

STRATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
AGENDA MEETING/REDEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024
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:

MAYOR LINDA HALL – PRESENT
COUNCIL PRESIDENT MICHAEL TOLOMEO – PRESENT
COUNCILMAN PATRICK GILLIGAN – PRESENT
COUNCILWOMAN TINA LOMANNO – PRESENT
COUNCILWOMAN DAWN MARTIN – PRESENT
COUNCILMAN STEPHEN GANDY – PRESENT
COUNCILMAN JIM KELLY – PRESENT
STUART PLATT, BOROUGH SOLICITOR – PRESENT
STEVEN BACH, BOROUGH ENGINEER
RON MORELLO, POLICE CHIEF - PRESENT
JOHN D. KEENAN JR, BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – 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.

PRESENTATION:

TRASH KIDS – PROCLAMATION

PROCLAMATION

Honorary Employees OF THE YEAR

Rori & Zennyn Foxhill

WHEREAS, Rori & Zennyn Foxhill have a deep appreciation of the hard work performed by the members of Stratford Borough’s Trash and Recycling Team; and

WHEREAS, Rori & Zennyn Foxhill wanted to show their support and admiration for the Stratford Trash and Recycling Team by dressing up as members for Halloween; and

WHEREAS, Rori & Zennyn Foxhill proudly wore their dayglow green T-shirt and hat and converted a Radio Flyer wagon into their very own trash truck to patrol the neighborhood for candy on Halloween.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stratford to recognize Rori & Zennyn Foxhill as our Honorary Employees of the Year for the Borough of Stratford.

Mayor Linda Hall

Council President Michael Tolomeo
Councilwoman Dawn Martin

Councilman Pat Gilligan
Councilman Steven Gandy

Councilwomen Tina Lomanno
Councilman James Kelly

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PUBLIC PORTION FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

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

There were no comments.

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

POLICE/OEM REPORT: Ron Morello provided the following report of the Stratford Borough Police Department Activities for December 2023 & January 2024.

Chief Morello stated he was not able to give a report last month due to the winter storm during the meeting.

Dec. 3 – Police responded to a home on Hillside Road where they found a 65-year-old man who had been deceased for some time, due to natural causes.

Dec. 4 – A Kia was stolen from Cornell Avenue and later recovered in Philadelphia.

Dec. 5 – A driver struck a utility pole near West Harvard on Warwick Road after they swerved to miss a deer. A Approximately 1/3 of the Borough lost power for a few hours.

Dec. 7 – A Stratford police officer tracked down a known drug dealer to a on Hillside Road where the 55-year-old Salem man was charged with CDS within 100 feet of a school.

Dec. 14 – Police arrested a 30-year-old father from Whitehall Apartments on aggravated assault and child endangerment charged after he used too much force restraining his 8-year-old son resulting in strangulation.

Dec. 15 – A 33-year-old Sicklerville man was banned from school property and charged with harassment after he threatened the principal because he was angry about a disagreement with the administration.

Dec. 17 – A 60-year-old female damaged the interior lobby of Wells Fargo. The transient from Trenton was charged.

Dec. 18 – Police responded to Good will where a worker fell through the roof of an overhang in front of the store. The worker was taken to Cooper Trauma for his injuries.

Dec. 23 – Police apprehended a robbery suspect after spotting him crossing over the railroad bridge from Voorhees on White Horse Road. The suspect was tracked down to Pine Hill apartments and arrested with the assistance of the SWAY Team. The suspect is also charged with robbing and pistol whipping a shop owner in Gloucester. The gun and proceeds of the robbery were recovered at the apartment. The suspect faces multiple charges and was lodged in the county jail.

Dec. 26 – Police arrested a 44-year-old Camden man after a strong arm robbery at Tim Hortons. The suspect attempted to snatch jewelry from the victim's neck and was arrested while trying to flee on a PATCO train.

Jan 1 – Police responded to Longwood Court for the report a stray bullet hitting a home. Police determine the round was fired in a backyard party on Hillside Road.

Jan. 3 – Police responded to Hillside Road for a report of a resident being strangled and assaulted by their boyfriend. The suspect was charged with aggravated assault and other charges.

Jan. 10 – Strong winds and heavy rains resulted in 21 calls for service within a 2.5-hour period. The storm felled several tree, taking down wires and knocking out power throughout the night. Chief Morello and Mayor Hall toured the borough to survey the storm damage.

Jan. 12 – A resident drove a vehicle with frozen over windows through a school zone and crashed into the traffic light at the intersection of Warwick Road and Vassar Avenue causing \$15,000 in damages. A claim for \$20,00 for damages and related expenses was made against the driver's insurance company.

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Jan. 13 – Police responded to Burger King for reports of a drug overdose in the bathroom. Police revived the 40-year-old homeless man with Narcan. The man refused transport to the hospital and was arrested several hours later on an outstanding warrant for armed robbery.

