

STRATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
AGENDA MEETING/REDEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP MINUTES  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 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.

**ROLL CALL:**

JOSH KEENAN, MAYOR – PRESENT  
STEPHEN GANDY, COUNCIL PRESIDENT – PRESENT  
JAMES KELLY, COUNCILMAN – ABSENT  
LINDA HALL, COUNCILWOMAN – PRESENT  
TINA LOMANNO, COUNCILWOMAN – ABSENT  
PATRICK GILLIGAN, COUNCILMAN – PRESENT  
MICHAEL TOLOMEO, COUNCILMAN – PRESENT  
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

**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.

**PUBLIC PORTION FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:**

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

John Gentless, 110 Union Avenue – Mr. Gentless asked is West Atlantic Avenue would be paved and if there is an update on the sewage pumping station. Mr. Platt stated the Engineer will cover the topics during his report to Council.

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

**MAYORAL APPOINTMENT** – Anita Schwartz – Library Board of Trustees – Term 11/9/2023-11/8/2028 Mr. Bray stated the Mayor reappointed Anita Schwartz to another five-year-term on the Library Board of Trustees.

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

October 3 – Police responded to Jefferson Hospital for a theft of \$2,000 in jewelry from a patient over a period of three days while she was on the third floor of the hospital. No suspects or additional thefts have been reported.

October 7 – Police responded to Brookview Manor Apartments for an overdose of a 40-year-old woman found in a bathtub. The woman was revived with Narcan and refused transportation to the hospital.

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October 12 – Police responded to Yellin School after a threatening note was found in the all-purpose room. After a 6-hour investigation the threat was determined to be not-credible. Mr. Morello stated the note was found with other written messages and appears to be a juvenile prank.

October 12 – Police responded to Parkview School for a child abuse case. No charges have been filed and DCP&P is handling the matter.

Mr. Morello stated the simultaneous events at the two schools taxed the departments manpower but are issued they need to work through.

October 16 – Somerdale Police initiated a pursuit of vehicle taken by force from Dartmouth Ave. The vehicle fled east on White Horse Pike, striking three vehicles at Laurel and White Horse Pike. Somerdale Police ended their pursuit and the vehicle fled at a high speed south on Laurel and struck three more vehicles between Central Ave and Warwick Road. Approximately 20 minutes later police spotted the suspect walking along Laurel Road near the lake. The suspect became combative and resisted arrest. Police turned the suspect over to Somerdale Police. The vehicle was recovered destroyed and parked by the lake. Later that evening the suspect assaulted at least one Somerdale Police officer during processing, biting the officer in their cheek. The suspect stole his girlfriend's vehicle while intoxicated and was lodged in the county jail.

October 17 – Police responded to a serious motor vehicle accident on the White Horse Pike at the Burger King driveway the occurred when a driver attempted a left hand turn out of the parking lot to travel east on the roadway. While attempting to block the lanes to protect the accident scene another driver struck the patrol car. The driver's insurance is paying for the damage to the patrol car which is not yet repaired.

October 19 – Police responded to assist Gibbsboro Police who has two of their police officers and an ambulance struck by a driver who fled in their vehicle. The suspect was captured near the Voorhees Police headquarters and they became highly combative. Police determined the suspect was under the influence of PCP and not feeling pain. The suspect was transported to Jefferson Hospital where they continued to fight until sedated. The suspect was jailed on numerous charges.

October 20 – Police responded to the school bus stop on Saratoga Road near the playground for a report of a deranged male beating on his parents' car windows. Police found a 22-year-old man having a manic episode. The man was cooperative at first because he knew the officers but suddenly ran toward the bus stop but was tackled by officers. The suspect was transported to Jefferson Hospital in Cherry Hill.

October 25 – Police responded to Yellin school for a report of a student hearing an unknown student state they had a weapon. Police were able to use security camera footage to isolate their search to certain student groups. Police cleared rooms and performed metal detector and hand searches. No weapon was found.

October 26 – Police and fire responded to a kitchen fire at Sterling Arms Apartments. The fire was extinguished quickly and the resident received warning notices for health and safety violations. Unfortunately, the incident disrupted dismissal at Yellin and Parkview schools.

October 30 – Mischief Night was uneventful with only some soaping and toilet paper incidents reported but far less than prior years.

October 31 – Halloween was uneventful with the school parade and parking near Parkview School managed.

October 31 – Police responded to a home on Wright Ave. for a large dog that escaped and entered a chicken coop where it killed the bird. The dog's owner was charged with having a dog at large and for the property damage it caused.

October 31- Police continue to review a business license application for an applicant who originally proposed a massage parlor at 606 White Horse Pike. The applicant later submitted an application for hair removal and aromatherapy. The applicant has not been able to provide the require DCA cosmetology license and other required documents.

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Mr. Morello stated the departments body worn camera will be upgraded by the Borough's vendor. Mr. Morello stated the Borough is halfway through the five-year contract with a total cost of \$128,000 of which \$55,000 is funded by a grant. Mr. Morello stated the next upgrade in 2027 will cost approximately \$130,000 without grant funding.

Mr. Morello stated patrols will be added during peak holiday times with some of the overtime funded by grants. Mr. Morello stated the revised Police Rules and Regulations ordinance will incorporate various updates from the State of New Jersey including the new Police Licensing requirements.

Councilman Gandy asked how many businesses on the White Horse Pike have restrictions against left turns. Mr. Morello stated TB Bank, Tim Hortons, and other newer businesses have restrictions but not older businesses.

Councilman Tolomeo suggested the Borough could add the restriction as a condition of business licensing next year.

**ENGINEER REPORT:**

Mr. Reilly stated the written report was submitted to Council. Mr. Reilly stated the Borough has a new contractor for the Berlin Road pump station upgrades and anticipates receiving pricing soon. Mr. Reilly stated the NJDOT awarded the Borough \$238,352 grant for Phase IV of Central Kirkwood Repaving project. Mr. Reilly stated Phase III is currently being designed. Phase II of Central Kirkwood is anticipated to start in the next couple weeks as well as the CDBG funding reconstruction of Bryant and Coolidge. Mr. Reilly stated the ADA upgrades are complete at the Justice facility and library with punch list items remaining at the Community Center and the new door for the municipal building anticipated to be installed next week.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

OCTOBER 5, 2023 AGENDA MEETING  
OCTOBER 5, 2023 EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 10, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

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

**OLD BUSINESS:** REPORT #1 UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARINGS OF ORDINANCES

ORD. 23-10 AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL & REPLACE CHAPTER 16.30- STORMWATER CONTROL ORDINANCE  
Mr. Bray stated the ordinance is required by NJDEP and a public hearing is schedule for the November 14 meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:** REPORT #2 UPCOMING INTRODUCTION 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 replace the existing rules and regulation and incorporates changes made on a statewide level.

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

Mr. Bray stated this ordinance will adopt the Berlin Road Phase II redevelopment plan.

REPORT #3 2023 BEST PRACTICES INVENTORY

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Mr. Bray stated the inventory was provided to Council and it is required to be placed on a meeting agenda in case there are any questions or concerns. Mr. Bray stated the Borough received enough points to receive its full state aid award. Mr. Brat stated some question are the same every year and some change.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

Mr. Bray reviewed the proposed resolutions. No one from Council removed or added to the consent agenda. Resolutions 23:149 through 23:162 were approved as a consent agenda.

- RES. 23-149 APPOINT DUTY CREW MEMBER
- RES. 23-150 AUTHORIZE CHAPTER 159 BUDGET AMENDMENT – DWI CHECKPOINT GRANT
- RES. 23-151 AUTHORIZE CHAPTER 159 BUDGET AMENDMENT – MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE GRANT
- RES. 23-152 AUTHORIZE 2023 BUDGET TRANSFERS
- RES. 23-153 AUTHORIZE PARTICIPATION IN CHERRY HILL COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM
- RES. 23-154 AUTHORIZE BOROUGH ADVERTISE & RECEIVE PROPOSALS FOR 2024 PROFESSIONALS
- RES. 23-155 AUTHORIZE CANCELLATION OF PROPERTY TAXES FOR TOTALLY DISABLE VETERAN
- RES. 23-156 APPROVE CONTRACT RENEWAL FOR INDEPENDENT ANIMAL CARE SERVICES INC.
- RES. 23-157 ACCEPT NJ DHTS 2024 DWI TASK FORCE GRANT - \$39,900.00
- RES. 23-158 AUTHORIZE CHAPTER 159 BUDGET AMENDMENT – 2024 NJ DHTS DWI TASK FORCE
- RES. 23-159 AUTHORIZE EXECUTIVE SESSION – Stratford vs Litigation Laurel Mills LLC/ PBA Contract
- RES. 23-160 AUTHORIZE REFUND OF TAX OVERPAYMENT – 127 VASSAR AVENUE
- RES. 23-161 AUTHORIZE REFUND OF TAX OVERPAYMENT – 4C STERLING TERRACE
- RES. 23-162 AUTHORIZE REFUND OF TAX OVERPAYMENT – 11 COOPER AVENUE

