

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

April 16, 2024

The regular meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday April 16, 2024, at 7:00PM at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002.

Council President Siskind called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Ms. Siskind, Ms. Welch, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Hughes Kelly, Ms. Roecker Coates, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Auerbach, Ms. Iovine, Mr. Orehek, Mayor Sorg, Police Chief Jeff Borkowski and Borough Manager Mary Aversa, Solicitor Joe Bresnan were also present.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Siskind made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 19, 2024, Council meeting. Seconded. **Carried 9 -Aye.**

Finance and Planning Committee – Ms. Hayley Welch Chairperson, Committee Members: Ms. Karen Sheedy, Ms. Lisa Auerbach, Ms. Elizabeth Iovine.

The Committee will consider the following recommendations:

1. That the March bills be paid in the amount of \$837,874.92 as follows: General (\$177,436.24); Street lights (\$7,267.97), Fire (\$1,553.21), Refuse (\$59,442.20); Parks & Rec (\$936.54); Water (\$298,195.20); Sewer (\$20,170.25); WWTP (\$270,814.00), liquid Fuels (\$2,038.31); Water Capital (\$0.0); Voided checks (\$0.0).
2. Authorization is requested to advertise to hold a public hearing and possible adoption of an ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance lighting criteria to the current IENA (Illuminating Engineering Society of North America) standards. The current Zoning ordinance language reflects the 2008 IENA standards. Montgomery County planning commission and Borough planning commission reviews were received.

The Following Business was discussed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. The zoning hearing board notice for 27 W. Butler Avenue was reviewed.
3. PennDOT is accepting bids for the Pickering field sidewalks for the portion of sidewalk along North St. and Highland Ave. with a let date of May 23,2024 and anticipated notice to proceed date of August 19, 2024. This process is managed by PennDOT.

Committee questions:

Ms. Auerbach inquired for details regarding the 27 W. Butler zoning issue.

Mr. Kucher clarified.

Mr. Bresnen further explained the process.

Ms. Iovine asked a question regarding the Park Ave. sidewalks and the protruding tree roots.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend that the February bills in the amount of \$837,874.92 be paid. **Carried 9-Aye.**
2. Authorization was requested to advertise to hold a public hearing and possible adoption of an ordinance amending the Zoning ordinance lighting criteria to the current IENA (Illuminating Engineering Society of America) standards. **Carried 9-Aye.**

Ms. Siskind made a motion to adopt the report. **Carried 9-Aye.**

Public Safety Committee: Ms. Amy Hughes Kelly – Chair, Committee Members: Jennifer Henderson, Nancy Roecker Coates, and Lou Orehek

The Committee will consider the following recommendation.

1. There was discussion on the proposed Fire Department study. A letter of intent is required to participate in the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Lower Gwynedd Township, North Wales Borough, North Penn Fire Company, Lower Gwynedd Township, Ambler Borough and the Wissahickon Fire Company to evaluate potential fire station locations and see if there is any interest in exploring regionalization of fire protection.

Al Comley and Jay Leadbeater with the Wissahickon Fire Company gave an explanation of the study, and a justification for the need for the Borough to participate.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Welch asked what the time frame was.

Mr. Comley answered 6 months to 1 year.

Discussion ensued.

2. A request for street closing was received from Bob Devine of From the Boot.

The following business was discussed:

1. The police department report was reviewed.
2. The Community Ambulance report was reviewed.
3. The Fire Department report was reviewed.

Committee questions:

Mr. Orehek asked a question regarding the alarms on the fire report.

Mr. Leadbeater clarified.

Mr. Orehek questioned the YTD data on the fire report.

Ms. Hughes explained, Mr. Leadbeater agreed.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Auerbach asked a question regarding the dates on the fire report.

Mr. Leadbeater explained that it was a clerical error.

Ms. Auerbach asked the Chief a question regarding Domestic calls.

The Chief explained and gave assurances that the Dept did partner with Domestic abuse groups.

4. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were reviewed.
5. The Solicitor and Staff are researching a program to support the Ambler Fire House volunteers.
6. The Committee discussed restrictions in place regarding oversized vehicles parking on streets.

Committee questions:

Ms. Hughes asked a question regarding the increase in the number of oversized vehicles parking on the street.

The Chief explained, giving an example of one incident in particular.

Ms. Hughes made the comment that she wanted to be sure that patrolling was happening given the increase and to keep Council informed.

The Chief provided an explanation of procedure regarding oversized vehicles.

7. The Committee discussed vehicles parked against the flow of traffic.

Committee questions:

Ms. Hughes addressed the issue of vehicles parking against the flow of traffic.

Ms. Henderson added it is illegal in PA to park against the flow of traffic.

Discussion ensued.

The Chief offered that issuing citations was the answer, but education needed to happen before the law is enforced.

Ms. Iovine agreed.

Discussion ensued.

The Committee will consider the following recommendation.

1. A recommendation was requested to sign a letter of intent to participate in the DCED Fire Department study. **Carried 9 - Aye.**
2. The request for street closing from From the Boot was tabled for a vote at a later date.

Committee questions:

Mr. Orehek suggested allowing street closure for more limited times, reducing the weekends to select weekends, not every weekend.

Ms. Roecker Coates respectfully declines the request, citing the end of the COVID pandemic should signal the end of outdoor street dining.

Ms. Huges Kelly argued that the issues are 2 separate issues.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Roecker Coates expressed that the request is excessive and asked Chief Borkowski a question regarding the existence of ordinances.

Mr. Bresnen explained that street closures on a short-term basis fall into a different category.

Ms. Henderson asked a parking lot question.

Ms. Iovine stressed that the decision must be fair to all restaurants.

Ms. Welch and Ms. Auerbach argued that closing York Street in a unique situation pursuant to From the Boot.

Discussion ensued.

Public Comment:

Annalee Lupinski 136 Rosemary Ave. expressed her opposition to York St. closing on weekends for outdoor dining at From the Boot.

Bob King Ambler Main Street President thanked Council for their continued support. He gave a short history of traffic on York St. He expressed the opinion that the Restaurants are a big part of why this town is "on the map" and expressed support for them in each unique situation.

Jay Leadbeater Wissahickon Fire Chief explained that the closure does not affect the fire companies' ability to protect. They have adapted to the closure. He stressed consistency.

Liz Wahl Kunzier Ambler Main Street Manager 360 Mattison Ave. Expressed concern from the MSM's view that the success of the business district is not a given and that Council needs to be supportive of each individual business and their unique requests.

Bernadette Dougherty 338 Tennis Ave. requested not to close York St. and to consider the other restaurants and to consider other possible street closures, and not to close York St.

Marshall Graner from Graner & Graner PC contends that no law permits this sort of shutdown, his opinion is that it is not legal.

Mr. Bresnan expressed his disagreement. It is not illegal because there is nothing on the books that says closing the street is not permitted.

Mr. Orehek questioned the legal terminology.

Albert Yaghooty Ambler Borough Finance Manager stressed the liability concerns.

Ms. Aversa explained that insurance waivers are in place.

Mr. Bresnan further clarified.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Hughes Kelly asked for a count from the Council on each Council member's stand. The Majority decided to table the issue for more discussion at the Committee meeting May 7.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Siskind moved to accept the report. **Carried 9 - Aye.**

Public Utilities Committee: Karen Sheedy - Chair, Committee Members: Haley Welch, Amy Hughes Kelly, Lou Orehek

The Committee will consider the following Recommendation:

1. A request to approve the engineering services on the MIRA-Well 4 PFAS Treatment project.

The following business was discussed:

1. The WWTP Engineers report was received.
2. The 2024 MIRIA grant is being prepared; a Resolution will be presented at the May Committee meeting for approval.
3. The Water department has begun system flushing. They began in Ambler and then Upper Dublin. Locations will be posted on the Borough Website.

Committee Questions:

Mr. Orehek asked if there was still a monthly water dept. meeting.

Ms. Aversa explained that the meetings are on an as needed basis.

Recommendation:

1. Authorization is requested to approve the Gannett Fleming engineering services agreement for the MIRA-Well4 PFAS Treatment Grant Project. **Carried 9 - Aye.**

Ms. Siskind made a motion to accept the Public Utilities report. **Carried 9- Aye.**

Parks and Recreation Committee: Jennifer Henderson – Chair, Committee Members: Haley Welch, Nancy Roecker Coates, and Lisa Auerbach

The Committee will consider the following recommendations.

1. An Ordinance permitting dogs in Riccardi Park was advertised for adoption, a recommendation was requested.
2. Resolution 2024-5 was requested in support of planning grant dollars from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), for trail access and safety improvements along the Green Ribbon Trail.

Committee Questions:

Mr. Orehek requested clarity on a “cost not to exceed” addition to the resolution.

Ms. Aversa clarified the requirements.

The following business was discussed:

1. The details of the No Mow May program for 2024 are posted on the Borough website.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Welch questioned the number of participants.

Mr. Kucher clarified 6 so far.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend adopting an Ordinance permitting dogs in Riccardi Park. **Carried 9- Aye.**

Committee Questions:

Ms. Henderson clarified the length as 100ft not 50ft.

2. A request was received to adopt Resolution 2024-5 in support of a grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), for trail access and safety improvements along the Green Ribbon Trail. **Carried 9- Aye.**

Ms. Siskind made a motion to accept the report. **Carried 9- Aye.**

Salary & Personnel Committee: Chair – Lisa Auerbach, Jen Henderson, Karen Sheedy, Elizabeth Iovine.

The Committee consider the following recommendations:

1. Executive Sessions were held on April 8 and April 14 for personnel matters.

The following business was discussed:

1. Resumes are being accepted for the Highway Superintendent position.
2. The current committee vacancies are as follows:

Zoning hearing Board - Seat (Alternate)
Civil Service – 1 Seat (Alternate)
Appeals Board – 1 Seat

The Committee will make no recommendations.

Ms. Siskind made motions to approve the report. **Carried 9– Aye.**

Public Comment

There being no further public comment or other business, Ms. Siskind moved the meeting adjourned. **Carried 9 – Aye.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Wahl Kunzier
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler