



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

Carie A. Crone, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Phone (609) 641-0663x101
Fax (609) 645-5098

CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 2ND, 2023 6:30 PM
MINUTES

FLAG SALUTE

MOMENT OF SILENCE: In honor of Absecon teacher, coach, and resident, Robert Dey.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Councilmembers Butch Burroughs, Sandy Cain, Richard DeRose, Betty Howell, Steve Light, Tommy Marrone, and Council President Nick LaRotonda

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Kim Horton, City Solicitor Bill Blaney Esq., City Engineer Ed Dennis, Administrator/CFO Jessica Thompson, Clerk Carie Crone, Police Chief Laughlin

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

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2023 ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

- 16** Amending the Code of the City of Absecon, Chapter 122, Animals, Article 14 – License Fees, A & B.

Motioned for a first reading: Councilman DeRose; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

Council President LaRotonda: Explained that this ordinance increases pet licensing fees for the City's residents.

Carie Crone: Elaborated that from January to March spayed/neutered pet licenses will cost \$10, while unaltered pet licenses will cost \$15. A late fee of \$5 goes into effect on April 1st.

Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

This Ordinance will be posted, laid over, and published according to law. A Public Hearing, second, and final reading will be held on December 7th, 2023.

17 Amending the Code of the City of Absecon, Chapter 224, Land Use and Development, Article XXIII – Signs.

Motioned for a first reading: Councilwoman Cain; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

Council President LaRotonda: Explained that this ordinance pertains to feather signs for local business. Current ordinance restrict/prohibit the use of feather signs. Several businesses, specifically those on New Jersey Ave., have requested the City to allow the use of feather flags to attract customers. The Code Enforcement Committee met together to discuss the idea and created the ordinance in question.

Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

This Ordinance will be posted, laid over, and published according to law. A Public Hearing, second, and final reading will be held after Planning Board Review.

2023 ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

Motioned for the second reading of Ordinance #15-2023: Councilman DeRose; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

15 Establishing salary ranges for the City of Absecon.

Motioned to open the meeting to the public for comment or discussion of Ordinance #15-2023: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman DeRose
All in Favor, None Opposed

No Discussion.

Motioned to close the public portion: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman DeRose
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Motioned for the final reading and adoption of Ordinance #15-2023: Councilman DeRose; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

Ordinance #15-2023 has been heard and is finally approved.

2023 RESOLUTIONS – CONSENT AGENDA

128 Accepting Volunteer Firefighters into the Absecon City Fire Department, namely Luke Savell, Joseph Reitzer, Jr. and Stanly Marczyk.

129 Accepting the 2022 Municipal Audit.

J. Thompson: Announced that there were no findings in the 2022 Municipal Audit.

- 130 Allowing for the Absecon Parent Teacher Organization to hold a City-Wide Yard Sale.

Council President LaRotonda: This City-Wide Yard Sale is planned for November 18th. Advised those interested in registering for the yard sale, to reach out to the Absecon PTO.

- 131 Authorizing the Mayor to sign an Employment Agreement between the City of Absecon and Chief James R. Laughlin for position of Chief of Police.
- 132 Authorizing the appointment of an Electrical Sub-Code Official, namely Kevin Muller.
- 133 Approving a special item of revenue into the 2023 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$14,088.36 from the State of New Jersey Drunk Driving Enforcement Fund.
- 134 Approving a special item of revenue into the 2023 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$100.00 from the Atlantic County Utilities Authority.

Council President LaRotonda: This grant money was earned by the Absecon Green Team for their work in hosting several community clean ups.

- 135 Authorizing the execution of an amendment to the Shared Service Agreement between the City of Absecon and County of Atlantic for a LEAP Implementation Program.
- 136 Authorizing the City of Absecon to award the contract for Utility Service Installations for the Heritage Park Concession Stand.
- 137 Authorizing a Place-To-Place Transfer of Plenary Retail Distribution License issued to White Horse Liquors, LLC.

PUBLIC PORTION – (Agenda items only)

Motioned to open to the public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilwoman Howell
All in Favor, None Opposed.

