



CITY OF ABSECON
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CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

JUNE 16TH 2022 5:30 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Council President Howell called the meeting to order at 5:48PM.

FLAG SALUTE: Mayor Horton led the Flag Salute.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Councilmembers Butch Burroughs, Sandy Cain, Caleb Cavileer, Nick LaRotonda (Late – Arrived at 7:15PM), Steve Light, and Council President Betty Howell

ABSENT: Councilmember Donna Poley

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Kim Horton, City Administrator/CEO Jessica Thompson, City Engineer Ed Dennis, Kyle Weinberg Esq. (Attorney), City Clerk Carie Crone, Police Chief J.R. Laughlin

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

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2022 ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

- 10** Declaring an all-terrain vehicle or dirt bike operated on a public street highway or right of way in violation of N.J.S.A. 39:3C-17 an immediate threat to the public health, safety, or welfare, and designating such vehicles as a contraband subject to forfeiture; therefore, amending the Code of the City of Absecon, adding Chapter 131 – All-Terrain Vehicles.

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

Chief Laughlin: There are two parts to this Ordinance. We've been listening to the public and are aware there's a problem, not only in Absecon, but it's becoming a bigger problem for the City. The dirt bikes, ATVs, and minibikes, are being driven on the roadways in and out of traffic, thereby creating a

hazard. This ordinance gives the Absecon Police Dept. more power to conduct our investigations into those things and to ultimately seize those vehicles, as to deter them from being on the roadway. We've been getting a lot of complaints about this matter but we cannot chase them because it makes the police officer responsible if there was to be an accident or crash. But if we get the all-terrain vehicles to stop, then the officer has a lot more power to prevent them from staying on the roadways. The second part of the ordinance prevents them from riding up to gas stations. If the vehicle is an unregistered dirt bike, mini bike, or ATV, then they are no longer permitted to ride up to gas stations to be filled. If an officer sees any of those vehicles filling up at a gas station, the gas station itself will receive a summons.

Roll Call: Burroughs - Yes; Cain - Yes; Cavileer - Yes; LaRotonda - Absent; Light - Yes; Poley - Absent; Howell – Yes

This Ordinance will be posted, laid over, and published according to law. A Public Hearing, second, and final reading will be held on July 7th, 2022.

2022 RESOLUTIONS

- 92** Authorizing the submission of a Grant Application and the execution of a Grant Contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the reconstruction of Calderon Avenue (Priority 1).

E. Dennis: Resolutions 92-94, these three resolutions are related to grant applications we are submitting to the NJDOT as part of their fiscal 2023 Grant Program. The first application (Res. 92) is the application for road work, which we submit every year. This year the grant application is for Calderon Ave., which is the City street that runs between the Walgreens and the Shoprite. We'll also be adding some drainage on New Jersey Ave. which will run down to Calderon Ave. and Route 30 to alleviate some flooding on New Jersey Ave at Highland Blvd.

Resolution 93 and 94 are for the same project. This is for adding sidewalk and curb at Crestview Ave for its entire length from Pitney Rd. to 10th Ave. We're submitting the applications for the 2 different grants to increase our chances of getting funded.

- 93** Authorizing the submission of a Grant Application and the execution of a Grant Contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the Crestview Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvements (Priority 2).
- 94** Authorizing the submission of a Grant Application and the execution of a Grant Contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the Crestview Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvement (SSTT).

C. Cavileer: E. Dennis, for Resolutions 93 and 94, have we previously applied for that already?

E. Dennis: We applied for the Safe Routes to School Program, which is also through the NJDOT but it's a federally funded program. We were not successfully, it's a very competitive program and I don't think much of the allocated money went to Atlantic County in general. We can request a debrief, which we do, from the DOT to see if we can get some feedback to incorporate into future applications. Sometimes you just have to keep applying, like we did for streetscape. We applied for that 4-5 times before we were granted the funding.

S. Light: For that project, will we potentially incorporate any type of sidewalk or design to the locations where we had restrictions before (for safety of our residents/children going to the park).

