



BOROUGH OF HADDON HEIGHTS COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 7:00 pm

Mayor Houck called the meeting to Order at 7:00 pm. 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 and the Revised 2022 Annual Meetings Notice was posted on the bulletin board designed for that purpose and was transmitted to the official newspapers January 7, 2023. Notice has also been posted on the Borough website.”

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Houck asked the Clerk for roll call.

Under roll call, Council President Christopher Morgan, Councilmembers Ottoson, Philipps, Russo, Pagan and Harron were present as well as Borough Solicitor, Howard Long, Esq. and Clerk Kelly Santosusso.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Houck asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

Mayor Houck opened Public Comment on Caucus and Agenda items only. Seeing none, Mayor Houck closed the Public Comment Portion.

CAUCUS WORK SESSION:

RFP for 2024 Professional Services – Clerk Santosusso

Clerk Santosusso advised Council that RFP packages for 2024 Professional Services are due tomorrow and that a spreadsheet summarizing the results will be circulated by the next day.

Discussion of Sewer Use Charges – Steve Bach, Borough Engineer

Mr. Bach said that his office circulated a final Executive Summary of the Sanitary Sewer Asset Management Plan. Under a grant through the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank and the Department of Environmental Protection, an inventory of the small asset system was performed by the Borough and the Engineer's office. Five general things were completed under this grant - Sewer Asset Management Plan asset inventory included what we had in terms of assets, level of service and what are the critical components of the system, life cycle costing and long term capital funding strategy to maintain and operate the system going forward. The Borough has three sanitary sewer pump stations, a collection system of approximately 115,000 linear feet of gravity sewer, 6,600 linear feet of sanitary sewer force main and 414 sanitary sewer structures or manholes. All of this is out of sight and underground. The age of the system needs some significant rehabilitation to continue to serve our residents. Going back to the early 1900's, began building in 1911, it expanded in 1923 and 1929 and in subsequent decades, expanded out from the center of town. He referenced a detailed graph of the system and how it developed over the years. The age is important because we can

calculate the useful life of components in terms of industry data. 52% of the system is over 95 years old, 45% is 75% old, and new development is three years old. He added that we are currently at our useful life. We have been very fortunate in that we haven't had an emergency in about 5 years but the last one cost over \$100,000.00. Preventative dollars will save money in the long run. Their report outlines prioritization - Maple Avenue is an older station but it has not yet been rehabilitated since its' construction. The Department of Public Works maintains it in the best manner possible but soon we will likely not be able to get parts for this pump station in the near future. Many manufacturers are not making older legacy components. 68 sewer manholes are in poor or failing condition that should be done sooner rather than later. Uneven rims mean the manhole is deteriorating ten to 15 feet underground. In 2015, we were able to decommission the Kings Highway Pump Station entirely, eliminating it with the help of the Camden County Municipal Utility Authority. Report suggests the Borough begin with the pump stations and then go onto Hillside Avenue along the County Park. (a sagging pipe). We have no way to maintain. Public Works goes out on a regular basis to keep it clear. Sanitary Sewer Lines are terracotta which are very susceptible to cracking and failure when disturbed, most of the disruption comes from the public utilities. The useful life of terracotta is 100 years and we are right at that point. We need to plan ahead and maintain the system for another 100 years. Absolute needs are Maple Avenue Pump Station, 68 manholes. Renewal and replacement over a period of time. Not doing so will result in significant emergency repairs in the future representing significant unanticipated budget impacts. His office checked sewer service fees from surrounding towns. Haddon Heights does not currently have a sewer fee. Other towns do necessary maintenance of their systems with a sewer fee; these fees are outlined in the summary report.

Mayor Houck asked what the total costs are. \$1,000,000 for Maple Avenue Pump Station, Bach said Cedar Avenue Pump Station is \$511,000. Terracotta system and some of the force mains are approximately \$10,000,000. The older remaining portion (70 years + old) of the terracotta is 8.6 million dollars. We still have approximately 30 years on that. Slip lining work would go toward the Agreement with CCMUA to reduce inflow and infiltration following the elimination of the Kings Highway pump station.

The Borough has its own sanitary sewer service. We have our own collection, our own pump station, when it leaves our town it goes into the CCMUA done by a pump station. We have to maintain borough responsibility. The other portion is the CCMUA collection interceptor system and the treatment plant that processes all of the waste water. When it leaves our system and goes to the CCMUA system, it takes all the waste water to CCMUA and is what residents are charged for the quarterly CCMUA fee.

Council President Morgan asked additional questions regarding improvement of inflow and infiltration. He asked if the other municipalities have implemented a sewer fee to address these issues. He said that Audubon implemented a sewer service fee and went on to say it is very rare that a municipality does not have a sewer fee. Haddonfield and Mt. Ephraim have sold their systems to NJ American Water. \$474 for a single family home in Haddonfield and Mt., Ephraim is at \$109 currently. Depending on when the system was sold, NJ American Water increases the fee over the years. In these towns, NJ American Water performs all of the work outlined above to make sure

Howard Long asked how much the grant was to conduct the Sanitary Asset Management Plan. Bach responded \$100,000.00 which has been forgiven if we spent \$250,000.00. We have done that to increase the pumping capacity at the Lake Street Pump Station this year. Long asked if we were reacting to the problems that might arise or were we being proactive. Long said that this group has a fiduciary obligation to ensure the system works. The lack of maintenance prior to 2018 have contributed to breakdowns in the system? Steve says the Public Works Department has worked hard to maintain the system we have. The problem is the age of the system, in particular Maple Avenue Pump Station. If we do not take action, we will eventually face emergency repairs which can be in the six figures. Existing mature trees are the number one impact to the terracotta lines as well as work done by utility companies. Utilities have the rights to be in our roadways under tariffs but are sometimes not as careful of the terracotta pipes.

Solicitor Long said he was surprised that we did not have a sewer fee. Long asked Bach if there are any other towns in Camden County who do not have a sewer use fee. Bach said the towns he represents in Camden County all have sewer fees.

Discussion ensued between Mayor Houck and Mr. Bach. A sewer fee would be primarily for the purpose of servicing the system. This is best practice to be proactive and to plan. This will be Bach's experience is allocating funding to maintain the system, provide personnel and this is a multi-year or even multi-decade process.

Mayor Houck asked if Council had any additional questions for the Engineer. Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Bach for his presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the November 21, 2023 Business Meeting

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt the Minutes of the November 21, 2023 Business Meeting. Motion was moved by Councilman Pagan, seconded by Councilwoman Harron. All members were in favor with the exception of Councilman Ottoson who abstained.

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES of the November 21, 2023 Business Meeting

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt the Executive Session Minutes of the November 21, 2023 Business Meeting. Motion was moved by Councilwoman Philipps, seconded by Councilman Pagan. All members were in favor with the exception of Councilman Ottoson who abstained.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION Presented to Carl Ballier, Chair of the Local Board of Health

Mayor Houck asked Carl Ballier and his family to come forward for a presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation of his 47 years of service. He then read the Certificate of Appreciation for his many years of service to the town and the Local Board of Health. Mayor commented on the lives impacted by Mr. Ballier's dedication to the town. He thanked his family and friends for being here this evening.

BOROUGH ENGINEER'S REPORT:

Steve Bach, 304 White Horse Pike – submitted written report and highlighted the following:

St. Martins Avenue paving is expected to be completed the week of December 11th.

Devon Avenue Field Improvements – punch list items are being completed and his office is working on closing out those projects.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE 2023:1538 – An Ordinance of the Borough of Haddon Heights, County of Camden, Adopting A Redevelopment Plan for Certain Property Within the Borough of Haddon Heights That Has Been Designated an Area In Need of Redevelopment – *St. Mary's*

Public Hearing and Final Adoption of Ordinance 2023:1538 is scheduled for Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Municipal Building located at 625 Station Avenue, Haddon Heights, New Jersey.

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to introduce Ordinance 2023:1538. Motion was moved by Councilwoman Philipps, seconded by Councilwoman Russo. Under a roll call vote, all members were in favor.

