

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

August 20, 2024

The regular meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday August 20, 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. Auerbach, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Hughes Kelly, Ms. Roecker Coates, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Iovine, Mr. Orehek, Mr. Hui, 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 July 16, 2024, Council meeting. Seconded. **Carried 9 -Aye.**

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

The Committee will consider the following recommendations:

1. That the July bills be paid in the amount of \$ 1,776,712.13 as follows: General (\$173,104.80); Street lights (\$6,329.19), Fire (#180,920.10), Refuse (\$65,132.41); Parks & Rec (\$7,458.90); Water (\$759,519.38); Sewer (\$2226,148.05); WWTP (\$355,425.98), liquid Fuels (\$2,672.50); Water Capital (\$0.0); Voided checks (\$0.0).
2. Recommend advertising the proposed revisions to the Transit Oriented Development Ordinance to include additional uses, aesthetics, development bonuses and architectural elements recommended by The Borough Planning Commission and County Planner.
3. Recommend adoption of Resolution 2024-9 appointing delegates to the Tax Collector Committee.
4. An update on the trees at Pickering field was provided.
5. Recommend approval of the Northern Montgomery County Recycling Commission Agreement and advertise the updated Municipal Waste and Recycling Ordinance for adoption.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Roecker Coates questioned the Arborists' report. She asked Mr. Kucher if further testing was possible.

Mr. Kucher responded that there is no more funding left for trees in the existing Grant. The tree with the weeping canker was pruned. Moving forward the budget needs to reflect the need for tree removal and tree maintenance given the ailing condition identified in many of the trees.

Ms. Roecker expressed further concern for the treatment of the diseased trees and the aging trees located on Butler Avenue. She would like to see a coordinated plan, looking at the trees as a type of infrastructure.

Ms. Aversa explained that there are existing plans regarding tree planting care and removal. Discussion ensued.

The Following Business was discussed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. The new Zoning Hearing Board notice for 27 W. Butler.
3. The 219 Hendricks Street subdivision proposing a two-lot subdivision preserving the existing home is being reviewed by the planning Commission.

Committee questions:

Ms. Siskind inquired of Mr. Kucher what was needed from Council tonight?

Mr. Kucher responded that The Borough does not have the funding in the General Fund currently to remove any trees.

Ms. Hughes asked what the plan is if a tree dies quickly – where do we get the money?

Ms. Aversa answered that we would take the funds from reserves.

Mr. Kucher gave an example of a tree in the Borough that died quickly and needed to be removed.

Ms. Hughes asked for an estimated cost.

Mr. Kucher explained typically about \$2000.00

Ms. Auerbach asked about new planting after removal.

Mr. Kucher explained with the exception of the tree with the weeping canker new trees could be planted where the old tree was removed.

Discussion ensued.

Public Comment:

Rob Cardillo 300 E. Park Ave. Expressed concern regarding the back and forth regarding tree health and tree removal. Expressed the opinion that a Shade Commission would be helpful.

Lindsey Daku 122 Greenwood Ave. Agreed on the Shade Tree Commission suggestion. Thinks a succession plan would be helpful regarding the tree population.

Ashley Abler 31 Orange Ave. Agrees with the Shade Tree suggestion. Suggests looking for a Borough Resident who is an Arborist to volunteer.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend that the July bills in the amount of \$1,776,712.31 be paid.
Carried 9-Aye.

2. Recommend advertising the proposed revisions to the Transit Oriented Development Ordinance to include additional uses, aesthetics, development bonuses and architectural elements prepared by The Borough Planning Commission and County Planner. **Carried 9-Aye.**
3. Recommend adoption of Resolution 2024-9 appointing delegates to the Tax Collector Committee. **Carried 9-Aye.**
4. Recommend approval of the Northern Montgomery County Recycling Agreement and advertisement of the Ordinance. **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 make no recommendations.

