

Borough of Palmyra
Council Caucus Meeting Minutes, 6:30 PM
Monday March 2nd, 2020

The Council Caucus Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:34 PM

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Brandon Allmond, Laura Cloud, Farrah Jenkins, Michelle McCann, Bernadette Russell, Mayor Gina Ragomo Tait

ABSENT: President Timothy Howard

The pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a moment of silence.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT Mayor Tait read the following into the record:

Public Notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act has been given

By the Municipal Clerk in the following manner:

- Posting written notice on the official bulletin board at the Palmyra Borough Hall on January 9th, 2020.
- Mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times, and the Courier Post Newspaper on January 9th, 2019.
- Notice to All Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the, February 18th, 2020 Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

Dr. Cloud indicated Mr. Keisler's name was spelled incorrectly on the public portion of the minutes from the last meeting. Ms. Jackson noted and indicated she would correct.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the, Regular Council Meeting of February 18th, 2020. Mr. Allmond second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

IN FAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins. Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE

Municipal Clerk, Ms. Jackson acknowledged the following correspondence received

Thank-You Note – Michele Dobbs and Family

Letter – Felicia Hopson, Freeholder Director of 2019 Burlington County Municipal Park Development Program - Veterans Memorial Park Application

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Tait then read and presented the following Proclamation into the record extending Birthday Wishes to Mr. Joseph P. Horan 102 years young:

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Joseph P. Horan, was born March 8th, 1918 in Beverly, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, Joseph, proudly served in World War II during the Ardennes Counteroffensive also known as the Battle of the Bulge defending this nation's freedom; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Horan, has received numerous ribbon and metals including the Borough's Military Service Medal, the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal and the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Horan has lived in this community on Garfield Avenue for many years; and

WHEREAS, we gather here today in celebration of 102 wonderful years of life;

NOW, THEREFORE I, Gina Ragomo Tait by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the Borough of Palmyra, in the State of New Jersey extend congratulatory Happy Birthday wishes to Mr. Joseph P Horan.

REDEVELOPMENT

620-622 Highland Avenue Redevelopment Area – Update

Mr. Gural indicated the Borough of Palmyra's Redevelopment Attorney; Andrew Brewer, filed the declaration of taking on Tuesday and followed it up by filing it with the Burlington County Clerk's office on Wednesday so the Borough of Palmyra now owns 722-721 Highland Avenue. Mayor Tait proceeded to sign the deed of the property over to Jeffrey Wade of Outlaw Fitness.

Route 73 South Redevelopment Area –Update

Mr. Gural indicated Cherokee Equities indicated the sheriff sale of the Fillit property was scheduled for Thursday the price being 910,000.00. Mr. Gural indicated the property owner postponed that sale and it is now scheduled for April 2nd, 2020. Mr. Gural stated the geotechnical test results came back and indicate that the dynamic compaction of the soil on the property is sufficient for installation of the foundation system. Mr. Gural indicated the Redeveloper is close to having agreement with National Amusements. Mr. Gural noted Mr. Hogue still working with Stock Development Group in regards to the remediation on the site plan. Mr. Gural stated Mr. Stock would like to schedule some dates to negotiate redevelopment agreement with the redevelopment committee. Mr. Gural asked the committee to give him some dates the committee would be available to negotiate with Mr. Stock and his group.

Redevelopment Study - Block 80, Lot 6 - 321 E. Broad St – Update

Mr. Gural indicated we have a preliminary study report but it does not look good. Mr. Gural stated the Land Use Board should have the full report in about two weeks.

NJ DEP v. Fillit litigation – Update

Mr. Rosenberg stated the NJ DEP filed a lawsuit against Fillit and several other defendants, most of the defendants failed to answer timely which made them default and unable to participate further. Mr. Rosenberg indicated two defendants Mr. James Adkins and his closely held corporation Messengers of Peace who failed to file timely answers filed a motion to allow them to answer outside of the time allotted. An extension was granted to Mr. Adkins which requires his answer within 14 days or he will be forever barred, no extension was granted for Messengers of Peace.

Redevelopment file sharing site

Mr. Gural indicated ERM is still experiencing technical difficulties with the file sharing sight. Mr. Gural indicated he would get to council when he has additional information.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner, Environmental Resolutions Inc.

