

BOROUGH OF WESTVILLE

165 Broadway

March 2, 2021

WORK SESSION - Meeting Minutes

Mayor Fritz H. Sims, Jr. called the March 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, Bruce Nordaby 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, Solicitor Jeff Krachun. Solicitor Timothy Scaffidi joined the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

❖ **Redevelopment/Reinvigorating the Downtown Area**

Administrator Giles stated the Borough is actively pursuing the properties at both Rita's and the old Dick's Realty building and that there has been no response from Rita's but he did hear from the owners of Dick's Realty and they are interested in selling so he will continue to negotiate price with the owners of that building.

Administrator Giles advised he is still pursuing grants for the Downtown area revitalization as well as playground grants and working with PSEG on grants for electric car charging stations.

Use of the lot at 114 Crown Point Road was discussed (e.g. pole barn for public works) and removal of the debris.

Councilman Lawrence discussed, in length, the status of lighting in the downtown area and replacement of some trees along Broadway that may take place late April. Councilman Lawrence advised parking will be "marked out" along Broadway.

Councilman Murtaugh added that when it snows only permit 15 minute parking in the Downtown to allow for plowing. Councilwoman Domico added that there is an Ordinance on the books regarding snow emergencies that does include parking along most of Broadway. How to notify residents of a snow emergency was discussed.

Meeting Minutes

❖ **River Drive**

Councilman Mailley commented there is no update on this project and Administrator Giles advised the security issues on River Drive are part of the Bond project and Camera system.

Administrator Giles advised installation of bollards and chains will take place as soon as the weather warms up as well as the removal of dead trees and other enhancements to the park.

Council President Murtaugh discussed the County Hazard Mitigation Plan and the geese at River Drive.

❖ **Vacant Homes**

Administrator Giles advised Gene Cifuni, employee in the Public Works Department, has been assigned the project of identifying vacant homes in Westville and is also working with Code Enforcement regarding vacant properties. Administrator Giles confirmed a list of abandoned houses has been created so the next step is to publish the list of houses and send letters that will give the property owners 45 days to appeal the vacant status. The necessity and responsibilities of a QRE (Qualified Rehabilitation Entity) for this project was discussed by Administrator Giles.

❖ **Improving Internal Communications**

Administrator Giles advised a new email will be created issues@westville-nj.com that certain individuals can access and take action on the items discussed in the email. Individuals will be responsible to address concerns in their area of responsibility.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding new Edmunds software that will be purchased to assist with the Rental, Code Enforcement, Construction and Animal business conducted in the borough.

❖ **Solar Opportunities**

Councilwoman Domico advised that due to the weather she has no updates on this issue.

❖ **Updating Borough Ordinances**

Councilman Young and Administrator Giles discussed the Parking Ordinance and how to best word the revised Ordinance. A lengthy discussion took place regarding the Parking Ordinance.

A long discussion took place on how to approach owners who have curb flags on their property and how those flags cannot be in the "right of way" and updating the Sign Ordinance.

Councilman Lawrence inquired about the new Marijuana law. Solicitor Scaffidi advised he is researching the issue and will report back to council. A lengthy discussion took place on the new marijuana laws and new property owners in the Borough, specifically, performing financial background checks and providing the property owners with information that includes guidelines on property maintenance and using the information as a first time warning.

Meeting Minutes

❖ **Updating Borough Ordinances**

A lengthy discussion took place regarding whether landlords should be considered a business because they are making money from renting a property.

An ordinance concerning chickens in the Borough was discussed in length (individuals who have chicken would be “grandfathered”) and Councilman Lawrence brought of the subject of individuals who raise bees.

Administrator Giles advised he is researching Ordinances that address block parties and yard sales.

❖ **Playground Equipment**

Administrator Giles provided an update by stating that the slide near the football field will be removed because it is aluminum and that some of the swings at the playgrounds need to be replaced. Administrator Giles estimates that it would cost between \$50,000 to \$60,000 to update the parks to better and more modern equipment. Discussion on the \$50,000 CDBG awarded in 2019 was discussed and Engineer Bryson advised he will research to see if the funds are still available for use. Opening the basketball courts was also discussed and decided that they need to be fixed prior to opening for use.

❖ **Rebranding and Website Initiatives**

Administrator Giles advised there is nothing to report at this time.

❖ **Phase 3 – Water Project**

Councilwoman Domico advised she and Public Works Superintendent Finger are still researching the project and Administrator Giles commented there is money in the budget for Engineer Bryson for research. A lengthy discussion took place regarding the Watermain Replacement project and how to solve the PFNA levels in the water.

❖ **Community Center**

Administrator Giles stated expenses to repair the building can be added to the Bond. Public Works Superintendent Finger stated repairs to the outside wall has begun.

❖ **Car Charging Stations**

Councilman Lawrence stated he was still in the research phase of this project and is looking for financing of the project (e.g. grant). Councilwoman Domico asked “what are the benefits to the Borough” and it was agreed that the Borough should not expend any expenses for this project.

General Discussion

Administrator Giles advised that due to unforeseen circumstances the Shared Services agreement that was discussed for trash services with another municipality should be placed on hold for the time being and Public Works Superintendent Finger agreed with this suggestion.

Administrator Giles discussed, at length, the process to sell Deadline Drive, writing a Request for Proposal and also environmental issues associated with the property.

Meeting Minutes

Public Portion

Councilman Nordaby motioned to open the meeting to the public, Councilman Mailley seconded his motion that was approved by the entire Council.

- Marie Goodard, 303 Summit Avenue, inquired about the trees scheduled to be planted, parking availability during snow events, curb flags, and inquired about the possibility of putting out grills and picnic tables at River Drive. Ms. Goodard reported the condition of the Snack Shack restroom and the condition of the bleachers. Public Works Superintendent Finger stated he would follow up on her concerns.
- Jamie Clayton, 100 Cedar Avenue, shared her ideas of adding pavilions to the park as well as grills and benches and other parks that could be in the municipality. Councilwoman Domico expressed her concerns about Liability and suggested the Committee meet to discuss this issue. Mayor Sims advised that some of the Parks issues are in the planning stage.

Hearing no other comments, Council President Murtaugh motioned to close the meeting to the public, Councilwoman Domico seconded his motion that was approved by the entire Council.

Mayor Sims commented that starting with the March 18, 2021 council meeting all upcoming meetings will be “in person” at Council Chambers located at 165 Broadway and that the first Town Watch meeting will be held on March 25, 2021 at 6 p.m. at 165 Broadway in Council Chambers.

Councilman Nordaby asked if lighting at the Gazebo at Thomas West Park could be looked at by the Parks Committee.

Council President Murtaugh advised Little League opening day is scheduled for April 10th which may conflict with a Girl Scout event and that the Little League clubhouse took on water.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilman Nordaby and seconded by Councilman Young and his motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Kathleen Carroll

Kathleen Carroll
Deputy Municipal Clerk