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.
4. Public works and code enforcement reports were received.
5. The Butler Avenue Traffic Study is complete, and the proposed changes are being reviewed.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Auerbach questioned the Chief regarding the excessive overtime for June – Wondered why it was so high.

The Chief answered partly the events and partly from the joint task forces Ambler PD participates in with the County.

Ms. Auerbach asked if AMS paid any reimbursement for the PD protection.

Ms. Wahl Kunzier answered that Yes AMS reimburses the Borough a flat donation after the events.

Ms. Sheedy felt the Traffic Meeting was beneficial.

Ms. Hughes Kelly thanked the PD for their work.

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

Public Utilities Committee: Karen Sheedy - Chair, Committee Members: Amy Hughes Kelly, Lou Orehek, David Hui

The Committee will consider the following recommendations.

1. Recommend approval of the proposal from Invoice Cloud to accept payments for water customers.

The following business was discussed:

1. The WWTP Engineers report was received.
2. The Ambler WWTP is requesting quotes for the supply and installation of VFD's (Variable Frequency Drives) for ALL 5 blowers as a part of the digester conversions.
3. The Committee discussed the sewer lateral inspections.
4. The bidding schedule was reviewed for the North Wales water main improvements and connection.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Hughes Kelly asked about Invoice Cloud charges.

Ms. Aversa responded that all the questions had been answered prior to the meeting vis email.

Ms. Roecker Coates raised a question regarding postponing the Sewer lateral inspection ordinance.

Mayor Sorg clarified Senate proceedings regarding timelines and items of their dockets.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Breslin further explained the procedure.

Ms. Aversa further clarified and explained the onus to repair would fall on taxpayers; whereas the Ordinance puts the Onis on the Home Seller and Buyer at the time of Sale.

Public Comment:

Mark Armstrong 258 Highland Ave. inquired regarding Borough camera use for sewer lateral inspections.

Ms. Aversa responded that we have cameras but we are not authorized to go onto people's properties to inspect their sewer laterals.

Approved at the Committee Meeting:

1. An executive session was held to discuss the PFAS litigation. A recommendation was approved to not participate in the PFAS settlement. **Carried 9 - Aye.**

Recommendations:

1. Recommend approval of the proposal from Invoice Cloud to accept payments for water customers. **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: Nancy Roecker Coates, Lisa Auerbach, and David Hui

The Committee made no recommendations.

Kate Harper made a presentation on behalf of the Ambler Rotary on the progress of the Knight Park Pavilion.

Mark Setman with Ambler EAC gave an update on the shade tree program.

The following business was discussed:

1. The new pad was installed at Knights Park for the new Ambler Rotary donated Pavilion. Representatives from Ambler Rotary gave an update on the project.
2. Yoga in the park is scheduled for August 24th and September 14th at 10:00AM at Knight Park.
3. Open Gym was held Monday evening.
4. National night out was August 16th.
5. The EAC Fall tree planting information was reviewed and is available to the public. Orders are due by August 26, 2024

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

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

The Committee consider the following recommendations:

1. Resumes are being accepted for the vacant Finance Manager position.
2. Resumes are being accepted for the Planning Commission vacancy.
3. Mr. David Hui was sworn in as the new Council Member for Ward 3.
4. An executive session was held at the Committee meeting for a personnel matter.
5. An executive session is required for a legal matter.

Approved at the Committee Meeting:

1. Michael Morton was appointed to the vacant water position. **Carried 9 – Aye.**

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

Public Comment:

Anna Lee Lapinsky 136 Rosemary Ave asked a question regarding the new water payment system and the continuation of in person payment.

Shelly rip 318 Forest Ave. Asked a finance and planning question on the agenda and procedure.

Ms. Siskind explained the procedure.

Ashley Abler 31 Orange Ave. asked a question regarding ordinance procedure.

Mr. Breslin and Ms. Siskind explained the procedure in more detail.

Ms. Aversa further clarified.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Wahl Kunzier
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler