

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

September 21, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday, September 21, 2021, 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, Ms. Hertz, Ms. DiPietro, Mrs. Siskind, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Welch, and Ms. Sheedy. Mayor Sorg, Chief Borkowski, Solicitor Joe Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa also were in attendance. Ms. Henderson was absent.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the August 17, 2021 Council Meeting. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002. Present: Ms. Hertz, Ms. DiPietro, Mrs. Siskind, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Welch, Ms. Henderson, and Ms. Sheedy. Mayor Sorg, Chief Borkowski, Solicitor Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa were present. Mr. DeRuosi was absent.

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 the Committee Meeting:

1. Motion to adopt **Ordinance 1123** to address the 2-Hour Parking Permit Program for Borough residents. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Police and Community Ambulance reports were received.

2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.

Ms. Endicott 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.

Public Utilities Committee – Mrs. Glynnis Siskind, Chairperson

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

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

The Committee will consider the following action this evening:

1. Consider authorization for Water Dept to trade in the 2016 GMC Sierra (trade-in quote \$20-21,000) and the 2019 Ram Classic (trade-in value \$22-23,000) to purchase a 2022 Ford F250 4x4 Utility Body Supercab Pickup. CoStars price \$44,974 (less trade in equals net cost \$3,460.50).

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Motion to award to Eastern Environmental the contract to rebuild WWTP Clarifier ET # 8 at a cost of \$75,100. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The WWTP engineer's report will be provided.
2. A public meeting of the Ambler Water Authority Board was held September 9, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. at Ambler Borough Hall at which time the business of the Authority was discussed and the Authority authorized the execution of a 'Certificate of Termination' of the Authority.
3. The Water Department will commence routine system hydrant flushing late-September or early October. The daily flushing schedule will be posted on the Borough website.

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. Sheedy

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 **August 2021** invoices in the amount of **\$679,978.99** be paid as follows: General (**\$170,647.23**); Street Lights (**\$2,988.24**); Fire (**\$0.00**); Refuse (**\$53,630.44**); Parks & Rec. (**\$11,592.69**); Water (**\$242,986.26**); Sewer (**\$31,691.17**); WWTP (**\$165,947.96**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$495.00**).
2. Consider adoption of **Resolution 2021-10** which adopts procedures for the handling of recycling and solid waste disposal violations by haulers, businesses, institutions or residents of the Northern Montgomery County Recycling Commission member municipalities.
3. Consider exploring how to preserve Ambler's historic resources. [A request has been made for Council to establish and appoint a new committee/task force for this undertaking.]

Discussion ensued. Ms. DiPietro stated a 'historic task force' could work to preserve whatever Council wants to preserve. Ms. Endicott stated a task force or committee could shape our vision and could research and report to Council. She stated this would be a year's long process, more like a Five-Year Plan. Then, Council could have the Planning Commission move forward with a review. Ms. Welch stated that formation of a task force was premature since Council would first need to flush out and define the 'tasks' at hand. Mr. DeRuosi stated that upon review of the Comprehensive Plan and Open Space Plan the Planning Commission has already identified historic properties. He stated he was not opposed to pursuing these goals and felt that a task force would be a redundancy. He preferred to allow the Planning Commission to move forward with a review. Ms. Hertz stated she would like a charter prepared spelling out the functions of a new committee or task force. She noted that Council at times has difficulty recruiting volunteers. Ms. Siskind suggested tabling the concept of establishing a new committee or task force until after the New Year. She requested a more detailed presentation. Mr. DeRuosi stated that our Planning Commission hashes out details at its monthly public meetings. He said it would be a disservice to the Planning Commission not to have them involved. Ms. Welch suggested sending a request for the Planning Commission to explore preserving Ambler's historic resources after the Parks Plan review is completed.

Bob Lagreca of 248 Belmont Avenue and Chairman of the Planning Commission stated this has been discussed since the early 1990's and noted that a couple of years have been spent laying the groundwork. Ms. Endicott stated that after 20 years, the Borough should resume discussion. She noted the Comprehensive Plan is only a road map and that Council would need to pass an ordinance to put change into action. Michael Frost of 128 Forest Avenue encouraged Council to move forward with a task force now noting that people are ready to undertake this task and they would do the research and put it all together with dynamic involvement. Mr. Lagreca responded that the Planning Commission can set aside time to review and comment on this issue.

Mike Golden, owner of the historic Wyndham Hotel stated that a task force would be redundant and would add more bureaucracy, resulting in increased costs spent on lawyers. He stated the Planning Commission is in place and that Council would approve or disapprove of the Planning Commission's recommendations. Liz Kunzier of 360 Mattison Avenue asked that if Council moved forward with establishing a task force that they advertise appointment opportunities to the entire community. She added that Ambler does not want to price itself out by adding complicating factors. Ms. Sheedy stated that the Planning Commission is a more targeted group. Ms. DiPietro stated that the Montgomery County Planning Commission Planner is there to advise and assist.

The Committee agreed to table or defer establishing a committee or task force at this time. Ms. DiPietro stated the F&P Committee would move to ask the Planning Commission to re-explore options and research on historic preservation.

4. Consider advertising for a public hearing on October 19th a request for a license transfer from Williamsonten, Inc. of Horsham to 3 Rivers Beer, LLC located at 241-65 N. Main Street.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Sheedy asked whether adequate parking exists for the proposed 30-seat and take out brewery. Code Officer Kucher stated the applicant would be prepared to address all issues at the hearing. Borough Manager Aversa stated there is sufficient parking.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. A Motion was made to acknowledge receipt by Council of the Borough Pension 2022 Minimum Municipal Obligations (MMO). Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.
2. A Motion was made to authorize the Borough Manager to execute documents relative to the Federal Aid Reimbursement Agreement for the Ambler Sidewalks Improvement Project. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.
3. A Motion was made to advertise an Ordinance amending the Borough's existing wireless ordinance to comply with the FCC order as well as develop design requirements for wireless facilities in the rights-of-way to prevent aesthetically obtrusive facilities. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.
4. A Motion was made to advertise a public hearing to be held October 5th to consider approval of a license transfer for Harry's Tap Room in Blue Bell to 1 W. Butler. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.
5. A presentation on the 9 N. Maple Street Sketch Plan proposing a 92 residential unit 5-story building by Ambler Lakeview Development LP was discussed. Authorization to work with the developer to prepare ordinance language was approved by Council.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. Staff provided cost details for equipment and other expenses to provide public 'hybrid' Council Meetings. Ms. DiPietro stated the Committee was not prepared to comment at this time.
3. The 2022 Municipal Budget is being prepared.

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 Community Garden Committee will hold a meeting at Knight Park on Sunday, September 26 at 3:30 p.m. For further information send an email to amblergarden@gmail.com or go to the Ambler Community Garden's Facebook page.
2. Ambler Square construction is almost complete, with punch list items currently under review. A park dedication will be planned.

Discussion ensued. Borough Manager suggested holding the dedication during Ambler's Halloween Extravaganza (with a food truck on site) to be held October 30th. Council was enthusiastic about this proposal.

3. The Ambler Borough Parks System Survey is available by link www.boroughofambler.com/Departments/Parks-Recreation or by QR code. Residents are encouraged to complete the survey.

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 no actions this evening.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider hiring Gabriela Rodriguez Fenwick and Tyler Conroy as patrol officers. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.
2. Consider advertising for the position of Finance Manager. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.
3. Consider advertising for the position of Water Account Clerk. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. Vacancies exist for community volunteers to be appointed to serve on the following Committees: 1 seat on the Environmental Advisory Council and 1 seat on the Human Relations Commission. Additionally, alternate seats currently are vacant on the Civil Service Commission, Human Relations Commission and Zoning Hearing Board.
2. The Committee recognizes and thanks the hard-working efforts of the Borough Police, Public Works crew, administrative staff and emergency personnel during the recent storm.

Ms. 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 the Committee Meeting: Motion to adopt **Ordinance 1123** to address the new 2-Hour Parking Permit Program for Borough residents. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

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

Consider authorization for Water Dept to trade in the 2016 GMC Sierra (trade-in quote \$20-21,000) and the 2019 Ram Classic (trade-in value \$22-23,000) to purchase a 2022 Ford

F250 4x4 Utility Body Supercab Pickup. CoStars price \$44,974 (less trade in equals net cost \$3,460.50). Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Approved at Committee Meeting: Motion to award to Eastern Environmental the contract to rebuild WWTP Clarifier ET # 8 at a cost of \$75,100. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

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

Consider that **August 2021** invoices in the amount of **\$679,978.99** be paid. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of **Resolution 2021-10** which adopts procedures for the handling of recycling and solid waste disposal violations by haulers, businesses, institutions or residents of the Northern Montgomery County Recycling Commission member municipalities. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider asking the Planning Commission to re-explore options and conduct research on preserving Ambler’s historic resources. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider advertising for a public hearing on October 19th a request for a license transfer from Williamsonten, Inc. of Horsham to 3 Rivers Beer, LLC located at 241-65 N. Main Street. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

A Motion was made to acknowledge receipt by Council of the Borough Pension 2022 Minimum Municipal Obligations (MMO). Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

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A Motion was made to advertise a public hearing to be held October 5th to consider approval of a license transfer for Harry’s Tap Room in Blue Bell to 1 W. Butler. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

A presentation on the 9 N. Maple Street Sketch Plan proposing a 92 residential unit 5-story building by Ambler Lakeview Development LP was discussed. Authorization to work with the developer to prepare ordinance language was approved by Council.

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:

Consider hiring Gabriela Rodriguez Fenwick and Tyler Conroy as patrol officers. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider advertising for the position of Finance Manager. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider advertising for the position of Water Account Clerk. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Anna Lee Lapinski of 136 Rosemary Avenue asked regarding the status of construction of a new Borough parking lot at the Vince Hee's location on Poplar Street. Manager Aversa replied that after demolition during Covid all construction was shut down. She added that the Borough continues to seek additional grant money.

Sara Galtman of 116 Rosemary Avenue spoke about lack of parking and no striping on Rosemary. She also mentioned traffic speeding on the road. Mayor Sorg stated striping of spaces must be measured and must meet PennDOT specifications. Chief Borkowski stated yellow curbing allows for fire truck turns. Officer Nick stated the police department could set up some equipment to monitor speeding on Rosemary Avenue.

Lisa Auerbach of 86 Orange Avenue stated that since her cell phone service went out during the recent storm, she had not realized there had been a tornado. She suggested the fire department sirens be utilized to warn of an impending tornado or other severe weather event.

Nick Taglianetti of 112 Rosemary Avenue stated that since the storm occurrence a telephone pole is leaning on his block. He was advised to contact PECO.

Tony Isabella of 300 Highland Avenue noted that if the Borough receives 2 inches of rain within two hours the Wissahickon Creek rises to flood stage.

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