BOROUGH OF HADDON HEIGHTS

REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES Saturday, January 6, 2024, 11:00 am

Mayor Houck called the Reorganization Meeting to Order at 11:00 am.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Mayor Houck asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT:

Mayor Houck read the following statement, “In accordance with Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, 1975, notice of this meeting was posted on the bulletin board designed for that purpose and notice was transmitted to the official newspapers on December 4, 2023.”

Mayor Houck began by welcoming dignitaries present acknowledging Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez and Assemblyman Bill Spearman from the 5th legislative district and Camden County Commissioners Melinda McCain and Ed McDonnell, and representative from Congressman Donald Norcross’s office Gina Espinoza. He also acknowledged Mayor Rob Jakubowski of Audubon and Mayor-Elect Kyle Hanson of Barrington.

ADMINISTERING OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO MAYOR-ELECT ZACHARY HOUCK

Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez of the 5th Legislative District came forward with Mayor-Elect Houck and his family for administering the Oath of Office. Senator Cruz-Perez administered the Oath of Office and offered her congratulations to Mayor Houck.

ADMINISTERING OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT:

Mayor Houck invited Assemblyman Bill Spearman and Councilmember-elect Kate Harron and her family forward for the administering of the Oath of Office. Assemblyman Spearman administered the Oath of Office and congratulated Councilmember Harron.

Mayor Houck invited Councilmember-elect Regina Philipps and her family forward as well as the Honorable Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez for the administering the Oath of Office. Senator Cruz-Perez administered the Oath and then congratulated Councilmember Philipps.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Houck asked Clerk Santosusso for the roll call.

Under roll call the following were present: Councilmembers Morgan, Ottoson, Philipps, Russo, Pagan and Harron and Mayor Houck. Also present were Solicitor Howard Long and Borough Clerk Kelly Santosusso.

COMMENTS FROM DIGNATARIES:

Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez commended Council for everything being done on behalf of the residents of Haddon Heights. She congratulated the Mayor and Council for an extraordinary year last year and wished everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

Assemblyman Spearman said he hoped that everyone had a wonderful holiday season and wished Council all the best in the New Year. He encouraged Council to reach out to the 5th District for any assistance. He concluded by saying it is a pleasure working with all of Council and serving the residents of Haddon Heights.

COMMENTS FROM NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mayor Houck said he is grateful for the support of the 5th district. He thanked everyone for attending the Reorganization meeting is privileged to serve as Mayor and said the last four years have flown by with the outcome of a lot of hard work. He thanked his wife and children for their support. He noted we have a great team and said it is a pleasure to work alongside the Councilmembers and to continue to serve the residents of Haddon Heights. He thanked Borough employees - the Clerk, Administrative staff, Chief of Police and Fire Chief and volunteer firefighters, all professionals and volunteers. He specifically thanked the volunteers as they are the backbone of the community. He noted some of the work that has already been done and will continue - redevelopment, paving roads, bike paths, soding fields, hosting of civic events and Parades. He concluded by wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilwoman Philipps thanked dignitaries present, Councilmembers and families for being here today. She said she was honored to be sworn in by Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez who has been a role model to her having dedicated many years of her life to public service while being a wife and mother. Grateful to have been re-elected and to serve alongside the Mayor and Councilmembers because she truly cares about this town and is grateful to call her fellow Councilmembers friends. She said she believes we are all obligated to make the world a better place. Philipps said she is honored to work with our incredible Borough staff, Police and Fire Departments, Borough professionals and volunteers. She expressed her gratitude and love to her husband Chris, to her parents, to her law firm Madden and Madden and specifically Michael Madden. Lastly, to her son Shane who has shown more bravery and strength and love for life in his short five years than most in a lifetime. She concluded by saying there is nothing that we cannot accomplish and she is looking forward to getting started this year.

COMMENTS FROM SITTING COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Councilwoman Harron wished everyone a happy New Year. She went on to thank her husband James for all of his support. She also thanked her friends and family, the Mayor, Councilwoman Philipps and the Democratic Club. She offered her appreciation to Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez for swearing her in and all dignitaries present for being here today. Harron went on to thank borough staff and all of the professionals. She has found her time on Council over the last few months very exciting and interesting and feels her background makes her well positioned to bettering the community overall.

