

BOROUGH OF WESTVILLE

165 Broadway

February 2, 2021

WORK SESSION - Meeting Minutes

Mayor Fritz H. Sims, Jr. called the February 2, 2021 Work Session to order at 7:00 p.m.

The **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited

The Deputy Clerk read the notice. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given by notifying the South Jersey Times and the Courier Post and posting the meeting date on the official bulletin board of the Municipality and the municipal web site. Additional written Public Notice was given and printed in the South Jersey Times and uploaded to the Municipal web site regarding the public meeting format change from an in-person public meeting to a video/teleconference public meeting due to COVID-19.

Roll Call: Mayor Fritz H. Sims, Jr., Council Members: Donna M. Domico, Travis R. Lawrence, Charles D. Murtaugh, Paul C. Mailley and Timothy P. Young. Administrator/Municipal Clerk Ryan J. Giles, Deputy Clerk Kathleen Carroll, Public Works Manager Martin Finger, Engineer Jon Bryson, Police Chief William Whinna and Solicitor Timothy Scaffidi. (Councilman Nordaby logged into the meeting at 8:06 p.m.)

OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC: Motion to open the meeting to the public was made by Councilman Mailley and seconded by Councilman Lawrence and his motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

As no one chose to address Council, Councilman Mailley motioned to close the meeting to the public, Council President Murtaugh seconded and his motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Sims gave a brief overview on the purpose of the Work Session.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

❖ **Redevelopment/Reinvigorating the Downtown Area**

Administrator Giles talked about properties in the Rehabilitation Zone that the Borough would like to purchase for redevelopment purposes and that the Borough has notified two property owners of the Borough's intent to purchase their vacant buildings. Councilman Murtaugh clarified that the entire town is in a Redevelopment Zone, with the exception of Grabbes located at 19 Delsea Drive.

Solicitor Scaffidi discussed the value of a Redevelopment Plan in that it would give the Borough great flexibility to bring new businesses into town.

Councilman Lawrence provided an update on the recent Redevelopment Committee meeting and talked about the lights in the downtown area and about needing parking spaces for the downtown area. Councilwoman Domico provided information on mapping out parking spaces along Broadway as a result of her conversation with the County.

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❖ **Redevelopment/Reinvigorating the Downtown Area** *(continued)*

A lengthy discussion took place regarding adding parking spaces to the downtown area, Pine Street, obtaining grants for projects and how to best utilize the space made available as a result of demolishing the old Police Building at 114 Crown Point Road.

Engineer Bryson confirmed the Borough received a grant for Pine Street and it can go out for bid as soon as the Borough is ready and Administrator Giles confirmed that the Borough will have a project for Boundary Lane and Birch Avenue. A discussion took place regarding grants received and completing road projects.

❖ **Enhancing River Drive**

Chief Whinna and Public Works Superintendent Finger discussed installing bollard poles and chains to prevent cars from driving onto the field.

A general discussion took place regarding parking along Delaware View and improving the area with a security system, speakers, benches and lanterns, etc. A discussion also took place specific to trees that should be removed from the area. Councilwoman Domico stated that when installing the bollards and chains to keep in mind the Fireworks trucks that will have to access that area. A discussion took place regarding funding to enhance River Drive.

❖ **Vacant Homes**

Mayor Sims confirmed that a new Vacant Homes committee is not warranted and that it will be part of the Planning & Business Development Committee that includes Redevelopment.

Administrator Giles provided specific details on how to begin the process to identify vacant homes in the Municipality in order to create a "Vacant Properties List" which is critical to rehabilitating homes. A lengthy discussion of how many homes are considered abandoned properties took place and Administrator Giles commented once the list is created it should be updated once or twice a year. A discussion regarding how the Borough of Paulsboro is managing their vacant properties took place. Administrator Giles confirmed he will take the lead on this issue.

❖ **Improving Internal Communications**

Mayor Sims stated he would like the Committee Chairperson to provide a report to Council after their meetings.

Councilman Lawrence asked if the Planning & Business Development Committee could receive copies of Land Use Board meeting minutes as well as information from sub-committee meetings.

Mayor Sims advised there will be Department Head meetings prior to Work Sessions.

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❖ **Solar Opportunities**

Councilwoman Domico will contact a solar company to see if the property behind 712 Broadway is viable for a solar farm and she will investigate the feasibility of a Solar Canopy in the Municipal parking lot.

❖ **Updating Borough Ordinances**

Councilman Young (Chair of the Ordinance committee) stated the committee has scheduled a meeting for Tuesday, Feb 9th at 5 pm so will report back to Council at the March 2nd Work Session.

❖ **Updating Playground Equipment**

Councilman Lawrence talked about grants that may be available to help fund updating the Borough's playgrounds. A brief discussion took place regarding obtaining grants and securing an individual to write grants for the Borough.

❖ **Rebranding and Website Initiatives**

Administrator Giles provided details on meetings Sandra Kelley would like to have with members of council and department heads. The meetings would take place over a few days with different members of council, department heads and Westville business owners. Administrator Giles advised he will schedule the meetings.

❖ **Phase 3 – Water Project**

Administrator Giles advised the Borough is at a point where it's paying the principal on Bonds for Phase 1 and 2 of the project and his recommendation is to wait one more year before starting Phase 3 to better manage the principal payments. Councilwoman Domico advised she and Public Works Superintendent Finger will be meeting the week of February 8th to discuss the water mains that need to be replaced in Phase 3 of the Water Project.

While Westville's water testing is under the state PFNA levels, a general discussion took place regarding preparations in the event Westville's PFNA levels increase and the installation of a filtration system would cost approximately \$500,000. A general discussion took place specific to Solvay's responsibility for the water contamination and that the State of New Jersey is suing Solvay for the expenses municipalities will incur to update their filtration systems. A general discussion on paying for a new filtration system took place that included how to obtain grants or loans. Engineer Bryson suggested that because of the process to apply, the Borough might want to consider starting the process before 2022.

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The following items were asked to be included in the “topics for discussion” for the March 2, 2021 Work Session:

- Restrooms at the Community Center and the replacement of the Security System
(requested by Council President Murtaugh)
- Car charging stations *(requested by Councilman Lawrence)*

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilwoman Domico and seconded by Council President Murtaugh and his motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Kathleen Carroll

Kathleen Carroll
Deputy Municipal Clerk