

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 7, 2008 - 8:00 P.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 8:00 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 [A] Nehls [P]

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

There were 5 members of the public present.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Nehls reported the Finance Department has completed working with the auditors to close out the 2007 year and produce the financial statements; the annual Debt Statement was sent to the state and the Annual Financial Statement is in the process of being signed. He announced that the Annual Debt Statement shows that as of December 31, 2007 and the Borough has \$28,522,150.63 in total debt, which is a ratio of 1.47% of net debt to equalized value. He noted the debt attributed to the Borough from the High School is \$9,635,252.16 and explained the Borough of Watchung is apportioned 23.0779% of the debt, Warren Township is apportioned 55.8653% and Long Hill Township is apportioned 21.0568%. Councilman Nehls said the Borough's first interest payment on the bonds sold last year will be due this month and noted the draft budgets should go out to the Council next week.

2. Police - Councilman Franklin announced the Police Committee will be meeting soon to discuss a 5-year plan. Councilman Franklin suggested the possibility of promoting a device he has in his home, a flashing light bulb which can be used in an emergency to assist emergency services to locate the home in need. Councilman Franklin demonstrated on a lamp and a bulb he brought into the Council chambers. All who were present were impressed and felt it was a good idea, especially when emergency service vehicles are trying to read house numbers on dark streets late at night.

3. Public Works - Councilman Mobus announced the bailey bridge is in place, and also that on tonight's agenda is the introduction of an assessment bond ordinance for the curbing on Beechwood, with bids being received later this month. He noted that the overlay on Brookdale Road will be included in this project. Councilman Mobus said on Monday evening the Library Study Committee met and, in addition to discussing a name change for the group, they made a site visit to get a first-hand look at the set-backs and the stream. It was the consensus of the Committee that a mission statement is a priority. Councilman Mobus said that he met with Assistant Engineer Arlene McCoy on Tuesday morning who informed him that she has a lot of the information needed for the Library which will save a lot of money. He added that the rehabilitation of Best Lake Dam is underway.

4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Buildings – Councilman Pote was not present this evening.

Public Affairs - Councilman Nehls reported the Environmental Commission met on January 28th and are very happy to know that the revised tree ordinance is being introduced tonight. He said he wished to personally thank Councilwoman Joren and the Laws and Ordinance Committee for making this possible. He said the Commission reorganized and announced that Jean Forlano is the new Chairperson, and Lynn Franklin is the Co-chair. Councilman Nehls said the Commission is eagerly awaiting the plans for the Ness property. In regard to the Board of Health, he said the new educator for the MiddleBrook Health Commission is doing a wonderful job, producing a newsletter in addition to a cable information show. Councilman Nehls explained that the Borough will try to have them run on our cable station. Mayor Ellis said that he was recently questioned as to the location of the oldest tree in Watchung and after discussion, it was agreed that Councilwoman Joren's idea of asking all the residents through the newsletter was a great idea; it may be in someone's back yard.

5. Fire - Councilman Black reported that the problem of excessive false alarms is being proactively addressed by Gary Greves and Charlie Gunther. He said he recently attended an advanced training extrication drill and said it was quite enlightening. He said it was an extremely motivated group and believes the Borough has a great team. Councilman Black also said the Borough had a major structural fire on Johnston Drive on Sunday afternoon and said all of the emergency service teams were there and did a phenomenal job. He thanked all who answered the call of need and also thanked the 7 towns who provided mutual aid.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation - Councilwoman Joren said the Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for next week, however, she said she has received an email from Dave Chemidlin who reported a record number of 217 kids participating in the basketball program this year, noting that this number is Watchung kids only. In regard to the Laws and Ordinance Committee, she reported a number of issues are being discussed, including accessory apartments. She said she is very happy to have the tree ordinance introduced tonight and feels that it is an ordinance that is fair to the residents and at the same time protects our natural resources. Councilwoman Joren said she still would like to call it the "Dolores Kresge" Ordinance in respect of all of the time and effort Dolores had put into protecting the trees in Watchung. Councilwoman Joren reported that the Commission discussed the recommendations from the Wildlife Management Advisory Committee which included expanding our current ordinance on the prohibition of feeding wildlife on public property to include all private property. After review of this proposal, the Committee agreed that the proposal, while well meaning, would be very difficult to enforce and in practical terms, be unworkable. She also said the Committee hopes to be able to introduce the revision to the Land Use Ordinance at the next meeting.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – Mr. Herits was not present this evening.

8. Police Chief - Police Chief Sean Whelan said January has been a busy month for his department and announced that he held the department's first departmental meeting in 10 years, noting that the new structure is in place. He reported that it is his intention to do an internal and external needs assessment prior to the implementation of the 5 year plan. Chief Whelan reported that January has been a statistically significant month with 63 adult arrests, and 2 arrests for the distribution of CDS (controlled dangerous substance).

9. Attorney – Mr. Cruz had no report this evening.

10. Administrator - Mrs. Fellin announced that in May of last year, PEOSH Indoor Air Quality Standards were revised, requiring an indoor quality plan and a person designated responsible for the plan. She said she has been working with Kevin Sumner on preparing the plan and a draft plan is now in place. Charlie Gunther will be the designated person for compliance and the plan will be provided to the governing body for their review. Mrs. Fellin said she would like to formally adopt the plan after it is reviewed and approved. She also announced that a Department Head meeting was held last Friday where a lot of good information was shared. After the meeting, Charlie Gunther gave a demonstration on how his department uses the new GIS system and Mrs. Fellin said she is looking forward to having the GIS implemented in other departments, in particular the Building Department so the Apartment Rental Registration Program can be implemented.

Mayor Ellis said prior to this evening's meeting, he attended the Eagle Scout Ceremony and announced that this is the 71st anniversary of Scout Troop 32 and commended Richard Wellbrock for his many years as Scout Master. Mayor Ellis said he attended a Mayor's meeting where ideas for a "greener" New Jersey and ways to improve the quality of life were discussed. He said he is going to suggest a needs assessment for the Borough's buildings. He also announced that he attended a meeting at the Freeholder's office along with Councilmen Mobus and Franklin, and Mrs. Fellin where they discussed a strategy for resurrecting the dropped Rt. 78 plan. He said he will keep residents posted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

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:
January 1st, 9th, 2008

Approval of the following Borough Reports:
Environmental Commission - Minutes of October 29, 2007

- #6 - Bill Carlough 1/28/08 Letter of response from DOT Commissioner Kris Kolluri to inquire as to why the original plan to improve the Rt. 78 Interchange was discontinued, with Mr. Kolluri stating c: M & C, LBF
- #7 - Hopewell Township 2/4/08 Resolution supporting local enforcement of "Large Trucks" on local roadways c: M & C

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda listed below, with the exception of R7, was unanimously accepted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Franklin and a second by Councilman Black. Councilman Mobus requested that R7 be withdrawn from the agenda.

- R1:2/07/08 Appointment of Municipal Judge - Frank W. Gasiorowski
- R2: Purchases Over \$2,000. - Ilderton Dodge
- R3: Appointment to Public Works, Full Time Status - Brian Veglatte
- R4: Award of Professional Services Contracts - Borough Attorney, Labor Attorney
- R5: Waive Chapter 2-25.10 of the Code of the Borough - Photographics
- R6: Authorize Release of Maintenance Guarantee and Stabilization Bond - Watchung Square Mall
- ~~R7: Award of Professional Services Contract - Titus Surveying and Engineering, P.C.~~
WITHDRAWN

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NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Introduction of OR:08/01 entitled "AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REPLACING CHAPTER XXIV OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, NEW JERSEY, TITLED "TREE PRESERVATION" Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be given its first reading. So ordered. Councilwoman Joren explained this Ordinance repeals and replaces Chapter XXIV of the Code of the Borough of Watchung titled "Tree Preservation" and is intended to maintain and enhance the general health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Borough by preserving and protecting one of Watchung's most valuable assets, its trees. Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be adopted on first reading and the Clerk be directed to publish the ordinance and notice of public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilman Black and unanimously carried on roll call. Public Hearing to be held on February 28, 2008.

Introduction of OR:08/02 entitled "BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION OF BELGIAN BLOCK CURBING AT BEECHWOOD PLACE IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, A LOCAL IMPROVEMENT, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$34,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS." Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be given its first reading. So ordered. Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be adopted on first reading and the Clerk be directed to publish the ordinance and notice of public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows; Franklin, Black, Mobus, Pote, Nehls, "yes"; Joren, "abstain". Public Hearing to be held on February 28, 2008.

Introduction of OR:08/03 entitled "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 138-11A, TITLED "DETACHED ACCESSORY STRUCTURES", OF THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG" Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be given its first reading. So ordered. Councilwoman Joren explained this ordinance clarifies that no detached accessory structure of building may be located in front of the principal building. Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be adopted on first reading and the Clerk be directed to publish the ordinance and notice of public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilman Black and unanimously carried on roll call. Public Hearing to be held on February 28, 2008.

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NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS The resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted on roll call with offering and seconding as follows:

		<u>Offered</u>	<u>Second</u>	
<u>Abstain</u>				
R8:2/7/08	Introduction of Ordinance OR:08/01 - Repeal and Replacement of Ch. XXIV of the Code of the Borough, Titled "Tree Preservation"	Joren	Black	
R9:	Introduction of Assessment Bond Ordinance OR:08/02 - Belgian Block Curbing/Beechwood Place	Joren	Black	Joren
R10:	Introduction of Ordinance OR:08/03 - Amendment to Chapt. 138 of the Code of the Borough, Titled "Detached Accessory Structures"	Joren	Black	

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PUBLIC PORTION

Anthony Addario, Rock Avenue, advised the Mayor and Council that the Green Brook Flood Control Commission passed a resolution urging the legislators to put \$23 million dollars in their budget so the flood control project can continue as planned, and asked for their support. Former Mayor Addario also mentioned that it is his intention to attend the Governor's county meeting and bring up the issue of Rt. 78.

Lee Ehrenworth, Canterbury Lane, asked for an explanation of OR:08/01, and was advised to stop into the office and get a copy, as it is very long. Dr. Ehrenworth, referring to OR:08/02, asked for an explanation of "accessory structure" and Mr. Cruz explained that it refers to anything that is not a principal structure, ie. a shed. Mr. Cruz said this is really just a clarification.

Walter Niegisch, Tuttle Road, said he thinks that Councilman Franklin's suggestion in regard to the blinking light bulb is a wonderful idea, and would be a big help to the Rescue Squad. He said many houses do not have numbers and at night many times the Squad will go right past the house. He said people should have numbers on their mailboxes and the numbers should face the oncoming traffic. Councilman Franklin said if the Borough promotes this to residents, other "tips" could be included for the best chance of quick response. Mayor Ellis said it sounded like a good Eagle Scout project.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of February 28, 2008 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Deputy Clerk