

Borough of Palmyra
Council Caucus Meeting Minutes
6:30 PM Monday August 2nd, 2021

The Regular Council Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:31 PM

ROLL CALL

At the call of the roll:

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

ABSENT: Michelle McCann

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 conducted both as a Virtual and In-Person Council Meeting. Members of the public are invited to “attend” the Council Meeting “Virtually” (via computer or phone) but all members of the public participating in the meeting virtually may be muted and their video image disabled. Members of the public are also invited to attend the Council Meeting “In-Person”, but Council Chambers will be limited to 20 persons maximum, on a first come, first served basis, in order to limit the potential spread of COVID-19 and its variants. All persons attending the meeting in-person will be required to wear a mask. 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 July 22nd, 2021 Notice was also posted on the Borough of Palmyra Website on July 30th, 2021 and notice was given to all Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 19th, 2021 - Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the July 19th, 2021, Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

President Howard made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 19th, 2021, Regular Council Meeting. Mr. Allmond second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

INFAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Mrs. Jenkins, President Howard

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Russell

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Jackson noted there was no correspondence.

REDEVELOPMENT

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area- Update

Mr. Gural stated the bankruptcy petition with Fillit has been resolved and the Borough will be receiving the \$250,000.00 balance of the lien on the property this week. Mr. Gural indicated a site visit was held on July 21, 2021, with may Borough officials as well as the Mayor and Councilwoman Jenkins to see the progress of the construction. Mr. Gural indicated over 5,000 loads of material has been delivery from the confined disposal facility in Cinnaminson. Mr. Gural indicated they had the opportunity to observe the osprey which in the coming days will be gone from the nest at which the nest will be relocated, and three new nests will be constructed in the Cove Nature Park. Mr. Gural indicated we received the affordable housing long term tax exemption application and the second warehouse application. Mr. Gural indicated the 4% tax credit draft application which will be submitted tomorrow to NJ Housing and Mortgage Financing Assistance by the redeveloper. Mr. Gural indicated it will take about four weeks before they receive a response. Mr. Gural stated that conversations have begun regarding future phases of the project which include the store frontage properties on Rt 73.

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

Mr. Brewer indicated the valuation hearing scheduled for August 16th, 2021, has been postponed until sometime in the near future.

Former Knights of Columbus property - Block 80 Lot 6 – Update

Mr. Gural indicated he had nothing new to report currently.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner, ERI

Mr. Kirchner indicated that they were able to complete the underground pipe work on the Temple Blvd project. Mr. Kirchner indicated he expected the concrete work to begin right after the completion

of the underground pipe work however that did not occur. Mr. Kirchner stated the construction company indicated they would be in tomorrow to begin the concrete work noting that they indicated they would be staying until that work was complete. Mr. Kirchner indicated he has requested schedules for completion but has not yet received them. Mr. Kirchner indicated he was aware of the resident's frustration relating to delays on the job and he is working within the confines of the contract to get to situation rectified moving forward. Mr. Kirchner indicated the same contractor, which has the 5th & Race streets project he has been after for a schedule, as they are trying to complete before school begins, has not yet submitted that schedule. Mr. Kirchner indicated he will be exploring all options regarding the contract to get the project moving along.

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 August 2nd, 2021. All comments will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes.

For those who "attend" the hybrid meeting, Mayor Tait opened the meeting to the public for comments. All comments are part of the record and are 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 Ms. Jackson if comments were received prior to the meeting.

Ms. Jackson indicated no comments were received.

Mr. Rader – Harbour Drive - Mr. Rader stated he asked 18 months ago why the public was excluded from addressing council following the public portion of the council meeting. Mr. Rader indicated that the open public meeting has a current agenda however during the meeting there are additions and deletions and corrections, all these changes are not permitted for public comment, is there a procedure for the public to comment on the changes. Mr. Rader asked, "has council eliminated all public contact to address the governing body following the public portion of council meeting".

Mr. Rosenberg indicated the open public meeting act requires that the public permitted to address the members of the governing body once during the meeting, it is silent as to when that one opportunity to address the governing body is to occur. Mr. Rosenberg indicated that at one time there were two opportunities from the public to address the governing body however it is entirely within the discretion of the governing body as to whether there is one opportunity or more than one opportunity. Mr. Rosenberg stated members of the public are always allowed to address any agenda item from a prior

meeting at the current meeting, noting that any member of the public can address any matter of concern during the public portion during any meeting. Mr. Rosen indicated that the governing body is required to post an agenda and to the best of his knowledge, that obligation has been satisfied. Mr. Rosenberg indicated that from time to time there may be some minor additions to the posted agenda, which is more of a function of the free flow of information that occurs in a group setting, this is in no way an intention of subversion of the intent of the open public meeting act. There was additional discussion regarding when and why the public portion should take place.

Ms. Still – Veterans Drive Ms. Still indicated at the last council meeting she attended the meeting as she needed some answers as to why her house and some neighbor's homes had flooded along with Market Street and why Palmyra had not done anything to help. Ms. Still indicated she was looking for answers and it was not addressed by the Mayor at all. Ms. Still indicated Mr. Dreby indicated it was classified as a 100-year storm and she did not know who classified it as a 100-year storm. Ms. Still indicated she had talked with FEMA, the National Weather Service, Red Cross, and many more who were willing to listen. Ms. Still indicated FEMA did not list Palmyra as a disaster area until July 29th, 2021, and now the small business administration is offering low interest loans, and they are loans which must be repaid and that is because of Senator Troy Singleton. Ms. Still indicated Senator Singleton has stay in contact with her on a daily basis asking how the neighbors are doing, giving advise as to who to contact and what to do to get rid of mold and mildew. Ms. Still indicated she was thankful for public officials who understand that they are in positions to serve the public not the other way around. Ms. Still indicated she was not asking for a handout, she needed questions answered. Ms. Still asked if the Borough of Palmyra is threatening me with a citation for not cutting my grass, then why are they not accountable for say a clogged drain or something which is devastating and damaging to so many innocent residents. Ms. Still indicated she received help from leaders from other districts but nothing from the leaders of the Borough. Ms. Still indicated the Brough did place a dumpster. Ms. Still stated when she called the National Weather Service, they indicated they did not believe it was a 100-year storm but a 50-year storm, indicated it was only 3 to 5 inches of rain in our area. Ms. Still inquired who are the other residents who had major damage and what caused this unprecedented flooding. Ms. Still indicated she was aware that they are in a flood plan but other houses closer to the river and in the food plan also were unaffected. Ms. Still indicated we just need answers.

Mr. Gural indicated the Federal government declared the flash flooding on July 12th, 2021, a natural disaster for eastern Pennsylvania, five counties in New Jersey and two counties in New York. Mr. Gural indicated he and Mayor Tait (the Borough representatives) were in communication with Senator Singleton from the beginning noting that the Borough gathered information which was submitted to the county office of Emergency Management to try to seek funding. There was additional discussion regarding the flooding, what other areas were affected, the amounts of property damages and public works clearing drains prior to the storm and after the storm.

Mr. Lynch – Temple Blvd- Mr. Lynch asked what was going on with the construction on Temple Blvd. Mr. Lynch indicated he had concerns as they have been working on this project for a long time and about two and a half months ago the contractors disappeared. Mr. Lynch indicated he spoke with some of the construction workers earlier in the week and they indicated they were off the job due to lack of materials due to covid however were back to complete the job and now they are gone, all the equipment, contractors, etc. Mr. Lurch asked what is going on with the project, where it stands and when its going to be done.

Mr. Kirchner indicated the contractor started, things were moving along then were ran into a problem obtaining the type of pipe they were installing, there was some conflict with existing water and gas services and pipes size needed to be changed from run of pipe size from 30 to 24 inch. Mr. Kirchner indicated there was not enough 24-inch pipe to complete the install. Mr. Kirchner stated when they tried to order it, it was back ordered from the manufacturer who makes the pipe; a load of pipe cam in which was a little short of what was needed, and they began working. They work Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday and came in last week and finished Monday and Tuesday of last week and we thought they were going right into the concrete work followed by the paving work. Mr. Kirchner indicated they pulled off with the pipe crews and concrete crews which they were told was unacceptable and they should return on Monday. Mr. Kirchner indicated we were told they would be there on Friday which they did not show up for either. Mr. Kirchner indicated letters regarding the contract have ensure and as of 4:50 pm today they are due back in the morning to complete the concrete work between Van Sant Drive and Firth Lane which should take a week or so depending upon the weather, nothing then they should roll into paving and the final clean-up work. Mr. Kirchner also noted that a week during May they was a shut down, there was a labor dispute; the contractor has a contract with the labor's union, and they were picketed by the operator's union. Mr. Kirchner indicated that as a show of solidarity the workers walked off the job which delayed the project an additional week. Mr. Kirchner indicated all the pipe is in the ground and now the concrete work needs to be completed along with the final paving. Mr. Kirchner indicated the concrete work will take about a week then the final paving and clean-up. Mr. Lynch asked, if the contractors do not show up tomorrow is there a possibility of Temple Blvd from Souder to Cinnaminson Avenue being closed. Mr. Gural indicated the Bridge Commission would oppose any attempt to close that street.

