



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
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CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

JULY 6TH, 2023 6:30 PM

MINUTES

FLAG SALUTE

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 Administrator/CFO Jessica Thompson, City Solicitor Bill Blaney Esq., City Engineer Ed Dennis, City Clerk Carie Crone, Police Chief JR Laughlin

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

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2023 RESOLUTIONS

91 Renewing Alcoholic Beverage Licenses within the City of Absecon.

PUBLIC PORTION – (Agenda items only)

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

No Discussion.

Motioned to close to the public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs
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.

Council President LaRotonda read Resolution #91 by title.

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 – 1,915,103.32

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes – 6/1/23

Regular Meeting Minutes – 6/15/23

Closed Session as to form and content only – 5/16/23

Motioned to accept: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs

Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; DeRose – Yes; Howell – Yes; Light – Yes; Marrone – Yes;
LaRotonda – Abstain (6/1/23), Yes (6/15/23 & 5/16/23)

REPORTS

Councilman Light – Parks & Playgrounds: Met on June 20th. Items of discussion included Flags for Forgotten Soldiers and National Night Out. Public Works and the Knights of Columbus will help prepare the fields. Also discussed the flag replacement at the 9/11 Memorial. Commended Public Works for their hard work. Next meeting will be on July 18th at 7PM. The public is welcome.

Alex Perri – Green Team: Met with a group of volunteers at Heritage Park two weeks prior to cut invasive vines. Noted that Go Green Galloway has helped the Green Team with provisions. Next meeting will be 6PM on Tuesday, July 11th at Garden State Brewery.

Councilman Marrone – Economic Development: Met on July 5th. Next meeting will be August 2nd at 5:30PM in the Conference Room. The public is welcome. Last meeting Councilman Marrone discussed with the Mayor and Councilwoman Cain possible ways by which the City may acquire State funding to invest in Absecon's downtown. Commented that the State has focused notable effort on downtown investments for municipalities in North Jersey. Taking active effort to meet with State in pursuit of acquiring funds for Absecon's downtown revitalization. Hoping to bring positive attention to Absecon, as well as the greater South Jersey area, and ultimately facilitating more economic growth. Announced that Reddog's Hi Point Pub will be hosting a Grand Opening on July 14th. Encouraged the public to attend. Mentioned that Councilmembers will be present and the Mayor will be cutting a ceremonial ribbon. Also announced that the City will be looking into amending their current Ordinance prohibiting advertising flags (e.g. 'Open,' 'Price Specials, etc.) outside businesses.

Councilwoman Cain – Finance: Have not met since the last Council Meeting. City leadership continues to evaluate different ways the municipality could possibly save money, all the while maintaining quality services. Next meeting will be on July 20th at 5:30PM. The public is welcome.

Councilwoman Howell – Community Affairs: Met earlier that day. Tomorrow evening will have the Christmas in July Movie in the (Heritage) Park showing of The Santa Clause at 7:30PM. Santa will be making a special appearance, arriving via Fire Truck around 7PM. Refreshments, pizza, ice

cream, and candy will be available for purchase. Implored the public to bring an unwrapped gift for the Police's Toys for Tots Holiday Program toy collection. Encouraged the public encouraged to attend. National Night Out will be on August 1st from 6PM-9PM at Pitney Park. Many organizations, including Community Affairs, will have booths set up. Noted that, while some other municipalities have a larger National Night Out event, Absecon's event is exceptional in that everything offered is free. Families are encouraged to come out for a nice evening. Creekfest will be on Sunday, September 17th from 2PM-8PM. Preparations for the event are progressing (e.g. band contracts are all signed). Noted that there will be no entrance fee. Mentioned potential events being considered by Community Affairs for the future include Tour de Lights, another Movie in the Park, and possibly another Senior event.

Council President LaRotonda: Announced that the Absecon Cultural Arts Alliance will be hosting a 'Best Pot in Town' Competition at the Jonathon Pitney House. Encouraged the public to stop by and see all the creative pots on display.

Councilman Richard DeRose – Public Safety: Reiterated encouragement for the public to attend National Night Out. Thanked the Police Dept. for their hard work in another successful Hooked on Fishing event. Thanked the Absecon Fire Dept. for their prompt and efficient response to a recent truck fire which occurred on the White Horse Pike. Numerous residents have reached out to Councilman DeRose in response to the incident, commending the Fire Dept.'s hard work and dedication to public safety. Echoed Councilman Marrone's enthusiasm for the upcoming Grand Opening of Reddog's Hi Point Pub. Next meeting will be July 18th at 6PM. The public is welcome.

Chief JR Laughlin – Police Dept.: Vehemently urged members of the public to "see something, say something." Urged the public to contact the Police Dept. if they notice anything nefarious/suspicious. Noted that in the summer months, kids are prone to getting into mischief and the importance of it being addressed. Warned that there have been an alarmingly high number of motor vehicle thefts this year, especially in comparison to last year (2023:10 thefts – 2022: 1 theft). Certain Kia and Hyundai models have been particularly targeted. From 8AM-4PM, the Absecon Police Dept. is currently offering free steering wheel locks to Absecon residents who own Kias and Hyundais (must provide proof of vehicle registration and Absecon residency).

Councilman DeRose: Highlighted that the Absecon Police Dept. is only able to provide the locks to residents because they took it upon themselves to proactively reach out to Kia and Hyundai and secure tool-acquisition. Denounced the rumored imputation, that the City is using taxpayer's money to provide this service to only Absecon Kia/Hyundai-owners, as erroneous and unfounded. Commended the Police Dept. for their achievement which was resultant of action that went above and beyond.