Tom Ottoson said Mayor Houck has gotten us through COVID, several Shared Services Agreements, economic development and much more; from his perspective, it wasn’t always easy balancing work and family. He thanked the Mayor for committing to another four years. He commended Councilwoman Philipps as she has distinguished herself as the hardest working councilmember. She has been thoughtful and has improved operations immensely. He then commented on Councilwoman Harron having immediately stepped in and coordinating all events such as the Holiday Parade and Menorah lighting Ceremony - she brings a high level of energy. He offered congratulations on everyone’s election and he looks forward to working with all in 2024.

Council President Morgan thanked everyone for their work on Council. Councilwoman Harron has stepped up in a commendable manner. Mayor Houck – you have been a fantastic Mayor. The next four years will be great. To Councilmember Philipps, her wisdom, level headedness and dedication to the position is nothing short of amazing – he is thrilled that she has been reelected. The town is better for these three individuals. He thanked the County for all of their support. We appreciate all that the County has done for us, in particular Station Avenue. He thanked the neighboring town’s Mayors for being here today. We work together as a larger community. To our friends and neighbors, let us stay together and continue to build on those relationships.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Houck called for Public Comment on Agenda items only.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to appoint Councilman Christopher Morgan to the position of Council President. A motion was moved by Councilmember Philipps, seconded by Councilmember Pagan. Upon a roll call vote, all members voted yes.

Mayor Houck administered the Oath of Office to Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Houck then asked for a motion to approve the following Directorships:

**Administration/Personnel/Inter-Government**  Councilmember Regina Philipps, Director

Councilmember Kate Harron

Council President Christopher Morgan

**Finance/Budgets/Grants** Councilmember Kate Russo, Director

Council President Christopher Morgan

Councilmember Tom Ottoson

**Public Works Department** Council President Christopher Morgan, Director

Councilmember Kate Russo

**Construction/Zoning Department** Councilmember Tom Ottoson, Director

Councilmember Kate Russo

**Public Safety (Police, Fire & Municipal Court)** Councilmember Regina Philipps, Director

Councilmember Tom Ottoson

**Parks/Recreation**  Councilmember Kate Harron, Director

Councilmember Tom Ottoson

Councilmember Matthew Pagan

A motion to approve the directorship appointments was made by Councilmember Russo, seconded by Councilmember Ottoson. Upon a roll call vote, all members were in favor.

Mayor Houck read aloud Resolutions 2024:01 through Resolutions 2024:31.

**Resolution 2024:01** – Resolution Appointing Borough Solicitor *– Wade, Long, Wood & Long, LLC,*

*Howard C. Long, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:02 –** Resolution Appointing Conflict Borough Solicitor – *The Platt Law Group, PC, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:03** – Resolution Appointing Auditor for 2024 – *Bowman & Company, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:04** – Resolution Appointing Borough Bond Counsel for 2024 *– Parker McCay, PC and Archer & Greiner, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:05 –** Resolution Appointing Borough Engineers – *Bach Associates & T&M Associates, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:06** – Resolution Appointing Risk Manager for 2024 – *Hardenbergh Insurance Group, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:07** – Resolution Appointing Broker of Record for Health Insurance for 2024 – *Hardenbergh Insurance Group, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:08** –Resolution Appointing Licensed Site Remediation Professionalfor 2024 *– T&M Associates, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:09** – Resolution Appointing Borough Planners – *Bach Associates, T&M Associates and LFB Land Planning, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:10 –** Resolution Appointing Deputy Clerk – *Julie Yuhaze*

**Resolution 2024:11 –** Resolution Appointing Affordable Housing Solicitor – *The Platt Law Group, P.C., Stuart A. Platt, Esq., 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:12 –** Resolution Appointing Affordable Housing Planner – *LFB Land Planning, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:13 –** Resolution Appointing Redevelopment Counsel **–** *Maley Givens, Emily Givens, Esq.,   
1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:14 –** Resolution Appointing Redevelopment Planners – *Pennoni Associates, LFB Land Planning and T&M Associates, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:15 –** Resolution Authorizing Thomas J. Colavecchio, Tax Assessor to File Tax Appeals and Assessor’s Appeals on Behalf of the Borough of Haddon Heights

