

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

June 19, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday, June 19, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002.

Council President DeRuosi called the Council Meeting to order. Mayor Sorg led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call – Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Mr. Pasceri, Mr. Zaccone, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Hertz, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott and Mrs. Siskind. Mayor Sorg, Solicitor Joe Bresnan of Dischell, Bartle & Dooley, Sgt. Robert Hoffman and Borough Manager Aversa were present. Mrs. Deininger was absent.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 16, 2018 Council Meeting. Seconded. Carried.

Council President DeRuosi spoke about the success of Ambler's 6th annual Arts & Musicfest. He extended his thanks to Ambler Main Street, Ambler Savings Bank, Rotary, the Police Department and Sheriffs, Emergency Management and Police Departments from neighboring communities, and Borough staff and work crews for their excellent work.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met Tuesday, June 5, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002. Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mr. Pasceri, Mr. Zaccone, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott and Mrs. Siskind. Mayor Sorg, Solicitor Joe Bresnan of Dischell, Bartle & Dooley, Sgt. Robert Hoffman and Borough Manager Aversa were present.

At the Council Meeting this evening, the Committees conducted business as follows:

Public Safety Committee – Mr. Claudio Zaccone, Chairperson

Committee members: Mrs. Deininger, Mrs Siskind

The Public Safety Committee report was given this evening by Mr. Zaccone.

The Committee will consider no actions this evening.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Police Department, Fire Department and Community Ambulance Association reports were received.
2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.
3. The Borough has submitted a letter to PennDOT containing documentation in support of a new traffic signal being warranted, given future construction of the St. Mary's Villa project. The Borough has requested that PennDOT reconsider having the St. Mary's Villa project install a new signal preferably at Bethlehem Pike and Lindenwold Avenue and that this be required as part of the project's Highway Occupancy Permit.
4. An upgraded microphone/speaker has been ordered for the Council Meeting Room.
5. Police Chief Foley will be retiring. His 'last ride' is scheduled for July 10th. The community is invited to join the police department for retirement festivities.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider moving the handicap parking space location from in front of the Ambler Theater to in front of 122 E. Butler Avenue. Seconded. Carried.

Mr. Zaccone asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

Public Utilities Committee – Mr. Salvatore Pasceri, Chairperson

Committee members: Mr. Zaccone, Ms. Tomlinson, Mrs. Siskind

The Public Utilities Committee report was given this evening by Mr. Pasceri.

The Committee will consider the following action this evening:

1. Consider approval of the Penna Escrow agreement for the Enclave at Lower Gwynedd Development (located in Lower Gwynedd Township across from Bergey Ford.)

Discussion ensued. Solicitor Bresnan explained that the document is a water extension agreement where the developer will post escrow money to secure public improvement (water line) construction.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Engineer's report was provided.

2. The Borough is considering moving forward to change the status of the Ambler Borough Water Department to form an Authority. Council approved consulting with an attorney in Harrisburg with Public Utilities Commission expertise.

Discussion ensued. Judy Baigis of 172 Tennis Avenue asked if the attorney would be paid by the Water Fund or from Solicitor Bresnan's fee. Solicitor Bresnan stated this was not a General Fund expenditure, and that the attorney, named Jim Dougherty (no relation to the Borough Engineer of the same name) would be engaged for no more than \$5,000 to be paid from the Water Fund.

3. Piping will need to be replaced at the Whitemarsh facility from the lower level to the clear well. Estimated (unbudgeted) cost is \$80,000. Staff will have a temporary fix (brace) installed and will have new piping installed in the fall at the time the carbon media is replaced (budgeted at \$45,000).

Discussion ensued. Judy Baigis of 172 Tennis Avenue asked whether the Whitemarsh facility was a sufficient producer to warrant the expense and how the Water Department would pay for the unbudgeted item. Manager's Assistant Elizabeth Russell stated the Whitemarsh facility yields the most water in the supply system. She added that funds in the Water Department's distribution budget or capital reserves would be used to pay for the cost of this capital expense.

4. Water Department will undertake routine system flushing later this spring. A daily flushing schedule will be posted on the Borough website and Council members will be updated on the schedule.
5. Valves have been replaced at: N. Ridge & Race, N. Ridge & Forest and at Alene & Bethlehem Pike.

Mr. Pasceri asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

Finance and Planning Committee – Ms. Francine Tomlinson, Chairperson

Committee Members: Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott

The Finance and Planning Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Tomlinson.

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consideration that **May 2018** invoices in the amount of **\$889,330.64** be paid as follows: General (**\$196,980.13**); Street Lights (**\$14,236.43**); Fire (**\$122,130.54**); Refuse (**\$37,584.38**); Parks & Rec. (**\$3,867.50**); Water (**\$157,301.81**); Sewer (**\$19,607.15**); WWTP (**\$232,784.54**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$16,823.61**); Liquid Fuels (**\$88,014.55**).

2. Consider a recommendation to adopt **Ordinance 1110**, the Bamboo Restrictions Ordinance.

Discussion ensued. Brook Marshall of 157 Edgewood Drive stated that the ordinance is illogical because it does not include all invasive plants, and that the ordinance discriminates against property owners who have bamboo on their properties. She added that this is in general a bad piece of legislation and that property owners already have the remedy of filing a civil suit. Brian Quinn of 323 Valley Brook Road objected to the ordinance on the general premise that a municipality should not be determining what a property owner has on his or her property. He stated the ordinance goes against the notion of “private property” and that it is a ‘land grabbing’ ordinance.

3. Consider authorizing the execution of the SEPTA Lease for the 2018 Farmers’ Market. [Rent currently is being paid. SEPTA’s legal team has prepared a corrected map.]
4. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program has issued a Notice to Proceed for the awarded Municipal Building Public Restrooms (Gym Wing) Project. Authorization is requested for the architect/engineer to prepare bid documents and advertise for bid.
5. Consider adoption of **Resolution 2018-09** recognizing the special Township relationship between residents of Maida, Italy and the Borough of Ambler.
6. Consider adoption of **Resolution 2018-10** supporting the Wissahickon Valley Public Library – Ambler Branch application for Keystone Grant funding.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer’s report was received.
2. Staff has prepared documents for the solicitation of Statements of Qualifications for specified professional services. Council is reviewing the draft documents.
3. Zelenkofske-Axelrod LLC has completed the 2017 municipal audit and Council is reviewing the financial statement.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Tomlinson stated that this is the second year in a row that the auditor has had to provide an amended audit. She stated she is not pleased with the service provided by the auditor.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider approval for Summit Realty to submit a letter to FEMA on proposed floodplain and floodway map revisions at the Ambler Lakeview development site. Seconded. (6-Aye; 3-Nay [Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Siskind]). Carried.

Ms. Tomlinson asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. Mayor Sorg stated she had recently attended a county-wide meeting on Brownfield redevelopment. She noted that Jerry Nugent of the County Redevelopment Authority was enthusiastic about the work the Borough has done in this field and complemented the quality of work produced by the Borough Manager and staff. He had stated that of the approximately 60 municipalities in the County, Ambler Borough's management ranks in the "top five." There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Ms. Sara Hertz, Chairperson

Committee members: Mrs. Deininger, Ms. Endicott

The Parks and Recreation Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Hertz.

The Committee will consider no actions this evening.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Committee will consider establishing a new program – *Friends of Borough Parks* – with residents who would like to volunteer their time and energy to improve the parks. A draft survey monkey survey has been prepared by Ms. Endicott and the survey will be available both on-line and as hard copy.
2. The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary has reinstalled storm drain 'street art' decals at the corner of Butler and Ridge. The street art is intended to create public awareness on keeping our storm drains clean.
3. **Family Movies in the Parks** have been scheduled: The Goonies at Pickering Field on June 22 (8 p.m.) and Toy Story at Knight's Park on August 24 (7:30 p.m.) **Yoga in the Park** at Pickering Field for adults is scheduled as follows: Tuesdays (7:00 p.m.) on June 26, July 17 and August 28 as well as on Saturdays (9:30 a.m.) on June 30, July 21 and August 25. All events are free. In the event of inclement weather events will take place in the Borough Hall gym (movies at 7:30 and yoga at scheduled times). Additionally, **Mindfulness** sessions are scheduling.
4. Summer Camp kicks off the week of June 18th and runs six weeks through July 27th. Sign-ups are still being accepted for weeks 2-6. Camp hours are 8:30 – 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Cost is \$40 per week. Parents may stop by during camp hours for sign-ups or for more information contact Christie Dunning of the YMCA at 215-628-9950 extension 1573.
5. Ambler Junior Baseball has received notification from Upper Dublin Township that their surplus Astroturf will be available, at no cost, to AJB for use at Knight Park.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Endicott asked about the permeability of the Astroturf and was informed that it will be installed with screens and will drain. Several residents inquired about the safety of Astroturf and whether special equipment, such as cleats, may be necessary or banned. It was requested that JB provide more information.

Ms. Hertz asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. Ms. Jill Sanchez of 149 Rosemary Avenue asked that attention be given to mud accumulation and correcting the eroded slope at the Wahl playground. Mayor Sorg stated that a Bike MontCo presentation was scheduled this week at the Montgomery County Community College. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

Salary and Personnel Committee – Mrs. Deininger, Chairperson

Committee members: Mr. Pasceri, Mr. Zaccone, Ms. DiPietro

The Salary and Personnel Committee report was given this evening by Ms. DiPietro.

The Committee will consider no actions this evening:

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. An Executive Session was held.
2. The Assistant Supervisor at the Wastewater Treatment Plant position has been advertised and interviews have been scheduled.
3. Vacancies exist on the Planning Commission and on the Environmental Advisory Council. Interested residents should forward a letter of interest/resume to the attention of the Borough Manager.
4. Ambler Main Street is always looking for volunteers, if interested contact Liz Kunzier at liz@amblermainstreet.org.

Executive Session

This evening, an **Executive Session** was held. It was stated that the discussion at the Executive Session related to hiring a new Borough employee.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consideration to hire a new Ambler Police Chief from within the department among the current Ambler police officers. Seconded. (5-Aye; 4-Nay [Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro]. Carried.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Ed Curtis Sr. of 357 Rosemary Avenue asked about the selection process. It was stated that as this process moves forward, if Council determines that the hiring of a police and municipal employee hiring consultant is necessary, David Wolgon would be hired at a cost not to exceed \$7,500. The consultant would set the parameters of the process.

Ms. DiPietro asked if there were questions or comments from Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the report be accepted and filed. Seconded, carried.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Safety Committee – The Committee will make no recommendations this evening.

Approved at Committee Meeting: Consider moving the handicap parking space location from in front of the Ambler Theater to in front of 122 E. Butler Avenue. Seconded. Carried.

Public Utilities Committee – The Committee will recommend and Mr. Pasceri moves:

Consider approval of the Penna Escrow agreement for the Enclave at Lower Gwynedd Development. Seconded. Carried.

Finance & Planning Committee – The Committee recommends and Ms. Tomlinson moves:

Consideration that **May 2018** invoices in the amount of **\$889,330.64** be paid. Seconded. Carried.

Consider a recommendation to adopt **Ordinance 1110**, the Bamboo Restrictions Ordinance. Seconded (8-Aye; 1-Nay [Mr. Pasceri]). Carried.

Consider authorizing the execution of the SEPTA Lease for the 2018 Farmers' Market. Seconded. Carried.

Authorization is requested for the architect/engineer to prepare bid documents and advertise for bid the CDBG Municipal Building Public Restrooms (Gym Wing) Project. Seconded. Carried.

Consider adoption of **Resolution 2018-09** recognizing the special Township relationship between residents of Maida, Italy and the Borough of Ambler. Seconded. Carried.

Consider adoption of **Resolution 2018-10** supporting the Wissahickon Valley Public Library – Ambler Branch application for Keystone Grant funding. Seconded. Carried.

Approved at Committee Meeting: Consider approval for Summit Realty to submit a letter to FEMA on proposed floodplain and floodway map revisions at the Ambler Lakeview development site. Seconded. (6-Aye; 3-Nay [Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Siskind]). Carried.

Parks & Recreation Committee – The Committee will make no recommendations this evening.

Salary & Personnel Committee – The Committee will make no recommendations this evening.

Approved at Committee Meeting: Consideration to hire a new Ambler Police Chief from within the department among the current Ambler police officers. Seconded. (5-Aye; 4-Nay [Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro]). Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

At the conclusion of the public meeting, Council allows the public time to comment on matters of interest or concern. Comment is not limited to current agenda items. During the Public Comment Period, Council will not answer questions or engage in dialog with the speaker. Residents are asked to state their name and address. Comments regarding any and all employee issues are not entertained. Council may address items or questions raised at the next scheduled Committee or Council meeting, but reserves the right to determine agenda items. Council requests those in attendance refrain from engaging the speaker during public comments.

Lee Meinicke of 126 N. Ridge Avenue addressed Council's procedure for hiring a new Police Chief. It was stated by Ms. Meinicke that she is appreciative of the PD and is glad of their service. She advocates for Ambler PD to be the best it can. She stated the job opening for a new Chief would provide Council with an opportunity it has not had in years to directly influence the direction of the Force. She noted that during Chief Foley's term, the Civil Service Commission had not been included to certify civil service scores for applicants. She stated that lobbying efforts of the 'mobocracy' turned this process into something less than representative of the entire Borough, with Council, by its vote to hire from within, backing away from a broader search. She asked that the composition of the Force include female officers and non-white officers to better reflect the diversity of the Ambler Community. She pointed out that the PD's \$2,000,000 budget which is more than half of the Borough's operating budget, merits occasional external review. She concluded by stating her disappointment at Council's decision not to conduct a broader search.

Brian Quinn of 323 Valley Brook Road stated that a broader search might lead to the bias selection of an outside candidate. He was pleased that the Borough has one or two apparently qualified candidates within the police department.

Judy Baigis of 172 Tennis Avenue complimented Borough crew on their maintenance of the Race Street tree pits, however she asked that in the future dyed black mulch not be used. Additionally, she asked that the Borough enforce dog license requirements.

Liz Iovine of 107 Church spoke about the road construction work and roadway blocking caused by Upper Dublin Township. She stated that affected residents had not been notified about the project.

Council President DeRuosi stated that no Committee Meeting will be held in July. Council will meet July 17th to conduct business at its regularly scheduled Council Meeting. **There being no further business**, Mr. DeRuosi moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler