



BOROUGH OF HADDON HEIGHTS
COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 3, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
ZOOM

Mayor Zachary Houck called the meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m. He then read the following statement:

“In accordance with Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, notice of this meeting was posted on the bulletin board designed for that purpose and notice was transmitted to the official newspapers provided by Resolution adopted January 4, 2020.”

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Houck asked the Clerk for roll call.

Under roll call, Council President Madden, Councilmen Schreiber, Morgan and Ottoson were present. Councilman Mrozinski was absent but excused. Councilwoman Kurtz was absent. Solicitor Howard Long, Borough Clerk Kelly Santosusso and Administrative Assistant Marian Hauser.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Councilwoman Kurtz joined the meeting at 7:04 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Houck asked for Public Comment on Agenda items only and reviewed procedures for the public to be formally recognized within the ZOOM platform.

Elizabeth Messina, 1225 Keswick Avenue – Ms. Messina expressed her support of Ordinance 2020:1490 and wished to thank Councilman Schreiber for his quick response to amend the previous Ordinance. Mayor Houck and Councilman Schreiber thanked Ms. Messina.

Rick DiRenzo, 415 Second Avenue – Mr. DiRenzo commented on Resolutions 2020:110 and 2020:112 regarding the budget and the issuance of relief bonds. He expressed his concerns regarding ranking of Haddon Heights as the 5th highest tax rate in the County. He went on to comment on the Shared Services Agreement with Audubon for Public Works, questioning salary of the DPW custodian who also serves as Zoning Officer and Administrative Consultant for COVID19. He said Haddon Heights is the only municipality in the County and State of NJ paying an administrative consultant fee for COVID19. He went on to express his thoughts on recent shortfalls in revenues and increasing taxes.

Mayor Houck thanked Mr. DiRenzo for his comments.

Jackie Guiffrida, 1541 Sycamore Street – Ms. Guiffrida said this is the first time participating in a Council meeting. She thanked Councilmembers for their service. Mayor Houck thanked Ms. Guiffrida for her comments.

Hearing no further sound or movement from the public, Mayor Houck closed the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

CAUCUS WORK SESSION:

National Current Events – Mayor Houck

Mayor Houck read a prepared statement, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. He asked if Council wished to express

Councilwoman Kurtz said she appreciates the Mayor's statement. She expressed that this has been a trying time as an African American woman. She said things are very fragile right now and she wishes that she could say that she has not had instances in her life where she has been maligned or her character has been maligned and this is why she understands why Black Lives Matter, but this is not to the exclusion of any other life. Kurtz referenced the metaphor if one room in your house is burning, we don't turn away from it to say that all the other rooms in the house are great. She went on to say that she feels very fragile but hopeful as well because as she has black sons who she must raise to navigate the world they live in. One where there is justice and equity regardless of one's race.

4th of July – Council President Madden

Council President Madden commented that unfortunately it is clear we will have to cancel the Parade as currently, it would go against the Governor's order of not permitting gatherings over 25. Even if the situation were to change over the next couple of weeks, there is not enough time to plan the event. She said we would like to look at thoughts of what our other options might be. As soon as we know, we will update the community on our website.

Statement on COVID 19 – Mayor Houck

Mayor Houck said that his daily videos on social media have moved to twice weekly. The Governor's recent address moving us to Phase II of reopening the state, June 15th. 59 new cases in Camden County. 6,912 positive cases. 343 deaths in Camden County. Haddon Heights has 25 cases to date. A third resident, a gentleman in his 80's has passed away from the virus. Council continues to work with our businesses in reopening safely.

Councilman Mrozinski joined the meeting at 7:15 pm.

2020 Census – Mayor Houck

To date, NJ has a completion rate of 62%. Haddon Heights is at 78.9% We are the second highest completion rate in the County, second to Audubon Park. The Census self reporting deadline will extend through October 31, 2020. Haddon Heights, 2010 79% for self reporting in 2010 You will signs around town and in our parks reminding residents to complete. We are looking to encourage the elderly population as well as the rental communities within town. Later this week, we will post phone numbers to call in should anyone be unable to complete online. 9 questions, takes about 3 minutes. Mayor encouraged residents to visit 2020.census.gov to complete

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of May 19, 2020 Business Meeting

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 19, 2020 Business Meeting. A motion was made by Council President Madden, seconded by Councilman Schreiber. All members were in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Resolution 2020:110 – A Resolution Authorizing the 2020 Municipal Budget by Title Only

Under a roll call vote, all members present voted in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING AND FINAL ADOPTION OF THE 2020 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Houck opened the Public Hearing on the 2020 Municipal Budget. Seeing and hearing no movement from the public, Mayor Houck asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing. A motion to close was made by Councilman Ottoson, seconded by Councilman Morgan. All members present were in favor.

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt the 2020 Municipal Budget. A motion to adopt was made by Councilman Schreiber, seconded by Council President Madden. Under a roll call vote, all members present voted yes.

Public Hearing and Final Adoption of Ordinance 2020:1488 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 100 of the Code of the Borough of Haddon Heights Entitled Handicapped Parking

Mayor Houck opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 2020:1488. Seeing and hearing no movement from the public, Mayor Houck asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing. A motion to close was made by Council President Madden, seconded by Councilman Morgan. All members present were in favor.

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt Ordinance 2020:1488 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 100 of the Code of the Borough of Haddon Heights Entitled Handicapped Parking. A motion to adopt was made by Councilman Schreiber, seconded by Council President Madden. Under a roll call vote, all members present voted in favor.

Public Hearing and Final Adoption of Ordinance 2020:1489 – An Ordinance Amending Ordinance 2018:1453 An Ordinance Entitled "Residential Certificate of Continued Occupancy" of the Code of the Borough of Haddon Heights, In the County of Camden, State of New Jersey

Mayor Houck opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 2020:1489. Seeing and hearing no movement from the public, Mayor Houck asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing. A motion to close was made by Councilman Ottoson, seconded by Council President Madden. All members present voted in favor.

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt Ordinance 2020:1489. A motion was made by Councilman Ottoson, seconded by Council President Madden. All members present voted in favor.

Solicitor Howard Long mentioned that Councilwoman Kurtz lost internet connection earlier in the meeting due to high winds and impending tornado warnings, high winds and rain.

Councilman Schreiber asked Mayor Houck if he could make a motion to recess the meeting until 8:00 pm due to the extreme weather event we were experiencing. Mayor Houck agreed; the motion was seconded by Council President Madden. All members present were in favor.

REJOINING OF MEETING at 8 pm

Some members including the Clerk were unable to join the meeting due to loss of internet. Discussion ensued amongst remaining members with a consensus to adjourn the meeting due to the loss of internet connection with the Clerk and Solicitor.

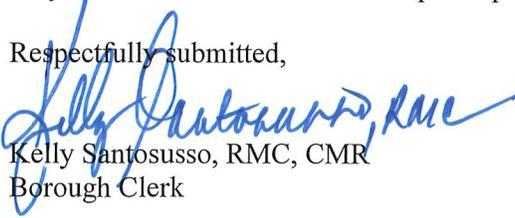
ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilman Schreiber, seconded by Council President Madden. All members present were in favor.

Councilman Morgan said that all should view the website for the posting of a Special Meeting to address remaining Agenda items.

Mayor Houck thanked all for their participation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kelly Santosusso, RMC". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name and title below it.

Kelly Santosusso, RMC, CMR
Borough Clerk

Statement from Mayor Houck June 3, 2020 Council Meeting

First, let me say I cannot begin to say that I understand what it is like to live as a black man or woman in this country. I have never walked a mile in his shoes, nor a foot. I will not pretend to understand the day to day experiences, the injustices, the racial bias, the struggles, or slights. I will not compare another experience of my own to their experience.

What I will do is listen. I will hear their stories, listen to their cries, and echo their voice for justice. I stand with the community in calling for justice in the murder of George Floyd. My years at St. Joseph's University have taught me two things. One that our criminal justice system is incredibly flawed and been so for many years. It's a system that disproportionately favors white, middle to upper class and oppresses the black community. Before anyone challenges me on that statement, I ask that you go spend a couple of years studying this very topic. And by no means is this a shot at our police department here in Haddon Heights. We are quite fortunate to have an incredible police department that embodies community policing. Second but most importantly, SJU taught me to embody the Jesuit ideals, precisely the ideal of "men and women with and for others." This value means standing with the marginalized and pursuing justice on behalf of all persons.

What occurred on a street corner in Minneapolis on May 25th is reprehensible. However, this is not the first time this has happened, nor will it, unfortunately, be the last. This is something that has played out repeatedly, and though not in plain sight, it is never the less injustice. The nearly 9 minutes that the officer knelt on George Floyd's neck is a clear showing of the disregard for human life and the morals that govern our society. Just as disturbing are the three other officer's actions or inaction, and quoting the British Philosopher John Stuart Mill, "Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing."

I am happy to hear that today all three of those officers who stood by quietly, doing nothing, are now charged in the murder of George Floyd. I had a conversation earlier this week with Police Chief Scardino on that the hardest thing for anyone to do is to confront one's peers. However, we must do just that. Now more than ever, we must be strong enough to step off from the sideline and condemn racism, bigotry, and injustice. And let me be clear this is not about choosing citizens over police, and no clarification is needed. I assume that if you believe "Black Lives Matter," you stand not against the police but against injustice, racism, bigotry, and anyone who casts aside our constitutional doctrine that, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." To close, I ask our community to do its part in fighting racism and injustice in our community. I ask that you stand side by side, calling for justice and equality. I ask that you listen to each other empathetically and wholly; and refrain from turning every statement by one another into an argument of opposing viewpoints. Give each other the benefit of the doubt, and be men and women with and for others.