

MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING
EAST STROUDSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL
TUESDAY MAY 4, 2021 - 7:15 p.m.

PRESENT IN PERSON: William T. Reese; Sonia Wolbert; Maury Molin; Carrie Panepinto; Don Cross; Roger DeLarco; Borough Manager Brian Bond. Also present were: Mayor Armand Martinelli, Solicitor John Prevoznik; Zoning Officer Marv Walton; Public Works Director Brian Ace; and Borough Engineer Russ Scott

The Pledge of Allegiance led by Jim Phillips.

Solicitor's Report on Executive Session

The Solicitor reported that an Executive Session was held on May 4, 2021 at 6:22 p.m., prior to the start of the Council Meeting. The Solicitor reported that all members of Council were in attendance. The Mayor was absent. The Borough Manager's annual evaluation was discussed. Mr. Prevoznik was excused from Executive Session at 6:25 p.m. and returned at 6:50 p.m. Executive Session ended at 7:06 p.m. No decisions were made.

April 2-, 2021 Council Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Mr. Cross and seconded by Mr. Molin to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2021 council meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments – Agenda Items

None.

SROSRC Report:

The SROSRC report was distributed via email.

Veterans Park:

Mr. Reese reported that there will be a dedication at Veterans Park at 11:00 a.m. on May 29, 2021. The donated benches will be installed prior to the dedication.

Mr. Reese requested approval to direct the Borough Manager to apply for a "Healing the Planet" grant in the amount of \$15,000.00 for improvements to the Veterans Park with a Borough match of \$2,500.00 for sidewalk design and installation.

A motion was made by Mr. Cross and seconded by Ms. Panepinto to direct the Borough Manager to apply for a "Healing the Planet" grant in the amount of \$15,000.00 for improvements to the Veterans Park with a Borough match of \$2,500.00 for sidewalk design and installation. The motion carried unanimously.

150th Update:

The next committee meeting is Thursday, May 13, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. in the Borough Council Chambers, and via Webex. An Ecumenical Service will be held Monday, May 24, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at St. Matthew's Church. Mr. Molin reported that essays are due by April 30. The calendar of events will be finalized at the next meeting and published on the Borough's website. 150th Anniversary T-shirts will be available for sale. Details will be on the Borough's website.

Police Report:

The SARPD report will be presented at the May 18, 2021 Council Meeting.

East Stroudsburg Community Alliance:

No Report.

Engineer's Report:

The Engineer's report was distributed.

I-80, Exit 51/308 Realignment Project Update

Mr. Scott reported the executed cost share agreement from PennDOT has been received for the utility relocation and the Borough can now submit for reimbursement. The bid letting by PennDOT for this project is scheduled for June 2021 with construction scheduled to start in the fall of 2021.

Emergency Generator Well No. 3

Mr. Scott reported North End Electric requested a waiver of an insurance requirement of the contract, specifically in regard to the criteria for the \$5 million pollution liability insurance. The contract specifications require the contractor to provide insurance from an insurance company which has an AM Best rating of A- or better and a financial size Class X or better. The contractor is requesting relief from these requirements in that its insurance company for environmental liability insurance is rated with an AM Best rating of A- and a financial size of Class IX.

A motion was made by Mr. Molin and seconded by Mr. Cross to approve the waiver request to allow the contractor to provide pollution liability insurance through an insurance company with an AM Best rating of A- or better but with a financial size rating of Class IX. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Scott requested authorization to execute the contract and issue the Final Award Notice to North End Electric in the amount of \$159,425.00 contingent upon Engineer, Solicitor, and Borough Manager favorable review of contract documents and bonds.

A motion was made by Mr. Cross and seconded by Ms. Panepinto to authorize execution of the contract and issuance of the Final Award Notice to North End Electric in the amount of \$159,425.00 contingent upon Engineer, Solicitor, and Borough Manager favorable review of contract documents and bonds. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Scott requested approval to issue the Notice to Proceed to North End Electric contingent upon Engineer and Manager approval.

A motion was made by Mr. Scott and seconded by Ms. Wolbert to authorize issuance of the Notice to Proceed to North End Electric contingent upon Engineer and Manager approval. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments – New Business

None.

Reports:

Brian Ace/Public Works:

The DPW report was distributed via email.

Mary Walton:

Mr. Walton's reports were distributed via email.

Mr. Walton requested authorization to approve the request by developer for a time extension for the Borough to act on developer's Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan for Dunkin', located at 256 North Courtland Street, to May 19, 2021 as recommended by the Zoning Officer.

A motion was made by Mr. Molin and seconded by Mr. Cross to approve the request by developer for a time extension for the Borough to act on developer's Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan for Dunkin', located at 256 North Courtland Street, to May 19, 2021 as recommended by the Zoning Officer. The motion carried unanimously.

Finance:

The financial reports were distributed via email.

Mayor Armand Martinelli:

No Report.

Sonia Wolbert:

No Report.

Don Cross:

Mr. Cross requested the Veterans Park Committee discuss installing nameplates of Veterans at Veterans Park.

Maury Molin:

Mr. Molin complimented the Manager with regard to the tables which were recently installed along the breezeway between Crystal Street and Dansbury Terrace. Mr. Molin reminded everyone who has adopted a planter to please continue to weed and maintain your planter.

Roger DeLarco:

Mr. DeLarco expressed his concerns with the planter he adopted and will seek assistance from Mr. Bond. Mr. DeLarco also complimented the Manager on the installation of the tables in the breezeway between Crystal Street and Dansbury Terrace.

Carrie Panepinto:

Ms. Panepinto relayed constituents' requests to extend the hours of the Recycling Center from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays thereby allowing residents who work during the week to utilize the center. Mr. Bond advised that request will be referred to the Recycling Committee.

Solicitor John Prevoznik, Esq.:

No Report.

Manager's Report:

Discussion of Terra Greens Municipal Golf Course

In preparation of a discussion regarding the Golf Course, Mr. Bond distributed to Council: i) a three-year Golf Course budget vs. actual analysis; ii) a projected five-year equipment and capital maintenance expense report; iii) a Golf Course personnel expense summary (yearly); and iv) a Borough-wide summary of planned utility infrastructure/capital improvement projects projected out twenty years. The estimated total for infrastructure and borrowing to complete improvements to existing infrastructure is approximately \$67 million. It was noted during the discussion that, with the exception of 2020, the Golf Course has continually lost substantial revenue during its operations and had to be subsidized by the General Fund. Mr. Bond reported that the Finance Committee recommended the closure of the Terra Greens Municipal Golf Course.

Ms. Wolbert, Chair of the Finance Committee, stated that the Borough's intention for 2021 was to open the Golf Course for the 2021 season. However, the Course's equipment and infrastructure are in disrepair and may cost a significant amount of money to replace and/or repair. Ms. Wolbert noted that since the Borough has owned the Golf Course, it has supplemented its operations with over \$1 million from the general fund to cover operating costs. The Finance Committee notes that in 2020 revenues increased to the point that a profit was made that year. However, the anticipation of such a profit is not supported by historical information and could have been due to the pandemic. The documents provided by Mr. Bond revealed an estimated ten-year equipment cost of \$124,000.00; golf cart replacement cost of \$160,000.00; building maintenance and expenses of \$16,000.00; and the annual personnel expense of \$112,000.00. Ms. Wolbert reported that the Finance Committee reviewed the documents that were distributed and concluded that in consideration of the Borough-wide infrastructure needs, including water and sewer, the Finance Committee does not feel that it is financially prudent to continue to operate the golf course. Mr. DeLarco reported that the Borough cannot continue to subsidize the Golf Course; Mr. DeLarco further opined that the land can still be used as open space thereby providing a recreational area. Mr. Prevoznik reminded Council that the Borough had to raise water rates to pay back the money that had been borrowed for existing infrastructure repairs. The 2020 borrowing did not account for any of the future infrastructure needs of the Borough. Mr. Prevoznik indicated that the Council could raise taxes to subsidize the Golf Course but reaffirmed Mr. Bond's position that the Borough cannot continue to subsidize the general fund from the water fund and pay its water debts. The water fund owes the sewer fund \$700,000.00 to pay for the Eagle Valley Booster Pump Station. Mr. Scott confirmed that there is a lot of old infrastructure in need of repair including water transmission mains which are over 100 years old. Mr. Scott noted that the repair and replacement of the water mains will be very costly. Ms. Panepinto, also on the Finance Committee, reported that the issues discussed have been the subject of ongoing discussions of the Finance Committee. She further acknowledged that there were many attempts to resolve the issues with the Golf Course, but unfortunately the recommendation to close the Golf Course is what is best for the entire borough.

