

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

November 17, 2020

Ambler Borough Council held their scheduled monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM Software Program. Consistent with Council President's and the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency, this action was taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our community and to promote our commitment to maintain social distancing. As such, the meeting was not held at Borough Hall. A public copy of the meeting agenda was posted on the Borough website on Monday, November 16, 2020. The public was invited to access the ZOOM Meeting and offer questions or comments.

Roll Call – Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Welch, Ms. Henderson and Ms. Marshall. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Solicitor Joe Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa also were in attendance. Finance Manager Gail Gordon, Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell also were in attendance.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 20, 2020 Zoom Council Meeting and the November 4, 2020 Zoom Committee Meeting. Revisions were suggested for the Minutes. Motion to approve with revisions to October 20th Minutes. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Mayor Sorg presented a resolution recognizing the service of Councilperson Brooke Marshall who is concluding her term and relocating to another community in eastern Pennsylvania.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met via Internet vehicle ZOOM on Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott, Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Welch and Ms. Marshall. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Borough Manager Aversa and Solicitor Joe Bresnan were in attendance. Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell also were in attendance.

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

Public Safety Committee – Ms. Erin Endicott, Chairperson
Committee members: Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Mrs. Siskind

The Public Safety Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Endicott.

The Committee will consider no actions this evening.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider adoption of the Emergency Declaration for COVID-19 for the month of November 2020. Seconded. 9-Aye. Carried.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Police, Fire Department and Community Ambulance reports were received.
2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.
3. The Borough's next Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for Tuesday, December 22 from 2-7 p.m. in the Gymnasium.

Ms. Endicott asked if there were further comments or questions from Council or the public. Ms. DiPietro asked for a clarification on an item listed on the police report. Chief Hoffman responded that "assist other agencies" involved providing back-up to bordering municipalities. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

Public Utilities Committee – Mrs. Glynnis Siskind, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Welch, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Marshall

The Public Utilities Committee report was given this evening by Mrs. Siskind.

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consider awarding bid for WWTP Digester conversion.

Discussion ensued. Manager Aversa stated the low bid was considered too high to accept and that the WWTP engineer was reviewing options for the project. She stated she would report back to Council at the December Meeting. The Committee determined to table this agenda item.

2. Consider authorizing Borough Solicitor to advertise an Ordinance relative to the use of Eminent Domain with PennDOT regarding the Butler Pike Water Main Project.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider award of paving contract for road restoration at Militia Hill Road & Route 73 (due to water main leak repair) to Associated Paving Contractors at the quoted cost of \$33,660. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.
2. Consider award to obtain parts to rebuild clarified ET-9 to Midway Supply for \$71,782.68. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The WWTP engineer's report was provided.
2. An application of the Borough of Ambler for approval of the abandonment of public water service to the public in Pennsylvania has been filed and a notice has been advertised. Formal protests and petitions were received. An update was provided.

Discussion ensued. Solicitor Bresnan stated that our Harrisburg Attorney Adeolu Bakare is speaking with the townships regarding one "sticking point." Solicitor Bresnan anticipated providing further feedback at the next Council meeting.

3. The Loch Alsh Dam Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is being updated by Gilmore Engineers. The plan must be updated every five years. A revised Inundation Map is being prepared by Princeton Hydro which will undertake hydrologic and hydraulic models for new breach scenarios. This is necessary due to the removal of St. Mary's Dam at the Mattison Estates construction site. The cost is \$15,000.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Siskind stated that the EAP is also being updated due to senior units being built at the Mattison Estates site. Manager Aversa stated that the cost of the PH study is the responsibility of the Water Dept. since the Borough owns and maintains the dam. Ms. Russell stated that a public copy of the EAP is available at the Borough Hall receptionist desk. The EAP was last updated in 2015. A copy of the EAP includes an Inundation Map

Mrs. Siskind asked if there were further 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. Nellie DiPietro, Chairperson

Committee Members: Ms. Endicott, Ms. Welch, Ms. Marshall

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

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consider that **October 2020** invoices in the amount of **\$634,350.31** be paid as follows: General (**\$137,644.98**); Street Lights (**\$10,482.83**); Fire (**\$0.00**); Refuse (**\$55,773.75**); Parks & Rec. (**\$13,418.76**); Water (**\$104,521.42**); Sewer (**\$133,727.19**); WWTP (**\$178,781.38**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$0.00**).
2. Consider acceptance of the Montgomery County Planning Commission's cost proposal for planning assistance for 2021-23 based upon the same level of service as is under the current plan at an average annual cost of \$12,726 per year. This item is budgeted.

3. Consider authorizing advertising for adoption an Ordinance to be prepared Fixing the Real Estate Tax Rate for the Year 2021. A public hearing to consider passage of the Ordinance will be held at the December 15th Council Meeting.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. Council discussed stormwater requirements, specifically the area calculations that triggers stormwater requirements.

Discussion ensued. Mr. DeRuosi stated his preference for considering reduction of the area that triggers requirements from 1,000 square feet to 750 square feet. Ms. DiPietro stated her preference for reduction of the areas to 500 square feet. The Committee will consider brining this issue to a vote at the December meeting.

Public Comment:

Brian Quinn – 323 Valley Brook Road – Requested due to the fact that so many properties would be impacted that Council delay consideration of stormwater amendments until a time when they could re-engage at public meetings at Borough Hall.

3. The Borough Council has scheduled 2021 Proposed Budget meetings on November 17 and December 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. via ZOOM.
4. The Solicitor will prepare an Ordinance regarding 2-hour parking limitations on Race Street and possible additional parking limitations/restrictions in the Borough.

Discussion ensued. The Committee will consider enforcement of 2-hour parking limitations and possible additional 2-hour parking limitations for other streets in the Borough as enumerated in the Code of Ordinances Chapter 15, Part 4. Establishment of a residential street parking permit process with distribution of free parking permits was discussed. Chief Hoffman stated that patrolling parking could be difficult. He speculated that residents would call-in violations and that eventually the public would fall into compliance.

Ms. Welch inquired about the possible striping of spaces. Manager Aversa stated there is a size requirement for parking spaces and that the Borough had determined in prior years that most congested streets would have a decrease in the number of spaces if they were striped. Ms. Hertz noted that parking permits would allow residents better access to parking spaces on their streets, but not necessarily in front of their house. Solicitor Bresnan stated that permits would be for residents, not businesses, and that there are parking requirements for businesses in the business district although many had been allowed to roll-over parking requirements from prior businesses.

Ms. Marshall suggested the Borough invest in license plate tracking technology to better enforce parking limits. Chief Hoffman stated the Borough does not have a parking authority and that enforcement would be left up to the patrols. He stated that initially enforcement would be spotty. Ms. Henderson noted that restrictions in the Poplar/Rosemary area would push parking onto Ridge and Main Street.

Public Comment:

Sal Boccuti – 300 Rosemary Avenue - Inquired about parking on both sides of Rosemary Avenue. Sought a clarification that the Borough would focus on signage and not meters. Manager Aversa responded that parking was allowed on one side of Rosemary Avenue other than on street sweeping days.

Jose Rodriguez – 185 Water Street - Requested that Water Street be added to the list of permit parking streets.

Amanda Weicksel – 183 Water Street - Requested that Water Street be added to the list of permit parking streets with 2-hour parking limits due to the perceived overflow from Rosemary Avenue.

Anna Lee Lapinski – 136 Rosemary Avenue - Requested that Water Street be added to the list of permit parking streets. Noted that businesses, specifically Zaccone Motors, frequently park vehicles on residential streets. Noted that the Beauty School staff occupy a large number of street parking spaces. Manager Aversa reiterated that parking permits would be issued to residents only.

Jill Sanchez – 220 Rosemary Avenue - Requested that the 200 block of Rosemary Avenue be included. Stated that enforcement should not be left up to the residents. Mr. DeRuosi stated the Borough should survey blocks on streets where residents have driveways.

Wes Pipitone – 149 Rosemary Avenue - Asked how the Borough intends to verify resident addresses such as requiring showing an ID and car registration to obtain a parking permit. He suggested that the Borough consider, due to the number of renters in the Borough, requiring a utility bill as a form of proof as opposed to car registration which might not be current.

Madge Monser – 372 Forest Avenue - Suggested the Borough consider extending 2-hour parking restrictions into the evening, noting that 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. parking limitations were not sufficient for residents on those streets. Manager Aversa stated complaints are received from residents when they are coming home from work, not late in the evening. She stated the Borough would need a parking authority to be able to enforce nighttime parking restrictions. Mr. DeRuosi commented that the soon-to-be-constructed Poplar Street lot might help to alleviate certain parking problems.

Ms. DiPietro asked if there were further 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.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Ms. Sara Hertz, Chairperson

Committee members: Mrs. Deininger, Ms. Endicott, Ms. DiPietro

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 is moving forward with plans for creation of a Community Garden next spring. A public information session was held via ZOOM on November 1st. A second meeting is scheduling for December.
2. Ambler Borough Planning Commission currently is working on a Parks Plan outlining the future of the Borough Parks System. They will hold several ZOOM workshops in the coming months for each of the parks to solicit resident input and participation in the process.

Ms. Hertz asked if there were further 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.

Salary and Personnel Committee – Mrs. Nancy Deininger, Chairperson

Committee members: Mrs. Siskind, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Henderson

The Salary and Personnel Committee report was given this evening by Mrs. Deininger.

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consider appointment of Denny Whalen for a 3-year term to the Board of Trustees of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library representing Ambler Borough. The Board is comprised of nine trustees and Ambler Borough appoints two of these trustees.
2. Consider adoption of Resolution 2020-08 Recognizing the Service of Councilperson Brooke Marshall.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. Several volunteer committee positions expire at the end of the year. Appointments will be made by Council at the January Meeting for Committee positions with expiring terms which include:

Appeals Board (2 seats – 3 year term); Civil Service Commission Alternate (current vacancy – 4 year term balance); Environmental Advisory Council (2 seats – 3 year term); Human Relations Commission (1 seat vacancy – 2 year term balance; 1 alternate seat – 2 year term balance); Planning Commission (1 seat – 4 year term); Vacancy Board (1 seat – 1 year term); and Zoning Hearing Board (1 seat – 3 year term; 1 seat Alternate – 3 year term; 1 seat Alternate – 2 year term balance). Interested candidates are asked to send a letter of interest and resume to the Borough Manager at manager@borough.ambler.pa.us or by mail to the Borough Manager.

2. Ambler Borough has organized a municipal water authority under the provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act. Terms for the 9-member Ambler Water Authority Board expiring the first Monday in January 2021 include: one seat from Ambler Borough and one seat from Whitpain Township. Interested candidates are asked to send a letter of interest and resume to the Borough Manager at manager@borough.ambler.pa.us or by mail to the Borough Manager.
3. Resumes are being accepted for the vacant Public Works Laborer position.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Approved at Committee Meeting: A recommendation for adoption of the Emergency Declaration for COVID-19 for the month of November. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Public Utilities Committee – The Committee recommends and Mrs. Siskind moves:

Consider authorizing Borough Solicitor to advertise an Ordinance relative to the use of Eminent Domain with PennDOT regarding the Butler Pike Water Main Project. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Approved at Committee Meeting: Consider award of paving contract for road restoration at Militia Hill Road & Route 73 (due to water main leak repair) to Associated Paving Contractors at the quoted cost of \$33,660. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Approved at Committee Meeting: Consider award to obtain parts to rebuild clarified ET-9 to Midway Supply for \$71,782.68. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

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

Consider that **October 2020** invoices in the amount of **\$634,350.31** be paid. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider acceptance of the Montgomery County Planning Commission's cost proposal for planning assistance for 2021-23 based upon the same level of service as is under the current plan at an average annual cost of \$12,726 per year. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider authorizing advertising for adoption an Ordinance Fixing the Real Estate Tax Rate for the Year 2021. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

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

Salary & Personnel Committee – The Committee recommends and Mrs. Deininger moves:

Consider appointment of Denny Whalen for a 3-year term to the Board of Trustees of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library representing Ambler Borough. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2020-08 Recognizing the Service of Councilperson Brooke Marshall. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No further public comment was received.

There being no further public comment or other business, Mr. DeRuosi moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler