

## AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

June 21, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002.

Council President Siskind called the Council Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Present:** Mrs. Siskind, Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Forst, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Auerbach, and Ms. Hughes. Mayor Sorg, Police Chief Borkowski, Solicitor Joe Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa also were in attendance. Ms. Welch was absent.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mrs. Siskind made a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 18, 2022 Council Meeting. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Mayor Sorg thanked all the community volunteers, Borough crew, Police Department and CAAA for their efforts in making the Arts & Music Festival a great success. Additionally, she recognized Councilperson Henderson for organizing the Borough's Juneteenth ceremony at Borough Hall.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002. Present: Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Welch, Mr. De Ruosi, Ms. Forst, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Auerbach, and Ms. Hughes. Mayor Sorg, Police Chief Borkowski, Solicitor Joe Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa also were in attendance.

#### **Finance and Planning Committee – Ms. Nellie Forst, Chairperson**

Committee Members: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Auerbach

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

#### **The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:**

1. Authorization is requested to approve payment of the **May 2022** bills in the amount of **\$1,719,423.49** as follows: General (**\$915,886.72**); Street Lights (**\$3,627.76**); Fire (**\$0.00**); Refuse (**\$58,128.51**); Parks & Rec. (**\$7,504.72**); Water (**\$461,921.41**); Sewer

(\$14,898.50); WWTP (\$205,750.10); Debt Fund (\$0.00); Liquid Fuels (\$1,874.01); Water Capital (\$68,993.66).

2. Consider what future directives are to be made regarding the draft Historic Building Demolition Ordinance. The draft Ordinance was provided by the Borough Planning Commission with assistance from the Montgomery County Planning Commission and would require prerequisites to the demolition of any building built before 1935, provide criteria for historic significance, provide penalties for violations, and require a hearing before the Planning Commission providing a 90-day waiting period for demolition of Historic Buildings, alternatives to demolition and recommendations for possible reuse of the Historic Building which may be suggested to the applicant by the Planning Commission and/or Ambler Borough Council.

Discussion ensued. For the record, Mr. DeRuosi and Ms. Hughes stated the ordinance was over-reaching and not necessary. Ms. Endicott stated she was unhappy with the way it came back from the Planning Commission. Ms. Sheedy suggested Council start small with the ordinance and build it over time. Mrs. Siskind noted the ordinance does not have any ‘teeth’, but suggested it was better than nothing and does not take anybody’s rights away. Ms. Forst considered that she could make a recommendation for Council to continue to consider the ordinance and further refine the ordinance.

Public Comment – Mr. Sal Boccuti of 300 Rosemary Avenue commented that the ordinance was a step in the wrong direction and should exempt residences. Mary Spross of 366 Forest Avenue reasoned that the ordinance lacks ‘teeth’ because it should be a demolition ‘prohibition’ ordinance that should include commercial as well as residential and apartment buildings. Kirsten Puskar of 324 Rosemary Avenue noted that with a 90-day put-on-the-breaks waiting period, developers would know that they cannot come into the Borough to make quick money. Liz Kunzier of 360 Mattison Avenue stated that it was not fair to a property owner who might need to sell a lot for financial reasons to have to endure the 90-day waiting period. Nancy Roecker of 208 Southern Avenue noted that there are always alternatives to demolition such as relocating structures.

Council & Mayoral Comment – Ms. Endicott stated that neighboring municipalities have more restrictive historic building ordinances and that developers would recognize the Ambler has fewer restrictions. Ms. Forst, Ms. Hughes, and Mr. DeRuosi stated they would prefer the ordinance apply to commercial buildings exclusively. Ms. Auerbach agreed but requested that the ordinance be returned to the Planning Commission. Mayor Sorg stated that the ordinance has no ‘teeth’ and would provide a lose-lose result. As to making a Motion on the ordinance, Solicitor Bresnan suggested for clarity that a Motion be made to discontinue further consideration of the ordinance.

3. Consider award of the Tannery Run CMP Arch Replacement project to Scott Building Corporation T/A Scott Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$239,860.00, subject to review by the Borough Solicitor. Bid results were provided by the Borough Engineer. The Borough has applied to FEMA for coverage for the project.

**In other business the following was reviewed:**

1. The Borough Engineer's report was provided.
2. Main Street Manager Liz Kunzier provided an update to Council.

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

**Public Safety Committee – Ms. Jennifer Henderson, Chairperson**

Committee members: Ms. Endicott, Ms. Forst, Ms. Hughes

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

**The Committee will consider no actions this evening.**

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

**Public Utilities Committee – Ms. Haley Welch, Chairperson**

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

The Public Utilities Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Sheedy.

