

Borough of Palmyra
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
Monday October 19th, 2020

The Regular Council Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:35 PM

At the call of the roll:

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

ABSENT: none

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Mayor Tait read the following into the record:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., and in consideration of Executive Order No. 103, issued by Governor Murphy on March 9, 2020, declaring a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency in the State of New Jersey, the Borough of Palmyra does hereby notify the public that to protect the health, safety and welfare of our citizens while ensuring the continued functioning of government, the meeting of the Mayor and Council will be a Virtual Council Meeting. Members of the public are invited to “attend” the Virtual Council Meeting but all members of the public participating in the meeting may be muted and their video image disabled. Notice of this meeting was published in the Burlington County Times on January 9th, 2020 and notification was sent to the Burlington County Times on October 8th, 2020. Notice was posted on the Municipal Door, Official Bulletin Board and the Borough of Palmyra Website and electronic signs on October 8th, 2020 and notice was given to all Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the October 5th, 2020 Regular Borough Council Meeting Minutes and the October 5th, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 5th, 2020 Regular Borough Council Meeting and the October 5th, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE

Municipal Clerk, Ms. Jackson acknowledged a thank-you letter received from the Family of Edna Webb.

REDEVELOPMENT

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area- Update

Mr. Gural stated the redeveloper has submitted the application to the Land Use Board for subdivision and site plan approval and it will be heard at the November 18th, 2020 meeting of the Land Use Board. Mr. Gural indicated the Special Master, John Sweeney, was approved last week by the courts; allowing for the sheriff sale to proceed on the Fillit properties. Mr. Gural noted the sheriff sale of the Fillit properties will be held at Borough Hall on December 2nd, 2020. Mr. Gural noted the negotiations with Fair Share Housing regarding the affordable housing requirements are ongoing.

Redevelopment Study Block 80 Lot 6, former Knights of Columbus property - update

Mayor Tait stated the public hearing regarding the determination of need of Block 80 Lot 6 the former Knight's of Columbus building will be heard at the Land Use Board meeting on Wednesday October 21, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Outlaw Training & Fitness/620-622 Highland Ave Redevelopment Project -update

Mr. Gural stated the trail date for the determination of the valuation of the property will be held on February 22, 2021.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner, ERI

Mr. Kirchner indicated at the last meeting we awarded the contracts for the three projects: 2020 Road Improvement project, Temple Blvd. Improvement Project and the 5th and Race Street Improvement project. Mr. Kirchner noted the pre-construction conference was held on Wednesday for those projects, noting the attendance of the Police Department, Public Works Department, Think Pavers Contracting, New Jersey American Water Co, and the Bridge Commission for the Temple Blvd. project. Mr. Kirchner stated the first project will be the 2020 Road Improvement project which includes Walnut and Pear Streets, then progressing towards Virginia, Maryland and Oregon Streets to continue with that portion of the project. Mr. Kirchner stated there is a meeting scheduled for later in the week to go over the traffic specifics for traffic control on the Temple Boulevard Project. Mr. Kirchner stated the 5th and Race project

for now is in a wait and see; depending upon if the children return to in-school learning or if they remain in a virtual learning environment. Mr. Kirchner stated he was hoping, if we have a mild winter, to have all the various projects commence over the winter. Mr. Kirchner also noted that New Jersey American Water Co. has submitted additional street opening permits for additional main replacements for Walnut Street, West Henry Street from Cinnaminson Avenue to Public Road, Hubbs Street, Charles Street from Park Avenue to Public Road and Park Avenue from Charles Street to West Henry. Mr. Kirchner noted they will be bringing in pipe this week and are hoping to have it installed before in-school starts on the 16th of November. Mr. Kirchner stated they were hoping to have a proposal for the Veterans Park Improvements by the end of month so council would have it for the November meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Tait noted:

We requested those participants wishing to have or make a Public comment, email their questions or comments in advance to Borough Clerk Rita Jackson at djackson@boroughofpalmyra.com. The opportunity to submit comments prior to meeting expired at 12:00 PM on Monday October 19, 2020. All comments will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes.