E. Dennis: Yes, that will be included in the application.

- 95 Authorizing the release of Zoning Escrow fees posted by Michael Tedesco.
- 96 Authorizing the release of Zoning Escrow fees posted by Nicholas LaRotonda.
- 97 Authorizing the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement with Mainland PBA Local #77 – Absecon Unit for the years 2020 through 2023.

J. Thompson: This is regarding the holiday, Juneteenth. The Governor declared it a state holiday, so City Hall will be closed Friday, June 17th. The City employees will be off, but the PBA employees needed a contract adjustment. This gives the PBA employees working 14 hours of comp time and those not working will get 8 hours of comp time (which is equal to a full day of work).

Council President Howell: Is this usual for holidays?

J. Thompson: Most of the holidays have been eliminated in the PBA contract, but because we are in the middle of a contract we needed to make accommodation for it.

- 98 Land Sale offer resolution to sell property known as Block 360, Lot 1.01 Pleasant Avenue.

J. Thompson: The City had an auction on June 9th where there was a successful bidder, SNS Landing Holding who offered a bid of \$250,000.00. This is the same group of corporations as GreenSky, who will be operating at the retail location of the previous True Value.

- 99 Authorizing Municipal support for ENV Growers, LLC., to receive a Class I Cannabis Cultivator License from the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission to operate within the City of Absecon.

J. Thompson: This is the same group of corporations (as mentioned before with GreenSky) who are working together.

PUBLIC PORTION – (For Agenda items only)

Motioned to open to the public: Councilman Cavileer; Seconded: Councilman Light
All were in favor.

- No Comment

Motion to close public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Cavileer
All were in favor.

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.

Council President Howell read Resolutions #92-99 by title.

Motioned to move the Consent Agenda: Councilman Cavileer; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain
Roll Call: Burroughs - Yes; Cain - Yes; Cavileer - Yes; LaRotonda - Absent; Light - Yes; Poley - Absent; Howell – Yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$1,451,196.88

Motioned to accept: Councilman Cavileer; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain

Roll Call: Burroughs - Yes; Cain - Yes; Cavileer - Yes; LaRotonda - Absent; Light - Yes; Poley - Absent; Howell – Yes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes – 6/2/2022

Closed Session as to form and content only – 5/19/2022

Motioned to accept: Councilwoman Poley; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain

Roll Call: Burroughs - Yes; Cain - Yes; Cavileer - Yes; LaRotonda - Absent; Light – Yes (6/2/22)
Absent (5/19/22); Poley - Absent; Howell – Yes

REPORTS

S. Light – Parks & Playgrounds: Committee has not met since last Council Meeting, but there are some matters to discuss. Regarding Route 9, Route 30, Veteran's Park – The American Flag was in disrepair so it was removed. Want to make people aware that there is currently no water or power there, which was formerly fed from the previous Firehouse. Unaware of how long the project of redevelopment would take, we want to be respectful and remove some items out of that park and consolidate things into a single 9/11 Memorial, then we could still maintain the grass and not have to pay the cost of bringing in separate electrical service, meter, water/well, etc., which the City and the residents would have to incur those costs. We will put a plan together and once agreed upon and permitted by the state and 9/11 Committee, we will establish one single 9/11 Memorial.

Council President Howell: Who actually owns that property?

J. Thompson: The state.

S. Light: Discussed his involvement in having the Absecon Creek dredged, fostering a deal between the Firehouse and the American Legion so the property could be combined (saving the City approximately \$750,000), the improvements on Pitney Rd. (sidewalks, lighting, paving), the improvements to Faunce Landing and Turner Cove, providing funding and financial assistance to the American Legion, Veteran's Park, and VFW Ambulance squad. Described how during the COVID pandemic, the Mayor was involved in communication with the Governor's Office on behalf of the Black Cat Bar & Grill when they had an issue with the ABC. Discussed how the flooding on Shore Rd. has been a consistent problem and is not going away, so they've been working on a plan with the county to address it. Encourages the development of the unused lots throughout the City. Also discussed how, although Atlantic City Electric used to maintain the street lights, now the outages need to be reported online via work order. Would like to have strategic lighting improvements on Ohio Ave. and Shore Rd. Expressed, again, his desire for a respectful plan for the 9/11 Memorial.

S. Cain – Public Safety: Committee met on June 6th. In July, Jim Eberwine, the head of Emergency Management, will begin having Emergency Management meetings and is currently forming a committee. On the City website, weather reports and updates will soon be available. Jessica from the Ambulance Squad stated the Ambulance Squad has received over 800 calls since the beginning of the year, but otherwise mostly quiet. Fire Chief Roy Talley discussed the recent fires on Spruce St. and E. Lee Ave. Police Chief Laughlin and Captain Mazer also attended the Committee meeting. They discussed the City's new pedestrian crosswalk signs. The Police Dept. will be hiring two new police officers soon. July 8th in the park, the Police Dept. and Community Affairs will be hosting their "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" Movie in the Park. The Police request that if you attend, please bring an unwrapped toy to help children in need. Also, on June 25th from 4pm-7pm, is the annual Clambake at the American Legion.

Chief Laughlin – Police Dept.: Hooked on Fishing event with the kids of Absecon with about 80 kids in attendance was very successful. The officers love hanging out with the kids in the community, especially teaching them how to bait hooks, and most of all, actually see them catch fish. In regard to the speeding matter, the Police continue to move around and target various areas known for excessive speeding. Needed to acknowledge that most of the speeders in an area actually live on the street they're speeding on, and are usually the same people who call-in concerned about speeders. The Police Dept. will continue their efforts in enforcement and education, in order to deter speeders in the community.

Council President Howell: Contacted other municipalities and was informed that they are also trying to find solutions to their speeding issues.

S. Cain: Next Public Safety Committee meeting is on July 11th at 4:30pm in City Hall.

S. Light: The next Parks & Playgrounds Committee meeting was originally scheduled for June 21st but due to the 8th grade graduation on the same date, the meeting is rescheduled for July 19th at 7pm in City Hall.

C. Cavileer – Finance: Hooked on Fishing was a great event. That Saturday also was the City-Wide Yard Sale and the last day for the South Jersey Field of Dreams, so overall it was a great day. Sends his congrats to all the graduates of Absecon, from Pre-K, to 8th grade, to high school, and to every student who worked hard these past two years. As a teacher, has seen first hand how hard these students have worked and how they've adjusted to a difficult situation, so congratulations to all of them. The Finance Committee met on June 16th before the Council Meeting. As previously discussed, the PBA had a small addendum to their contract. The agreement is that any officers working a 12-hour shift on Juneteenth will earn time and a half, because it's a holiday, and all officers off that day will gain 8 hours of comp time for the holiday. Also discussed was the finalization of contracts with four bands for Creekfest. The sound system will be set up on two stages at Faunce Landing. The date for Creekfest is Sunday September 18th. The date was picked in consideration of many factors. The inclusion of the Blue Devils was a large factor, as they typically play on Saturday. In regard to Public Safety, gave a shoutout to Capt. Mazer who was responsible for the Street-Smart signs around the city. Street-Smart is a statewide campaign and so the state reached out to the Absecon Police Dept. to provide them with different signs which have been placed around the city. They are out there to remind the community things like "heads up, phones down," "check your speed," etc.

B. Burroughs – Public Works: There has not been a Public Works Committee Meeting since the last Council Meeting. The next meeting will be June 21st.

J. Thompson – Administrator/CFO: Had a meeting with the Mayor and American Water Company. They are excited to get involved with upcoming events in the City and to do some outreach. A reminder that the Concerts in the Park will be starting soon on June 26th and will continue for the next 9 weeks. Residents should have already received their new trash containers. The City is hoping the program promotes and ensures a clean and sustainable community, keeping all materials dry and contained, a neater look at the curb, and providing additional storage with easy maneuvering.

Council President Howell: If anyone is having a problem receiving their new trash receptacle or has an issue with the new trash receptacle, who should they contact?

J. Thompson: They can contact the ACUA. This is also a reminder that the trash containers, as well as the recycling containers, have a warranty. So, if there is ever an issue with them (ex: broken wheel), the ACUA will replace it. Also, if you want to get rid of old trash containers, put a sign on them on your trash day, and the ACUA will remove them.

E. Dennis – City Engineer: Addressed Councilman Light's previous reference that when the City built the Firehouse, it was built on a portion of the original American Legion parking lot (to help with the 1-story design). There was a report in the newspaper this week that claimed when that happened the Legion lost parking space, which is not accurate. The Legion did not lose any parking spaces in that design, they actually gained paved parking spaces. Gave an update on the Memorial Field site. Wanted to remind the public that although the site is one redevelopment project for the City, it's really three separate sites/lots: 1. Firestone – Currently up and running; 2. Royal Farms (former Firehouse) 3. Essentially everything else. Recently requested an update from the original redeveloper who owns the middle lot (3rd lot). The update about to be provided is first-hand information from the owners of the properties who are in control of the development of said properties.

The middle portion of the site, owned by original redeveloper will be the site of a new White Horse Wine & Spirits. The project was approved by the Planning Board earlier this year. The update: the stakeout (survey work required to begin construction has been completed) they've brought in some materials to start the soil erosion and sediment control which they are required to do by Code. They've started bringing equipment (excavator, backhoe) they are scheduled to start construction on that site Tuesday June 21st.

The other site: "Royal Farms"— Construction has not started because the property is being sold to new development company. The process of selling that property included 6 months of negotiation. It was a complex and confidential transaction that included many moving parts. No information was permitted to be disclosed during the transaction process by neither the buyer nor the seller. For the past 6 months, very limited information was able to be shared with the City or anyone not directly involved in the sale or purchase due to confidentiality reasons. This is why there for the past 6 months, there has not been any developments at the site. Very limited information could be shared by the developer, but the sale of the property closed last week. The transaction is a milestone because it has taken 6 months to accomplish. The property is now owned by a new urban renewal entity, which is a requirement based on the way the City zoned the area and the way of the bonding associated with that site. The new property owner is making arrangements for the maintenance of the site (cleaning & grass cutting). This site has been in a state of limbo because of the negotiations between the seller and the buyer, and anticipated closing (which took several weeks). This likely explains the recent state of the property and its maintenance. The new property owner is arranging for maintenance and will meet all City requirements for maintenance (cutting the grass, keeping the property up to Code, etc.). The new property owner also stated "unequivocally" that the property will be developed. This is all, again, information directly gathered from the owners of the properties.

Council President Howell: Emphasized how great that news is. Clarified that despite some contrasting claims, the City, for a number of years, has not owned either lots just discussed by E. Dennis. The properties were sold, and as E. Dennis just explained, the properties were sold again between third parties, the City was not involved in that sale. The City wants to welcome in businesses there, of course, because it will be good for the City. But because the City does not own the properties, and has not owned the properties, the information was only shared between the buyer and seller. We have been trying to keep the residents updated but because of their confidentiality agreement, they have not been able to release information to us until after the transaction was complete. This was not lack of City transparency, it was a matter of third-party confidentiality.

E. Dennis: Hopes people keep in mind that there are millions of dollars being invested into these sites, and there is a lot of damage that could potentially occur if information is disclosed during confidential negotiations.

S. Light: Noticed that Brigantine Beach had portable, somewhat-permanent bathrooms. Saw the Brigantine Police Officers lock the bathrooms up at dusk. The facilities are modern, convenient, and overall satisfactory. This is a very expensive and permanent structure, but in regard to putting in a permanent facility in Heritage Park, maybe this is a good cost-effective option to consider.

E. Dennis: Asked if referring to behind Heritage Park.

S. Light: Confirmed.

C. Crone – City Clerk: The monthly reports for May are as follows:

Municipal Court: \$8,106.15

Tax Office: \$1,513,740.81

Construction Office: \$16,973.00

Municipal Clerk's Office: \$9,138.00

Mayor Horton – Message from Fire Chief Roy Talley: Before giving her report, Mayor Horton first read aloud a letter she received from Fire Chief Roy Talley, who asked her to share its content at the Council Meeting on his behalf:

"Members of Council and the public, the Fire Dept. is conducting an investigation into complaints received about an additional Facebook post by an officer of the Fire Dept. This is not related to a previous suspension issued by the Dept. Also, the presence of Absecon Police at the Firehouse was requested by the Fire Dept. due to other social media posts considered threatening."

Mayor Horton emphasized the importance of sharing Fire Chief Talley's information with the community.

Mayor Horton - Mayor's Report: Since the last Council Meeting, Mayor Horton contacted the NJ Governor's Office and was informed that the NJ Commissioner of Education cannot meet with the City while she is revisiting her final report, which was already requested by the Absecon Board of Education. When permitted, Mayor Horton will schedule a meeting with the Commissioner with other Council members also in attendance. Also Mayor Horton expressed her thanks and appreciation for the Absecon Police Dept. for assisting her in honoring an Absecon resident who just turned 100 years *young* on June 12th. Sergeant O'Connell and Officer Williams were extremely nice in recognizing this resident's birthday and she was obviously elated by everyone's efforts. Extended her thanks to Council President Howell, Councilwoman Cain, Councilwoman Poley, and Councilman Burroughs for taking the time to also stop by for the birthday recognition. The resident of honor felt like a local celebrity due to all the attention and all the attendees there to wish her a happy birthday. Absecon has the most professional officers in the county. Our officers are firm when they must be, but they are also quick to show kindness in moments like this. Absecon is very lucky to have the Police Dept. they have, under the leadership of Police Chief Laughlin. Mayor Horton attended the Absecon Pre-School informational meeting on June 9th. The school is looking to house 12 pre-school classes in the next school year. So far 80 students have been enrolled to start school in the fall (31 three-year-olds and 49 four-year-olds). The school is fully funded for the attendance of 186 children. They are hoping to receive 130-140 students this year. The school is aggressively reaching out to residents, especially those with children that fall into this age group. On the evening of Tuesday June 21st, Mayor Horton will be attending the Attales Middle School Graduation Ceremony, as she attends in support every year. Reminds the public to please be aware that after the school year ends next week, the young residents of Absecon will be out and about. Wishes a safe and happy summer to all.

PUBLIC PORTION

Motioned to open to the public: Councilman Cavileer; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain
All were in favor.

Mike Reilly - 444 4th Street: Asked Mayor Horton who fully funded the Absecon Pre-School.

Mayor Horton: The school receives the funding from the state.

Sandy Hickerson – 210 Upland Avenue: Emphasized how delighted Frances Adirzone was for her 100th birthday to be celebrated and honored by the City and the community, and was additionally thrilled with the Mayor's Proclamation. She had a birthday party the following day and brought the Proclamation to show everyone. The effort was very appreciated, it made her day. Also, S. Hickerson addressed Council President Howell regarding the new pedestrian signs, expressing her opinion that they have had a positive impact on the speeding situation in the city. Has observed people driving much slower and adhering to the 25-30 mph speed limits. Gave a shoutout to the Absecon Police Dept. Has seen firsthand their active and engaged commitment to protecting the residents, and it makes her feel so safe to know they are there.

Tom Burns – 110 E. Faunce Landing: Spoke with the Police Chief before the Council Meeting. A few weeks ago, was a reported memorial service at the Faunce Landing Boat Ramp, there. The number of attendees was apparently substantial (was told over a couple of hundred). Those who attended the memorial traveled down East Faunce Landing to the Faunce Landing Boat Ramp. Many attendees came "roaring" down E. Faunce Landing on motorcycles and low riders, and it was both alarming and annoying. It was also quite late at night for an event like this to occur. Was informed by Chief Laughlin that if this were to happen again, the city has an 11pm curfew at the Faunce Landing Boat Ramp. Asks the Council what would it take to change the curfew to an earlier time? Recognizes that boaters are out and come in from the water late, but believes the late hours are conducive to loitering. Considers the city lucky that there were no problems with the crowd, being the size it was. If the police had gone down to the Boat Ramp when the crowd was there, according to what Burns had heard, the police would have been significantly outnumbered. Informed by the Chief how the situation would have been handled, had the event gotten out of hand, but concerned that (1) the annoyance with the racing up and down E. Faunce Landing and (2) the possibility of something bad developing. This was not an isolated circumstance in terms of the traffic that races up and down our street in the evening. Wants the City to make the curfew at the Faunce Landing Boat Ramp earlier to deter loitering. Communicated with neighbors who also recognize the issue. Boaters are not the people loitering and hanging around the Boat Ramp late into the evening. The boaters get in, get their rigs, and then get out of town. Asks for the City to impose an earlier curfew. Also addresses an issue with Creekfest. Asks for clarification about what the traffic regulation will be for that event.

Council President Howell: Indicated that she heard about the incident of the memorial at the Boat Ramp from friends who also live on that road. They also said the crowd was quite large. When asked if they called the police, they said they did not, but they had gone down to the ramp themselves where they discovered it was actually a very nice memorial service. Asks the Chief whether the Police Dept. received any complaints about the event that night.

Chief Laughlin: No, we did not. It was very peaceful.

T. Burns: Claims his wife called the police and an Officer did, in fact, come to their house.

Council President Howell: For the speeding or the noise?

T. Burns: Both. Asserted that the responding Officer handled the situation wonderfully and informed Burns and his wife that he himself had been down to the Boat Ramp and discovered the Memorial Service occurring. Indicates, that although he's glad the event was peaceful, he is concerned about when action will be taken if it's not peaceful. When something happens, people always look back and say "coulda, woulda, shoulda." Referenced back to the last time he spoke during Public Session regarding trash and the responding message received was "if you don't like it, pick it up." Continues to pick up the trash (beer cans, condom wrappers, etc.) at the Boat Ramp and down the street.

C. Cavileer: Thanked T. Burns for coming to Council with this information. In regard to the Creekfest parking and traffic, it has been discussed that, for safety reasons, traffic will move one-way down Lisbon Ave., and then everything will be blocked from Lisbon Ave., down to the Boat Ramp, and continued around the corner onto 4th Ave. There is still discussion of how far down they will block 4th Ave, which could go as far as Lazy Lane. They must first make sure residences are not disrupted. There will be off-site parking with a Jitney bringing people down E. Faunce Landing (which will be acting as a one-way street), then exit out Lisbon Ave. It was decided, with the Absecon Police Dept, that using E. Faunce Landing and Lisbon Ave. for two-way traffic during this event would not be a good situation. The Absecon Police Dept. has been involved in Creekfest discussions, not only to be made aware of the information, but also so the Police could offer their expertise and insight into the best methods of operation.

Alex Perri – 620 Yarmouth Avenue: Grew up in Absecon and still returns to stay and visit with parents. Recently noticed in Heritage Park and on the bike path, that the land has become degraded with non-native, invasive weeds. Has a background as an ecologist, more specifically as a restoration ecologist, degraded landscapes into improvement wildlife habitat. Questioned why the City is not doing more to protect and improve the parks and open spaces in Absecon. Wondered if the City was just unaware of the problem. Expressed his disappointment and concern that Heritage Park has more weeds than plants. The weeds fail to provide ecological value and, instead, provide a hostile, degraded aesthetic to the park. Recently heard that the City is planning to destroy the woods to continue New York Ave. and believes this would be a huge mistake. Whether or not the original plan was to develop that land, the land has become a part of the park. To destroy the land for housing would not only disgrace Jonathon Pitney, but would also be an insult to all community members. Understands that it would bring the City money, but the financial situation should not be so bad that it would require the City to destroy probably the largest undisturbed habitat area in the city. Expressed doubt about this plan to develop the land being common knowledge within the community, especially among those living on New York Ave. and Chelsea Rd. Believes this is a matter that should be voted on by all the residents, instead of being decided by a few members of the City.

Council President Howell: This project was supposed to continue 15 years ago but never did. It has been in the works for a while now, and E. Dennis has already met with the neighbors on New York Ave., and anyone else interested, in the project, twice. It's the Absecon residents who are very interested in purchasing the property there.

E. Dennis: Clarified that he has not met with *all* the residents neighboring the area. Also, although there is no way to be certain, E. Dennis is under the assumption that almost all residents in the surrounding area know this project is happening.

A. Perri: Why would the residents on New York Ave. and Chelsea Rd., who have woods behind their house, want a neighborhood behind them instead? It's going to decrease all their property values, which they would be opposed to.

E. Dennis: There will be a process for all this. This project will come before the Planning Board, it's a subdivision. There will be a public hearing and everyone who lives within 200 feet of that site will be noticed. It's a public meeting so anyone can go to that meeting and share their thoughts with the Planning Board who would need to approve that project.

A.Perri: Thinks that this needs to be publicly addressed, either in the paper or something. Suspects that if more people knew about this, there would be a stronger presence of residents at Council Meetings. There is a little sliver of woods next to MiPlace and when sections of woods are broken up, it becomes an infiltration area for non-native plants. There are plants here which were introduced and have not co-evolved in the United States, therefore they have no ecological value. The bugs do not use them, and it's also specialized. Certain insects only eat or lay their eggs on certain plants, and then, also, birds only eat certain insects. So, if the landscape is degraded and weeds fill in, it causes a cataclysm through the food web.

Council President Howell: Informed A. Perri of the 5-minute time limit to speak. Recommended he look on the Absecon website to see when the Planning Board meets (2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month).

A.Perri: Urged the City to start posting on the American Legion sign when meetings are going to take place. There was no mention on the sign that there was going to be a City Council Meeting. Hundreds of people drive past there.

Council President Howell: City Council Meetings take place on the first and third Thursdays in the month.

Leo McLaughlin – 205 Pennsylvania Ave: Commended Engineer E. Dennis for his update about the redevelopment properties at Memorial Field. Appreciated the reasons that explained why E. Dennis was unable to provide the public an update sooner, however, he is glad to hear the end result and hopes the development moves quickly. Thanked Mayor Horton for resolving issues in the Firehouse. Appreciated the social aspects of things occurring online, and asserted that some of it is not truthful. Recognized that he came to the meeting to find the truth and was provided it. Assumed now there is probably a process of how to move forward with the individual. Commended the construction and noted how good insight was used in its development. Offered his help for any similar projects in the future, as he is backed by 60 years of experience in the business.

E. Dennis: Wanted to clarify that he is not reporting that Royal Farms has sold that property, rather, he is clarifying that one development company has sold that site to another development company.

Amy Carrelli – 42 Amy Lane: Introduced herself as the "infamous little whistleblower/squeaky wheel." Noted that her grandfather was a former Commander of the American Legion Post 28 and that another grandparent was also American Legion member. Is a lifelong resident of Absecon and claimed that Amy Lane was renamed after her in 1973. Concerned about some issues in the City, specifically with the government and local Police Dept. Has tried to speak to Mayor Horton without success. Intends to tell her life story in a book, and from that, expects many people in Absecon to be held accountable for their actions. Commended A. Perri for speaking about the invasive species issue and criticized how the city currently looks, especially considering the amount of taxes residents pay. Observed that Amy Lane and Davis Ave. are both overgrown with poison ivy, preventing her from walking down the street. Criticized the City for giving the property owners a violation, fining them \$1,000 for each day the poison ivy is not removed. Suggested the community raise money to hire a company to remove it for them. Revealed she received a similar violation for failing to maintain her lawn after the death of her father and expressed her distress with the situation and the City's lack of sympathy.

S. Light: First addressed T. Burns, suggesting E. Dennis could possibly find resolutions to issues at E. Faunce Landing. A few years ago, there was discussion about making E. Faunce Landing a one-way road to decrease the traffic. There was also a plan to do something with the bike path to help it flow with traffic. Although there was never much traction on these plans, the City is trying to address matters of concern and come up with a plan. Also noted, respectfully, that his house is located on what was once previously a farm and stated how growth is inevitable and not always a bad thing. Asserted that the City's intentions with New York Ave. are good and respectful, as they are trying to make room for people who want to come build houses and join their community. Believes the City has a lot to offer the members of its community.

Kirk Highland – 102 Howlett Lane: Addressed the stormwater problem on 4th Ave. This problem has persisted for the 20 years he has lived there and remains a current problem. Hopes the City addresses the issue. There are about 6 acres behind K. Highlands house which adjoin with open space of Galloway. Previously spoke with the Mayor about this, but suggests the City incorporate that with their Open Space. The land is a beautiful transition/buffer zone. The person who owns the property only spent about \$130,000 to purchase the 6 acres. It is K. Highland's Understanding that the current owner planned to build 10 homes on the site. The land would be such a beautiful spot which adjoins the Atlantic County Open Space (Glen by the Bay Park). Urged the Council to consider the acquisition of the land when it becomes available. Offered his support to the City if they pursue the land. Referenced the previous Council meeting when there was criticism about the state of the properties at Memorial Field. Disappointed in how unkept the Dollar General and Home Depot is. Emphasized his hope for a solution to the stormwater issue on 4th Ave., as well as his love for Absecon.

Council President Howell: Asked for clarification about the property discussed.

K. Highland: The property is about 6 acres directly behind his house and is all water back there. The demarcation line is only about 50 feet off his property. Expressed uncertainty about how the anticipated homes would be built.

Council President Howell: Asked what its Zone Use is.

K. Highland: When he moved to the area, it was zoned as a farm. Clarified that the area is mostly in Galloway. Spoke with Danny Levinson, who was heavily involved in getting Open Space, and he was very receptive to the idea and further recommended K. Highland speak to the Mayor and Council. Believes it would be a great acquisition to the city.

Council President Howell: Will check on the zoning information for that property.

Motioned to close public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Cavileer
All were in favor.

CLOSED SESSION - #100-2022 - Personnel

Kyle Weinberg: In accordance with the Open Records Act N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, the City Council will be going into Closed Session.

K. Weinberg explained the reason to go into Closed Session is to discuss personnel matters with respect to employees. There may be formal action taken when the session is over, so we will open up for Public Session after the Closed Session.

Motioned to enter Closed Session: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain
All were in favor.

(Closed Session)

Motioned to adjourn Closed Session and re-enter the meeting: Councilman Burroughs; Seconded:
Councilwoman Cain
All were in favor.

Council President Howell: For the record, stated that Councilman LaRotonda joined the Council
Meeting during Closed Session at 7:15PM.

REGULAR MEETING

2022 RESOLUTIONS

- 101** Authorizing the City Administration to process an involuntary disability retirement
application for Police Officer Kevin Craig.

Motioned to move Resolution #101-2022: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs
Roll Call: Burroughs - Yes; Cain - Yes; Cavileer - Yes; LaRotonda - Yes; Light - Yes; Howell –
Abstain

K. Weinberg: There was a correspondence read by Mayor Horton from Fire Chief Talley, with
respect to some circumstances at the Fire Dept. Those circumstances are directly with the Fire
Dept. as a separate entity, and not with the City.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned to adjourn: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: _____

7/7/22