



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

Carie A. Crone, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

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CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING

DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 6:30 PM

MINUTES

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Councilmembers Butch Burroughs, Betty Howell, Steve Light, Tommy Marrone, and Council Pro-Tem Richard DeRose

**ABSENT:** **Councilwoman** Sandy Cain 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**

- 18** Amending and supplementing Chapter 277 – Zoning, of the Code of the City of Absecon and repealing all Ordinances heretofore adopted, the provisions of which are inconsistent therewith.

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

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

**Bill Blaney:** Explained that this Ordinance has been created as a result of complaints regarding housing and only restricts locations.

**Councilwoman Howell:** Commented that the State Law overrides Municipal Law.

**B. Blaney:** Stated that the facilities need to get licenses from the State who regulate their quantity and proximity.

*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 #16-2023: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

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

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

Motioned to open the meeting to the public for comment or discussion of Ordinance #16-2023: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

All in Favor, None Opposed

*No Discussion.*

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

Motioned for the final reading and adoption of Ordinance #16-2023: Councilwoman Howell; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

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

*Ordinance #16-2023 has been heard and is finally approved.*

## 2023 RESOLUTIONS – CONSENT AGENDA

- 138** Appointing a Full Time Patrol Officer, namely Michael Barbagallo.
- 139** Appointing a Special Law Enforcement Officer, Class II, namely Matthew Hartman.
- 140** Authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Agreement with Local 107, International Brotherhood of Teamsters for a five-year contract.
- 141** Authorizing the City of Absecon to enter into a contract with UGI Energy Services for the delivery of Natural Gas for use by the City.
- 142** Authorizing to apply for a Grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.
- 143** Approving a special item of revenue into the 2023 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$3,920.00 from the State of New Jersey Highway Traffic Safety.
- 144** Authorizing the City of Absecon to award the contract for the CDBG Road Accessible Path.
- 145** Authorizing Change Order No. 1 for the 2023 Road Program.
- 146** Certifying the Qualified Participants in the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) for the Absecon Volunteer Fire Department for the calendar year 2022.

- 147 Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to refund Escrow accounts of completed projects with a balance above twenty-five dollars.
- 148 Authorizing the transfer of appropriations in the 2023 Local Municipal Budget per N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-58.
- 149 Authorizing a refund of an overpayment of taxes for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2023 on the listed property. Block 180, Lot 2.
- 150 Authorizing a refund of an overpayment of taxes for 2023 on the listed property. Block 120, Lot 2.
- 151 Authorizing a refund of an overpayment of taxes for 2023 on the listed property. Block 147, Lot 16.
- 152 Authorizing a refund of an overpayment of taxes for 2023 on the listed property. Block 84, Lot 2.

**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: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Marrone  
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.

**Resolution #146-23** – Removed from the Consent Agenda.

Motioned to move Resolution #146-23: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs  
Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Absent; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Abstain; Light – Yes; Marrone – Abstain; LaRotonda – Absent

**Motioned to move the Consent Agenda** (Resolutions #138-145, 147-152): Councilwoman Howell;  
Seconded: Councilman Light  
Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Absent; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; LaRotonda – Absent

**APPROVAL OF BILL LIST** – \$ 2,175,199.17

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Regular Meeting Minutes – 11/2/2023

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

## **REPORTS**

**Councilman Light – Parks & Playgrounds:** The Green Team is interested in establishing a Community Garden and installing bike racks in the city. For the Pitney Park west access road, Remington & Vernick has been in touch regarding lighting upgrades. There are current efforts to coordinate a night-site visit to gain better awareness of the situation. Discussed water plans at the Concession Stand moving forward. ASAC donated and installed a scoreboard at the schools in honor of longtime volunteer and referee, “Johnny I.” Thanked Public Works for their work throughout the year. The Committee has decided to cancel the schedule December Meeting. The Next Parks & Playgrounds Meeting will, therefore be in February 2024.

**Councilman Marrone – Economic Development:** Stated that they have not met, as their last meeting was canceled. Reported that they Committee has made significant accomplishments within the past year and is looking forward to all that they will accomplish in the upcoming year. Praised Community Affairs for their help with Economic Affairs-related work. Applauded their recent Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony which occurred in the City’s downtown.

**Councilwoman Howell – Community Affairs:** Met earlier that evening. Celebrated the recent Holiday Tree Lighting. Thanked Public Works, Ambulance Squad, and Police Dept. for their support and assistance. For the event, local businesses donated gift cards to be awarded to lucky kids, and additionally offered discounted specials. Noted that Mr. and Mrs. Claus made an appearance and that the school chorus and a few student trumpeters were also in attendance. Informed the Public that their December meeting is canceled. Provided the following report on behalf of the Planning Board: Next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. The Meeting will pertain to the Crest Motel, with help from the HUD, being transitioned from a motel into housing for homeless Veterans.

**Councilman Burroughs – Public Works:** Last meeting was on November 21<sup>st</sup>. E. Dennis informed the Committee that video of the sewer lines was completed and is in the process of being analyzed. A release date for property included in the Redevelopment Project has been pushed back from October ’23 to January ’24. The drainage on Church St. is completed and the water stations are in the City’s possession. The Green Team mentioned getting bike racks. The Committee’s December Meeting is canceled.

**Council President Pro-Tem DeRose – Public Safety:** Announced that the City’s has confirmed with the ACUA their Townhall Meeting, which will take place on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Encourages those concerned with the ACUA odor to come and take the opportunity to discuss the matter with the ACUA President directly. Praised the Absecon Police Dept. for their “Shop with a Cop” event, and the Fire Dept. for their “Santa in the Park” event. The December Committee meeting is canceled.

**J. Thompson – City Administrator/CFO:** Reminded the public that the City’s Leaf-Pickup will continue until the end of the year. Met with the ACUA in regards to the 2024 budget. Trash collection and Tipping fees will increase by 3%, Wastewater services will increase by 2%, and Recycling services will stay about the same. The City’s budget requests have been sent to all City departments, and RFPs for professionals have been posted on the City’s website.

**Mayor Horton:** Reviewed recent local events including the Fire Dept.’s Santa in the Park and the City’s Annual Tree Lighting. Encouraged the public to attend White Horse Liquors soft-opening at their new location on Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:30AM. Shared that she will be presenting Freda Goldberg, a Preferred Care resident, a proclamation on December 13<sup>th</sup>, which will be Freda’s 107<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Ed Dennis – City Engineer:** Provided several updates pertaining to the Road Program. The Program is being split into two phases, and paving has been complete. Work (e.g. drainage) is ongoing on Highland Blvd, which will help nearby draining issues. Awarded the “Road Access Pass” for the sidewalk extension on Mill Rd. The Project is largely funded through a CDBG Grant with the ACIA. The sidewalk will be extended down Mill Rd. and a cut-through will be created to Heritage Park. Crestview Ave. Sidewalk Project remains in the Planning stage, but has met with almost every resident along the project’s path, which has been very productive. Will incorporate feedback into their plans. For the Streetscape Project, they received a grant from the DOT for sidewalks on New Jersey Ave. between New Rd. and Michigan Rd. Plans have been submitted to the County, Atlantic City Electric, and the NJDOT. Once approvals are acquired, work will begin.

**Councilwoman Howell:** Asked whether the properties for the New York Ave. Project have been acquired.

**B. Blaney:** Although the City has filed with the Court, they have not received the paperwork back yet.

**Councilwoman Howell:** Asked for an update on Shore Rd.

**E. Dennis:** Is still working with the County on the Shore Rd. Project. The County currently possesses all the information they need, so awaiting some fine-tuning of the engineering. Cannot speculate on an exact time-frame.

**Councilman Light:** Asked whether water companies touch base with Remington & Vernick regarding engineering.

**E. Dennis:** Stated that they do not, but he intends on requesting those updates. Clarified that the conversation referenced American Water Co.’s Lead Replacement Program

#### **PUBLIC PORTION**

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

**Alex Perri – 620 Yarmouth Avenue:** Spoke to Public Works and Parks & Playground Committees about a placement of the Community Garden, and all seem to agree. Received several quotes for a fence to mark the boundary of the agreed-upon garden placement, one of which includes the price of installation. Estimates the cost of creating a Community Garden will be about \$7,000. Hopes to fundraise the money required, and additionally receive some support from the City. Anticipates the Garden to have 15 beds available for seasonal rent. Hopes the project is completed by May 2024 and that an ordinance will be introduced by January.

**B. Blaney:** Asked A. Perri to send him an email and they can figure out a date to discuss the matter. Clarified that the City Project prevents the Green Team from fundraising due to a liability issue, so the project must be a City Program with the Green Team members being on it’s Committee.

**A. Perri:** Hoped to get the Ordinance approved ASAP so he can start properly planning the Garden.

**B. Bill:** Shared that the earliest an Ordinance will likely be introduced would be the second Council Meeting in January, but assured A. Perri that he could meet with him well before that.

**A. Perri:** In regard to local bike racks, the Green Team intends on using it’s \$500 allotment to pay for the cost. Has sent the quote to Councilman Marrone and hopes to complete a purchase order by the end of the calendar year. Locations discussed include Heritage Park and at the location of the Community Garden.

**Councilman Marrone:** Spoke to J. Thompson earlier, and it seemed as though the purchase order would be completed soon, if not already done.

**J. Thompson:** Stated that she covered the funds, but that she would not send the purchase order out until order details are finalized.

**Councilman Marrone:** Guaranteed A. Perri that the funds were safe.

**A.Perri:** Offered to meet with any necessary persons to discuss logistics, as needed. The Green Team will not be meeting in December. Asked E. Dennis whether any of the projects he discussed would cause any environmental disturbances/damages that ought to be accounted for beforehand. Expressed concern for any possible damage to the large tree near the concession stand during construction for the line. Praised E. Dennis for discussing the Crestview Ave. Project with local residents, but suggested the same should be done even for projects on public land. Emphasized the importance of transparency in projects when it comes to consequential disturbances to the environment. Asked who will be responsible for long term maintenance of Crestview Ave. once the project is completed.

**Council President Pro-Tem DeRose:** Asked whether project plans are available for public view.

**E. Dennis:** Confirmed. Also confirmed that the Heritage Park project will, in fact, disturb roots. Throughout his 23-year career and many environmental permit processes, he has never been asked to modify any project in order to avoid any root disturbances. Suggested that if A. Perri is suggesting the City adopt a new standard, more discussion will be required. Always tries to minimize tree disturbances in his work, but sometimes it cannot be avoided. Informed A. Perri that the plans for Crestview Ave. are not even finalized yet, and that they are speaking with residents in order to finish up their preliminary plans. There are many reasons to minimize tree disturbances, so tries to avoid when unnecessary. Asserted that thought has gone into the projects by the Governing Body, who have decided it is for the betterment of the community. Clarified that meandering around to avoid any root disturbances is not a realistic course of action.

**Councilman Marrone:** Informed A.Perri that E. Dennis could go over the plans with him after finalization so that A. Perri can gain a better understanding of its scope.

**E. Dennis:** Confirmed. Explained that he is presenting information with directness in order to quell any suspicions of intransparency. There are no set plans for the Crestview Project, but upon review of the first stretch of the project, anticipates minimal disturbance to the natural environment. Understands A. Perri's concern that in regard to utility projects, there are deeper cuts and more chances of significant disturbances, however, with a sidewalk project, the cut is much shallower and disturbances not as impactful. Affirmed that, once plans are complete, he welcomes a meeting with A.Perri in which he could answer any potential questions and/or discuss possible modifications to minimize any damaging disturbance within reason.

**A.Perri:** Pointed out that root disturbances are not immediately noticeable, and typically take about 3-4 years to become apparent. It's not until the tree starts showing signs, that the City will need to spend \$3,000-4,000 to cut the tree down. Encourages the City to mitigate the damage and disturbances inflicted on the environment during project work. Referred to the Ordinance he previously proposed regarding tree replacement. Emphasized the importance of being sustainable as a City.

**Council President Pro-Tem DeRose:** Informed A. Perri that the City wouldn't need an ordinance to plant trees if they needed to replace ones that were disturbed in a project. Mentioned even including tree replacement as part of the project itself.

**A.Perri:** Asserted that an Ordinance would hold people accountable to actually replace trees.

**E. Dennis:** Clarified how that is a policy decision.

**Councilman Light:** Noted that a positive aspect of the construction for the water bottle fill stations, is that it will help curb the use of plastic water bottles. Supports responsible and respectful progress.

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie A. Crone".

Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 12-21-23