

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

JANUARY 13, 2005

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, Messenger-Gazette and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG and SILENT PRAYER

ROLL CALL

Black [P] Franklin [P] Mobus [A] Joren [P] Harding [P] Pote [P]

Also present were Borough Attorney Albert Cruz, Borough Administrator/Clerk Laureen Fellin, Borough Engineer Richard Moody, and Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

There were 9 members of the public present.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Franklin reported that the Administration & Finance Committee met briefly today to discuss professional services. He also said they are in the information gathering stage on dental plans where they are looking into how they can save the Borough money without compromising any benefits for employees.
2. Police - Councilman Black said the Police Department is looking into possibly a "no left turn" at the bottom of Hillcrest and Valley Road. He explained that this was implemented in 1995 and was rescinded in 1996. He said although there have been 43 reported accidents at this corner, only 3 were caused by the left turn. Councilman Black reported that in 2003 there were 221 summonses and warnings issued for violations around the circle and 344 issued in 2004. There were a total of 4068 summonses issued in 2004 and this included 167 detective cases which were handled by the department's only 2 detectives. Councilman Black said we should be very proud of our Police Department and we're looking forward to a great year. Mayor Ellis noted that out of all of the arrests, very few were Watchung residents.
3. Public Works - Councilman Franklin, in Councilman Mobus's absence, said the Borough received a very nice letter from the Watchung Arts Center thanking the governing body for replacing the roof. Councilman Franklin said he wished to comment on an editorial printed recently in one of the local papers from a Library employee criticizing the Council. He said that he is the liaison for the Library and the Borough is not ignoring the Library at all, in fact, the Library Advisory Committee is drawing up proposals and options now. Councilman Black said he would like to compliment the great job Public Works did in 2004, adding that they are a great group of men.
4. Buildings and Public Affairs
Public Affairs - Councilman Harding said he has not yet met with any of the committees this year.
Buildings - Councilman Pote said the Committee met for the first time and he had a good orientation. He said the focus of the meeting was the use of the 1st floor here at Borough Hall and with that he will be looking closer at the workflow to try to get a better feel for the needs of the Borough. Councilman Pote said that he received a report from Construction Official Ed Bennett regarding the Santucci House and will be studying it within the next couple of weeks. He said he met with Rescue Squad Captain Paul Sosman and discussed the purchase of extrication equipment, and asked him to provide some statistics on calls, including the numbers from Atlantic Ambulance.
5. Fire - Councilman Harding said the Fire Department is busy working on their budget and their new computer network is all set up with three workstations. He explained that they will now be able to tie into the County and access vital statistics. Councilman Harding said the setup is very impressive and announced February 5th will be the date of the Installation Dinner.
6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation - Councilwoman Joren reported that the Recreation Committee met last week and said the winter programs are in progress and hopefully the ice rink will be in working order soon. She said the Committee discussed ideas for the Somerset County Grant application for this year. Councilwoman Joren announced the resignation of long time member Laurie Bell and said she was a good worker and will be missed. In regard to Laws and Ordinances, Ms. Joren said the Committee welcomed Councilman Franklin aboard and said they are continuing work on the proposed fence ordinance and the Council has received a draft of one that would allow bow hunting. She said the big project they will be working on is the recodification of the Land Use Ordinance.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer - Richard Moody said he attended the Planning Board Workshop meeting and the sanitary sewer connection between Johnston Drive and Home Depot was discussed. He said he will be meeting with Vornado on Tuesday because they have agreed provide and easement to the Borough for that purpose.

Mayor Ellis announced that he has received a letter of resignation from Mr. Moody, effective January 21, 2005, as he is moving on to T & M Associates, an engineering firm that works with municipalities. Mayor Ellis said Mr. Moody has had a good relationship with the Borough for 10 years and wished him much luck.

8. Attorney - Mr. Cruz said he had one item for executive session; however, he will withdraw it until he has full Council attendance.

9. Administrator - Mrs. Fellin said she attended a JIF meeting this morning and in addition to being elected as secretary, she announced that they passed a resolution accepting accreditation of Watchung's Police Manual which is good news because this will provide us to a 5% discount on automobile and general liability premiums. The new Personnel manual is in the process of being reproduced and will be distributed to employees before the end of the month. Mrs. Fellin also reported that she will be holding a Department Head meeting next week to discuss personnel evaluations. She also announced the deer management program will begin on Monday, the 17th, and again on Thursday, the 20th.

Mayor Ellis said he is currently working with the trustees for the Ness Estate and the Borough has hired a multi-disciplined firm known and respected for municipal engineering and professional planning, to evaluate a plan the trustees have had developed. He said he asked the trustees for a three month review of the plan and they have agreed. Mayor Ellis said he will keep all informed of any developments. Mayor Ellis said he will be meeting tomorrow with a resident who has volunteered her time to improve our website and will also be meeting with Therese Lizardo who wears the crown of Miss District of Columbia and whose family resides in Watchung.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda listed below was unanimously accepted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Franklin.

Approval of the following Council minutes:

Approval of the following Borough Reports:

- #1- Police Department - December 2004
Recreation Committee - December 2004
Tax Collector's Report - December 2004
- #1- Martha Halmo, 12/17/04, 12/21/04 Letter and E-mail Supporting the use of reflectors for Deer Control c: Mayor & Council, AC, LBF, CG
- #2- State of NJ, DEP 12/20/04 Public Notice of revised and updated FFY2005 Project Priority List (Clean Water Financing) c: Mayor & Council, LBF, AC, Environmental Comm.
- #3- State of NJ, DEP 12/21/04 Announcing Green Acres funding opportunities c: Mayor & Council, LBF, Environmental Commission
- #4- Borough of Sayreville 12/22/04 Resolution supporting legislation to require the State to reimburse municipalities for the payment of property taxes for disabled veterans c: Mayor & Council, LBF
- #5- Laurie Bell 12/31/04 Letter of resignation as Recreation Commission member c: Mayor & Council, LBF, M. Bachert, C. Blackadar
- #6- NJ State League of Municipalities 1/3/05 Resolution opposing pending legislation which would allow government workers to collect both disability and workers comp benefits at the same time c: Mayor & Council, LBF
- #7- Watchung Arts Center 12/31/04 Thanking the Mayor and Council for their support and encouragement throughout the year c: Mayor & Council
- #8- Tommy Nadbielny 1/7/05 Voicing his concerns regarding the condition of the sidewalks at Best Lake c: Mayor & Council, LBF, RWM, CG

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The resolutions listed below, with the exception of R8 which was pulled from the Consent Agenda, were adopted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Franklin.

- R1:1/13/05 Approval of Raffle License for Sisters of Mercy of New Jersey
- R2: Awarding contract to Commerce National Risk Control Services for CDL Random Drug and Alcohol Testing
- R3: Authorizing the execution of agreement for the services of James F. Hurley Insurance Agency Corp. as Professional Risk Management Consultants
- R4: Authorize 2005 contract with Plainfield Area Humane Society
- R5: Authorize 2005 Recycling Contract with Somerset County
- R6: Authorize Mayor to file Grant and Loan Applications
- R7: Supporting opposition to A-3529 allowing government workers to receive both a disability pension and workers compensation benefits at the same time
- Mr. Cruz explained that he asked for R8 to be removed from the Consent Agenda because there was information missing on page 1 of the agreement, and on page 11 he would like paragraph 28 removed. Mr. Cruz explained a developer's agreement is usually good for a two year period and Target has said they may need longer and are willing to post performance bonds to 2007, with an option to withdraw. Councilman Black made a motion to accept R8 as amended; it was seconded by Councilman Franklin and upon roll call unanimously carried.
- R8: Approving a Developer's Agreement between the Borough of Watchung
- R9: Purchases Over \$2,000. - NJ Fire Equipment Co.
- R10: Resolution accepting the resignation of Borough Engineer

NON-CONSENT AGENDA

NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted on roll call with offering and seconding as follows.

Mr. Cruz asked that R11 be removed because the interested party requested it be held for two weeks so that they can iron out a few loose ends.

R11:1/13/05 Authorizing Sanitary Sewer Connection
Block 6801, Lot 6 **WITHDRAWN**

Mr. Cruz asked that R12 be removed because he would prefer to have the full Council present

R12: Executive Session:
Personnel – Council **WITHDRAWN**

PUBLIC PORTION

Lee Ehrenworth, Canterbury Lane, said Mr. Moody will be missed. He asked if there is a plan to cull deer on the North Side of town and Councilman Franklin said he is working on it. Mr. Ehrenworth asked if the net and bolt method was an option, adding that it only requires the approval of the homeowner and Councilman Franklin replied that it will be discussed by the Council before being voted on. Mr. Ehrenworth said those who don't learn, repeat their mistakes, and if you wage war you cannot have a safe sanctuary.

Ilse Belcher, Valley Road, asked Councilwoman Joren what was being proposed in regard to the bow and arrow method. Councilwoman Joren said there will be a proposed ordinance which would allow bow hunting under certain conditions. Mrs. Belcher said that on Thanksgiving a man was on her property and shot a deer, and she did call the police, however, he was gone by the time they arrived. She asked why anyone would shoot a deer with an arrow and Councilwoman Joren said she agrees, however, this will be up to the Council. She asked why the Borough doesn't use Streiter lights and Mayor Ellis said that Marty Halmo provided the governing body with information on Streiter lights and he will be looking into it. Councilman Black said the proposed ordinance will alleviate poachers. Councilman Franklin said poachers are cowboys, despicable, and what they do is absolutely illegal.

Maria Perez, Hill Hollow, said when Mrs. Belcher called the police the first time, she was told it was legal. Mayor Ellis said it was not and he would look into why she was told that. Mrs. Perez asked how residents will be notified of the culling days and Mrs. Fellin said it will be on Channel 22, our website, and in the newspapers.

Aleece Townsend, Valley Drive, said she was disappointed that R11 was not approved tonight as this has been going on for 3 years and now Mr. Moody is leaving. Mayor Ellis said the Borough will continue to be in touch with Mr. Moody and Mr. Cruz said the Borough needs the paperwork in hand before a resolution is voted on and told Ms. Townsend she should speak to Mr. VanRensselaar.

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, said she is optimistic that the website will be improved and asked that it does not have white on blue, as she cannot print it out. She said she would like to see the minutes from the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment on the website. Mrs. Goldschein asked that a description of a tennis court be written into the fence ordinance and asked if the ordinance says anything about lighting and Councilwoman Joren said there was not, however, they will address "tennis court" at their next meeting.

Jeff Klumpp, Tuttle Road, said anyone who has ever witnessed the net and bolt method knows that it is extreme. He said that sometimes the deer die from a heart attack when they are trapped. Mr. Klumpp asked who the Borough was going to hire for the bow and arrow hunting and Mayor Ellis said the Borough did not hire anyone yet, however, when they do to know that there is a strict background check the hunters must go through.

Councilman Harding said he was surprised to hear that people would look for changes to our website. He agreed that there is always room for improvement, however, he just spoke to someone who went on to our website for the first time in a while and said it looked great.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of January 27, 2005 at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco

Michelle DeRocco
Deputy Borough Clerk