No Discussion.

Motioned to close to the public: Councilwoman Howell; Seconded: Councilman DeRose
All in Favor, None Opposed.

CONSENT AGENDA: All matters listed under item, Consent Agenda, are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be discussed separately.

Motioned to move the Consent Agenda: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Marrone
Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$ \$ 3,506,138.57

Motioned to accept: Councilman DeRose; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain
Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes – 10/05/23

Closed Session as to form and content only – 8/3/23

Closed Session as to form and content only – 9/7/23

Motioned to accept: Councilwoman Cain; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs

Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; DeRose – Yes (8/3), Abstain (9/7, 10/5); Howell – Yes; Light – Yes (8/3, 9/7), Abstain (10/5); Marrone – Abstain (8/3), Yes (9/7, 10/5); LaRotonda – Yes

REPORTS

Councilman Burroughs – Public Works: Have not met since the last Council Meeting. Next Public Works Meeting will be on Tuesday, November 21st at 3:30PM. The public is welcome.

Council President LaRotonda: Asked J. Thompson for an update regarding the installation of stop signs at Pennsylvania and Oakhurst, recently approved by City ordinance. Inquired whether Lloyd Jones (Public Works) was notified of the approval.

J. Thompson: Does not have an answer at this time. Indicated that she will look into the matter.

Councilman DeRose – Public Safety: Next Public Safety Meeting will be on Tuesday, November 21st at 6PM. Congratulated and commended the new Volunteer Firefighters. There have been recent meetings in regard to the EMS situation in the city moving forward. Although the City is happy with its partnership with Galloway's EMS service, the City is currently working on a service proposal. Thanked Absecon PD for keeping residents and children safe this Halloween. Plans on speaking with Ed Dennis in regard to issues recently brought up to him by the Absecon Green Team. Has had numerous conversations with Absecon residents about how the Creek and Bay are such a staple in the community, and ways in which they could, both, possibly be more utilized. Pitched some ideas to the Parks & Playgrounds Committee, which prompted the idea of an Absecon Waterfront Commission. The Waterfront Commission will be tasked to think of how the City can maximize use of the Absecon Creek (e.g. grant funding, restoration, etc.)

Council President: Fully supports the idea. Shared that he will be working with the City Solicitor to ensure this idea comes to fruition.

Chief Laughlin – In regard to Resolution #133, the Absecon Police Department annually receives allocated earnings from the State's Drunk Driving Enforcement Fund for their activity pertaining to DUI arrests in the City. They didn't use much of the funds provided by the State last year, due to the anticipated costs of State-mandated upgrades pertaining to alcohol testing equipment (i.e. breathalyzers). The City made a point to purchase the new machine (\$20,000) this month, before a price-increase expected in the upcoming new year. The remaining cost will be paid with funds from the Forfeiture Account. Reminded the public that Daylight Savings will begin in the upcoming weekend. Acknowledged that the PD has received complaints from residents about dark and potentially dangerous areas throughout the city, particularly for children, but emphasized the need for parents to parent their children in a way that encourages safety and protection (e.g. knowing where your children spend their time, establishing an earlier curfew, etc.) Also reminded the public about the importance of wearing a helmet when riding a bike. Thanked Police Officers for all their hard work in the recent busy month. Events included the Movie in the Park (gave a shout-out to the Mayor for her hard work and dedication to the event), Haunted Hallways (attended by over 600 people), Trunk or Treat, and Halloween Trick or Treating.

Council President LaRotonda: Echoed the Chief's appreciation for the Police Dept.'s hard work.

Councilman Steve Light: Also thanked the Police Dept. for how they handle the issues throughout the city related to seasonal flooding.

Chief Laughlin: Emphasized that the city's flooding issue has expanded from a seasonal issue to an all-year occurrence. This specific issue was a factor in the PD's decision to acquire its pickup truck. Their acquisition of the pickup truck has increased efficiency and reduced injuries.

Councilman Light: Shared that people who attended events at the local schools were commending the Absecon Police Dept., specifically for how the officers carry themselves and interact with the community (especially the children.) Echoed this praise.

Chief Laughlin: Suggested that the community's contentment with the City's current PD is a result of the Administration and the Sergeants who have been responsible for the hiring in recent years. Declared that the Police Dept. has acquired a workforce of very talented, highly educated, and smart Officers, but advised Council, with concern, that several Police Officers have been looking to leave the Absecon PD. Expressed hope that the problems driving these valuable Police Officers away from the City may be rectified.

Councilwoman Howell – Community Affairs: Met with the Galloway Ambulance Squad several times since the last Council Meeting. Although there have been complaints from residents about the EMS response time, it was discovered that the issue was dispatcher-related and not of any fault by Galloway EMS. Advised the public that when they call 911 via cellphone, the call may be sent to cell towers in Absecon, Galloway, and even Atlantic City. Suggested for anyone calling 911 to clarify to the dispatchers which municipality they are calling from. This month, the Absecon Senior Center will be hosting Tai Chi on every Tuesday and Chair Yoga every Thursday. Schedules will be posted about other events at the Center. The next Community Affairs event will be the Holiday Tree Lighting on December 4th at 6PM. She and the Mayor have contacted local businesses, the schools, and City Public Works Dept. help make the event magical. There will be fun and games for the children, awards, and a special guest appearance made by Santa Claus. Local businesses have been contacted are anticipated to offer some special sales for that evening. Next meeting will be December 7th at 5:30PM.

Council President LaRotonda: Informed by American Legion Commander Sedlak that there will be a Veteran's Service on Saturday, November 11th at Veteran's Park.

Councilwoman Cain – Finance: Last meeting was October 19th. Matters discussed included raising Dog and Cat License fees that are comparable to nearby municipalities.

Council President LaRotonda: Also shared that the money from the increase is also provided by the City to vets and shelters when the City finds itself in possession of stray/lost dogs and cats.

Councilwoman Cain: The results of the City's Audit showed no findings, which helps the City's rating when in need of taking loans. The Municipal Audit will be available to view on the City's website in the near future. The last Finance Meeting was attended by several Police Officers to discuss state-wide troubles with OPRA Requests. They discussed the possibility of hiring extra help to ensure the City stays in compliance with the law. The PD will do research into the possible position and report their findings to the Committee sometime in the future. Announced that the City has used 85% of their 2023 Budget, which is on-target. Next meeting will be November 16th at 5:30PM.

Councilman Marrone – Economic Development: Congratulated Luke Savell on joining the Absecon Volunteer Fire Dept. Referenced Resolution #137-23 in acclamation for the upcoming opening of the new White Horse Liquors and thanked the owner, Adam, who was in attendance, for his investment in Absecon. Had their meeting on November 1st at 4:30PM. Acknowledged that the timing may be inconvenient for some people, but shared that the scheduled time may change in the upcoming year in order to be more accommodating. Strongly emphasized that the public is welcome

and encouraged anyone interested to attend. Gave assurance to the public that the Committee is always open to new and creative ideas, business ideas, and anything that will increase the value of the City's Downtown. In their last meeting, they viewed and discussed a brief online presentation from the Atlantic County Economic Development Association, ultimately concluding that they would like to invite the organization to come to City Hall for a thorough in-person presentation and opportunity to discuss any questions. This organization does a lot of municipal grant writing and outreach, which is all very promising. Intends to work with Finance Committee Chair, Councilwoman Cain, to pursue City betterment in this matter. Councilman Light mentioned possibly creating a Chamber of Commerce. Next meeting will be December 6th at 4:30PM.

Council President LaRotonda: Applauded the new White Horse Liquors, expressed excitement for their grand opening in December, and thanked Adam for his investment in Absecon.