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

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

RESOLUTION

Mayor Tait read Resolution 2021-170.

Resolution 2021-170, Resolution Authorizing Emergency Contract with Sunbelt Rentals in an amount not to exceed \$65,000.00 for Rental of Generator for the Sewer Plant, in Accordance with N.J.S.A.40a:11-6

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the Resolution 2021-170.

Mr. Allmond made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-170. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: Dr. Cloud

Motion carried. Resolutions 2021-170 was approved

PUBLIC EVENTS

Mayor Tait stated National Night Out will be held Tuesday, August 3rd, 2021 beginning at 5:00pm.

Mayor Tait stated the Palmyra Market will begin on August 12th, 2021 and will follow every Thursday thru September and a fall Market in October. It will be hosted by the PIA in Payton Flournoy Park and will begin at 4:00pm. Ms. Weiner provided a wish list of the things they would like the Borough to do and asked if anything else was needed from them. Mr. Gural indicated the list included the use of restrooms in Borough Hall; Mr. Gural indicated Borough Hall is currently as will be tomorrow not available for restrooms as locks have been installed on the restroom doors and they are for exclusive use only for the staff in Borough Hall. Mr. Gural indicated that during the day when Borough Hall is open there is one restroom down by the police department which the public can access by obtaining a key from the staff on duty in the foyer. Mr. Gural indicated all the things we have done is to minimize the covid spread while still conducting business in Borough Hall. Ms. Weiner indicated that the CDC guidelines indicate that they bathrooms need to be cleaned every two hours, is it possible to have the restrooms for only two hours. There was additional discussion regarding the restrooms and port-a-potties. Mrs. Jenkins asked if the restrooms could be opened at Legion Field. Ms. Weiner indicated that she did not know if people would want to go down to the fields to use the restrooms. Ms. Weiner asked about the community center noting it was closer and would have to be staffed. Ms. Weiner indicated that she would get a volunteer to watch the door, allowing on one person in at a time and have it open for only two hours during the market. Mr. Gural noted that if the PIA could staff the door at the Community Center, then we would be amenable to opening the community center for two hours only during the time of the market. They was discussion regarding if the covid waivers needed to be completed by those participating in the Palmyra Market. Mr. Rosenberg indicated they would be required, as we are not done with covid given what the Governor indicated today.

Chief Campbell stated the NJ Mobile MVC Bus will be in Palmyra on Saturday, August 21,2021 from 10am to 2pm. Reservations are required. Additional information will follow.

Mrs. Russell noted the Town-wide Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, September 18th, 2021 with a rain date of the September 19th, 2021, noting additional information will follow. Mayor Tait indicated Ms. Rix asked that the Harbour be included, and she is willing to help coordinate information to the residents.

Mayor Tait stated the Halloween Parade will be held on October 30, 2021 and will begin at dusk.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Gural indicated we have covered part of the Borough Hall staffing/reopening to the public, Legion Field, Community Center, Council Meetings during previous conversations tonight, however Borough Hall is open to the public four days a week from 10:00am to 3:00 pm, noting there is someone in the lobby directing traffic and answering questions. Everyone entering the building and the staff are required to wear masks. Mr. Gural indicated we are currently reaching out to laid-off staff to return to help with opening and cleaning the restrooms at Legion Field. The Community Center is still closed except for Covid vaccines on Tuesdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Council meetings are hybrid currently and depending upon what happens in the future we are hoping to continue hybrid.

Mr. Gural indicated once Ms. Johns is back full-time, they may be a need to make recommendations to the governing body regarding position changes.

Mr. Gural stated the bid opening for the Veterans Memorial Park Improvement Project is August 11, 2021 at 11:00 am. Mr. Gural noted we should have the recommendation letter from ERI on the 12th, and be able to award on August 16th, 2021.

Mr. Gural indicated the pedestrian signal button meeting with State DOT/Light Rail for a signal button on Broad St and Highland Ave went very well and State DOT/Light Rail has agreed to place three buttons, an audible system, restripe the street and replace the handicap ramps at that intersection. Mr. Gural indicated they would be seeking comments in the next 30 days or so, then seek funding and the project could take upwards of two years to complete.

Mr. Gural stated we are still seeking quotes for the community center HVAC system. Mr. Kirchner indicated the contractors we are contracted with are not familiar with the geo-thermal units installed in the center, so they are seeking companies that are able to work on those types of units.

Mr. Gural indicated the Tax Sale will be held on September 14th and will be held online. Mr. Gural also noted the tax bills went to the shipper today and the grace period for payment will be extended until September 14th, 2021.

