

AMBLER BOROUGH COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 6, 2021

Ambler Borough Committees held their scheduled monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 6, 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 in our community. As such, the meeting was not held at Borough Hall. A public copy of the meeting agenda was posted on the Borough website. The public was invited to access the ZOOM meeting and offer questions or comments.

In Attendance this Evening – Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott, Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Welch, and Ms. Sheedy. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Solicitor Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa also were in attendance. Water Superintendent Steve Smallberger, Public Works Supervisor Marco Resente, Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell also were in attendance. Mr. DeRuosi called the meeting to order. He reviewed the rules and protocol for attendance and participation in a ZOOM Meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

Public Safety Committee - Ms. Erin Endicott, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Mrs. Siskind

The Committee Report was read by Ms. Endicott.

1. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.
2. A Declaration of Disaster Emergency for Ambler Borough for the month of April 2021, empowering the Borough to manage its emergency response was received. Consider adoption of the proposed Declaration.
3. The Borough is working with Darchei Noam-PA and the Wellness Pharmacy to run a Covid vaccination clinic at Borough Hall.

Public Utilities Committee - Mrs. Glynnis Siskind, Chairperson

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

The Committee report was read by Mrs. Siskind.

1. The WWTP report will be provided to the Committee.
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 was advertised. Formal protests and petitions were received.
3. Quotes are being requested by the Water Department for the Phase II piping replacement project at the Whitemarsh facility.
4. Water Department will conduct routine system hydrant flushing which began the first week of April. A flushing schedule will be posted on the Borough's website.

Finance & Planning Committee - Ms. Nellie DiPietro, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Endicott, Ms. Welch, Ms. Sheedy

The Committee report was read by Ms. DiPietro.

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. An Ordinance amendment to stormwater requirements, specifically the area calculation that triggers stormwater requirements has been advertised for adoption. A Public Hearing has been scheduled for April 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
3. An Ordinance to define Mural Language has been advertised for adoption. A Public Hearing has been scheduled for April 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
4. Montgomery County has prepared a contract to work with the County Planner. The Planning Commission will be providing input on future projects.
5. Consider adoption of a Resolution 2021-03 for the Intermunicipal Collaboration to extend the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for the development of a Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) for the Wissahickon Creek Watershed.
6. Consider establishing a residential inspection program for resale of properties.

Discussion ensued. Code Officer Kucher stated he could cross-reference information on sales with final water certifications. He stated inspection paperwork could be completed at closings. Solicitor Bresnan stated any such program would require teeth for enforcement. Ms. Welch asked whether curbs and sidewalks would be inspected. Manager Aversa stated the Planning Commission would probably involve with determining an inspection program.

Public Comment: Janet Verbit of 306 E. Mt. Pleasant Avenue stated it would be inappropriate to conduct a full-home inspection – buyer beware. She noted that it would be necessary for the Borough to charge a fee. Madge Monser of 372 Forest Avenue suggested Code inspect locations of downspouts and where water flows to maximize MS4 requirements.

Parks & Recreation Committee - Ms. Sara Hertz, Chairperson

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

The Committee report was read by Ms. Endicott.

1. The Committee is moving forward with plans for creation of a Community Garden to be installed this spring. A meeting of Community Garden has been scheduled for Sunday, April 11 at 3:30 p.m. at Knight Park. Amy Seponara of Forest Avenue stated a Steering Committee has been established for this project which will bring everybody together and be a perfect pandemic activity. She stated this year the intention is to install three 8x4 foot raised beds and that a perimeter design was being worked on. This will be a work-in-progress and may at some point in time incorporate a children's garden or rain barrels. She noted that Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard would accept produce donations.

Public Comment:

Anita Pieri – 32 E. Church Street – Ms. Pieri stated she did not know about the Community Garden. She did not receive flyers and stated that her awareness was only through social media. She stated there had been poor communication. She asked the Committee to consider increased traffic, people, and parking needs. She stated she was researching community garden projects in other communities. She stated the West Ambler project was a disaster and that Conshohocken was organized. Ms. Hertz responded that the proposed Knight Park location had been selected during the winter at Council Meetings and that meetings had been held parallel with meetings for Parks Planning.

Abby Epps – 20 E. Church Street – Ms. Epps stated that she is a gardener and as such felt that trees would need to be cut down for the garden to receive six hours of sunlight per day. With the flooding problems in the area, she stressed the importance of these trees. She asked Council to consider building a community center as opposed to a garden. Mr. Abby Epps stated the proposed location was a used area of the park for activities such as wall ball.

Becca Polard – 265 Bannockburn Avenue – Ms. Polard stated she is 100% in favor of the Community Garden. Her young son Alex stated the area proposed is free and clear and a Community Garden would be great for the community.

Madge Monser – 372 Forest Avenue – Ms. Monser suggested that the stakeholders reconvene at the table to discuss the Garden project. She suggested that Church Street and Bannockburn Avenue resident input was needed, and that the committee should start over. She stated this was an amazing vision that would require community support.

Dana Riley – 241 Bannockburn Avenue – Ms. Riley stated the proposed location was convenient to a watering source and public restrooms. She stated a determination has yet to be made on what to plant. She encouraged residents to attend the upcoming meeting and bring their ideas. She stated 45 residents have signed up.

Patti Fabiani – 54 E. Church Street – “Michael”, a computer-sharing guest of Ms. Fabiani stated there are other needs at Knight Park and suggested that Council apply money to other facilities at the park.

Bob Lagreca – 248 Belmont Avenue – As Chairperson of the Planning Commission, Mr. Lagreca stated the Commission has not yet finalized long-term plans for the parks. He thought the Community Garden project was not a bad idea and noted that the location had adequate water and ADA parking.

Jeri Brockington – 318 Randolph Avenue – As Director of the Steering Committee, Jeri stated the intention was not to bring stress or separatism and the Garden would be good for the community.

Jen Stomsky – 262 N. Spring Garden Street – Ms. Stomsky stated she was aware that Councilperson Henderson had discussed establishing a Community Garden since she began as a Councilperson. Ms. Stomsky suggested residents come to the meeting with solutions.

Councilperson Nellie DiPietro – Ms. DiPietro stated she had received correspondence in support of the Community Garden from the Farmers’ Market (operated by Farm-to-City), Ambler Main Street, Weaver’s Way Co-op and the Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard.

Councilperson Erin Endicott – Ms. Endicott stated discussion on the Community Garden had been on Council’s agenda since June 2020, that meetings had been posted and were well attended and that all activities had been in compliance and were transparent.

Councilperson Sara Hertz – Ms. Hertz stated the organizational bylaws, rules and infrastructure were in process.

Councilperson Jen Henderson – Ms. Henderson stated the committee had distributed numerous meeting flyers to addresses at Church, Main and Bannockburn.

2. The Committee had discussed holding an EAC-organized parks clean-up day on Saturday, May 8th from 10 a.m. until noon which will include rain garden maintenance to ensure they are properly functioning.
3. Ward 2 is participating in the EAC's Adopt-A-Tree Program and set forth a challenge to the other Wards to similarly adopt-a-tree.
4. The Committee is discussing options to manage the competing demands for recreational space at Ricciardi Park multi-purpose courts.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Hertz stated there have been tensions at the courts between pickleball players and children and their families have not been able to co-exist. She stated the Borough has nine parks featuring activities for children and that Ricciardi Park is the only park with multi-generational activities. She questioned whether rules or guidelines were needed and asked that we all play nicely together. Ms. Endicott stated this is a shared facility and needed to be self-policing with guidelines. Ms. Hertz suggested a sign allocating dedicated usage hours and etiquette. Ms. Sheedy suggested establishing seasonal hours.

Public Comment:

Justin Hammond – 204 Fulling Mill Road – Mr. Hammond stated the children are excited by the pickleball tournaments and participate. He stated he felt the groups would work it out.

Janet Verbit – 306 E. Mt. Pleasant Avenue – Ms. Verbit stated the players enjoy the kids and share the court. She stressed that the problem is not with the kids.

Judie Maida – 32 School Street – Ms. Maida suggested that while the children are in school the Borough could add the two nets back on the court.

Marita Bondi – 225 Hendricks Street – Ms. Bondi stated this is not a crisis, that during the pandemic the court's popularity has soared and that as we move forward the courts probably will be less used. She stated the people can address isolated incidents at the courts and that it would be rash to put in new restrictions until we know how it all plays out.

Julie Singer – 518 Vestry Drive – Ms. Singer stated her goal was the return of all four nets. She suggested considering weekend/weekday scheduling during the four seasons.

Councilperson Hertz suggested signage that works with the good will of the people. She stated she would like to see the two nets which had been removed returned. Solicitor Bresnan stated signage with rules would require authorization in an ordinance. Ms.

Deiningering suggested language that asks the public to be respectful. Manager Aversa suggested good citizen signage stating these are multi-purpose courts and “please share with everyone.” Solicitor Bresnan stated there would therefore be no need to review the ordinance at this time.

Salary & Personnel Committee - Mrs. Nancy Deiningering, Chairperson

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

The Committee report was read by Mrs. Deiningering.

1. An offer of employment is requested for the Assistant Supervisor of Public Works.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Safety Committee - The committee recommends and Ms. Endicott moves:

Consider adoption of a Declaration of Disaster Emergency for COVID 19 for the month of April. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

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

Authorizing making an offer of employment to a candidate for the Public Works Assistant Supervisor position. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no public comment this evening. **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