dead tree on the corner of Mountain Boulevard and Wildwood which should be removed and a three foot high stump. Mr. Franklin thanked Mr. Atkins for his help in having pipes replaced. He also said the Texier House is in need of maintenance. Councilman Nehls said Mr. Herits will be moving forward with getting this accomplished with painting, etc. and Mr. Burns is looking at the wall in front of Borough Hall.

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, said the Borough should not put big sidewalks on Valley and mentioned the opposition for sidewalks on Mountain Boulevard. Council President Joren said this was a problem because the County said sidewalks would have to be on the South side of the road.

Pete Martino, Sunbright Road, suggested using heavy timber instead of steel for the library windows. He also questioned if the lake was going to be dredged and Councilman Gibbs said it is being discussed. Mr. Martino asked who was going to design the salt containment building and the cost. Mr. Atkins responded that Mr. Herits will be doing the design and the approximate cost for the Borough is \$45,000 with the County paying the same.

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Council President Joren moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Mobus, Gibbs, Sopko, "aye."

- R8: Executive Session - Contract Negotiations – Free Acres Association, Inc, Municipal Services Agreement
- Litigation – In the Matter of the Borough of Watchung for a Judgment of Compliance of its Third Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, Docket No. SOM-L-902-15
- Contract Negotiations – PBA Contract

The Borough Council may take official action on those items discussed in executive session upon completion of the executive session.

Upon return to regular session, all Council members previously in attendance were again present.

Mr. Cruz gave a brief synopsis of what had been discussed at the Executive Session. He said the first item discussed was Free Acres Association and he has received direction on how to proceed with those negotiations. The second item were two updates on the Status of litigation on affordable housing, and the third item discussed was the PBA negotiations and direction was given on how to proceed with that.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 P.M. to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled Council meeting 7:30 PM, October 6, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance
Deputy Clerk