



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
500 Mill Road
Absecon, New Jersey 08201

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Municipal Clerk

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CITY COUNCIL

MARCH 18, 2021

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Bennett at 5:30 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE

STATEMENT OF THE SUNSHINE LAW
NOTIFICATION THAT THIS MEETING IS ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Burroughs, Cain, Cavileer, Howell, Larotonda, Light, Bennett

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Horton, Attorney, Fred Scerni, Jessica Thompson, Carie Crone

2021 ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

- 06** Amending the Code of the City of Absecon Chapter 224, Land Use and Development, Article XXXV-Stormwater Control.

Motion for second reading - Councilman Light - second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Bennett, yes

Motion to open to the public – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilman Larotonda

All were in favor

Jessica – said that Eddie explained at the last meeting that this had to deal with new State regulations and commercial develop and try to use “greener” ways first for storm water management

Motion to close public – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Howell

All were in favor.

Motion for final reading and adoption – Councilman Larotonda – second – Councilwoman Howell

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Bennett, yes

2021 RESOLUTIONS

- 60** Certifying the Governing Body is in compliance with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's "Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964"

Jessica – this is done each year so we are compliant with equal employment with regard to background checks and arrest records

- 61** Allowing for the Absecon Education Foundation's Annual City-Wide Yard Sale.
- 62** Permitting a Charitable Organization to solicit funds, namely the Absecon VFW Post 9462 Auxiliary.
- 63** Permitting a Charitable Organization to solicit funds, namely the Absecon-Galloway Rotary Club.

- 64** Authorizing the release of Zoning Escrow Fees posted by Ron Ragone.

Jessica – the project is completed and monies can be returned

- 65** Authorizing the Mayor to execute an Agreement between the City of Absecon and the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the installation of emergency pre-emption equipment at the intersection of US Route 9 and New Jersey Ave.
- 66** Authorizing the Mayor to execute an Agreement between the City of Absecon and the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the installation of emergency pre-emption equipment at the intersection of US Route 9 and US Route 30.

Keith – this is the equipment that will allow our fire department to get through the intersections quicker.

Jessica – Res. 66 and 67 are the same. We have already done the intersection of Rt. 30 and Mill Road when they were working on it. We are paying for 100% of the equipment and 25% of the installation and the DOT pays for the rest.

- 67** Authorizing the Mayor to execute an Agreement between the City of Absecon and the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the installation of emergency pre-emption equipment at the intersection of US Route 30 and Mill Road.
- 68** Approving Right-of-Way use to Cross River Fiber, LLC.

Jessica – we were approached by them for us to give consent for putting their fiber lines on existing utility poles and conduit. This are not fiber lines that are going to be available to residents; only commercial lines. There will be an agreement following this and conditioning it on being given a work plan so our city engineer can go over it and make sure we are comfortable with the route that they want to take. If we do nothing, they can run the lines anyway. We just want to be comfortable with what they're doing.

Keith – according to them that will not be adding new poles and/or doing any digging up any areas.

Just installing their fiber on existing poles.

Fred – confirmed what Keith said and said that this resolution is structured so that there will be another agreement after this resolution.

PUBLIC PORTION (Agenda Items Only)

Motion to open to the public – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Burroughs
All were in favor.

Keith – he was asked personally by Mr. Wenz if he could speak now, since he has to be somewhere after this

Bob Wenz – 711 15th St. – he saw a draft of the subdivision about 15 years ago and understands why the city would want to sell lots at this time. He pointed out the same things as he did years ago. Behind his property, there is a dark green spot that is supposed to be a 300 ft. retention basis that runs behind all the homes on 15th St. You can put them underground as in other locations in town. He has no objection to the area being developed, except he'd like to see a cul de sac and not cut through to Highland Blvd. The closest street that you can cut through to Highland is about 8 or 10 ft. wider than our street, which is Chelsea Road and feels it could handle the traffic. He knows it's in the early stages, but he asked council to consider those objectives when creating these lots.

Chris Seher – 707 Chelsea Road – asked what the cost of the intersection equipment will be to the city. He feels this is good to have and we probably should have had it put in years ago.

Jessica – the maximum cost we put in the budget plan is \$95,000 total. It could come in a little lower than that, but we don't have figures yet.

Motion to close public portion – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Larotonda
All were in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA - Resolutions were read again.

Motion to move consent agenda – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Bennett, yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST - \$1,337,517.60

Motion to approve – Councilman Larotonda – second – Councilman Cavileer

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Bennett, yes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Budget Meeting Minutes – 2/25/2021

Regular Meeting Minutes – 3/04/2021

Motion to approve – Councilman Burroughs – second – Councilman Cavileer

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Bennett, yes

REPORTS

Nick – Economic Development – they discussed a potential program that they'd like to see brought to town. It would be local discount card for businesses in town who would offer some type of discount and whatever that percentage is, it would go towards their property taxes for the year. He knows Brick Township does it and Voorhees. He will get more information on it and the Mayor of Brick might come down and give a presentation once we get more information.

Betty – it's run by a company and our tax office wouldn't do it.

Betty – Public Safety – thanked Nick for the program he just spoke about. It sounds like a good program. They will be including the emergency management team now at their meetings and will be keeping them the first Monday of each month. The fire department needed a letter of intent that we are going to purchase it, so she got it from Jessica. They will be joining the coop as well so there is no problem. The punch list for the firehouse is still being worked on. The police chief said the speeding is going up and it's becoming the number one complaint. The new police officer was sworn in last week. The ambulance squad has hired a new girl and two interns and they are very thankful to Steve for pushing to get lights installed in the parking lot. Jim and Tony from the emergency management team has given Covid updates. The emergency operations plan needs to be updated every four years and the deadline was March 15th, so Jim was working on that.

Chief Laughlin – he knows everyone is getting complaints about the speeders and at our staff meeting yesterday, it was discussed. You will see officers out enforcing it. He asked everyone to be cautious of their speed, especially with the nice weather coming and it bringing more people out. He mentioned scammers that are using phone calls and texts and for people not to respond to them. You should not give any personal information out ever. If it is social security or the IRS, they would do a letter. People should call if they have any questions. If you go get something regarding your name collecting unemployment benefits in another state, you should contact the police department. Most likely someone is using your information. We swore in our new officer, Da'Zhon Bethea on Friday and he started on Monday and we are delighted to have him.

Caleb – Finance – the budget and personnel were the main topics of discussion. Public Works has a pool of 18 applicants for the full-time position and they are in the middle of the interview process.

Mike – city auditor (by zoom) – the American Rescue Plan has been put into place by the federal government. There is a lot of uncertainty and the regulations are still being put together and once they are completed, we will get guidance. The League of Municipalities had a presentation and they tried to anticipate some of the questions. It seems we are not allowed to use the funds for tax reduction and there might not be an extension of the budget adoption. The money can't be used towards pension either and if you use it incorrectly, you have to pay it back. He then spoke about our budget for 2021 and feels this is a sound budget.

Sandy – Community Affairs – the Locks of Love was a big success and the heart outside of City Hall will be taken down very soon and everyone should come and remove their locks if they want them. The city cleanup day is this Saturday 3/20. There will be another one on 4/24, along with shredding. Absecon Monopoly game is still going on and will end on April 2nd. The Memorial Day parade is still being looked into. The senior center has a newsletter on their website. Her next meeting will be April 1st at 4:30 p.m.

Butch – Public Works – the ballfields came up again at his meeting. According to Pete and Lloyd, it's actually the public that is abusing the fields. They are locked and not to be used during the off season, but they are going over the fence and abusing the fields. Kim did a letter saying Pete has the authority as the rec director to monitor the fields, especially with inclement weather and

practicing on them and the coaches are being asked to respect that.

Keith – asked if his job description gives him the authority to do that

Jessica – it was in the job description.

Steve – he was at the meeting and the coaches will be attending the Parks and Playgrounds meeting to get everyone on the same page. Some fields are critical and others aren't.

Butch – the Field of Dreams is planning their opening day. The replacement of the signs at the east and west ends of the WHP are being looked into getting painted instead of new ones. A small amount of maintenance is being done at the boat ramp. Caleb asked Butch to check into the parking lots at Faunce Landing and Turner Cove. They both have the same problem of puddling. Lloyd does fill them in.

Steve – Parks & Playgrounds – he spoke with Mr. Neal, a school board member about the school fields and maybe coming up with a plan for next season. He suggested a practice field at the school for lacrosse and a playing field there at some point. Franklin Field was mentioned as a practice site. Some turf is being installed in the batting cages. The concerts in the park will begin June 27th and we discussed the possibility of the Legion selling water and other wrapped foods.

Jessica - our tax sale will be 4/14 and the information is available on the website. It will be done electronically. Our new newsletter is on the website and at the library and lobby table. The budget hearing and final adoption is scheduled for April 1st.

Steve – brought up an application that is going to be heard in Galloway for an RV park by Mr. Risley, who also the bordering property which sits in Absecon. It's behind Ten Acres. He has been asked by residents about it, who are concerned about safety and property values.

Kim – she was made aware of this from a resident on Lantern Lane and he received a letter since he is within the 200 ft. list for noticing. She contacted the Mayor and was told that the Zoning Board would be making a decision on this, since it's a use variance.

Keith – it is a Galloway project and we aren't residents, maybe we could formulate a letter showing the Mayor and Council's opposition to this and how it would affect some of our property values.

Mayor – received a thank you note from the Main Street Pantry for the donations that were collected from residents in January. Thanked Jessica Thompson and Jessica Snyder for the newsletter that was put together. She welcomed our new police officer to the City. He seems like a great guy and is happy and excited to be part of the police department.

MONTHLY REPORTS – February

Tax Collection - \$4,444,034.87

Municipal Court - \$6,583.27

Municipal Clerk - \$2,634.00

Construction - \$6,445.00

Carie – mentioned the deadline for the boat ramp permits that go up April 1st and the dog and cat licenses.

PUBLIC PORTION

Motion to open to the public – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Cain

All were in favor.

Chris Seher – with his experience on the Zoning Board, a letter is not accepted and you would have to attend the meeting. Galloway council can't interject with an application. The Absecon people getting notified are within the 200 ft. of the property and they are able to speak at a meeting.

Fred – he feels elected officials could send a letter and the Zoning Board will decide what to do with it. It might be better if both city councils talk.

Chris – complimented the police department on filling in as crossing guards and it is much appreciated; he's been on grand jury and today 2 police officers testified and were extremely professional; and urged the police chief and council to support the police department to write speeding tickets and not warnings, because they don't work. He asked Council to look carefully regarding the NY Avenue subdivision and having a cul de sac and feels having the cut through street is safer. Chelsea is wider between Highland and Ambassador and it's used as a cut through now and we'd have a lot more cars coming onto it. He doesn't remember the auditor weighing in on the pros and cons of a draft budget and its increase. He asked the amount that Absecon is getting and asked for a clarification of a deadline that was mentioned by Mike.

Jessica – in the press releases, it says around \$866,000, however that's the only source of that information and we have not received anything officially yet.

Mike (auditor) – he said the funds need to be used by December 31, 2024.

Chris – asked if council has started having any talks on the marijuana issue

Keith – we have discussed it and found out that 67% of the voters voted yes on it. It probably will go to the economic development committee for discussion and then to Council.

Greg Seher – there has been some concern about the hotels on Route 30 being used for residential uses, but it's not zoned that way. School aged children live there as well.

Keith – will pass it on to the Public Safety committee and they can report back

Steve – said that if there is a conflict with our letter to the Galloway Zoning Board, then we should send it to Council and the Mayor.

Motion to close public – Councilman Light - second – Councilman Larotonda
All were in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Councilman Larotonda – second – Councilwoman Howell
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: _____