Mr. Gural indicated the Main Harbour Drive engineering/evaluation report has been completed and he had reviewed it. Mr. Gural read a portion of the summary of finds from the report noting; Main Harbour drive did not meet the current standards to be accepted. Mr. Gural indicated the report describes in detail why it does not and makes recommendations of improvements to make it acceptable and a cost estimate to have those items done. Mayor Tait asked if the report could be given to the Harbour Condo Association. Mr. Gural indicated yes.

Mr. Gural indicated the redeveloper is preparing a Phoenix Award recommendation of the project to be considered at the Brownfields 2021 Convention. The Brownfield Convention will be held December 8th thru 11th, 2021 in Oklahoma City, OK. Mr. Gural stated if members of the governing body would like to attend, please let him know.

Mr. Gural indicated there have been concerns and comments regarding spraying for mosquitos. Mr. Gural stated we have no control over when and where the county sprays. Mr. Gural noted it had been brought to his attention that there are tablets which can be placed in containers of water that prevent mosquitoes from breeding by killing the larva. Mr. Gural said the tablets are available on amazon and if council wanted, we could investigate it and possibly purchase them and make them available to the public. Mrs. Russell indicated the tablets are non-toxic and will not harm pets, but it is the homeowner who should be responsible for getting rid of standing water on their properties. Dr. Cloud indicated they are safe in fishponds, bird baths and swimming pools as they are made with bacteria on chemicals. Mrs. Russell noted there are different types that we may wish to investigate.

Mr. Gural indicated he renewed the volunteer accident policy effective September 1st to cover various injuries to volunteers who help with various Borough events.

Mayor Tait appointed the following to the Rt. 130/Delaware River Corridor Plan Endorsement Committee, Allie Rossignol, Jessica O'Connor, Ernest McGill, Loretta Kelly, Josh Ormond, and Mayor Tait. Mayor Tait stated if anyone else is interested, please let he know.

Mr. Gural indicated there had been discussion among the special salary committee, Ms. Kilmer regarding the vacant TACO and Code Enforcement Officer positions. After discussions it was decided that those positions should be advertised and hired. Mr. Gural indicated the TACO position is full-time and we should be looking for someone with experience. Mr. Gural noted the Code Enforcement Officer is part-time, but the candidate should also have experience. Council agreed and authorized the advertising of those positions.

Mr. Gural indicated he was not aware of the status of the DCA Local Assistance Bureau, explore potential Fire Department/EMS merger/shared service feasibility study, noting that Mr. Gerken had reached out to them and is on vacation. Mr. Gural indicated there was a meeting between Chief Dreby, EMS Chief Danny Norman and there were concerns about various things, but they are continuing to investigate it.

Mr. Gural indicated the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission a non-profit organization that assists with transportation initiatives in the region, has offered to collaborate with us and the redeveloper regarding seeking funding for a pedestrian bridge from the light rail train station in Pennsauken over the creek and into our redevelopment area. Ms. Hue from our Land Use Board has been immensely helpful inputting this together. The redeveloper has provided a number of concept plans to consider, and we are working out a meeting with all for some time in late August.

Mr. Gural indicated the following items are on the agenda as reminders of assorted items the governing body's various committees are working on. They included, Legion Field & Community Center usage Ordinance, Purchase Orders and Council signature requirement, Sidewalk/snow & ice removal Ordinance, Sewer lateral responsibility Ordinance and Sewer bills, Handicap Parking Sign Ordinance, Parking Ordinance/ additional amended code subsections required, and a Veterans Affairs Committee Ordinance.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Gural indicated he had nothing additional to report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Tait noted the committee reports will be given at the next meeting

President Howard indicated the committee was currently working on the facilities ordinance and a meeting was scheduled for the upcoming week. He noted they would have additional information at the next meeting.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mrs. Russell- no comment

Dr Cloud – no comment

Mrs. Jenkins – no comment

Mr. Allmond -no comment

President Howard indicated the committee was currently working on the facilities ordinance and a meeting was scheduled for the upcoming week. He noted they would have additional information at the next meeting.

Mayor Tait indicated National Night Out is tomorrow from 5 to 8 pm, please come out and enjoy and meet our new officers in the police department.

Mayor Tait indicated the Covid-19 vaccines are available at the Community Center on Tuesdays from 9:00am to 1:00 pm.

Mayor Tait stated SBA loans are available to those who experience a loss or hardship due to the recent floods.

Mayor Tait indicated she was going to try the "Neighborhood to Neighbor Block parties again this Wednesday, as the weather is going to be nice.

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 8:18 PM

Doretha R Jackson, RMC Municipal Clerk

Approved: August 16th, 2021