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

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

The Municipal Clerk read the following comments received:

Kim Robinson – Leconey Avenue

It is my understanding that at the last borough council meeting on October 5, 2020 there was a discussion on fulfilling a request for churches to use Payton Flournoy Park. I want to remind the council that in June 2020 a group of four PHS students requested the use of Payton Flournoy Park for a peaceful Black Lives Matter protest. Also, in August 2020 that same group of students and concerned community members requested usage of the park for a panel discussion. Both events were denied approval from the Borough to use the park. The events took place but without the support of the Borough. To allow another group, even churches to officially utilize the park would be both against policy and send the wrong message to our community. Thank you

Mayor Tait indicated she has spoken with Mrs. Robinson regarding her concern noting that Pastor Soper's request was formally submitted, accompanied by a certificate of insurance and the request had been update not to included the sound system only the electric, which is always on, on the bandshell. There was some additional discussion regarding the proposed event and the past events.

Ms. Weiner- Charles Street

Ms. Weiner indicated the Scarecrow Contest was up and running noting the scarecrows decorating the light poles along Broad Street. Ms. Weiner indicated the Halloween Mini Parade is proceeding on Friday October 30th, 2020. The Fire department will begin moving at 6:30 noting the will begin on the river side and crossover the tracks about 7:30. Me. Weiner stated Ms. Hui made an interactive map which is posted on the Halloween Parade Committee's website as well as the Borough's website. Ms. Weiner thanked the Palmyra Police Department, Fire Department and Lenny's Towing for all their help with the event. Ms. Weiner noted the Halloween "Pins" are in and will be distributed to participants in the parade and thru businesses in the area; she thanked Ms. Rossignol for the design of the pins this year.

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 **2020-202** and Resolution **2020-205** will be enacted as a single motion, if either resolution needs additional discussion it will be removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately. Mayor Tait asked if anything needed to be pulled from the consent agenda. Borough Council indicated no.

Resolution 2020-202, Resolution Requesting Approval of item of Revenue and Appropriation N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87(Chapter 159) 2020 Safe and Secure Communities Grant Program in the amount of \$39,485.00

Resolution 2020-203, Resolution Appointing Juan Delgado as Plumbing Subcode Official and Plumbing Inspector at the combined annual Salary of \$17,500.00 Retroactive to October 6th, 2020

Resolution 2020-204, Resolution Authorizing Employee Assistance Program Contract with Seaside Serenity Counseling, LLC effective 01/01/2021 in an Amount of \$3,400.00

Resolution 2020-205, Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Bills for the Month of October 2020 in the Amount of \$1,502,161.23.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve resolutions 2020-202 thru 2020-205. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolutions 2020-202 thru 2020-205. Mr. Allmond seconded the motion.

At the call of the roll:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried. Resolutions 2020-202 thru Resolution 2020-205 were approved

MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURERS REPORTS

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the Treasurer's Reports for September 2020. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Reports for September 2020. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll:

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

None

Motion Carried. Treasurers Report was approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Tait indicated she had spoken with the Mayors of Riverton and Cinnaminson and they decided Trick-or-Treating would be held on Saturday October 31st, 2020 from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm in all three towns.

Chief Campbell indicated the Firearms Basic Training Seminar was been held tonight and tomorrow night in the Cinnaminson Township building at 6:00 pm. Chief Campbell stated that due to the popularity of the seminar they would be looking into dates in November to continue holding the seminar. Chief Campbell indicated the meeting held with the Philadelphia Police department in regards to the noise coming out of the parks went very well and they are looking to set up another meeting with the residents along the river, from Palmyra, Riverton and Cinnaminson. Chief Campbell indicated the Philadelphia Police department is taking a very proactive approach in trying to resolve this issue with the noise.

Mr. Gural indicated the renovations in Borough Hall have been completed and depending upon what happens in the area with covid-19 the building is ready to go. Mr. Gural noted the uptick in case in Palmyra and throughout the state. Mr. Gural stated the staff can return to normal in office hours when indicated to do so by the governing body. There was some discussion regarding opening to the public and having shorten hours on a specific day or two of the weeks. Mr. Gural indicated that due to the current uptick in the number of cases in town that perhaps the governing body should take another look at it in two weeks. Mayor Tait indicated Mr. Gural should talk with the staff and let council know how they feel.

Mr. Gural indicated he recently spoke with the Palmyra Police Association representatives regarding the Collective Bargaining Agreement and made to offer council noted. Mr. Gural indicated he had not yet heard back from them

Mr. Gural indicated he had nothing new to report regarding the former mayor Michelle Arnold's advance travel funds owed the Borough, he noted the fifth invoice had been sent with no response to date.

Mr. Gural indicated everyone has seen the procedures Mr. Rosenberg outlined to sell the Borough-owned lots. Mr. Gural stated it is complicated and could be expensive to the Borough. Mr. Gural indicated he drafted a letter to the adjacent property owners of the two parcels available for sale to determine the interest of purchasing those properties. Mr. Gural indicated he would have additional information once he sees the interest of those owners and at that time would be able to better determine how to proceed.

Mayor Tait indicated that Rev. Soper had unrequested the use of the sound system in their request to utilize the Payton I Flournoy Park for a Christmas eve event. Mayor Tait indicated Rev. Soper and Rev. Allan would need to complete the Covid-19 release and the hold harmless form in addition to the forms they submitted. President Howard noted the need for additional trash receptacles in the park in case they were needed. There was some additional discussion regarding the event, timing and number of people attending. After polling the governing body, the request was approved.

Mr. Gural indicated Mr. Rosenberg sent the letter to Willingboro Township noting the termination of the Animal Control contract due to them not fulfilling their responsibilities to the contract. Mr. Gural noted that we currently have a local animal control company helping on a case by case basis. Mr. Gural stated the animal control contract will be included with the Request for Proposals request in November so it can be awarded on an annual basis.

Mayor Tait indicated the Governor's Executive Order No 187 indicated that indoor sports can resume and notes the various way the buildings must be maintained and cleaned. There was discussion regarding usage of the building, the ability to clean the building around various groups using it, staffing of the center and the ability to sanitize the meeting rooms, gym and bathrooms. Mr. Russell stated she wanted to discuss the issues of opening as there have been conversations regarding opening the center and outdoor restrooms; she noted she was not in favor of opening them given the current circumstances but felt the discussion should be had. There was also discussion regarding opening the restrooms at Legion field and the ability to keep those facilities clean. Mr. Gural noted the current staffing that the Borough has noting the inability to keep the restroom cleaned as they should be given the current circumstances. Mr. Gural also noted that two of the community center employees were laid off and the discussion would need to be had regarding rehiring/restaffing the center in order to be able to reopen the community center. President Howard noted the discussion regarding opening the community center and Legion Field restrooms but indicated safety must be the number one priority before opening those facilities. After some additional discussion it was decided that we currently are

not ready nor do we have the staff to handle those requests currently and that given the current uptick in covid-19 cases now is not the time to open those facilities.

Mr. Gural noted both Park Tavern and 5 West received approval for outdoor dining. Mr. Gural noted that only Park Tavern has applied for and received their outdoor extension to sell alcoholic beverages in their outdoor seating areas.

Mayor Tait introduced our 2020-2021 Student Representatives to Borough Council, Ellie Lake and Andrew Yansick.

Ellie Lake reported that virtual learning has been somewhat of a hurdle, but the students are getting thru it and the teachers are adjusted to the new technology and other than the connection issues it had been going relatively smoothly. Ms. Lake noted the fall sports are well into their seasons and the covid-19 waivers have been immensely helpful in tracking who may or may not be sick. Ms. Lake also noted that boys' soccer is holding their senior night on Wednesday October 21st, 2020 at 5:00 pm at the stadium and girl's tennis will be holding their senior night at 3:00pm on October 29th, 2020 at the Tennis courts.

Andrew Yansick reported that the students just got approval for clubs to begin which many students are looking forward to. Mr. Yansick stated the students will be going into hybrid learning on November 16th, 2020 in time for the second marking period. Mr. Yansick noted he and a few other students created a pledge for the student body to read and sign regarding the covid-19 situation and a sort of guideline as to what the students should be following while in school on school property and while even at home. Mr. Yansick indicated he had spoken with Mayor Tait regarding circulating the pledge throughout the Borough providing additional information for the residents and noting we are all in this together and need to do various things to keep everyone safe and healthy. Mayor Tait indicated she had received the letter and would have it posted on the Borough's website.

Mayor Tait appointed Dwayne Robinson from Leconey Avenue to fill the vacant Land Use Board seat of Bryan Norcross. Mayor Tait noted he would be sworn in on Wednesday at the Land Use Board Meeting.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Gural indicated the Borough Calendar has been updated thru the end of year including the brush and leaf schedule. Mr. Gural asked that everyone look at the website and let him know if there is something that need to be fixed or added.

Mr. Gural stated that 100 new trash carts have been ordered and a that although we only allotted \$5,000.00 dollars for the purchase of those carts, they needed to be purchased in lots of 100 which was over the amount allotted by approximately \$3,300.00 dollars. Because we were out of carts and parts this purchase had to be made.

Mr. Gural stated the traffic study request letter regarding the traffic signaling at Broad Street and Cinnaminson Avenue and Broad Street and Highland Avenue was sent to the County by Mr. Rosenberg; and we await their response

Mr. Gural reminded all the November Council Caucus meeting will be held at 6:00 PM on Monday November 2nd, 2020 as it is the night before elections.

Mr. Gural indicated the NJ Local Government Emergency Fund allocated \$93,936 for Palmyra Borough. Mr. Gural explained this is the covid-19 relief funds to help municipalities that have having financial burdens due to covid-19. Mr. Gural indicated Mr. Gerkins will be working with several department heads in gathering that information to apply for those funds.

Mr. Gural indicated the next "Did You Know" should be about sidewalks. Mr. Gural indicated he would have it posted by the end of week.

Mr. Gural stated the 2020 Municipal Best Practices Inventory is due by November 3rd, 2020. Mr. Gural explained the inventory is a tool which the Division of Local Government Services uses to determine each Municipalities allocation of state aid. Mr. Gural noted it is sixty questions which need to be read into the record including our responses at a public meeting. Mr. Gural indicated the public hearing will be held at the November 16th, 2020 meeting.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mrs. McCann thanked the Riverton Middle School for coming to Legion Field to clean up the park.

Dr. Cloud -no comment

Mrs. Jenkins - no comment.

Mr. Allmond- no comment

Mrs. Russell noted the panelist at the Bethany Church event regarding equity in education was the best thing she has attended, noting the attendance of Malik Howard, Councilwoman Jenkins and others.

President Howard thanked Bethany Church for holding an anti-racism forum on Saturday noting Councilwoman Jenkins was a panelist and a lot of information was available and given.

Mayor Tait noted the Borough was up to 91 positive Covid-19 cases. Mayor Tait indicated she had spoken with Mrs. Robinson regarding inequality within the Borough. Mayor Tait indicated she was going to add it to the Mayor's Advisory Committee for additional discussion. Councilwoman Cloud indicated she would like to help with that discussion. Mayor Tait advised all to get their flu shots this year.

Mayor Tait asked Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg if there were items for closed session. Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg 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 7:45 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Doretha R Jackson

Doretha R Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk