



BOROUGH OF HADDON HEIGHTS
COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
Tuesday, September 1, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
ZOOM

Mayor 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 borough website and notice was transmitted to the official newspapers provided by Amendment to Annual Meeting Notice on July 24, 2020. Meeting notice has remained continuously posted on the borough website with details for the public to participate via the ZOOM platform.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Houck asked the Clerk for roll call.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Houck asked for Public Comment on Agenda items only. Seeing and hearing no movement, Mayor Houck closed the public comment portion of the meeting. All members were in favor.

Seeing and hearing no movement from the public, Mayor Houck closed the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

CAUCUS WORK SESSION:

Update on COVID-19

Mayor Houck provided an update here for Camden County. 46 total number of cases in Haddon Heights and three (3) deaths. Within Camden County, 20 to 30 new cases a day. To date, 9,810 positive cases and 564 deaths.

Mayor Houck went on to report that Executive Order 183 goes into effect this Friday which opens indoor dining at 25 percent capacity. He encouraged residents to patronize our businesses and please wear masks and abide by all social distancing requirements.

Camden County Cares Grant Mayor Houck encouraged business owners to apply for the 10K grant at www.Camdencountycares.com.

Update on 2020 Census

Mayor Houck provided update that HH is at 82.1 % self-response completion rate which is up from 2010. NJ Census Bureau is sending out reminders to residences who have not completed. Overall, New Jersey has a 67% completion rate. Mayor Houck informed that residents will begin to see census takers out knocking on

doors to collect the data which is critical to receiving federal funding in the future. Camden County having a population over 500,000 has been incredibly beneficial to us during the pandemic. We are in the final push as the deadline is September 30th. Mayor Houck encouraged anyone who has not yet filed to please do so by going to my2020census.gov.

Energy Aggregation

Councilman Ottoson referenced a video he sent out to Council a couple of weeks back regarding an effort to encourage green energy. He explained the process would be for Council to adopt an Ordinance which would allow us to capture residents' electric bills in an effort to purchase bulk green energy. We would then search the market and get in when favorable. Our electric would be at a discounted rate for a period of 12 to 16 months. Ottoson said residents would be notified and also mentioned that we have 138 non-residential customers who could be included. By Ordinance, we would have save on residents' energy bill above what they would pay PSE&G. He encouraged Council to view the video and said we could have a representative come to a Council meeting to answer any questions. Ottoson concluded with noting the selling points of this are the utilization of green energy and reduction in utility bills. Mayor Houck thanked Councilman Ottoson.

Devon Avenue Site Remediation & Solar Opportunity

Councilman Ottoson said he sent Council a report for the last Caucus meeting. He said he has had a meeting with NJIT who has a NJ Brownsfield Assistance center with professionals who have extensive experience in remediation and solar. They have provided some guidance on how we may move forward with completion of the remediation behind the tennis courts and some of the surrounding area of the athletic fields. He said that option #2 in the report is to utilize Environmental Protection grants. Due to changing rules with the DEP, we need to do another study, fund the study and then determine funding sources for the remediation and then look into solar companies. He explained there are solar companies that will assist with remediation. Ottoson said we have a conference call set up with licensed site remediation professional this week. He concluded by saying this looks promising. Council President Madden said the site has been a problem for some time and we need to remediate it. She questioned whether we would be bound by some long term lease agreements associated with the solar panels. Ottoson said solar panels would be placed for 25 years and that they would be an income producer. The lighting at the fields would be at no cost and we might possibly be able to create another field. Ottoson says it is a noble goal to reduce the carbon footprint in town.

Tree Planting

Ottoson said in the spring, we had a plan to distribute trees in the grade schools. With the pandemic and schools closing, we have the trees on hold at a local nursery. He said the plan is to hold for spring Arbor Day and plant at Cedar and Bellmawr Avenue. He explained he would like to start raising tree stock for the future to plan for when trees are cut down or die as trees are very expensive now. Councilman Ottoson said he would like to work with the Shade Tree Commission to plant 150 trees to replace the 150 stumps that were ground this year. Councilman Morgan says he thinks it will be a good idea but asked that we coordinate with Shade Tree Commission and with Dave Taraschi with regard to location of plantings to ensure all parties are on the same page. Ottoson agreed and said he would like to have a plan of action in place for the fall.

Bike Racks Design

Mayor Houck said that there have been a number of discussions on social media pages regarding the need for bicycle racks in town. With the future county trail coming next spring, this will be even more evident. He thanked Sustainable Haddon Heights for all of their hard work on this topic. He then said the borough pursued a design on our own and gave credit to Julie Yuhaze who did a phenomenal job with rendering the art work for the designs. Mayor Houck showed the designs and explained they would be surface mounted along Station Avenue. The first design would be laser etched with color. The other design would be a black plate which has a cut out. Both designs are part of the borough's official logo and are fitting for the historic district. Discussion ensued on the history of funding opportunities previously coordinated through Sustainable HH.

Mayor Houck invited two young residents Kaitlin and Emilia participating in the meeting to voice their opinions. Kaitlin said we were hoping to have bike racks as it would be safer for kids and they can lock their bikes. She said we also think they could be placed around town on Station Avenue, the Dell and at the Parks. Emilia said that possible funding can be donated from local families and possibly have their names placed on the bike racks. Mayor thanked Caitlin and Emilia for their participation and said the bike racks will be a great addition to the community.

Kathy Lange commented that the new design might garner some support from the HH Business and Professional Association. Once reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and becomes the official proposal, she thinks the business associations might assist with fundraising. Lange said she will contact the HHBPA. Mayor Houck said these two designs will be presented, then get approval from HPC and then move forward with a dollar figure and work out funding.

Annual Renewal of Vision and Dental Plans for Active Full-time Employees & Retirees

Santosusso reported the annual renewal rates for Vision and Dental Plans for all active and full-time employees and retirees of the borough remain flat for the coming year. She said renewals will be in place for November 1st. She added she is awaiting the numbers for prescription coverage and will report once received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the August 7, 2020 Business Meeting and the August 18, 2020 SPECIAL MEETING.

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to approve the August 7, 2020 Business Meeting Minutes. A motion to approve was made by Council President Madden, seconded by Councilman Morgan. All members present were in favor.

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to approve the August 18, 2020 SPECIAL MEETING Minutes. A motion to approve was made by Councilman Ottoson, seconded by Councilman Morgan. All members present were in favor.

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES of the August 18, 2020 SPECIAL MEETING

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to approve the Executive Session Minutes of SPECIAL MEETING, August 18, 2020. A motion was made by Council President Madden, seconded by Councilman Morgan. All members present were in favor.

PRESENTATION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT HONORABLE SERVICE MEDALS to *Lieutenant Thomas Reilly and Patrolman Michael Selby*

Mayor moved from podium to present the awards. Captain Thomas Schneider read the awards detailing the events of the storm and the acts of bravery. Most serious incident during the storm. He thanked all that were involved.

PRESENTATION OF UNIT CITATION TO FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMBERS *Benjamin Zwaska, Ian Muenzenberger, Matt Medes and Ken Baus*

Mayor invited Fire Chief Michael Kinky forward to present the Unit Citation. Chief Kinky detailed the events of the storm and the incident on the White Horse Pike. He commended all.

Mayor Houck congratulated the recipients noting the quick actions of the police officers and fire fighters who disregarded their own safety for the sake of the gentlemen in the car; this was simply heroic. Mayor Houck said he toured the town following the storm, the worst of the year. A 100 yr. old tree fell on the White Horse Pike

100 to 150 year old tree. The tree fell on a gentlemen's car. We have some of the finest employees and thanked everyone for a job well done.

PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER AS CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH – *Presented to Linda and Bill Verdone*

Mayor Houck explained that the Verdone's granddaughter was diagnosed with a rare form of Leukemia. During that time, Natalie's mother has formed a non-profit organization which has raised over a million dollars for childhood cancer research. Mayor Houck said he was shocked to learn how under-funded childhood cancer is.

Mayor Houck read the Proclamation aloud. Mayor Houck welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Verdone.

Mrs. Verdone thanked the Mayor. She said we normally do this every year in person and we have the banner hung on Station Avenue since 2013. We do this to make people aware that the funding is so lacking. Adults may lose 7 to 10 years of life. A child can lose 60 plus years of life. Our daughter began the organization – she began raising one dollar at a time. Her goal was \$60,000 and the first year she \$100,000. *Infinite Love for kids fighting Cancer*. There are over 100 types of childhood cancer. She pointed out the inequities in the funding saying that children are our future. She encouraged all to visit the website and see exactly with the funds go. Mayor Houck thanked the Verdone's for the work their family has done for this effort.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

INTRODUCTION of Ordinance 2020:1494 – An Ordinance Creating Part 1, Chapter 14, Entitled The “Heights Grows Committee” of the Code of the Borough of Haddon Heights, County of Camden and State of New Jersey

Public Hearing and Final Adoption is scheduled for September 15, 2020 at 7:00 pm in the Municipal Building located at 625 Station Avenue, Haddon Heights, New Jersey. *Meeting may be conducted via ZOOM platform due to circumstances related to COVID19.*

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to Introduce Ordinance 2020:1494. Motion was made by Council President Madden, seconded by Councilman Ottoson. Under a roll call vote, all members present were in favor.

Mayor Houck read aloud Resolutions 2020:151 through 2020:158.

Resolution 2020:151 – Resolution Requesting Permission from the Director of Local Government Services to Establish a Dedication by Rider for Beautification Committee “Heights Grows” Donations Fund as Required by N.J.S. 40A:5-29.

Resolution 2020:152 – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of Edward Gorman for the Positions of Construction Official and Electrical Sub Code Official

Resolution 2020:153 – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of Michael DePalma for the Positions of Building Sub Code Official and Fire Official

Resolution 2020:154 – Resolution Authorizing Refund of a Tax Overpayment – *Nguyen*

Resolution 2020:155 – Resolution Authorizing Refund of a Tax Overpayment - *Patrinicola*

Resolution 2020:156 – Resolution Authorizing Payment of Bills and Claims for the first Half of September

Resolution 2020:157 – A Resolution Providing For A Meeting Not Open to the Public in Accordance With the Provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12. *1.) Matter related to personnel in Police Department. Discussion is expected to be ½ hr. in duration. Formal action may be taken following Executive Session.*

Resolution 2020:158 – Resolution Authorizing Refund of Recreation Program Fees Due to Circumstances Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt Resolutions 2020:151 through 2020:158. A motion to adopt was made by Councilman Ottoson and seconded by Councilman Morgan. Upon a roll call vote, all members present voted yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Houck opened the Public Comment portion on any matter.

Kathy Lange, 15 First Avenue – Lange thanked Councilman Ottoson for bringing up the topic of Devon Avenue remediation. This has been a long term plan for the Borough. Lange asked if we have received the Brownsfield designation as we did not previously qualify. Ottoson responded that we need to move it forward for remediation as the requirements are now different. The licensed site remediation professional will review and do a study and then make a recommendation. Lange thanked Council President Madden for pointing out there could be a 25 year lease agreement for solar panels. Lange mentioned that as of 2009, there was a recreation plan in place but could not move forward due to the high cost of remediation. She explained the plan and noted that the center of the plan was for a High School baseball field. If we could have moved that field from 8th and High as was promised to the High School. The field could be a true family residential field. Discussion ensued between Ottoson and Lange regarding use of the space. Lange said we are fortunate that the Board of Education maintains our fields. She said full recreation plans are available in Borough Hall.

Mayor Houck said he appreciated Mrs. Lange's history of the town. We are travelling down the road. We will get input from the public.

Rick DiRenzo, 415 Second Avenue – Mr. DiRenzo thanked the Mayor for honoring our public safety heroes. He went on to voice his concerns with regard to the Shared Services Agreement for Public Works. Discussion ensued regarding liability. Chris Long said he will check the agreement and said he is confident that the Borough is covered. Mr. DiRenzo went on to describe his concerns with safety equipment and issues with trash and recycling. Mayor Houck thanked him for his input and said he will get back to him regarding his concerns. Mr. Taraschi clarified that Recycling goes to Republic under an agreement with the County and the trash goes to Covanta under the agreement with SJ Sanitation. DiRenzo made complaints against private hauler SJ Sanitation. Solicitor Chris Long and Mayor Houck ensured Mr. DiRenzo that whenever there are violations of our contract with SJ Sanitation, we work with Mr. Taraschi on issuing penalties.

Audrey DiRenzo, 415 Second Avenue – Congratulations to HHFD, to Lieutenant Reilly and Officer Selby and said she is thankful for our first responders. Mayor said he appreciated her comments. Mrs. DiRenzo said that she was a trustee on the HHBPA and recalls they put funds aside for the bike racks. She offered to get the amount that was set aside. She said the new mock up design looks great and she would not be in favor of the Shop Rite logo on racks as was originally proposed on the previous design. Councilman Ottoson said HHBPA withdrew their support due to concerns with the initial design. Mrs. DiRenzo said she prefers the current design.

Councilman Schreiber joined the meeting 8:10 pm.

Seeing no further movement or comment by the public, Public Comment portion was closed.

Mayor Houck announced that Council would be going into Executive Session.

Council reconvened the Public meeting.

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to come out of Executive Session. A motion was made by Councilman Morgan and seconded by Council President Madden. All members present were in favor.

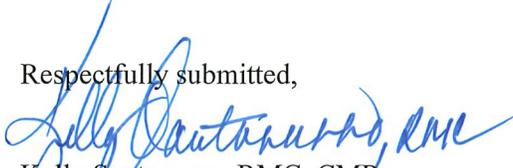
ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further action to be taken, Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kelly Santosusso, RMC, CMR
Borough Clerk