

STRATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
AGENDA MEETING/REDEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2024
6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: Borough Deputy Clerk John Keenan called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

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

At this time there was a short recess while Mayor and Council went across the street to the Fire Station to read and present a Proclamation to the Hartman Family in memory of former Councilman Frank Hartman who passed away this past June.

The Mayor and Council returned to the meeting place, and the meeting continued.

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
JUSTIN STRAUSSER, BOROUGH SOLICITOR – PRESENT
CRAIG REILLY, BOROUGH ENGINEER - PRESENT
RON MORELLO, POLICE CHIEF/OEM – PRESENT
BOB BOVE, DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF – PRESENT
JOHN D. KEENAN JR, BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – PRESENT
STUART PLATT, BOROUGH SOLICITOR – PRESENT BY TELEPHONE

STATEMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT: The Deputy 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 Kelly seconded the motion, which passed with all members present voting in favor in a voice vote.

John Gentless of Union Avenue spoke of the marketing piece placed on social media by a developer. He brought up Ordinance 24:11 related to tax abatement and the owner of the senior living property is not current on his real estate taxes. Mr. Platt responded stating the Ordinance was not being created for a specific property, and any entity who would make an application for the tax abatement would have to be current on their taxes, or they are not eligible for the tax abatement. Mr. Gentless also inquired to selling the liquor license, which he was told it was placed for sale last year with no bidders. Mr. Gentless recommended giving the license away to a developer to entice them to build.

Mike Mancini of 3 Winding Way Road thanked Mayor and Council for their work and spoke briefly about the tax abatement Ordinance, but stated he would make his comments during the public hearing for the Ordinance.

Councilman Kelly reminded Mr. Mancini about a meeting he was at, where Mr. Mancini and some others met with the developer of the senior living facility which was about 21 months ago. Mr. Mancini confirmed knowledge. Councilman Kelly stated they told the attendees they planned to start work in the next quarter, and

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the work never occurred. Mr. Mancini commented there are three developers doing nothing in town and someone needs to be hard on them, Councilman Gilligan motioned to close the public portion for agenda items. Councilman Tolomeo 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 August 2024:

- 8/2 During the evening hours, we responded to a home on Saratoga Road for a burglary in progress. In this case, a family arrived home to find a pair of sneakers at their threshold and the door ajar. The resident, a local police officer made entry and encountered the man in the kitchen. Have dealt with him that day on duty, resident was able to keep the man talking until police arrived to take him into custody. A 40-year-old man, drug user from Willingboro, was charged with burglary, and theft.
- 8/4 During the evening hours, we responded to Temple Avenue for a car crash. Upon arrival, a lost drunk driver smashed into a parked Jeep totaling both cars. A 35-year-old Blackwood man was arrested and charged with DWI.
- 8/9 During the overnight hours, we responded to Cornell Manor Apartments for a report of a physical domestic. Officers arrived and found her boyfriend had strangled the female victim. The offender attempted to flee the scene but was apprehended in the parking lot. 25-year-old man was sent to CCJ on aggravated assault charges.
- 8/10 Overnight, our Officers responded, in the pouring rain to assist Somerdale Police at Warwick & Somerdale Road for a report of an occupied disabled vehicle. Upon arrival, they found the driver to be acting erratically. A few minutes into the encounter, using a lighter and hairspray the driver proceeded to light the interior of her car on fire. As the fire began to engulf the vehicle, officers broke the window and drug the female to safety. A few fire extinguishers later, the fire was put out. That female was transported to Jefferson for treatment.
- 8/15 During the afternoon hours, we were called to the Dollar General on the White Horse Pike for a Shoplifting turned Robbery. In this case, a male used physical force to assault and escape an employee who was attempting to detain the suspect for stealing Tide Detergents. The suspect has not yet been identified.
- 8/16 During the morning hours, we responded to a home on Summit Avenue for a report of an unconscious 24-year-old male in a bedroom. The male was found to be deceased, with evidence of drug abuse on scene. Toxicology results are still pending.
- 8/17 During the evening hours, officers responded to the 300 block of Union for a 44-year-old female overdosing. Narcan was utilized and CPR was initiated. That female survived and was transported to Jefferson for treatment.
- 8/19 During the afternoon hours we responded to another unconscious person call on Winding Way. Again, CPR ensued; the 55-year male victim was transported to Jefferson however, he did not survive. This death was of natural causes.
- 8/20 A raging lunatic, who had been discharged from the hospital, desired to extend his stay at the Hotel Jefferson. Staging a Psychotic episode, the male destroyed two expensive pieces of imaging equipment caused thousands of dollars in damage. 30-year-old Camden man was arrested and sent to CCJ however, the male was rejected by jail admissions because the prison nurse thought the man needed a second mental evaluation by another hospital. The suspect was released pending a Superior Court appearance.

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8/23 During the evening hours, we responded to the lower-main entrance to the Hospital for a report of a man down. A 33-year-old Williamstown man who had been discharged from the hospital after a crisis evaluation, attempted suicide by taking a running jump off the ER second floor parking deck. That male was ultimately flown to Jefferson Philadelphia for trauma care. That male is still alive.

8/26 During the afternoon, officers responded to Whitman Avenue to take a missing person report. In this case, an 88-year-old man, with recent dementia flare-ups went missing in his vehicle. Detectives tracked the vehicle License Plate Readers and found the man had crossed over the Delaware Memorial Bridge. A silver alert was issued and the man was located and stopped by the Maryland State Police near the Maryland House on I-95.

The appreciative family was reunited with their family member a few hours later.

In Mid-August, I filed multiple charges against Brandywine and Velocity for the pigpen they are not maintaining at the old Bradlees Location. From trash and debris, to graffiti and parking lot fire lane and handicapped parking violations. They are scheduled for court later this month. Since being cited, they have done nothing to clean up the mess.

FIRE REPORT: Deputy Chief Bove presented the Fire Report for August 2024.

ENGINEER REPORT:

Mr. Bach stated the written report was submitted to Council. He highlighted some of the work.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

August 08, 2024 AGENDA MEETING

August 13, 2024 REGULAR MEETING

A motion was made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno with all members present voting aye by roll call vote, with the exception of those who were not present at any of these meetings, abstained.

OLD BUSINESS:

REPORT #1 UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARINGS OF ORDINANCES

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24:11 AMEND CH. 3.16 FIVE YEAR TAX EXEMPTION AND ABATEMENT LAW

Motion to open the public hearing on ORD. 24:11 made by Councilwoman Lomanno, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo, with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

Mike Mancini of 3 Winding Way Road spoke about crafting the Ordinance to not give incentives to existing buildings. Mr. Platt responded that if nothing gets built there is no new revenues.

Agnes Moore from Laureba Avenue spoke about the tax abatement Ordinance which Mr. Platt did respond.

Motion to close the public hearing on ORD. 24:11 was made by Councilman Gilligan, seconded by Councilman Kelly, with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

Motion to adopt ORD. 24:11 was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo, with all Council voting aye by roll call vote, with the exception of Councilman Gandy who abstained.

24:12 AMEND BOND ORDINANCE 15:06 \$76,283.98 LED STREET LAMPS/ADA RAMP TO MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS

Motion to open the public hearing on ORD. 24:12 was made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilman Kelly, with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

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No one from the public spoke.

Motion to close the public hearing on ORD. 24:12 was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

Motion to adopt ORD. 24:12 was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilwoman Martin with all Council voting aye by roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

REPORT #2 NO UPCOMING INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

RESOLUTIONS:

ORD. 24:11 AMEND CH. 3.16 FIVE YEAR TAX EXEMPTION AND ABATEMENT LAW

ORD. 24:12 AMEND BOND ORDINANCE 15:06 \$76.283.98 LED STREET LAMPS/ADA RAMP TO MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS

RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Keenan reviewed the proposed resolutions and confirmed Resolution 24:119 was being removed to be be acted upon at the September 10, 2024 meeting.

No one from Council removed or added to the consent agenda. Resolutions 24:120 through 24:123 were approved as a consent agenda by motion of Councilman Tolomeo, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno, with all Council voting aye by roll call vote.

RES.24:119 APPOINT LABORER – CDL DRIVER – JAMES OVERPECK

RES.24.120 ACCEPTING 2023 ANNUAL AUDIT – NO FINDINGS

RES.24:121 AMENDING SPENDING PLAN – ADDORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

RES.24:122 EXECUTIVE SESSION – LITIGATION

RES.24:123 SUBSTITUTE CROSSING GUARD APPOINTMENT – CHEYNE JESS

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilman Tolomeo – Thanked the public for coming out this evening, especially for the Frank Hartman Proclamation. Thankful to the police work and report and the DPW.

Councilman Gilligan thanked those who came out to honor Frank Hartman.

Councilwoman Lomanno – Thanked everyone who came out for the meeting, and expressed how hard Council has worked on the tax abatement Ordinance and not easy, and it’s a long process. Council works for what is best for the residents. She also thanked those who came out to honor Frank Hartman and his family, and how Frank worked so hard for Stratford.

Councilwoman Martin – Thanked those who came out for the meeting, and to police for keeping everyone safe, and be aware the schools are now open and the School Resource Officers and firemen.

Councilman Gandy – Thanked the public for attending the meeting. Thanked Chief Morello for another crazy month of incidents note in the police monthly report.

Councilman Kelly thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting. He stated he is a 58-year residents. Thanked Chief Morello and Deputy Chief Bove for coming and presenting their reports.

Mayor Hall stated everyone’s opinion counts, and how residents should email or phone in to Mayor and Council and let them know your concerns. She thanked the Fire Department for helping with the Frank Hartman presentation this evening. She also stated she witnessed the resident on her street who recently passed away, and how hard the EMS and Police responded when needed. She also stated she witnessed the fire department and police responding to a down branch on Saratoga Road this past month.

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GOOD AND WELFARE:

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

John Gentless inquired if DPW could paint the parking stall lines at the Fire Station. Mr. Keenan stated he would add it to their task list. He inquired to Councilman Gandy for abstaining to vote on the tax abatement Ordinance. Councilman Gandy stated due to his employment it was recommended he not vote on this particular Ordinance. Agnes Moore inquired about the status of Royal Farms. Mr. Keenan stated the site owner stated Royal Farms is compliant with their lease terms.

Kathy Considine of Longwood Drive thanked the Mayor and Council for their work. She inquired to the empty lot where the shopping center is, and why the town could not just enter the site and maintain the property. Mr. Keenan reminded the resident this is not an abandoned site. The owner pays taxes, unlike the site Mrs. Considine was using as a reference on Longwood Drive which was recently cleaned up by the town, due to the owner being deceased, with no known owner of the property.

Motion was made by Councilman Gilligan, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo to close Good and Welfare with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion was made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo to enter into Executive Session, with all Council voting aye. Mr. Keenan stated this session could take about 30 minutes, which no action being taken afterwards, but reserved the right to take action.

Motion made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo to come out of Executive Session with no action taken in Executive Session. All Councilmembers voted aye.

Comment was made no action was taken during the Executive Session.

Fireman Membership Application – Frank Hallworth

A motion made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilman Gilligan to approve the membership application, with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Councilwoman Lomanno, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo with all Council voting aye to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted:

John D. Keenan, Jr. RMC
Borough Administrator
Borough Deputy Clerk