Councilman Light – Parks & Playgrounds: Thanked the Blue Devils' staff for their building maintenance. Shared that the Police Chief, Committee members, and coaches have addressed the need to increase lighting on the Pitney Park access road. Reached out to Public Works Chair, Councilman Burroughs, and Ed Dennis, among others, about meeting to discuss possible ways the situation may be addressed. They are considering conducting maintenance work on the tennis work during the off-season. The Green Team discussed possibly using their funds to install a bike rack at a local park. Councilman DeRose spoke about his proposal for the creation of a Waterfront Committee. Announced that from November 1st to April 1st, the State requires boats to have proper lifejackets onboard. The Committee discussed the Faunce Landing Boat Ramp Permits and related fees, as well as winter-time flag removal on Veteran's Highway. Pete Higbee discussed Ambulance and Referee fees for sports games. Thanked Public Works for maintaining the fields and Coaches/parents for lining the fields.

J. Thompson – City Administrator/CFO: City Leaf-Pickup will begin November 6th through the end of the year (loose leaves only, no branches or debris.) The ACUA has agreed to purchase 2 water-fill stations to be located at the Heritage Park Concession Stand and the Soccer field at Pitney Park. The City will be responsible for the installation of the stations. Working with Jeff Ciccone, from the Absecon Fire Dept., on an application for an American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant Program for next year. The 2023 Best Practices Inventory was submitted to the State and received a score of 37.5 (A minimum score of 29 is required for a municipality to receive State Aid.)

Councilman DeRose: Asked J. Thompson if there was an anticipated timeframe for when the City will be receiving the water-fill stations.

J. Thompson: Believes that the ACUA has ordered the stations, unaware of when they will arrive.

Council President LaRotonda: Thanked the Green Team for their hard work in making sure the City acquired the water-fill stations. Appreciates Jeff's efforts in attaining grants, which saves the taxpayers a significant amount of money.

City Clerk: Monthly Report – September 2023

- Municipal Court: \$8,015.69
- Tax Office: \$361,530.33
- Construction Office: \$24,149
- Municipal Clerk's Office: \$7,380

Ed Dennis – City Engineer: Provided updates for several items. The Heritage Park Utility Connection contract has been awarded. The project will provide water and sewer service needed at the Concession Stand for the water-filler stations (station sub-project is specifically included in the project bid.) The majority of milling and paving for the Road Program has been completed and work on drainage improvements will soon begin on Highland Blvd.

The plans for the Streetscape Project on New Jersey Ave. near White Horse Wine & Liquors have been submitted to the County. An Inter-local Agreement will be made for the project. Shared that the County already had plans to resurface areas of New Jersey Ave. (new paving, sidewalks, and lighting). For that project, the City is waiting to complete the Inter-local Agreement and for Atlantic City Electric to confirm the lighting design. Expressed excitement for all the projects soon to come. **Councilman DeRose:** Requested that the City keep Adam, of White Horse Liquors, up to date with anticipated timeframes so that he can make any appropriate preparations.

E. Dennis: Shared that he has already been in contact with Adam to ensure efficient coordination. Letters went out to properties in regard to the Crestview Sidewalk Project, and they are currently scheduling meetings with those who have reached out, with the objective of clarifying plans, reassuring possible concerns, and getting any helpful feedback to make any necessary adjustments. The Mill Road Sidewalk Project (near the 9/11 Memorial) has been approved by the Atlantic County Improvement Authority to go out to bid (scheduled for November 21st.) The Project will be paid for with CDBG funding. Bid results will be ready in time for the next Public Works Committee Meeting. They have sent information to the County in regard to the project on Shore Road. The County is now responsible for attaining the necessary State Permits, while they are making final adjustments based on feedback from the County. Finally, the video surveillance of the City's sewer lines is currently wrapping up.

Councilwoman Howell: Asked for an update regarding the New York Avenue Project.

E. Dennis: Had no update to provide.

B. Blaney: He recently received paperwork pertaining to the final parcel needed for the project.

Mayor Horton: Asked for an update on Royal Farms.

E. Dennis: Had no update to provide.

Council President LaRotonda: On behalf of Alex Perri, asked whether the planned cut-through at Heritage Park will negatively impact any trees currently living there.

