

Borough of Palmyra
Virtual Council Caucus Meeting Minutes
Monday June 7th, 2021 6:00 pm

The Council Caucus Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:03 PM

ROLL CALL

At the call of the roll:

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

ABSENT: None

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

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 and in response to Executive Order No 196 issued by Governor Murphy on November 16, 2020. Please be advised 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 12th, 2021. Notice was posted on the Municipal Door, Official Bulletin Board and electronic signs on May 20th, 2021. Notice was also posted on the Borough of Palmyra Website on June 4th, 2021 and notice was given to all Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 17th, 2021 – Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the May 17th, 2021 Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 17th, 2021 Regular Council Meeting.

President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE

Municipal Clerk, Ms. Jackson noted there was no correspondence.

REDEVELOPMENT

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area- Update

Mr. Gural stated that since last we met, we broke ground on the redevelopment project. Mr. Gural indicated that the redeveloper has begun removing the asphalt from the parking area. Mr. Gural stated that the negotiations are ongoing with the redeveloper and North Point regarding the Fillit property. Mr. Rosenberg indicated the Fillit has submitted a disclosure statement, a plan of reorganization to the bankruptcy court, noting that the bankruptcy may be over in the next few months. Mr. Gural noted that we have received payments in the amounts of 2.5 million and 1.65 million which have been deposited into our affordable housing trust account., noting we will still be receiving 1.7 million which we should receive when the building permit is issued.

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

Mr. Gural indicated there is nothing new to report, noting the valuation hearing is still scheduled to be heard in Superior Court in August.

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

Mr. Gural indicated he had nothing new to report.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner, ERI

Mr. Kirchner stated the repairs to Public Road have been completed essentially closing out the Public Road elimination project. Mr. Kirchner stated there would be a change order at the next meeting decreasing the total amount by 25 or 30 thousand dollars. Mr. Kirchner indicated that the 2021 Road program is out to bid with bids due back on June 15th, 2021, and we are hoping to award the project on June 21st, 2021. Mr. Kirchner stated there have been some complaints regarding the condition of W 2nd. Street, he noted it has been very warm and the grass has not taken so with the heavy rains it washes the soil into the street. Mr. Kirchner indicated that portion of 2nd Street has not yet been paved as it is New Jersey American Waters portion, and they are held up waiting for a county permit to tie their water main in on that street. New Jersey American Water Co. did mill and pave Maryland Avenue. Temple Blvd is progressing, noting a problem with the pipe running into Leconey Circle and having had to change the diameter from 30 inch to 24 inch. Mr. Kirchner indicated there have been some pipe supply problems and they are hoping to have the additional piping needed by the week of June 20th, 2021.

PHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS

Andrew Yansick – Mr. Yansick indicated he sent an email to Ms. Sabo regarding the vandalism at Legion Field but has not yet received a response. Mr. Yansick noted the Prom was great.

Coady McCann – Mr. McCann indicated that Spirt Week is in full swing and on Friday they will be having a dance similar to the homecoming dance, as due to covid the homecoming dance was cancelled.

Naomi Cabon – Ms. Cabon stated the boys and girls track teams competed in the sectionals on Saturday. Ms. Cabon noted the following students will be going to the State Finals on Friday, Heather Adams, Kadence Anderson, Maura Russell, Quinton Ives, Isaiah McPherson, and Owen Riley.

PUBLIC COMMENT

We requested those participants wishing to have or make a Public comment, email their questions or comments in advance to Municipal Clerk Rita Jackson at djackson@boroughofpalmyra.com. The opportunity to submit comments prior to meeting expired at 12:00 PM on Monday June 7th, 2021. All comments will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes.

For those who “attended” the Virtual Meeting, Mayor Tait opened the meeting to the public for comments. All comments will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open to the public for comments 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

Mayor Tait asked if any comments were received before the meeting.

Municipal Clerk, Ms. Jackson indicated one was received. Ms. Jackson read the comment into the record.

Dear Mayor and Council,

Is there a plan to re-open the Palmyra Community Center, and will those plans be made public? Given that the current vaccination rate in NJ is close to 70 percent. (Some of the highest in the United States) Those numbers along with the use of effective known safety protocols the re-opening should happen relatively soon. I reached out via email on three separate occasions recently and heard back from only one person. Much to my amazement I was told that there was no specific timeline for re-opening which is surprising since schools and businesses across the state have been months.

Mrs. Okazaki -5th Street

Mayor Tait indicated she spoke with Mrs. Okazaki and will let her know what's planned when it is determined.

Mayor Tait asked if there were any additional comments from those present.

Seeing none, Mayor Tait asked for a motion to close to the public for comments Mrs. Russell made a motion to close the public portion for comments. President Howard second the motion.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Tait stated **Resolution 2021-137** thru **Resolution 2021-143** will be enacted as a single motion, if any resolution needed additional discussion, it would be removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately

Mayor Tait asked if any resolution needed to be removed from the consent agenda. Seeing none Mayor Tait read the following resolutions into the record:

Resolution 2021-137, Resolution Authorizing 2021-2022 Liquor License Renewal for Harikrishna Liquors, Inc. T/A Palmyra Liquors Plenary Retail Distribution License #0327-44-004-007

Resolution 2021-138, Resolution awarding a contract to ERI for additional engineering services for the Veterans Memorial Park Enhancements project per their proposal dated May 20, 2021 in the amount of \$6,750.00

Resolution 2021-139, Resolution awarding a contract to ERI for engineering services for the Fall 2021 Road Program per their proposal dated May 27, 2021 in the amount of \$51,000.00.

Resolution 2021-140, Resolution Authorizing 2021-2022 Liquor License Renewal for Milmarian Inc. ABC Pocket License #0327-33-002-003

Resolution 2021-141, Resolution Authorizing 2021-2022 Liquor License Renewal for Ashburn Corporation T/A Roger Wilco Liquors Plenary Retail Distribution License # 0327-44-005-009

Resolution 2021-142, Resolution Authorizing the 2021-2022 Liquor License Renewal for John P Gerew Inc. T/A Park Tavern Plenary Retail Consumption License # 0327-33-006-004

Resolution 2021-143, Resolution Approving Patrick D Daly as a Member of the Junior Firefighter's Auxiliary to the Palmyra Fire Department

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the consent agenda Resolutions 2021-137 thru Resolution 2021-143.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the consent agenda Resolutions 2021-137 thru Resolution 2021-143. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion carried. Resolutions 2021-137 thru Resolution 2021-143 were approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Gural indicated the Governor has terminated the executive order number 103, however the state of emergency declared in executive order number 103 continues to exist in the State of New Jersey noting this current order shall take effect immediately. Mr. Gural indicated the new executive order is very confusing. Mr. Gural indicated the borough staff in accordance with advice from counsel should not be required to be vaccinated but we are allowed to inquire if they have been vaccinated and enact different rules for those who have been vaccinated from those who have not. Mr. Gural indicated we are planning on reopening in a limited capacity after the 4th of July holiday, noting a staff meeting is planned for June 16th, 2021. Mr. Gural noted that when the building is opened he would like to limit the number of people in the building at one time to three. Mr. Gural indicated he would like to bring back one of our laid off employees, the first week in July, to help with controlling/directing the people coming into the building. Mr. Gural indicated council meetings for June shall remain Zoom meetings, but would like to begin with the July 19th, 2021, meeting a possible hybrid meeting and opening the building for that meeting to see how things work for moving forward. There was discussion regarding the meetings, requirements for attending, social distancing and mask wearing. Mr. Gural stated beginning June 22nd, 2021 (only on Tuesdays) the County Board of Health in conjunction with OEM will be in the community center offering covid vaccine shots beginning at 9:00 am to 1:00 pm thru August 31, 2021. Mr. Gural noted we have also received requests for the concession stand for August so that to must be considered. Mr. Gural indicated that the concession stand should open at the same time the community center is opened. President Howard indicated his committee would work on the ordinance for the fields, parks and community center hoping to have something for governing body consideration in July.

Mr. Gural stated there has been some vandalism at Legion Field. Mr. Gural indicated some of the juveniles have been identified and will be prosecuted.

Chief Campbell indicated they have 7 or 8 applicants for Class one officers. Chief Campbell indicated she has reserved three spots in the academy and has narrowed the candidates to four. Chief Campbell indicated there are two potential new full-time officer candidates which are currently going thru all the required testing and background checks. Chief Campbell indicated she is hoping to have all the testing/paperwork completed and the candidates ready to go by early July.

Mr. Gural indicated he and Chief Campbell have met gone over all the measurements for the parking ordinance. Mr. Gural stated he would be including those measurements in the ordinance and who have it ready for committee consideration soon.

President Howard indicated he was waiting for another committee to meet regarding the merit increases and would have recommendations for council consideration at the next meeting July 21, 2021.

Mayor Tait indicated she was waiting to hear back from some people regarding serving on the Rt. 130/Delaware River Corridor Plan Endorsement Committee. Mayor Tait indicated she should have those names for the July meeting.

Mr. Allmond indicated he would like to craft an ordinance to officially create a Veterans Affairs Committee similar to the Green Team. He noted additional information would be coming.

Mayor Tait indicated the County has developed a problem with drivers who hold CLD licenses that can drive their recycling trucks. Mr. Gural indicated throughout July the recycling schedule is going to be disrupted/ delayed, he noted that recycling collections should be picked up on Wednesday and completed Thursday. Mr. Gural urged residents to look at the County recycling website and our website for updated as to when they will be picking up recycling.

Mr. Gural stated Mr. Gerken has submitted the 2021 Recreation Improvement Grant application for replacement of the Legion turf field. Mr. Gural explained the application is for \$300,000.00 with a match of \$300,000.00 and wanted the governing body to be aware that the \$300,000.00 will need to be budgeted if we receive the grant. Mr. Gural indicated the redeveloper will still be paying the \$600,000.00 at a later date.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Gural thanked everyone for taking the JIF Elected Officials Training Seminar.

Mr. Gural notified the governing body that the donation request from the War Memorial Committee has been received and noted the request will appear on the bill list.

Mr., Gural indicated Ms. Jackson has been working with the Board of Elections and Chief Campbell regarding the placement and installation of the ballot box outside Borough Hall. Mr. Gural indicated there is a sign box outside the building which needs to be replaced or taken down. There has been some thought of placing the ballot box in that location and removing the sign box. Mr. Gural also noted a camera will be installed to cover specifically the ballot box location. Mr. Gural indicated the Board of Elections will be reimbursing the Borough for those expenses.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mrs. Jenkins – no comment

Dr. Cloud - no comment

Mrs. Russell- thanked Rita for her work planning the Rt. 73 Groundbreaking Ceremony and reception, noting it was amazing. Mrs. Russell asked about the nest in the redevelopment area. Mr. Gural indicated they will be relocated. Mrs. Russell noted the Juneteenth Celebration, June 19th, 2021, in Riverton Park from 3 to 6 pm and the E-waste recycling event being held in front of the Community Center, same day, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Mr. Allmond – no comment

Mrs. McCann indicated school is out beginning next Friday. Ms. McCann indicated the parks look beautiful and are being used.

President Howard – no comments

Mayor Tait – Mayor Tait again thanked Ms. Jackson for her efforts with planning the groundbreaking ceremony and reception. Mayor Tait noted the opening of the community garden on June 5th, 2021 and urged anyone with time or in need to stop down and weed or pick vegetables from the garden. Mayor Tait thanked President Howard from standing in for her at the Memorial Day Celebration. Mayor Tait thanked Mr. Allmond and Ms. McCann for attending the ceremony. Mayor Tait thanked Mr. Allmond and Dr. Cloud for helping and attending the Community Garden opening. Mayor Tait stated we need to begin planning the town wide yard sale and asked for volunteers to head that project. Mrs. Russell indicated she would be willing to help with the town wide yard sale. Mayor Tait asked everyone to think about the possibility of beginning the Farmers Market again, noting there have been questions regarding if its going to be held.

Mayor Tait asked Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg if there were items for closed session. Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg indicated no.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM

Doretha R Jackson, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Approved: June 21, 2021