

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

MARCH 22, 2007 - 7:30 P.M.

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

Franklin [P] Black [P] Mobus [P] Joren [P] Pote [P] Nehls [P]

Also present were Administrator/Clerk Lauren Fellin, Borough Attorney Albert Cruz, Borough Engineer Tom Herits and Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

There were 9 members of the public present.

R1:03/22/07 Expression of gratitude to the Silverman Family - Donation of Windows for Borough Hall and the Fire House

Mayor Ellis began the meeting by calling forward residents Claudia and Ken Silverman, who generously donated new replacement windows for the Borough Hall Municipal Building, the exercise room at the Police Station, and discounted windows for the Fire House and Rescue Squad. Councilman Pote read Resolution R1:03/22/07 (copy attached) and he and Mayor Ellis publicly thanked the Silvermans for their generosity. Mayor Ellis commented that this was a wonderful donation and that this was a good example of the spirit that makes Watchung great. Councilman Pote and Mayor Ellis proudly displayed plaques that will be put in the appropriate buildings which will memorialize this donation by the Silverman Family.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Black announced the budget meeting will be held on Saturday, March 24th and he will be meeting with CFO Bill Hance tomorrow to go over a few items.

2. Police - Councilman Franklin said he is in receipt of the police activity report and announced that the perpetrators in almost all of the crimes that occur in Watchung are from out of town, and sometimes as far away as New York and Pennsylvania, and most are shoplifting crimes that take place at the shopping areas on Route 22. He said he will be attending a seminar called "Policing Your Town" on May 11th in West Windsor. Councilman Franklin said the Police Committee is taking another look at the climate control problem at headquarters and will consider bringing in another company to try to rectify the situation. Councilman Black said thanks should be given to Councilman Mobus who is always available to offer his expertise whenever the Borough buildings are in need.

3. Public Works - Councilman Mobus reported on the recent snow event in the Borough on March 16th and said although it was a difficult storm to clean up, Public Works got through it and did a terrific job. He said "kudos" to Charles Gunther and his crew. Councilman Mobus reported that the residents who are benefiting from the sanitary sewer improvements have received their letters informing them how to hook up. He announced the Spratford Park dedication ceremony has been moved to April 28th at 12 noon. He said the plans for the Gateway project are almost finalized.

4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Buildings - Councilman Pote reported the Police Station is in the process of being painted and the Rescue Squad answered 23 calls in January and 29 in February. He said the extrication team responded to a call in Warren on March 19th and noted that the picture of the event in the local paper showed mostly Watchung first responders in attendance, and said "kudos" to the team for a successful extrication. He said the Historical Committee will be meeting next month and the Library Study Committee will be presenting their report to the governing body at either the 1st or 2nd meeting in April. Mayor Ellis said he received some materials from a company who the Borough may want to call upon in the future to help with construction pertaining to the Library.

Public Affairs - Councilman Nehls announced the Environmental Commission will be meeting this Monday, March 26th, and he will be attending a Middle-Brook meeting on the 28th. He also announced the annual Pancake Breakfast will be held on May 5th at Wilson Memorial and this year the profits will go the Children's Tumor Foundation, an organization that 19 year-old resident Sandra Blumberg raises funds for. He explained that Sandra suffers from Neurofibromatosis (NF) and this organization supports research to find a cure.

5. Fire – Councilman Nehls reported that the Department responded to 21 calls in February and logging in a total of 175 man hours. In regard to the shared service grant application, he said they are waiting to hear back from the State and hopes he will be able to report by the next meeting. Mayor Ellis said he was able to witness a drill held on Valley Road, near his home and said it was very interesting to watch. He also thanked the homeowners for allowing the drill to take place on their property.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation - Councilwoman Joren reported, in regard to Recreation, the Coaches Dinner was well attended and the program has grown over the years, attributing its success to the efforts of Dave Chemidlin. In regard to Laws and Ordinances, Councilwoman Joren said the planner is working on incorporating the changes and we are waiting for the summary.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer - Mr. Herits reported that he met with the Ness Property Development Committee and discussed a layout for the property. He said two pre-construction meetings were held last week, one for the Spencer/Fawn Sanitary Sewer Repair Project, and the other for the Pedestrian Crosswalk Improvements on Stirling Road. Mr. Herits also reported that the Hughes Lane project will be ready to go out to bid very soon, and that the contractor for the Spratford Park Project will be completing the finishing touches. He announced new plans were drawn up for the Bonus Room and he has been discussing the road overlays with Charlie Gunther. Mr. Herits also noted that the pre-construction meeting for the Rock Slope Remediation Project will be held on April 2nd, and the contractor will have 150 days to complete both Phase I and Phase II.

8. Attorney – Mr. Cruz had nothing to report.

9. Administrator – Mrs. Fellin reported that she held a Department Head meeting this morning and some very interesting information was shared. She announced that Tax Collector Catherine Park will have evening hours on three Thursdays a month, from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM; Assessor Ed Kerwin related the County Tax Board has given permission to the local Assessors to file appeals to make assessment corrections needed due to Assessor mistakes; and Fire Prevention Officer Gary Greves spoke of the need for combination ionization/photo-electronic detectors, a newer smoke detector that can pick up the vapors of “white smoke” and is able give a warning at an earlier stage.

Mayor Ellis announced that this Saturday is the scheduled date for “Operation Pride” which has been a successful program over the years, and said anyone who would like to assist should be at the Texier House parking lot at 9 AM. He reported that he and Mrs. Fellin attended the First Annual Law Enforcement Awards to recognize outstanding achievement in services to domestic violence victims held at the Administration Building in Somerville and sponsored by the Resource Center for Women and their Families. Mayor Ellis said Sergeant Jeffrey Skibenes was honored for his professional manner and calm demeanor when dealing with domestic violence victims. Mayor Ellis also said he appreciated the County taking the time to recognize the efforts of our men and women in Law Enforcement.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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NEW BUSINESS

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

Approval of the following Council minutes:
March 8, 2007, Regular and Executive Session

Approval of the following Borough Reports:
Tax Collector’s Annual Report - March 1, 2007
Tax Collector - February, 2007
Police Activity - February, 2007
Building Department - February, 2007

#22 - Connell Company 3/12/07 Notice of Berkeley Heights Planning Board to hear site plan Application (removal/replacement of trees) on March 21, 2007 c: M & C, Eng., Pl. Board

#23 - Connell Corporation 3/12/07 Notice of Berkeley Height Planning Board to hear site plan application and bulk variance application (removal/replacement of trees; construction/replacement of

#24 - Berkeley Heights Planning Board 3/12/07 Notice of Public Hearing on proposed Master Plan Reexamination Report on March 21, 2007 c: M & C, Eng., Pl. Board

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

- R1:03/22/07 Expression of gratitude to the Silverman Family - Donation of Windows for Borough
- R2: Award of Bid - Rock Slope Remediation at Police and Municipal Court Facilities:
- R3: Authorize Donation of Surplus Copier to Valley View School Library
- R4: Award of Professional Services Contract to L.T. Purcell Associates - Skyline
- R5: Purchases Over \$2,000. - NJ Fire Equipment Co.
- R6: Temporary Budget Amendment
- R7: Acceptance of Sanitary Sewer Portion of the Corey Lane/Orchard/Old Somerset/
Eaton/Sunbright/Valley Road Project

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Proclamation - Autism Awareness Month: April

Mayor Ellis read the proclamation into the minutes (copy attached) and said this is a growing problem in our state and his heart goes out to the parents and families of children afflicted with this condition.

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NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

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

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| R8:03/22/07 | Payment of Bills | <u>Offered</u> Black | <u>Second</u> Franklin |
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PUBLIC PORTION

Anthony Addario, Rock Avenue, expressed concern with the notices received from Berkeley Heights in regard to public hearings for zoning changes and revisions to their Master Plan, noting that he believes major construction will be happening at the Connell site and feels it would be in Watchung's best interest to find out exactly what is being planned. Mayor Ellis replied that Connell owns the property and has a right to develop it, however, the Borough will stay on top of the situation. Mrs. Fellin announced that a LOI application was received in her office today, and said it would be available if Mr. Addario would like to review it.

Steve Caruso, on behalf of the Watchung Fire Department, wanted to publicly thank the Silverman Family for their generous donation of discounted replacement windows for their building.

Councilman Mobus said the last Governing Officials meeting he attended featured a session on gang violence, and all should be aware of what is happening because we as residents and parents cannot assume gangs can not be in Watchung. He said he would like to invite a speaker to come to a Council meeting to bring awareness to this situation. Mayor Ellis agreed that it was a good idea and gave Mr. Mobus the go-ahead to coordinate the session.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of April 12, 2007 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Deputy Clerk