**The Committee will consider no actions this evening.**

**In other business the following was reviewed:**

1. Engineer's Report - The WWTP engineer's report will be provided.
2. Water Department has stated that routine system hydrant flushing will be delayed until Whitemarsh is back in service, which has been taken out of service for an involved carbon media filter change.
3. Water Dept. will conduct quarterly samples for PFAS in July.

Ms. Sheedy asked if there were further comments or questions from the Committee, 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. Erin Endicott, Chairperson**

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

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

**The Committee will consider the following action this evening:**

1. Consider how to proceed with the current draft Single Use Plastics (SUP) ordinance.

Discussion ensued. Council discussed roll-out dates for ordinance provisions, while focusing on Styrofoam products. Ms. Henderson and Ms. Auerbach suggested Council focus on prohibition of single-use plastic bags, maintaining Styrofoam products in the ordinance and then gradually building the ordinance by roll-out dates to include Styrofoam products and other products.

Public Comment – Mary Spross of 366 Forest Avenue stated that plastic utensils are the worst single-use plastics for the environment and suggested Council put them back into the ordinance. Nancy Roecker of 208 Southern Avenue noted that Ambler is not the only municipality with an SUP Ordinance under consideration. Sweetbriar Café owner requested the Borough provide more street accessible recycling containers. She emphasized that conditions for business owners really have not improved since Council began discussion of an SUP ordinance a few years ago.

Motion – Ms. Endicott made a motion to proceed with consideration of the draft SUP Ordinance to include Styrofoam products, going into effect with a staggered timeline. Seconded. [Poll Council. Vote detailed in Recommendations Section of the Minutes.]

**Approved at Committee Meeting:**

1. Consider making a contribution of \$650.00 for a special event co-hosted by Lower Gwynedd Township and Ambler Borough on June 18, 2022 at Bethlehem Baptist Church. Motion seconded. All Aye. Carried.

**In other business the following was reviewed:**

1. Knight Park YMCA Summer camp will run June 21 to July 29 (8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.) Monday through Friday. Camp fee is \$50 per child per week. Proof of Ambler residency required at registration.
2. Ambler Community Garden (ACG) will host a Ribbon Cutting Event at the ACG Garden at Knights Park on Thursday, July 14 at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome. [Ms.

Henderson noted that 50 pounds of vegetables so far have been raised and that contributions have been made to Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard.]

Ms. Endicott asked if there were further comments or questions from the Committee, 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 – Mr. Frank DeRuosi, Chairperson**

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

The Salary and Personnel Committee report was given this evening by Mr. DeRuosi.

**The Committee will consider the following action this evening:**

1. Consider appointing Ed Curtis, Sr. to the vacant Civil Service Commission position.
2. Consider authorizing Police Chief to begin the testing process for a new patrol officer.
3. Consider authorizing advertising for the vacant Assistant Water Superintendent position.
4. Consider appointing Kirsten Puskar to the vacant Environmental Advisory Council position.

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

Consider payment of the **May 2022** bills in the amount of **\$1,719,423.49**. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider a discontinuation of discussion on the draft Historic Building Demolition Ordinance. Seconded. Poll Council: 5-Aye (Ms. Auerbach, Ms. Hughes, Ms. Forst, Mr. DeRuosi, Mayor Sorg). 4-Nay (Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Endicott, Mrs. Siskind). The Motion is approved, and Council will discontinue discussion on the draft ordinance.

Consider award of the Tannery Run CMP Arch Replacement project to Scott Building Corporation T/A Scott Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$239,860.00, subject to review by the Borough Solicitor. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

### **Parks & Recreation Committee**

The Committee recommends and Ms. Endicott moves:

Consider proceeding with consideration of the draft SUP Ordinance to include Styrofoam products, going into effect with a staggered timeline. Seconded. Poll Council. 7-Aye; 1-Nay (Ms. Forst). Carried.

*Approved at Committee Meeting:* Consider making a contribution of \$650.00 for a special event co-hosted by Lower Gwynedd Township and Ambler Borough on June 18, 2022 at Bethlehem Baptist Church. Motion seconded. All Aye. Carried.

### **Salary & Personnel Committee** – The committee recommends and Mr. DeRuosi moves:

Consider appointing Ed Curtis, Sr. to the vacant Civil Service Commission position. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider authorizing Police Chief to begin the testing process for a new patrol officer. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider authorizing advertising for the vacant Assistant Water Superintendent position. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider appointing Kirsten Puskar to the vacant Environmental Advisory Council position. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mary Spross of 366 Forest Avenue stated that the landscaper work at Ambler Borough Park is excellent. She requested that the lawn service crew keep the string trimmers away from the tree trunks.

Carmina Taylor, a community activist, announced her intention to forward a letter to Council members regarding a countywide multi-cultural event being planned for September.

**There being no further public comment or other business**, Mrs. Siskind moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell  
Assistant Secretary

Borough of Ambler