Jan. 24 – Police responded to Whitehall Apartments for a report of a burglary to a vehicle in progress. Police arrested a 35-year-old Delco woman who was fleeing the scene. Police found the suspect in possession of a center punch glass breaking tool and proceeds from this and other burglaries.

Jan. 28 – Police arrested the 40-year-old homeless man again on an outstanding warrant for failure to appear in court on the armed robbery charges.

Jan. 29 – Stratford and Camden County Police executed a search warrant at a Harvard Avenue home in search of child pornography. A 42-year-old resident was arrested and lodged in the county jail.

Jan. 30 – Police responded to a Harvard Avenue home for a medical event involving a suicidal man. The incident lasted 90 minutes and end with the man being transported to the hospital in Cherry Hill.

Chief Morello congratulated Officer Rebecca on his retirement. Chief Morello stated Officer Camburn has resigned and wished him well in his new position with another department. Chief Morello stated the department is seeking applicants and the Civil Service Commission application will be online for the 2024 Law Enforcement Examination.

ENGINEER REPORT:

Mr. Bach stated the written report was submitted to Council. Mr. Bach stated the Beaver Circle sewer repair was completed and paving will occur after the fill materials settles and the weather improves. Mr. Bach stated Bryant Ave is first in line to be completed by the contractor who shut down for the winter with a tentative start date of March 18. Mr. Bach stated the roadway surface needs to be 40 degrees to be able to pave it. Mr. Bach stated the Berlin Road sewer substation project will begin once the materials arrive.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

JANUARY 9, 2024 REGULAR MEETING

A motion was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo with all members present voting aye by roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

REPORT #1 UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARINGS OF ORDINANCES
ORD. 24:1 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO
ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)

Mr. Bray stated the public hearing is Tuesday. Mr. Bray stated the ordinance is part of the Borough’s annual budget procedures.

NEW BUSINESS:

REPORT #2 UPCOMING INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES
ORD. 24:02 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2.12.150 RATES OF COMPENSATION

Mr. Bray stated the proposed ordinance sets the rates of pay for police extra duty assignments paid by third party entities.

ORD. 24:03 AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING 2024 SALARIES AND SALARY RANGES

Mr. Bray stated the ordinance sets the pay and salaries of Borough Employees.

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RESOLUTIONS:

RES. 24:37 CONFIRMATION OF AN APPOINTMENT OF POLICE CHIEF

Councilman Gilligan made a Motion to adopt Res. 24:37. Councilwoman Lomanno seconded the Motion which was adopted by Council by unanimous roll call vote of members present.

Mr. Bray reviewed the proposed resolutions. No one from Council removed or added to the consent agenda. Resolutions 24:29 through 24:36 were approved as a consent agenda.

RES. 24:29 AUTHORIZE EXECUTIVE SESSION – Negotiations-Stratford Commons; Negotiations-Sterling Arms Condo Assoc.; Negotiations-Recreational Storage Group, LLC; Litigation-Stratford vs Laurel Mills LLC; Personnel-Police Titles & Positions

RES. 24:30 AUTHORIZE REFUND OF TAX OVERPAYMENT – 13 Green Tree Rd.

RES. 24:31 APPOINT HEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RES. 24:32 AUTHORIZE GRANT APPLICATION – NJDCA LRCIG

RES. 24:33 AUTHORIZE STRATFORD FIRE COMPANY 2024 COIN DROPS

RES. 24:34 AMEND RES. 23:183 – EMERGENCY SEWER REPAIRS

RES. 24:35 APPOINT DUTY CREW MEMBER

RES. 24:36 APPROVE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT – STRATFORD SWIM CLUB FESTIVAL

Motion was made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno with all members present voting aye by roll call vote.

RECREATION STORAGE GROUP CONSISTENCY HEARING Mr. Platt recognized representative from RGS to make its presentation. Mr. Platt swore in the RSG Representatives: Erik Johnson – Managing Partner and George Hristodoulou – Principal Partner. RSG provided Council with an overview of the proposed Class-A, climate control, self-storage facility. The project would require one variance to allow for a canopy at the front door which encroaches into the setback requirements. Mr. Platt stated Council received a report from Mr. Bach concerning the projects consistency with the redevelopment plan. Mr. Bach stated the project is materially consistent. The project would close at 11 p.m. and the facility’s security system would track anyone who enters and when they leave the facility.

Mr. Platt stated the application would have a hearing before the Joint Land Use Board. Mr. Platt asked for Council to open the floor should Public Comment on its review of the project’s consistency to the redevelopment plan. Councilman Gandy made a motion to open the hearing to public comment. Councilwoman Lomanno seconded the Motion which was approved by unanimous voice vote.

John Gentless, 110 Union Avenue. – Mr. Gentless asked if the project would allow vehicle storage or vehicle rental. Mr. Gentless asked how long would it take to build. RSG stated the project would have no vehicle storage or rental and could be built in 8 months.

There were no further comments.

Mayor Hall asked where is a similar facility. Mr. Johnson stated one opened recently about three miles away in Voorhees Township.

Mr. Platt stated Council would need a formal Roll Call vote to declare the project materially consistent with the redevelopment plan and agreement. Councilman Gandy made the Motion to determine the project is materially consistent with the redevelopment plan and agreement. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno with all members present voting aye by roll call vote.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

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Councilman Tolomeo –Councilman Tolomeo thanks Public Works, Police and Fire departments for their assistance during the storm.

Councilman Gilligan – Nothing at this time.

Councilwoman Lomanno – Councilwoman Lomanno stated the Borough is working to create a military banner program for Borough veterans. Councilwoman Lomanno stated the goal would be to hang the banner by Memorial Day. Councilwoman Lomanno stated the applicant should be a resident but not necessarily the veteran.

Councilwoman Martin –Councilwoman Martin stated the Board of Education is expected to approve the Egg Hunt and Miss Stratford and Little Miss Stratford events at its next meeting. Councilwoman Martin stated a resident requested more pre-school program at the Community Center. Councilwoman Martin stated they are going to see what is possible.

Councilman Gandy – Councilman Gandy stated the EMS Committee met with Jefferson Hospital and agreed to hold more than an annual meeting in the future.

Councilman Kelly – Councilman Kelly stated he was impressed with the coordination between local and county law enforcement in executing the warrant on Harvard Avenue.

Mayor Hall – Mayor Hall stated Somerdale Mayor George Badey thanked the Borough for its assistance with an accident on the White Horse Pike.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

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

John Gentless – 110 Union Avenue – Mr. Gentless asked about the use of surplus in the budget and an update on the Methodist Church tax appeal. Mr. Keenan stated it is too early to tell. Mr. Platt stated the church asked for a tax exemption which was denied by the county tax board. Mr. Platt stated the issue is going before the state tax board.

Motion was made by Councilman Gilligan, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo to close the public portion with all Council voting aye.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mr. Platt stated the Executive Session is anticipated to last approximately 30 minutes and action is expected afterwards.

Motion was made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilwoman Martin, with all Council voting aye to enter into Executive Session.

Council entered Executive Session at 7:37 p.m. Council returned from Executive Session at 8:22 p.m.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Lomanno, seconded by Councilwoman Martin, with all Council voting aye to come out of Executive Session.

Mr. Platt asked the Borough Clerk to read Res. 24-38 into the record.

RESOLUTION REVOKING THE DESIGNATION OF LAUREL MILLS, LLC AS THE REDEVELOPER FOR THE LAUREL MILLS REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the Borough of Stratford, County of Camden, State of New Jersey previously designated Laurel Mills, LLC as the Redeveloper of the Project Site identified as Block 116, Lots 14

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and 14.04 (“Laurel Mills Redevelopment Project”) subject to meeting certain conditions as set forth in Amended Resolution 2022:87; and

WHEREAS, on June 28, 2022, the Borough of Stratford and Redeveloper entered into a Redevelopment Agreement for the Laurel Mills Redevelopment Project (“RDA”); and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has been authorized to act as a Redevelopment Entity to oversee the implementation of the Laurel Mills Redevelopment Project; and

WHEREAS, on September 26, 2023 the Borough Solicitor forwarded correspondence to the Redeveloper through its attorney advising that pursuant to Article 12 of the RDA, the Borough was providing formal notice of default; and

WHEREAS, on October 18, 2023, the Borough once again provided formal notice of default to the Redeveloper pursuant to Article 12 of the RDA; and

WHEREAS, the Redeveloper has not materially complied with and continues to fail to perform under the provisions of the RDA; and

WHEREAS, on December 27, 2023 the Borough provided final notice to the Redeveloper of its continued default and breach of the RDA and advised the Redeveloper the Borough was exercising its rights to terminate the RDA and to terminate the Redeveloper’s designation as the Redeveloper of the Laurel Mills Redevelopment Project and any other agreements between with the Borough and Redeveloper; and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Agreement was not consummated in a form satisfactory to the Borough Council of the Borough of Stratford and its professionals and Laurel Mills, LLC failed to meet the conditions of its designation as aforesaid.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stratford that Laurel Mills, LLC designation as Redeveloper for the Laurel Mills Redevelopment Project is hereby revoked and any associated agreements are terminated.

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Motion was made by Councilman Gandy to adopt Res. 24:38, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno with all members present voting aye by roll call vote.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Councilman Tolomeo, seconded by Councilman Gandy with all Council voting aye to adjourn at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Bill Bray, Borough Clerk