Chief Laughlin: Shared that the Police Dept. has been contacted by residents questioning the exclusivity of their lock offer. Explained that Kia and Hyundai provided the locks to the Absecon Police Dept. specifically for their own customers, and therefore, it would not be appropriate for the City to offer them to any requestor.

Councilman DeRose: Agreed with that judgement.

Chief Laughlin: Reported that the Police Dept. has been dealing with a string of car thefts. Car thieves have been using out-of-state vehicles to come, and then continue to travel back and forth. Therefore, it requires a significant number of man-hours to solve these cases. Car theft is a wide-spread issue. Cautioned the public the dangers of leaving keys within an unlocked vehicle. Warned that no car is clear of the risk. Urged everyone to lock their cars, houses, and sheds, to install additional lighting around houses, and to immediately say something to the Police as soon as they notice anything suspicious.

Councilman Marrone: Advised people to look up their vehicle models on the police website, as there are other vehicles which suffer the same security flaw as the exposed Kias and Hyundais, and which also qualify for locks.

Chief Laughlin: Confirmed. Listed BMW, Audi, Mercedes as vehicle companies who also have models that are at risk. Stated that car thefts have been a notable issue of concern during the past few years for the state, but that the issue was mostly concentrated in the north. It is a recent development, however, that the issue has expanded its pervasiveness into South Jersey. Encouraged the public to join the Police Dept. at the upcoming Movie in the Park. Commended the many Police Officers who have put in time and effort for the event.

Councilman Light: Thanked Chief Laughlin and his Dept. for a successful and well-attended Hooked on Fishing event. Echoed the Chief's warning about the risk of car theft, highlighting the surprising speed in which it can take place.

Chief Laughlin: Commented that many of the car thefts are committed by juveniles who simply drive the car until they end up in a crash and flee in search of their next car. Emphasized that the small time-frame needed by some thieves to steal a car is remarkable (e.g. while the car owner is inside Wawa for a quick stop).

Councilman Burroughs – Public Works: Last met on June 30th at 3:30PM. Discussion included a number of items, such as the progress made on the rearrangement of traffic flow at the intersection of Route 9 and California Ave and upgrades to Heritage Park. Arrangements had been made with the County for the advanced paving of Illinois Ave. There has been a number of complaints regarding the street's potholes, so although the County did not yet pave the street, they addressed the holes by repairing with cold patch. Mentioned that he, himself, suggested for the County take that course of action months ago. Also, the installation of crosswalk signs at 10th Ave. is in progress. Next meeting will be July 18th at 3:30PM. The public is welcome.

Councilman Light: Was informed by The Last Salute that Public Works had secured all the Missing in Action and Veterans signs at Veteran's Park. Thanked Public Works for their hard work and dedication to this matter.

J. Thompson – City Administrator/CFO: No report.

Mayor Horton: Reflected on the recent 4th of July holiday, noting the importance of upholding our country's core values of freedom, justice and equality, as well as the importance of good citizenship. Thanked First Responders, Public Works, and all City employees for their dedication in serving Absecon's residents. Shared that residents are constantly expressing to her their gratitude for the kind and helpful service these workers provide. Thanked Public Works for their diligence in keeping parks and roadways properly and beautifully maintained, even despite the extremely hot weather conditions. Emphasized the need for public heat safety awareness. Cautioned everyone to be mindful of potential dangers the heat may inflict, especially on children, older adults, and animals. Urged everyone to stay hydrated. Commended the success of the City's recent Hooked on Fishing Event, which she has had the pleasure of attending. Praised the opportunity for families and children to have positive experiences with the City's Police Officers. Encouraged the public to attend the upcoming Movie in the Park. Also encouraged the public to attend the City's weekly Concert in the Park series, which are scheduled for every Sunday. Expressed her active prioritization in personally attending community events and elaborated on her appreciation for the opportunity to interact with so many Absecon residents. Stated that these community events offer everyone the opportunity to see old friends and make new.

E. Dennis – City Engineer: Provided an update on the Road Program. The City is currently finalizing plans so that they may soon get the project out to bid. Work is also being done on the City's Streetscape Project and they will be communicating with the redeveloper in the designated area to ensure proper coordination. The redeveloper's work in the area (i.e. White Horse Wines) is wrapping up so it is important to avoid any chance of tripping over each other during construction. Redevelopment Area work will follow work on the Road Program. Survey work has been scheduled for the Crestview Ave. Sidewalk Project. Once plans are completed, meetings with specific residents on that road will be scheduled, and then once those meetings are complete, a larger meeting will follow for anyone interested to come and give input, ask questions, etc. The City will actively work to ensure an open and active line of communication with residents who will be affected (and will also benefit) from this project. Reiterated the updates provided by Councilman Burroughs in regard to matters of Public Works Committee. E. Dennis plans to follow up with the County about the Shore Rd. Project and Illinois Ave. Paving Plan. Will be looking for clarification whether the cold patch repair is a temporary or final solution for the potholes.

PUBLIC PORTION

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

No Discussion

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

CLOSED SESSION - #92 – Contract Negotiations

B. Blaney: In accordance with the Open Records Act N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, the City Council went into Closed Session. Explained the reason to go into Closed Session is to discuss contract negotiations, so there will not be any action taken after.

Motioned to enter Closed Session: Councilwoman Howell; Seconded: Councilman DeRose
All in Favor, None Opposed.

(Closed Session)

Motioned to adjourn Closed Session and re-enter the meeting: Councilman Marrone; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs
All in Favor, None Opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,



Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 8-3-23