



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

MARCH 21st, 2024 6:30 PM

MINUTES

FLAG SALUTE - Honorary Councilmembers in honor of World Down Syndrome Day

N. LaRotonda – Moment of Silence – Passing of Richard Hudson, long time Absecon resident, US Marine Corp. Veteran and a member of the VFW.

T. Marrone – Moment of Silence – Former Councilman Anthony Ingenito. Retired Deputy Chief of the Atlantic City Fire Department. Longtime Resident who raised his family here and was a great man.

N. LaRotonda – Thanked everyone as we honor World Down Syndrome Day, we have honorary Councilmember up on the dais with us today and great to see everyone who came out to support them.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Councilmembers Alex Clark, Richard DeRose, Steve Light, Tommy Marrone, Christine Parker, and Council President Nick LaRotonda

ABSENT: Councilmember Sandy Cain

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

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

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2024 RESOLUTION OUT OF CONSENT

62 – Recognizing World Down Syndrome Day and welcoming Honorary Councilmembers for the day.

R. DeRose – When I first moved to Absecon one of the most profound experiences I had was experiencing the Field of Dreams. Became a coach and everyday there has been the most impactful

moments. New this day was coming up and wanted to do something special to recognize the children and adults that have impacted and changed my life through Field of Dreams. With the help of Councilwoman Parker and support of all Councilmembers we were able to pull this together with short notice. Thanked everyone.

Read Resolution #62-2024.

N. LaRotonda – Thanked the Honorary Councilmembers – Luke, Faith and JJ.

Motioned to move Resolution #62-2024: Councilman Parker; Seconded: Councilman Marrone
Roll Call: Cain - Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose - Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone - Yes; Parker – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

R. DeRose – Offered the sponsoring Councilmembers to speak about their Honorary Councilmember.

C. Parker – Nephew Luke, will be three next week. Family was aware Luke would have Down Syndrome, but didn't know all of what that meant. Though the world views them as lacking something, we found out they actually have something a little bit extra then the rest of us. That extra chromosome has brought us extra joy, extra love and a whole lot of extra smiles to our lives. Every special needs child or adult can achieve anything, with support of parents and siblings. Thanked Council for doing this tonight.

A. Clark – Joined tonight by Faith who is ten years old. Absecon Resident, 5th grade and the youngest of six children. Plays baseball at the Field of Dreams and her favorite thing to do is swim. Sisters Ann Marie and Rose have done a sock campaign to encourage people to spread kindness to all people with disabilities. Last year they raised \$2685 for the South Jersey Field of Dreams.

Tiffany (J.J.'s Mom) – Found out J.J. was going to have Down Syndrome while pregnant. Didn't know what to expect, but he has been nothing but a blessing. Also plays baseball at the Field of Dreams. Thanked Council for honoring them tonight, it's very special.

N. LaRotonda – Thanked everyone and especially the Honorary Councilmembers for attending.

2024 ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

Motioned for the first reading of Ordinance #07-2024: Councilman DeRose; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

Roll Call: Cain – Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; Parker – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

07 Establishing Salary Ranges for the City of Absecon.

J. Thompson: We do this each year to adjust several ranges, for items in the budget along with contract negotiations.

Roll Call: Cain - Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose - Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone - Yes; Parker – 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 April 4th, 2024.

Motioned for the first reading of Ordinance #08-2024: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilman DeRose
Roll Call: Cain – Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; Parker – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

- 08 Re-appropriating \$670,000.00 proceeds of obligations not needed for their original purposes to provide for capital projects in 2024.

J. Thompson: As part of our budget discussions there were various items that we wanted to put in the budget of capital nature, and since we had some funds left over from an old Ordinance that weren't being used, we re-allocated those funds in order to do those projects. It's everything besides the Road Program – Pedestrian safety items, police vehicles, netting at the baseball fields and upgrade to the playground equipment.

Roll Call: Cain - Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose - Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone - Yes; Parker – 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 April 4th, 2024.

Motioned for the first reading of Ordinance #09-2024: Councilman DeRose; Seconded: Councilman Marrone

Roll Call: Cain – Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; Parker – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

- 09 Amending and supplementing Chapter 224, zoning, of the Code of the City of Absecon, and repealing all ordinances heretofore adopted, the provisions of which are inconsistent therewith.

N. LaRotonda: We have an Ordinance that we introduced at the beginning of the year that limits the proximity of Sober Living Homes, which was 600 ft. This Ordinance will expand that to 1200ft.

Roll Call: Cain - Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose - Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone - Yes; Parker – 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 April 4th, 2024.

Motioned for the first reading of Ordinance #10-2024: Councilman Marrone; Seconded: Councilman Clark

Roll Call: Cain – Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes; Parker – Yes; LaRotonda – Yes

- 10 Amending and supplementing Chapter 224, Land Use and Development, Article XXIII – Signs.

N. LaRotonda: Last year we introduced an Ordinance to allow for Feathered Signs on New Jersey Ave. We introduced in December, then it had to go to Planning Board, which they had some recommendations that required some changes. We've made those changes and now have a new ordinance to reflect those changes.

T. Marrone – This is a prime example of a lot of the hard work of everyone up here. This Council is extremely pro-business and extremely motivated to get New Jersey Avenue back to life.

Roll Call: Cain - Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose - Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone - Yes; Parker – 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 April 4th, 2024.

2024 RESOLUTIONS – CONSENT AGENDA

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.

- 63** Accepting a Performance Guaranty posted by Big Land, LLC (Jersey Cow) Mill Rd. (C.R. 651) Block 206, Lot 12.
- 64** Permitting a Charitable Organization to solicit fund, namely the Absecon-Galloway Rotary Club.
- 65** Permitting a Charitable Organization to solicit fund, namely the Absecon Green Team.
- 66** Authorizing the Introduction of the 2024 Municipal Budget.

PUBLIC PORTION – (Agenda items only)

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

Chris Seher – 707 Chelsea Rd. For the authorizing of the Municipal Budget, will there be hand-outs?

Jessica – I have notes I was going to read.

N. LaRotonda – I was going to let the public speak and then refer to Jessica and under our Finance Committee we will be discussing our budget.

C. Seher -Will something be posted before the final vote.

J. Thompson – This is introduction and it gets posted on the website and then we do the adoption in four weeks.

N. LaRotonda – Thanked the entire Council for their efforts preparing the budget this year. Difficult and extra meetings. This budget ensures long-term sustainability for public safety for our residents, including a four-year contract for the police department as well as additional hiring. New long-term agreement with our EMS Department. Thanked finance committee chair Alex Clark and CFO. Commended Councilman Marrone for making the proposal of taking a deduction in Council's salary. All agreed to reduce by \$500.

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

CONSENT AGENDA VOTE

Motioned to move Consent Agenda: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Clark
Roll Call: Cain - Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose - Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone - Yes; Parker – Yes;
LaRotonda – Yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$ 441,832.58

Motioned to accept: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilwoman Parker
Roll Call: Cain - Absent; Clark – Yes; DeRose - Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone - Yes; Parker – Yes;
LaRotonda – Yes

REPORTS

Councilwoman Parker – Community Affairs: Haven't met since last meeting. Met with the VFW and American Legion and moving forward on the Memorial Day Parade. Secured the Oakcrest Marching Band. Earth Day Celebration, April 20th. Senior Brunch, June 1st at the Methodist Church.

Councilman DeRose – Public Safety: Have not met since last meetings update. Nothing to report out of Committee, however extremely proud of the contract offered to our police officers and working towards solidifying a sustainable and good EMS Service for our residents.

Chief Laughlin – Daylight savings time, great time for our residents to use the park. Asking the motoring public and residents to please keep in mind of the extra foot traffic and kids playing.

Councilman Marrone – Public Works/Code Enforcement: Has not met since last meeting. Public Works is out there working hard. Commend Lloyd Jones, there where a couple issues that came up and within 24hrs they were solved. As for the Code Enforcement part of our meeting, working on the flag ordinance, re-discussing our length of stay ordinance for motels.

Councilman Clark – Finance: Finance has been very busy the last two months. Got a lot of things accomplished. Police Contract with the help of Public Safety Committee. Ran into a little storm with inflation running so high the last two years, which made this budget more difficult. Working hard and diligently to keep things the best we can.

Councilman Light – Parks & Playgrounds: Rob Reed from the Absecon Historical Society was in attendance and he and his group would like to fundraise to sponsor the restoration of the Downtown Clock. Looking to give ASAC more money. Flags for Forgotten Soldiers locked in for the third week in July to the third week of August. Items of concern, Crestview Soccer Field – ruts on the field, some lights out, improper lighting outside the bathrooms. Pitney Park and Heritage Park – Lights out. Tennis Courts – surface is a safety issue. Baseball Field – netting. Batting Cages – additional lighting requested. Concession Stand and the Concerts – concerts start June 23rd. Field of Dreams, opening day April 12th. Eagle Scout would like to do a phone charging station, was approved by Committee but not by Council, think he might have misunderstood my wording. We need to hash out where we can put it so its safe. Our Committee recommends it being put here in Heritage Park so it's closer to City Hall and the Police, potentially near the playground area.

N. LaRotonda – Thanked Rob Reed and the Historical Society for willing to take on the task of solicitation and restoration of the clock.