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

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Councilman Gandy – Councilman Gandy thanked Councilwoman Hall and the Public Events Committee for their work on the Halloween Parade and holiday decorations. Councilman Gandy congratulated Councilwoman Hall on her election as the next mayor and Councilmen Gilligan and Tolomeo for their reelection. Councilman Gandy reminded drivers to be careful of items and children who could be hidden by leaves piled at the curb.

Councilwoman Hall – Councilwoman Hall thanked Council and resident for their support in the Mayoral election. Councilwoman Hall stated she used the Community Center for an event and it was very nice to use the kitchen for a cookie making event with Forgotten Haven and the Miss Stratford and Little Miss Stratford courts. Councilwoman Hall stated she'd like to see new water fountain at the community center. Councilwoman Hall stated the bathroom floor drains need to be clean in the Community Center. Mr. Keenan stated the fountains at the Community Center, Borough Hall and Justice Facility will be replaced and the contractor is responsible to clean the floor drains as one of the punch list items. Councilwoman Hall congratulated Councilmen Gilligan and Tolomeo on their reelection.

Councilman Gilligan – Councilman Gilligan congratulated Councilwoman Hall on her election as mayor and Council Tolomeo on his reelection to council. Councilman Gilligan stated he looks forward to working together with the new mayor and council.

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Councilman Tolomeo – Councilman Tolomeo thanks everyone for voting and their support which is an honor and privilege. Councilman Tolomeo stated he looks forward to working with the new mayor, council, Borough professionals and staff.

**GOOD AND WELFARE:**

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

John Gentless – 110 Union Ave. Mr. Gentless congratulated Councilwoman Hall, Councilman Gilligan and Councilman Tolomeo on their victory in the election. Mr. Gentless asked if there is an update on making the former owners of the Methodist Church pay property taxes. Mr. Platt stated the issue is being worked on but it would not advance the Borough interests to provide further details at this time. Mr. Gentless stated he met the new owners and they are very nice people. Mr. Gentless stated he has no problem with how every many apartments are being proposed for the former dance studio on Webster Avenue. Mr. Gentless asked if any of the proposed apartments would be set aside for low and moderate income renters. Mr. Keenan stated the new property owners have an application before the JLUB to convert the single family home into a five-unit apartment building. Mr. Platt stated if approved, project may need to provide one unit or a financial contribution to the affordable housing fund. Mr. Gentless asked what amount of parking is being provided for the affordable housing units including in Stratford Commons. Mr. Keenan stated there is a designated shared parking for those units.

Mike Mangano, 102 Union Ave. – Mr. Mangano stated Halloween doesn't seem right anymore because homeowners leave a bowl of candy on their front porch and walked around with their children as they Trick or Treat. Mr. Mangano stated he doesn't see how the Borough is going to continue to utilize part time workers to collect the trash. Mr. Keenan stated he has a waiting list of applicants. Mr. Mangano asked about the impact of new construction on the Borough sewer system. Mr. Keenan stated projects submit sewer studies as part of the approval process. Mr. Keenan stated Ryan Homes will be performing electrical upgrades to a pumping station. Mr. Mangano stated he home is at the epicenter of blight. Mr. Magano stated his neighbor's homes are in poor condition. Mr. Mangano stated residents should be vetted. Mr. Mangano asked if the borough is doing any patches to the roadways. Mr. Platt stated he has run out of time. Mr. Mangano stated the Borough has to look into vetting to ensure a better quality of people.

There were no further comments.

Motion was made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo 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 30 minutes and no action is expected afterwards but Council reserves the right to take action if needed.

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

Council entered Executive Session at 7:09 p.m. Council returned from Executive Session at 7:46 p.m.

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

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**ADJOURN:**

A motion was made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilwoman Hall with all Council voting aye to adjourn at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Bill Bray, Borough Clerk