E. Dennis: Does not believe there is any tree-clearing scheduled but will check to confirm.

Councilman Light: Shared that residents have been complaining to him about the current status of Rupert Drive (County Road.)

E. Dennis: Informed Council that the County is currently planning to repave that portion of the road ASAP (before the larger project), just waiting to receive the required Permit from the State (DOT).

Mayor Horton: Echoed appreciation for Chief Laughlin and the Officers of the Absecon PD for their dedication to community safety and outreach, evident through their hard work in recent community events. Thanked Public Works for their hard work, and specifically Lloyd Jones for his excellent leadership. The Senior Advisory Board met to discuss Senior events and opportunities. The Board will soon begin the hiring process for its Director position. Announced that on November 16th, Russ Davies and his 7th grade students will be out and about raking leaves for local Senior Citizens.

PUBLIC PORTION

Motioned to open to the public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Marrone
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Theresa Hudson – 4 Stone Circle: he is a close neighbor to a Cooperative Sober Living Residence (CSLR) in which 11 adult men are currently residing. Compared CSLR single-sex facilities to Oxford Houses and other transitional housing. Acknowledged that these facilities exist throughout the entire County. Suggested that there are high homeless rates, prior jail time, and history of attending treatment facilities for addictions. Was upset to recently discover that she also lives near an Oxford

House. Expressed confusion as to how the nearby CSLR “popped up out of nowhere” and is now housing numerous formerly-addicted men. Acknowledged that there is a wide-spread opioid epidemic currently plaguing the entire country. Claimed that the transitional housing provides no guidance, formal training, or recovery program. Denounced facilities of the kind, which seem to be emerging everywhere, and wondered why this is not common knowledge or a public concern. Stated that, according to her research, the Municipal Code Enforcement Officer is responsible for knowing information about the rental buildings in the City. Asked who Absecon’s Code Enforcement Officer reports to.

Council President LaRotonda: The City Administrator.

T. Hudson: Asked J. Thompson who checks the City’s Rental Documentation (specifically their “Use of House.”)

J. Thompson: Delegates that responsibility to the Construction/Building Dept.

T. Hudson: Criticized J. Thompson for not checking over every City document.

Councilman Marrone: Observed that the concern, to him, seems to be that the facilities in question are emerging in neighborhoods without any notice, and residents are finding out about them after the fact.

T. Hudson: Condemned J. Thompson again for letting the matter slip through the cracks. Read J. Thompson’s Administrator job description. Shared information about her own personal experience working in Managed Care and her thorough knowledge in Administration. Expressed confusion in how the City allowed the nearby CSLR to be established. Claimed that if the facility’s documentation had been flagged, the City could have possibly been able to prevent the facility from opening, or at least making it more difficult for its establishment within the city. Expressed concern about the safety of the children in her neighborhood. Implied that this failure is a result of poor teamwork within the City. Stated she realistically does not have the option to move, and claims to be burdened by the view/presence of the facility on a daily basis. The presence of the CSLR has disrupted her daily life, citing her reservations to work out on her deck. Acknowledged that these transitional houses are protected by State law and that the City’s is extremely limited in any responsive action, but requested for the City to put Ordinances in place.

Council President LaRotonda: Thanked T. Hudson for coming to the Council Meeting.

Understands her concern about living close to transitional houses, and also conducted research to be more informed on the topic. The entire state is dealing with the epidemic, which explains why the State Legislature has taken the action that it has. Recommended for everyone to write a letter to their State Legislator to express their concerns and frustrations regarding the situation and the possible dangers to the current residents. Shared that he spoke with the City’s Code Enforcement Official and requested that if any more similar facilities submitted documentation, to please make Council aware. Affirmed that the City and City Attorney is working to create an Ordinance, similar to those approved by nearby municipalities (with a focus on zoning specifications.) Admitted that there was the legitimate possibility that the State would not allow the approval of such an Ordinance.

B. Blaney: Shared that when the first transitional housing was established in Absecon and then, again, after Council President LaRotonda reached out to him about this situation, he conducted research about possible courses of action a municipality may pursue. The State has been very firm in regard to protecting the existence of transitional housing and has suggested that any action taken by a municipality against the transitional houses would be discriminatory.

T. Hudson: Acknowledged that the occupants of transitional housing are a protected class under the ADA.

B. Blaney: Referred to Ordinances approved in nearby municipalities that address transitional houses and shared that they all seem to follow a standard model. If Absecon were to pass any Ordinance it would likely match those models. Asserted that no Ordinance would be capable of

completely preventing the existence of transitional houses, but would, instead, possibly be able to impose some kinds of limitations.

T. Hudson: Urged the City make it more difficult for the transitional houses to move into the municipality.

B. Blaney: Clarified that the City would not try to make it difficult for the organizations, but would simply require appropriate accordance.

T. Hudson: Pressed that the City to monitor transitional houses and those who inhabit them. Blamed the ruin of Absecon not only the influx of residents from Pleasantville, but the current residents of Absecon as well (e.g. landlords, people who default on their property taxes, etc.) Shared that, according to Oxford House, the relapse rate is 12.4 month, and claimed, as a nurse, that successful rehabilitation is rare. Speculated that when the inhabitants relapse, they will have no housing alternatives and will increase Absecon's homeless population.

Councilwoman Howell: Discovered that she lived near a transitional housing facility, and when she reached out to discuss the matter with Code Enforcement, and then the State, it was made very clear that no discriminatory action may be taken against the establishments. To be transparent, announced that T. Hudson is her daughter-in-law. Commented that transitional housing is a business that makes a lot of money. Indicated doubt in that these companies are actually interested in the wellbeing of those individuals living in transitional housing. Emphasized that the CSLR near T. Hudson's house is self-governed, but affirmed that different houses implement different degrees of structure and independence.

Council President LaRotonda: Spoke with Code Enforcement about the importance of making sure these facilities are inspected and following the City's Code. When a facility does not abide by the City's Code, a notation is made in City's records. Members of the public are also encouraged to call the Police if they see anything suspicious. Emphasized the importance of people sharing their opinion directly with their State Legislators, especially around elections.

Councilwoman Howell: Agreed with T. Hudson, that the Police Dept. should be notified when a transitional house is established. Argued that it is important for Officers to know the home's use, as it could affect situational dynamics. Refutes the notion that her reasoning is discriminatory, insisting it's a matter of safety.

T. Hudson: Clarified to those in the public who are angry they were not informed of the presence of nearby transitional houses, that the residents of transitional houses are recognized as disabled and are therefore a protected class. Urged the City to discuss the matter internally.

Council President LaRotonda: Stated that, while he has compassion for those who are recovering from addiction, disagrees with where and how these transitional houses operate.

T. Hudson: Speculated that most of the people living in transitional houses are convicts. Shared a story about a homicide in CT that occurred at a transitional house. Urged governing bodies to be proactive instead of being reactive. Expressed concern that she may suffer the same fate. Theorized that the men living in the nearby CLSR, in addition to being drug addicts, also committed very serious criminal offenses and are now on parole with no formal recovery plan or supervision.

Council President LaRotonda: Reiterated that this situation is not limited to our County, but is wide-spread throughout the entire state.

Councilman Marrone: Emphasized the effectiveness of people reaching out to their State Legislators. Strongly encouraged local bipartisan cooperation and unity in order to make their demands for safety heard.

B. Blaney: Informed T. Hudson that any Ordinance from the City regarding this could possibly not be introduced until next year, due to the timing.

T. Hudson: Hopes to see progress on the Ordinance and improved management of City employees.

Councilman Marrone: Agreed with T. Hudson in that the Code Enforcement Officer should have made the Administrator, Police Chief and Council members aware of the situation.

J. Thompson: Commented that it is difficult to be in the loop for matters when she is not invited to the meetings in which they are discussed.

Council President LaRotonda: Clarified that he recently created a Code Enforcement Committee and the first task they undertook was to make necessary updates to various City Codes. Told J. Thompson that she is more than welcome to join the Committee Meetings. Maintained that communication within the City must be improved in order to ensure common awareness.

T. Hudson: Suggested the City make active effort to make sure everyone (City, Police, Fire Dept.) are all aware of where these facilities are located.

B. Blaney: Explained transitional houses are intentionally located within regular ordinary neighborhoods, so that those people in the houses blend back into society without drawing attention.

Councilman DeRose: Disclosed that, as the product of a parent who struggled with addiction but got help, recovered, and went on to be a great parent, he can attest that there is, in fact, hope for successful recovery.

T. Hudson: Dismissed Councilman DeRose's divulgence. Stated because the residents at the transitional house are dangerous convicts, he cannot apply his experience to the matter at hand.

Councilman DeRose: Questioned how such a large amount of people living at the nearby CLSR, would be living in a single-family home.

B. Blaney: Compared the home situation to be similar to a boarding house.

Council President LaRotonda: Commented that it allows the building to operate as a house, which lack requirements like routine inspections.

Councilman DeRose: Asked how many transitional houses are located in Absecon.

Council President LaRotonda: Estimated 4-5 houses.

Councilman DeRose: Stated that moving forward, he would appreciate T. Hudson's involvement in the Ordinances and Policies relating to the topic.

T. Hudson: Indicated that she would happily contribute.

Councilman Light: Asked what the City would need to do in order for the City, Police, Fire Dept., and EMS to be aware of the transitional houses, for their own safety.

B. Blaney: Suggests the City create an internal policy requiring Code Enforcement to share that information. Emphasized that the City cannot discriminate anyone, but, from a safety standpoint, for emergency services, it would be important for them to know how whether that many adults are residing in a single dwelling.

Alex Perri - 620 Yarmouth Avenue: Excited for the new water bottle stations. Indicated that the stations were one of the first goals that the newly established Green Team was keen on achieving. Earned \$100 from the ACUA for the Green Team's 3rd place prize in Community Cleanups. They will receive their award on November 18th at the ACUA's America Recycles Day Event. Considering using money from the City to buy bike racks (locations TBD.)

Councilman DeRose: Asked whether they plan for the bike racks to be installed in a fixed location or whether they considered mobile racks that can be moved around.

A. Perri: Informed the bike racks they had been looking at would be in a fixed location attached to concrete, but thought having a mobile bike rack would definitely be useful especially for events like Creekfest. The Green Team adopted 2 roads and has hosted several road cleanups. After a couple more road cleanups, they will be eligible to receive more funding. Everyone and anyone are encouraged to come out and volunteer with the Green Team. The Green Team's next meeting will be on Monday, November 13th at the Garden State Beer Co. at 6PM. Thanked Council President LaRotonda for speaking with Code Enforcement about an invasive species Ordinance, and for his constant communication. Hopes that Council will sign an agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Emailed information to all Councilmembers but only a few responded.

Council President LaRotonda: Asked whether the agreement would need to be in a Resolution.

J. Thompson: Is unsure so will review the information again.

A.Perri: Emphasized that the agreement is a great opportunity to gain access to free resources.

B. Blaney: Requested that someone send him the information so he may review it and determine what the City needs to do.

A.Perri: Proposed the City to approve a Shade Tree Ordinance. There is a program in Sustainable Jersey that requires tree replacement or contribution to a tree protection fund. Understands the right for people to do what they want on their property, but mentions the importance of our connection with the earth.

Council President LaRotonda: Assured A.Perri that if he is sent the information, he will bring the matter up at the next Code Enforcement Meeting.

Councilman Light: Thanked A.Perri and the members of the Green Team on all their hard work and their resultant accomplishments.

A.Perri: Praised Green Team's dedication and teamwork as well as the City's willingness to aid them.

PUBLIC PORTION

Motioned to open to the public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs
All in Favor, None Opposed.

No Discussion.

Motioned to close to the public: Councilman Burroughs; Seconded: Councilman Light
All in Favor, None Opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned to adjourn: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted,



Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 12-7-23