J. Thompson – Admin/CFO: 2024 Budget is \$12,280,000 the assessed value of the City increased 3.7 million over 2023. This budget does include a 4-cent tax increase. Up until this year the municipal rate was still lower than it was in 2013. Extraordinary efforts have been made over the last ten years to not increase taxes, however inflation has continued to rise and costs have increased substantially over that time. Continued conservative, strategic financial planning and efficient management has been key to keeping the tax burden at a minimum. In order to maintain and expand public safety services to the residents a tax increase is necessary to cover the additional cost. Continuation of the annual road program has been budgeted as well as investment in infrastructure, recreation improvements, pedestrian safety, public safety vehicles and equipment. Some anticipated projects for Spring and Summer are Mill Road accessible path improvements, utilities at Heritage Park, Central Business District Streetscape Phase IV, reconstruction of Calderon Ave. and Crestview Ave. pedestrian safety improvements. Fall and Winter projects are the 2024 Road Program, resurfacing of the Pitney Park Tennis Courts, City Hall accessible ramp, Meadowview Ave. sanitary sewer rehabilitation and hopefully Shore Rd. flooding mitigation roadway improvement. We continue to apply for and receive grants to help offset projects and programs to enhance city services. Budget is far below the State mandated caps on both the tax levy and the appropriations sides. 4-cent increase is approximately 3.8% increase in the Municipal portion of taxes. Thanked everyone for their hard work and difficult decisions. Pre-construction meeting for utility work at Heritage Park, work should start around April 1st. Spring leave collection runs April 15th-May 10th.

E. Dennis – City Engineer: Project out to bid right now is the Streetscape on New Jersey Ave., between Michigan and Route 9. Once work starts the temporary fencing will come down, all new sidewalk and brick pavers along with some decorative lighting. Right now, in planning stage and once the budget is in place we'll launch right into engineering to get the other projects out for construction.

Mayor Horton – Asked Eddie to reach out to the County about New Jersey Ave.

E. Dennis – We have a license agreement with the County for that project. In the bid for the streetscape there is an alternate bid to mill and repave the road.

T. Marrone – As much as I'd like to see the beautification happen, I think the repair of the road is more important.

S. Light – Concession stand, has anything changed?

E. Dennis – Everything listed is still in the contract.

City Clerk: Monthly Report – February 2024

- Municipal Court: \$5,344.98
- Tax Office: \$4,165,568.78
- Construction Office: \$17,224
- Municipal Clerk's Office: \$5,949

Mayor Kim Horton: Recognized Rich Hudson and Anthony Ingenito. Crest motel has been purchased and will be turned into housing for Veterans. This housing will be called Veterans Village of Absecon and will have 26 units. NJ and Brigantine Elk will be providing furniture for the units and a Grand Opening is being planned for the coming months. Attended the Holy Spirit High School play, professional and talented production.

N. LaRotonda – Toured the ACUA Landfill. Thanked ACUA president for his transparency with the odor concerns.

PUBLIC PORTION

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

Tony Kucharski – 607 Yarmouth – Attended the ACUA tour with Council President LaRotonda. Cooperative and friendly relationship with the ACUA President Matt. He has been transparent and has taken a lot of accountability. Tour was focus on the systems relative to the gas collections and odor control. I report directly to him whenever we experience a significant odor event. I record the time odors begin and when they abate and relative weather information and Matt in return is able to corollate this information with what is happening on site at the time. Learned the system is new, or expanded, gas collection and control system now consist of 15 active gas extraction wells, 115 in total, 19 more than at this time last year, and it's about 1 well per acre, repairs made to the network of connecting pipes, improved to an 18inch main header, 5 blowers providing vacuum pressure on the system, bank of hydrogens sulfite filters, two flares and they do well field balancing twice weekly. New system is up and running and only time will tell if this is the solution.

N. LaRotonda – Matt did say he's hoping we see an improvement by fall. Thanked Tony for working with Matt to get to some resolution.

Madeline – 1100 Breakers Ave. – Life long residents. Purchased home in September on the corner of Breakers and Morton, Morton is the street people drive fast down. A lot of kids out playing on both blocks. Would it be possible to get a sign like on Highland.

C. Laughlin – We will definitely get a sign out there.

Brendon Santangelo – 150 Crestview - Amazing to walk in to see all the kids here, amazing event – Thank you.

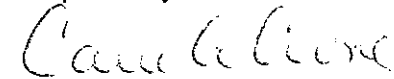
C. Seher – 707 Chelsea Rd. – Concerns about speeding. Put in speed humps/bumps, other towns have them and they work. Moving signs around is a waste of time. Ask Engineer to look into it.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,



Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 5-16-24