**Resolution 2024:16** – Resolution Appointing Certified Recycling Professional – *Dave Taraschi, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:17** – Resolution Appointing Special Law Enforcement Officers – *David Bauman, Class II, Stephen Graham, Class III*

**Resolution 2024:18 –** Resolution Appointing Tax Search Officer – *Eric Fitzgerald, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:19** – Resolution Appointing Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer – *Dave Taraschi, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:20 –** Resolution Appointing Fund Commissioner and Alternate to the Camden County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund – *Michael Mansdoerfer and Council President Christopher Morgan*

**Resolution 2024:21** – Resolution Designating Delegates to the Camden County Community Development Block Grant Program – *Mayor Zachary Houck and Kelly Santosusso, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:22** – Resolution Appointing Fire Chief – *Joseph Hales, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:23** –Resolution Appointing Members of the Haddon Heights Fire Department

**Resolution 2024:24** – Resolution Appointing Fire Inspectors for the Haddon Heights Fire Department –*Stephen Mach, Ben Zwaska and Jim Arpino,1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:25** – Resolution Authorizing Chief of Police to Issue Gun Permits – *Chief Thomas Schneider*

**Resolution 2024:26** – Resolution Appointing Crossing Guards for the Haddon Heights Police Department –   
*1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:27** – Resolution Appointing Licensed Collection System Operator (C-2 Sewer License) - *Martin Finger, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:28** – Resolution Designating a Public Agency Compliance Officer – *Kelly Santosusso, 1 yr.*

**Resolution 2024:29 –** Resolution Appointing Captain Daniel Kinkler to the Position of Municipal Humane Law Enforcement Officer for the Haddon Heights Police Department

**Resolution 2024:30** – Resolution Appointing Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator

**Resolution 2024:31** – Resolution Concerning Attached 2024 Appointments

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTIONS 2024:01 THROUGH 2024:31: All individuals named in the above Resolutions please stand to receive the *Oath of Office* from Mayor Zachary Houck.**

Mayor Houck administered the Oath of Office.

Mayor Houck then read aloud Resolutions 2024:32 through 2024:41.

**Resolution 2024:32** – Resolution Regarding Rules of Council for 2024

**Resolution 2024:33** – Resolution Regarding Interest Rate for 2024

**Resolution 2024:34** – Resolution Authorizing Funding Petty Cash Fund for and Naming a Custodian for 2024

**Resolution 2024:35** – Resolution Authorizing Use of a Cash Management Plan for 2024

**Resolution 2024:36** – Resolution Authorizing the Designation of Newspapers to Receive Notices of Meetings as Required Under the Open Public Meetings Act

**Resolution 2024:37** – Resolution Establishing 2024 Council Meeting Dates

**Resolution 2024:38** – Resolution Approving Borough of Haddon Heights Temporary Budget Appropriations for 2024

**Resolution 2024:39 –** Resolution Designating Depositories of Funds for Various Accounts for 2024

**Resolution 2024:40** – Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Small Tax Balances for the Year 2023

**Resolution 2024:41** – Resolution Authorizing the Utilization of State Contract Vendors

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTIONS 2024:32 THROUGH 2024:41**

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to approve Resolutions 2024:32 through 2024:41. Motion was moved by Councilmember Pagan, seconded by Councilmember Russo. Under a roll call vote, all members voted yes.

**Resolution 2024:42 –** Resolution Authorizing Payment of Bills and Claims for End of 2023

Mayor Houck asked for a motion to adopt **Resolution 2024:42**. Motion was moved by Council President Morgan, seconded by Councilmember Pagan. Under a roll call vote, all members voted yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Houck called for Public Comment on any matter the public wishes to address. Seeing and hearing no comment, Mayor Houck closed the public comment portion.

Mayor Houck welcomed all in attendance back to Tanner Brewing following the meeting. Thank you to everyone who attended today and looking forward to 2024.

Seeing no movement, Mayor Houck closed the Public Comment portion.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Philipps, seconded by Councilmember Russo. All members were in favor. 11:38 am.

Respectfully submitted:

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Kelly Santosusso, RMC, Borough Clerk