Mr. Kirchner indicated the municipal aid portion of application was filed with DOT. Mr. Kirchner stated he expected comments back in about two weeks. Mr. Kirchner stated he would have the necessary information to Mr. Gural by weeks end so he can prepare for road construction work in the 2020 budget. Mr. Kirchner indicated the contract has been awarded for the fencing at Legion Field and he would be checking with the fencing company to see when that could be scheduled. Mr. Kirchner indicated all bids were rejected at the last meeting for the sanitary sewer replacement for the Public Road Pump station elimination project and the new redesigned bid packages are out and will be accepted back on Tuesday, March 19th, 2020. Mr. Kirchner indicated some residents have experienced sewer lateral difficulties and they have been worked out. Mr. Kirchner stated he was asked to look at the sewer budget model and is currently in the process of doing so.

PUBLIC PORTION

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open the Public Portion. Mrs. Russell made a motion to open the public portion for comments. Mr. Allmond second the motion

All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

Mrs. Furrer - Maryland Avenue - Mrs. Furrer stated she has watched trees grow in the gutter on the steel building at public works for some time. Mrs. Furrer stated someone needs to clean gutters on the building. Mrs. Furrer noted two vehicles are stored on public works grounds, why are they there. Chief Pearlman indicated they belong to the police department. Mrs. Furrer also noted where New Jersey American Water Co. did their work on Maryland, Virginia and Oregon Avenues, installing new meters; where they back filled the areas curbside there currently appear to be sink holes developing. Mrs. Furrer indicated they should be required to come back and back fill them again. Mrs. Furrer asked who is responsible if someone breaks an ankle. Mayor Tait indicated she would try to reach out to N J American Water Co. Mr. Gural noted the water company will not give us information regarding private property. Mr. Rosenberg indicated a letter to Board of Public Utilities may get some response.

****Mr. Howard arrived at 7:06 PM**

Mr. Rader - Harbor Drive- Mr. Rader asked if he could get a copy of the letter Mr. Rosenberg sent to the Mayor Arnold mentioned in the February 18th Council meeting. Mr. Gural indicated you can OPRA request it and get a

copy of it. Mr. Rader asked about the documents which were sent to Mr. Dan Rosenberg regarding the ethics investigation. Mayor Tait indicated all documents are available if you request them. Ms. Jackson indicated you must be specific when requesting documents. Mr. Rader asked about the mural on Toney's barber shop that was discussed at the last meeting. Mayor Tait explained what was talked about at that meeting regarding the mural. Mr. Rader asked about the parking changes on Broad Street and the potential of purchasing property in that area for parking. Mrs. Russell noted that had been some discussion regarding purchasing a lot in the area and expanding parking in the downtown area but nothing had been decided. There was some additional conversation regarding the cost and public notification.

Mrs. Smith – Wrensong Court

Mrs. Smith asked who is responsible for the landscaping around the Riverline it looks bad and could use some sprucing up. Mr. Gural indicated the responsibility is NJ Transit. Mr. Gural however noted we have an agreement with NJ Transit to allow us to handle the landscape. Mr. Gural noted later on the agenda tonight there is a discussion item regarding the landscaping at the various intersections of the Riverline and perhaps this area could be added to that project.

No one else from the public wishing to be heard, Mayor Tait asked for a motion to close the Public Portion. Mrs. Russell made a motion to close the public portion, President Howard second the motion.

All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2020-98, Resolution appointing Councilman Brandon Allmond as Project Manager for the Veterans Memorial Park Enhancements Project.

Mayor Tait read Resolution 2020-98, Mr. Gural explained and she requested a motion for approval. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolutions 2020-98. President Howard seconded the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

IN FAVOR: Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell, President Howard

AGAINST: None

Abstain: Mr. Allmond

Motion Carried, Resolution 2020-98 was approved

MOTION FOR APPROVAL

Motion for Approval of 50/50 Raffle License for Palmyra PTA on March 6th, 2020.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the 50/50 Raffle License for Palmyra PTA. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the 50/50 Raffle License for Palmyra PTA. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll:

IN FAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. Russell, President Howard

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: Michelle McCann

Motion Carried

MOTION FOR APPROVAL

Motion for Approval of Basket Raffle License for Palmyra PTA on March 6th, 2020.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the 50/50 Raffle License for Palmyra PTA. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the 50/50 Raffle License for Palmyra PTA. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll:

INFAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. Russell, President Howard

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: Michelle McCann

Motion Carried

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Mayor Tait stated the Rock the Block event with Habitat for Humanity and the PIA will be held on April 25th, 2020.

Mayor Tait indicated they are seeking volunteers and will be working from Horace to Race Streets. She noted there have been 15 houses signed up to work on and they are looking for about 150 volunteers for that day.

Mayor Tait noted that Sacred Heart Church will be hosting a dinner and reverse raffle fundraiser March 12th at the Riverton Country Club

President Howard noted the 2020 Census Job Fair was held on February 22nd, 2020 at the Community Center. Mr. Gural stated the information is on our website and it will remain there for the time being.

Mayor Tait stated the Downtown parking public forum was held on February 27th, 2020. Mayor Tait noted about 10 people show up. Mayor Tait noted a change that needed to be made regarding the 15 minuet parking on 600 block of Morgan Avenue due to the effects on the Church.

Mrs. Russell indicated she would like to attend the Walter Rand Awards Scholarship dinner. Council indicated yes.

Mayor Tait stated the Palmyra PTA is holding a basket raffle on Friday night at Charles Street School and the cost for admittance is \$20.00.

Mayor Tait also congratulated the Palmyra High School girls Basketball team, on making the first round of the playoffs.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

NEW Business

Mayor Tait noted the Mayor's Advisory Board meeting will be held on March 12th, 2020 at 7:00 PM at the Community Center.

Mayor Tait stated the Green Team Documentary Film Series film begins on Thursday at Central Baptist Church at 7:00 pm and they will be showing "Bag It" and "Burlington Island".

Mrs. McCann stated the Easter Egg Hunt will be held April 4th, 2020 at 9:00 AM at Legion Field. Mrs. McCann indicated she was working out some final details regarding the candy and prizes with Mrs. Sykes.

Mayor Tait stated the Borough of Palmyra Rabies Clinic will be held on Saturday April 18th, 2020 from 10:00 am to 1:00pm in front of the Community Center.

Mayor Tait stated the Palmyra Downtown & Public Safety Day will be held May 2nd, 2020 at 10:00 am.

Mayor Tait noted the Borough is always looking for volunteers to help with various public events, noting additional information regarding volunteering is posted on our website.

Mr. Gural stated Earth Day, spring cleanup weekend and Arbor Day are coming in April. Mr. Gural noted the last Friday in April is usually the celebration and tree planting at Charles Street School. Mrs. Russell noted along with the proclamation she would like to plant two trees this year instead of only one as the tree planted last year did not survive.

Mayor Tait indicated she received a request from Senator Troy Singleton for the Borough of Palmyra to participate in the Veteran Friendly Municipality Program. Mayor Tait indicated one of the programs they are doing is putting in Veterans Parking signs; noting we have already installed one Veteran parking sign and have two more to install in town on Broad Street.

Mayor Tait asked the governing body how they felt about establishing a Veterans Liaison and or Council Committee. There was some discussion regarding the responsibilities of that committee, including working with the War Memorial Committee, the Memorial Day Celebration and Veterans within the Borough. Mr. Gural noted that if the governing body wished to add this committee, it should be done by resolution. After some additional discussion regarding the creation of the committee and their duties, Mr. Allmond made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-99 Creating a veteran's affairs council committee comprised of the following three council members Brandon Allmond, Bernadette Russell and President Howard with Brandon Allmond serving as chairperson. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll:

IN FAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell, President Howard

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried

Mayor Tait indicated she attended the Palmyra Harbour Condo Association meeting held last month and noted one of the comments she received was that people were unaware of who council was. Mayor Tait suggested that council rotate attendance at their meeting so everyone would have the opportunity to meet the council members and get to know everyone. President Howard indicated he would attend this month. Mayor Tait indicated the meetings are held the third Thursday on every month at 7:00 pm.

Dr. Cloud indicated the Green Team discussed the NJAW Environmental Grant Program at their last meeting. Dr. Cloud indicated she will write the grant application with help from Emma from Green Team. She noted the due date of March 31st, 2020 in indicated if won the funds would be used from a rain barrel workshop and potentially a rain garden workshop and installation. Mr. Gural stated Mr. Gerkens indicated be willing to review the application before submission.

Chief Pearlman stated the Burlington County Records Management System has major problems. He noted the system was switched on October 1st, 2019 and the problems are still ongoing and excessive. Mr. Gural indicated there are copies of other letters sent to the county from other municipalities in your packets. Mr. Gural stated if council is in agreement, he and Chief Pearlman discussed the Borough sending a letter to the county to also put them on notice that we are aware of the problems and they need to get it fixed. Mr. Gural indicated Mr. Rosenberg and Chief Pearlman can work on the language of the letter. Council agreed.

Mr. Gural stated we received a proposal from ERI last November regarding the landscaping along the railroad insertions; as agreed we postponed the work until this year as it was so late into the season. Mr. Gural noted he did not believe the project would meet the criteria for a capital purchase, thus the cost would need to be included in the budget. Mr. Gural noted with council's permission he could authorize ERI to solicit the quotes so we would be ready to proceed in perhaps a month or so. Dr. Cloud asked if the plantings along the side of the Riverline station could be included as a add alternate for the solicitations. Mr. Gural indicated he could inquire.

Mr. Gural indicated there has been an interest in purchasing the vacant lot on Race Street, Block 62 Lot 11at 517 Race Street. Mr. Gural indicated if council would be interested in selling, he would speak to the potential purchaser as ask him to make an offer. Mr. Gural explained how we acquired the property and noted it is not a buildable lot and only useful to the adjacent property owners. Council noted their willingness to sell, given a reasonable offer. Mr. Rosenberg indicated council has his memo regarding the status of the issue regarding the local energy utility franchise tax. Mr. Rosenberg indicated he was waiting to hear back from PSE& G's attorney before rendering his final opinion. Mr. Gural noted we cannot anticipate those dollars as revenue in budget. Mr. Gural also noted in addition to not receiving this \$40,000.00 in revenue we also did not receive the Safe and Secure grant which is usually about \$39,485.00, which amounts to almost \$80,000.00 dollars in lost revenue to the budget with these two items. Mayor Tait indicated the Municipal Construction Projects Apprenticeship Training Program was placed on the agenda for council to consider as it would insure the best and most qualified people were chose for various projects. Mr. Gural noted that if the ordinance was passed, we would be eliminating the small contractor as most of the smaller companies do not have this program in place and would not qualify to bid various projects. Council indicated they would look at the program and determine how they wished to proceed at a later date.

Old Business

Mrs. Jenkins explained the Holiday decoration request noting the things which need to be done. Mr. Gural indicated if all are in agreement we can proceed as the cost is under the threshold. Council agreed. Mayor Tait indicated we have already gone over the Downtown Parking proposed amendments. President Howard stated the Legion Field usage by youth athletic organizations and potential fees are still a work in progress. President Howard and Mr. Allmond indicted a lot of other things came up in their meeting and rather than piece together an ordinance which would require additional changes they wanted to wait, work on all usage of the parks, Bandshell, Promenade and bring any and all changes to council at one time. President Howard indicated the committee would be meeting again and would bring it back to council at a later date. Mayor Tait asked Mr. Gural about the investigation of the former mayor Michelle Arnold, specifically what happen to letter sent to prosecutor. Mr. Gural indicated we never received a response. Mayor Tait inquired about the potential amendments to the sign ordinance. Mr. Rosenberg indicated he prepared a draft for council consideration. Mr. Gural indicated Mrs. Kilmer also submitted her comments regarding the ordinance changes and council may wish to consider them also.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Gural indicated the Budget Workshop will be held on March 28th at 8:00 am, noting the draft appropriations and budget for the Current Fund and Sewer Utility have been provided for you to look over, noting they are still a work in progress and changes are still be made. Mr. Gural indicated the Chief Payton I. Flournoy Sr. Memorial Park brick pavers PO was issued and the work should be done this week. Mr. Gural indicted Mayor's parking space little Broad has been changed to a Veterans parking space and the new sign had been installed. Mr. Gural noted we have spoken about Tony's Barbershop mural noting he also sent Mr. Venture a letter indicated all that had been discussed at the last meeting. Mr. Gural stated he also sent a letter to the Heart & Soul committee and the governing body indicating the great job that was done even though we did not receive the grant, however noting that maybe there will be a Cohort 2! Mrs. Russell noted special thanks to Tangy and Qwan for their wonderful work on the project.

Mr. Gural stated the complaint regarding 411 W. 5th St has been addressed, work has commenced again regarding the project and another dumpster has been placed and clean-up is in process.

Mr. Gural noted the Palmyra School district is to receive \$5,106,898 in State Aid from the Department of Education an increase of \$2,987.00 or .06%

Mr. Gural indicated a Stormwater Management public outreach requirement is being fulfilled with a letter being sent to the residents in their sewer bills. Mr. Gural indicated a copy of the letter is in the council packet.

Mr. Gural indicated Mrs. Kilmer received some information from the County Board of Health regarding Coronavirus/ COVID-19. Mr. Gural indicated he would be putting the information on the website noting that currently there is not allot going on in our area.

Mr. Gural indicated the meeting calendar on the Website has been updated, please look at it and let him know if something is missing. Mr. Gural also noted the “Did You Know” segments will be returning soon, indicating the next is going to be about redevelopment in the Borough.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mrs. Russell had no comment.

Mrs. McCann had no comment

Dr. Cloud had no comment

Mrs. Jenkins had no comment

Mr. Allmond had no comment.

President Howard had no comment

Mayor Tait had no comment

Mayor Tait asked if there was any business for executive session. Mr. Gural indicated no.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. President Howard second the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Doretha R Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk