

STRATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
AGENDA MEETING/REDEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP MINUTES
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023
6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: Borough Clerk Bill Bray called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Keenan led the Pledge and said an opening prayer.

Mayor Keenan wished everyone a Happy Hanukkah.

STATEMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT: The Borough Clerk read the following statement:

Notice of this meeting has been provided to the Courier Post and The Retrospect and is posted on the Borough Hall Bulletin Board stating the time and the place of the meeting.

ROLL CALL:

JOSH KEENAN, MAYOR – PRESENT
STEPHEN GANDY, COUNCIL PRESIDENT – ABSENT
JAMES KELLY, COUNCILMAN – PRESENT
LINDA HALL, COUNCILWOMAN – PRESENT
TINA LOMANNO, COUNCILWOMAN – PRESENT
PATRICK GILLIGAN, COUNCILMAN – PRESENT
MICHAEL TOLOMEO, COUNCILMAN – ABSENT
STUART PLATT, BOROUGH SOLICITOR – PRESENT
CRAIG REILLY, BOROUGH ENGINEER - PRESENT
RON MORELLO, POLICE/OEM COORDINATOR – PRESENT
JOHN D. KEENAN, JR., ACTING BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR - PRESENT
BILL BRAY, BOROUGH CLERK – PRESENT

SPECIAL PRESENTATION – – EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR – Michael Williams. Councilwoman Lomanno read the proclamation recognizing Michael Williams as the 2023 Stratford Borough Employee of the Year.

PUBLIC PORTION FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

Councilman Gilligan motioned to open the public portion on agenda items only. Councilwoman Hall seconded the motion, which passed with all members present voting in favor in a voice vote.

John Gentless, 111 Union Avenue – Mr. Gentless stated he is concerned a tree's root have been damaged by the concrete curb and sidewalk replacement being done as part of the Central and Kirkwood Phase II project. Mr. Gentless stated the Borough should hire certified tree expert to evaluate the tree.

Councilman Kelly motioned to close the public portion for agenda items. Councilman Hall seconded the motion, which passed with all members present voting in favor in a voice vote.

POLICE/OEM REPORT: Administrator/Department Head Morello provided the following report of the Stratford Borough Police Department Activities for November 2023.

November 3 – Police responded to Stratford and Bryant Ave for a labor dispute. Police found crews from Atlantic City Electric were being obstructed by union picketers. The picketers complied with requests not to obstruct workers or the roadway and power was restored.

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November 9 – Police responded to motor vehicle accident at Laurel Ave and White Horse Pike and found an intoxicated 40-year-old Clementon man had rear-ended another vehicle. The other driver sustained minor injuries.

November 12 – Police responded to Saratoga Road for a report of a woman in cardiac arrest. Officers began CPR and used an automatic electronic defibrillator and stabilized the woman who was transported to the hospital but later died.

November 14 – Police responded to Evergreen Road for an unconscious 85-year-old woman and determined she had died of natural causes several hours earlier.

November 15 – Police responded to a motor vehicle crash at White Horse Pike and Cornell Ave where an intoxicated man wandered into the passing lane where he was struck and killed. The accident was handled by Somerdale Police but all lanes of the White Horse Pike were closed for several hours causing significant traffic problems for over 2 hours.

November 16 – Officers received reports of a vehicle fled a Winslow Officer. Police spotted the stolen pick up on the White Horse Pike and the driver fled on Somerdale Road then on foot near Atlantic and Somerdale Road. Police arrested the 16-year-old suspect from Winslow and he was charged with receiving stolen property, eluding police and was released into the custody of his grandmother.

November 21 – Police responded to Bishop Court Apartments for a report of a robbery. A resident report he came home and was accosted by a suspect who was in the alleyway in the rear of the Filipino Community Center. The suspect took the victim's keys from a neck lanyard and attempted to steal his car but the keys were not on the lanyard. The suspect fled on foot toward 30 Strikes Bowling Alley and the victim was taken to Jefferson Hospital for treatment.

November 22 – Overnight air conditioning copper valued at \$5,000.00 was taken by unknown suspect from Ryan Homes, Stratford Common building site on Berlin Road.

November 23 – Police responded to Pennsylvania Avenue on reports of a driver being stopped by a group of people who accused him of speeding. During the incident a firearm was pointed at the victim. The driver fled and called a third party who contacted police. During their investigation the people became involved in a fight involving 6 people. Police charged six people with fighting and one person with aggravated assault for pointing the firearm and terroristic threats.

November 24 – Police responded to PNC Bank for the report of a motor vehicle accident. Police found one driver remained in their car and called 911 while the other driver approached them and sprayed them with mace. Police charged the 24-year-old Clementon woman with assault.

November 26 – A vehicle left at Echelon Ford for repairs with the keys inside was stolen by two suspects who had been at Jefferson Hospital. The suspects drove to Walmart where they were involved in a motor vehicle accident. Police followed a trail of engine coolant and found the vehicle and suspects on a dead end road. The suspect was charged with auto theft and related offenses.

November 27 – Police responded to Warwick and Laurel roads for a power outage and found a telephone pole snapped at the top of the pole. The pole was replaced and power restored 17 hours later. The outage and repairs were very disruptive the morning, afternoon and evening commutes.

November 30 – Police responded to a fatal motor vehicle accident at White Horse Pike and Wellington Avenue.

November 30 – Police responded to a serious motor vehicle accident at White Horse Pike and Laurel Road. Police charged a 40-year-old Bishop Court resident with drunken driving and assault by auto. There were two injuries.

Mr. Morello stated police have found a homeless encampment on the Rowan University campus in a wooded area. The homeless persons have used an open flame and accidentally ignited their couch. Mr. Morello stated the Fire Department has responded twice to extinguish fires.

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Mr. Morello stated the application for the alleged massage parlor/aromatherapy/hair removal business is still incomplete and the applicant has been informed of the additional information that is required.

ENGINEER REPORT:

Mr. Reilly stated the written report was submitted to Council. Mr. Reilly stated they have issued recommendation letters for sewer repairs and upgrades. Mr. Reilly stated the Central and Kirkwood Phase II project began with concrete work. Mr. Reilly stated contractors are directed not to disturb more than 10 percent of surface roots. Mr. Reilly stated there is a two-year maintenance bond that would cover the cost of replacing any trees that die as a result of work.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

NOVEMBER 9, 2023 AGENDA MEETING
NOVEMBER 9 2023 EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

A motion was made by Councilwoman Tolomeo, seconded by Councilman Kelly with all members present voting aye by Roll Call Vote except Councilman Kelly who abstain because he was not at either meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: REPORT #1 UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARINGS OF ORDINANCES

ORD. 23-11 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 2.12 ENTITLED "POLICE DEPARTMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS"

Mr. Bray stated the ordinance will update department rules to incorporate changes by the state and the public hearing is set for December 27 at 1 p.m.

ORD. 23-12 AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT BERLIN ROAD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr. Bray stated the ordinance will adopt the redevelopment plan for Berlin Road Phase II. Mr. Bray stated he attended the Joint Land Use Board meeting where they found the plan to be in compliance with the Borough Master Plan. Mr. Bray stated the public hearing will be December 12.

NEW BUSINESS: REPORT #2 UPCOMING INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

ORD. 23-13 REVISED 2023 SALARY ORDINANCE

Mr. Bray stated the ordinance revises the Borough salary ordinance.

ORD. 23-14 SEWER REPAIR BOND ORDINANCE

Mr. Bray stated the ordinance would approve funding for emergency sewer repairs on Beaver Circle.

ORD. 23:15 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 15 OF THE BOROUGH OF STRATFORD ENTITLED FIRE HOUSING CODE INSPECTION OFFICE

Mr. Bray stated the ordinance would amend the Borough's housing code inspections code.

RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Bray reviewed the proposed resolutions. No one from Council removed or added to the consent agenda. Resolutions 23:168 through 23:180 were approved as a consent agenda.

RES. 23-168 AUTHORIZE SSA WITH MT. EPHRAIM – ELECTRICAL SUBCODE OFFICIAL

RES. 23-169 APPOINT SUBSTITUTE CROSSING GUARD – STAINES/JOHNSON

RES. 23-170 AUTHORIZE CANCELLATION OF TAX OVERPAYMENTS OR DELINQUENCIES LESS THAN \$10

RES. 23-171 APPOINT MEMBER TO BOARD OF PARKS COMMISSION – READ

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- RES. 23-172 AUTHORIZE REFUND OF TAX OVERPAYMENT
- RES. 23-173 APPOINT SCHOOL SAFETY GUARD – OSCIAK
- RES. 23-174 AUTHORIZE APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION FUNDING GRANT FROM NJACOP
- RES. 23-175 AWARD CONTRACT FOR PARKING LOT STRIPING
- RES. 23-176 AUTHORIZE CANCELLATION OF PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CHARGE
- RES. 23-177 AWARD CONTRACT FOR ADA ACCESSIBLE BATHROOM IMPROVEMENTS
- RES. 23-178 APPOINT DUTY CREW MEMBER – VOHRINGER/BOYLE
- RES. 23-179 AUTHORIZE 2024 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FIREFIGHTER GRANT APPLICATION
- RES. 23-180 AUTHORIZE EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel-Fire Official

Motion was made by Councilwoman Hall, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno with all members present voting aye by Roll Call Vote.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilman Kelly – Councilman Kelly thanks Mike Williams for his work and said he never hears a negative thing about Public Works which he credits to his work.

Councilwoman Hall – Councilwoman Hall congratulated Mr. William and said the recognition as Employee of the Year is well deserved. Councilwoman Hall thanks Mr. Williams and Public Works for their work on the Borough Christmas tree. Councilwoman Hall wished everyone a Happy Hanukkah and Happy Holidays. Councilwoman Hall asked if Public Works can look for low hanging branches before Santa rides the fire truck again. Councilwoman Hall stated she attended the Rowan holiday event and heard the Stratford kids perform holiday songs and there was a great turnout with many parents. Councilwoman Hall thanked the mayor and she has big shoes to fill next year. Councilwoman Hall thanked the Police Department for its help with the tree lighting.

Councilwoman Lomanno – Councilwoman Lomanno thanks Mike Williams for his efforts for the Borough. Councilwoman Lomanno stated the town looks great and Public Works has done a great job collecting leaves. Councilwoman Lomanno stated under Mr. Williams direction Public Works has done countless things for the Borough that have not gone unnoticed.

Councilman Gilligan – Councilman Gilligan thanked Mike Williams for his work and stated the painting of the crosswalks was a huge benefit for the Borough and demonstrates how Public Works is well managed. Councilman Gilligan thanked Councilwoman Hall for her efforts to organize the tree lighting which had a good turnout despite the rain.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

Motion was made by Councilman Gilligan, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno to open the meeting to the public for Good and Welfare with all Council voting aye.

John Gentless – 111 Union Ave. – Mr. Gentless asked if there are any updates. There were none. Mr. Gentless asked if any of the proposed apartments on Webster Avenue would be required to be affordable. Mr. Platt stated the application would be heard by the Joint Land Use Board and it would make a recommendation is approved. Mr. Gentless asked if there are any updates on the United Methodist Church property taxes. Mr. Keenan stated they have filed a tax appeal.

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Beverly Love – Cornell Manor Apartments – Ms. Love stated the apartment complex has new owners who have raised the rent. Mr. Platt stated the Borough Council does not jurisdiction over rents. Ms. Love stated there is also a pothole at Grand Ave and Columbia Ave. Mr. Keenan stated the Borough is working to get it filled. Mr. Reilly state he is meeting a contractor on the site to get a price.

There were no further comments.

Motion was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno to close the public portion with all Council Members present voting aye by Roll Call Vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mr. Platt stated the Executive Session is anticipated to last approximately 15 minutes and no action is expected afterwards but Council reserves the right to take action if needed.

Motion was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilwoman Hall, with all Council voting aye to enter Executive Session.

Council entered Executive Session at 7:05 p.m. Council returned from Executive Session at 8:19 p.m.

Motion was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilwoman Hall, with all Council voting aye to come out of Executive Session.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Councilwoman Hall, seconded by Councilwoman Tolomeo with all Council voting aye to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Bill Bray, Borough Clerk