Mayor Houck read aloud Resolutions 2023:197 through 2023:211 except for 2023:209.

Resolution 2023:197 – A Resolution of the Borough of Haddon Heights, County of Camden, Referring the Proposed Redevelopment Plan For Certain Property Within the Borough of Haddon Heights to the Borough Planning Board for Review Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7.e

Resolution 2023:198 – Resolution Authorizing Agreement Between the Borough of Haddon Heights and Phoenix Advisors, LLC, Independent Registered Municipal Advisor of Record for the Purpose of Providing Continuing Disclosure Agent Services for 2024

Resolution 2023:199 – Resolution to Release Performance Bond and Authorize Refund of Planning Board Escrow Balance – PB20-7-1HP

Resolution 2023:200 – Resolution Authorizing a Refund of a Permit Fee to Skyline Solar, LLC

Resolution 2023:201 – Resolution Authorizing a Refund of a Permit Fee to Hutchinson

Resolution 2023:202 – A Resolution Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to Make Additional Transfers of Funds If Needed to Assure All 2023 Budget Appropriations Have Adequate Funds and Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to Pay All Necessary Bills through the End of the Year

Resolution 2023:203 – Resolution Authorizing Refund of a Cabin Rental Fee

Resolution 2023:204 – Resolution Awarding a Contract to Delta Dental for the Purpose of Providing Dental Coverage to All Full-Time and Retired Employees of the Borough of Haddon Heights for the Period 1/1/24 through 12/31/24

Resolution 2023:205 – Resolution Authorizing Mayor to Execute an Agreement Between Voorhees Animal Orphanage, Inc. and the Borough of Haddon Heights for the Purpose of Providing Animal Shelter Services for a Period of Twelve Months

Resolution 2023:206 – Resolution Authorizing Execution of Five Year Tax Agreement – 508 Station Avenue

Resolution 2023:207 – Resolution Authorizing Execution of Five Year Tax Agreement – 414 White Horse Pike

Resolution 2023:208 – Resolution Authorizing Execution of Five Year Tax Agreement – 615 White Horse Pike

Resolution 2023:210 – Resolution to Close Escrow Account and Authorize Refund of Planning Board Escrow Balance

Resolution 2023:211 – 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 regarding Personnel discussion related to Borough administration and staffing. 2.) Contract matter related to Shared Services Agreement with the Borough of Audubon for Municipal Court Services. Discussions are expected to be ½ hr. in duration. Formal action may be taken on the foregoing item following Executive Session.***

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt Resolutions 2023:191 through Resolution 2023:211, except Resolution 2023:209. Motion was moved by Councilman Pagan, seconded by Councilwoman Harron. Upon a roll call vote, all members voted yes.

Mayor Houck then read aloud Resolution 2023:209.

Resolution 2023:209 – Resolution Authorizing Payment of Bills and Claims for the First Half of December

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt Resolution 2023:209. Motion was moved by Councilman Pagan, seconded by Councilwoman Russo. Upon a roll call vote, all members voted yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Houck opened Public Comment on any matter.

Seeing no movement or comment, Mayor Houck closed the public comment portion.

Mayor Houck announced Council will recess into Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 7:51 pm

Executive Session concluded at 8:36 pm

Upon returning to open session, Mayor Houck asked for a motion to come out of Executive Session. Motion was moved by Councilwoman Russo, seconded by Councilman Pagan. All members were in favor.

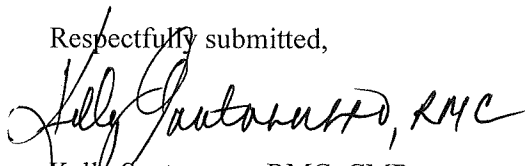
Howard Long thanked Councilmembers Harron and Pagan for the great job on the Holiday Parade.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before Council, Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was moved by Councilwoman Russo, seconded by Councilman Pagan. All members were in favor.

8:37 pm

Respectfully submitted,


Kelly Santosusso, RMC, CMR
Borough Clerk