After much discussion between Council members, the floor was open to the public. Mr. Phillips, of East Broad Street, stated the value of recreation is priceless. The capital improvement costs will always be present. At least five local golf courses that had once competed with Terra Greens have closed and our course is one of the few places that allows golfers to walk.

Mr. Phillips suggested that the Borough lease equipment, increase rates slightly and encouraged Council to open the Golf Course for the season. Mr. Reinheimer of Braeside Avenue stated the other courses in the area are so busy and foresees this season being as good as, if not better, than last year. Mr. Mackenzie, of Analomink Street, referred to Terra Greens as a jewel, and most municipalities would love to have a golf course. There are creative ways for the course to flourish.

Ms. Panepinto asked Mr. Bond what his thoughts are with regard to the Golf Course. Mr. Bond stated he is concerned about the future costs, and how administrative time will be spent dealing with the Golf Course. Council discussed whether the Golf Course should remain open. Mr. Molin made a motion to open the Golf Course which was seconded by Mr. Cross. Mr. DeLarco asked what that meant financially. Specifically, he asked if the Golf Course had to spend a lot of money on equipment or infrastructure or if the Golf Course was seen to be losing money every week, was the Golf Course open for the season. The issue was discussed further. It was recommended that if the Course was to be opened, that the Golf Course financial statements be reviewed as they were last year with a reevaluation of whether the Golf Course remains open on July 6, 2021 based upon the Golf Course's financial performance.

With no further comments, a motion was made by Mr. Molin and seconded by Mr. Cross to open the Golf Course, with continued oversight and review of the Golf Course's profit and loss statements and an evaluation to take place at the July 6, 2021 Council meeting as to whether the Golf Course should remain open for the balance of the season. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bond requested approval from the Finance Committee to increase the Golf Course Maintenance Worker hourly rate to \$14.50 per hour and re-advertise.

A motion was made by Ms. Wolbert and seconded by Ms. Panepinto to table the request to increase the Golf Course Maintenance Worker hourly rate to \$14.50 per hour and re-advertise. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bond requested approval to set a public hearing on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at 7:20 p.m., for the first Public Hearing for the FFY 2021 Community Development Block Grant.

A motion was made by Ms. Wolbert and seconded by Mr. Molin to set a public hearing on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at 7:20 p.m., for the first Public Hearing for the FFY 2021 Community Development Block Grant. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bond requested approval of Resolution 15-2021, authorizing the condemnation of a temporary construction easement on property (Parcel No. 05-3/1/7/25) for the Brown Street Waterline Project, as recommended by the Manager and Borough Engineer.

A motion was made by Mr. DeLarco and seconded by Ms. Wolbert to approve Resolution 15-2021, authorizing the condemnation of a temporary construction easement on property (Parcel No. 05-3/1/7/25) for the Brown Street Waterline Project, as recommended by the Manager and Borough Engineer. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bond requested approval to authorize the Solicitor to obtain an appraisal of the temporary construction easement on property (Parcel No. 05-3/1/7/25) for the Brown Street Waterline.

A motion was made by Ms. Wolbert and seconded by Ms. Panepinto to authorize the Solicitor to obtain an appraisal of the temporary construction easement on property (Parcel No. 05-3/1/7/25) for the Brown Street Waterline. The motion carried unanimously.

Bill Reese:

Mr. Reese commended everyone for the Borough's progressiveness on Crystal Street. Mr. Reese is anxious to review the traffic control study. Mr. Bond advised that will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

Approval of Warrant List 210504

A motion was made by Mr. Molin and seconded by Ms. Wolbert to approve Warrant List 210504 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Wolbert and seconded by Mr. DeLarco to ratify the paying of monthly bills paid prior to ratification of warrant list 210504. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Wolbert and seconded by Mr. Cross to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Tuesday, May 18, 2021, @ 7:15 p.m., in person at the East Stroudsburg Borough Municipal Building and virtually on Facebook on the East Stroudsburg Virtual Meeting page.