

## AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

**October 15, 2024**

The regular meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday October 15, 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 7:15 p.m.

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

**Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Siskind made a motion to approve the Minutes of September 17, 2024, Council meeting. Seconded. **Carried 8 -Aye.**

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

The Committee meeting was held on October 1, at 7:00pm. Elizabeth Iovine - Chairperson, Committee Members: Karen Sheedy, Lisa Auerbach.

### **The Committee will consider the following recommendations:**

1. That the September bills be paid in the amount of \$1,590,841.69 as follows: General (\$699,581.03); Street lights (\$3,909.53), Fire (\$48,702.95), Refuse (\$60,283.75); Parks & Rec (\$4,875.63); Water (\$398,487.07); Sewer (\$31,946.42); WWTP (\$341,872.74), liquid Fuels (\$1,182.52); Water Capital (\$0.0); Voided checks (\$0.0).
2. The planning Commission requests permission to explore incorporating revisions similar to the recent Transit Oriented Development Ordinance that includes additional Uses, Aesthetics, Development Bonuses, and Architectural Elements and maximum heights in the Downtown Commercial and Commercial zoning districts.

### **The Following Business was discussed:**

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. Joe Duda and Steve Repke from Bernstein will be at the November 6th meeting to discuss the Borough pension plans.
3. The plans for the 2025 Farmers Market were discussed.

4. Municipal Opportunities for Retrofits and Energy Efficiency (MORE) program - The Borough is applying for grant assistance to cover costs for facility-level energy management for municipal operations including but not limited to Borough Hall and the Borough Sewer plant. The funding would cover costs associated with a SSRAE level 2 energy audit as well as possible assistance for scoping and design of energy conservation measures.

### **Committee questions:**

Ms. Roecker Coates asked Grant timing question

Ms. Aversa explained the breakdown of what the grant includes. Mr. Kucher further explained the grant application process. He pointed out the second round includes a low-interest rate loan.

Ms. Roecker Coates asked what the letters SSRAE stand for. Mr. Kucher explained.

Mr. Orehek asked a question regarding the Downtown Commercial changes.

Ms. Aversa explained. Mr. Breslin further clarified.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Recommend that the September bills in the amount of **\$1,590,841.69** be paid.  
**Carried 8-Aye.**
2. Recommend permission for the Planning Commission to explore incorporating revisions similar to the recent Transit Oriented Development Ordinance that includes additional Uses, Aesthetics, Development Bonuses, and Architectural Elements and maximum heights in the Downtown Commercial and Commercial zoning districts.  
**Carried 8-Aye.**

Ms. Siskind made a motion to adopt the report. **Carried 8-Aye.**

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

The Committee meeting was held on October 1, at 7:00pm. Ms. Amy Hughes Kelly – Chair, Committee Members: Jennifer Henderson, Nancy Roecker Coates, and Lou Orehek

### **The Committee will consider the following recommendations.**

1. Recommend adoption of Ordinance #1142 regulating the feeding of Feral Cats.
2. Recommend the dedication of the Street name Votta Way on Lindenwold Avenue.

**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.
6. A meeting was held with residents on October 13<sup>th</sup> at Borough Hall to discuss issues at Knight's Park.
7. The Annual Oktoberfest was a successful event, thanks to staff and all who volunteered to make these events happen.

**Approved at the Committee Meeting**

1. The recommendation to approve the advertisement of Ordinance #1142 was approved at the Committee Meeting. **8-Aye**

**Committee Questions:**

Ms. Auerbach asked a question regarding the meeting a\previously held at Knight's Park.

Ms. Siskind responded that the biggest issue discussed was traffic: speeding, running stop signs, going the wrong way on a one-way street. The issues caused at the park are generally being caused by older kids.

Ms. Hughes encouraged residents to say something if they see something.

Ms. Sheedy asked a question regarding the time frame for the street dedication sign.

Mr. Orehek clarified 20 years is the time frame.

Regarding the Feral Cat Ordinance MS. Siskind recognized that the Ordinance doesn't solve the problem. Discussion ensued.

**Public Comment:**

Sabrina Vincent 7 N. Ridge disagrees with the Ordinance and feels it would unfairly punish residents. She suggested other solutions. Requested the Ordinance not pass.

Blaze Serritore 21 Mt. Pleasant described his experience with Feral cats. Is looking for and Ordinance with less criminal options.

Mr. Orehek asked if organizations feeding and trapping cats would be illegal?

Mr. Breslin explained that the only way to stop behavior such as feeding Feral cat colonies is to enact an ordinance.

Donna Rohner with Alley Cats Allies asked to include a spay and neuter clause in the Ordinance.

Jill Zimmerman 134 S. Spring Garden St. Introduced herself as a person involved with cat rescue and volunteered to help.

Mary Spross 366 Forest Ave. would like a clause in the ordinance disallowing family cats to roam outside freely.

Ms. Sheedy explained that that ordinance already exists.

Ms. Siskind asked if a clause could be included protecting those individuals and organizations who trap and remove feral cats from prosecution.

Mr. Breslin confirmed that that would be possible in addition to the existing language.

Discussion ensued.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Recommend adoption of Ordinance #1142 regulating the feeding of feral cats. **Carried 8- Aye.**
2. Recommend approving the Votta family request for a dedication “street name” sign for Lindenwold Avenue with a set term of 20 years. **Carried 8- Aye.**

Ms. Siskind moved to accept the report. **Carried 8- Aye.**

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

The Committee meeting was held on October 1, at 7:00pm. Karen Sheedy - Chair, Committee Members: Amy Hughes Kelly, Lou Orehek, David Hui

### **The Committee will consider the following recommendation.**

1. Attached is the bid recommendation for the North Wales water main improvements and connection.

**The following business was discussed:**

1. The WWTP Engineer's report was received.
2. The Ambler WWTP is requesting quotes for the supply and installation of VFDs (Variable Frequency Drives) for ALL 5 blowers as part of the digester conversions.
3. System flushing is underway, locations will be posted on the Borough Website.

**The Committee will make no Recommendations:**

Ms. Siskind made a motion to accept the Public Utilities report. **Carried 8- Aye.**

**Parks and Recreation Committee:** Jennifer Henderson – Chair, Committee Members: Nancy Roecker Coates, Lisa Auerbach, and David Hui

The Committee meeting was held on October 1, at 7:00pm. Committee Members: Jen Henderson - Chair, Lisa Auerbach, Nancy Roecker-Coates and David Hui.

**The Committee made no recommendations.**

**The following business will be discussed:**

1. The lawn maintenance contract expires at the end of the year. A new Bid Document is being prepared.
2. Ambler Youth Alliance has open gym activities scheduled October 25th and November 8<sup>th</sup>.
3. Yoga in the park is scheduled in Knight Park for Saturday October 19<sup>th</sup> at 10AM.

**Committee Questions:**

Ms. Auerbach asked a question regarding Committee absences. Ms. Siskind explained the documentation.

Ms. Siskind made a motion to accept the Parks and Rec report. **Carried 8- Aye.**

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

The Committee meeting was held on October 1, at 7:00pm. Committee Members: Lisa Auerbach – Chair, Jen Henderson, Karen Sheedy and Elizabeth Iovine.

**The Committee will consider the following recommendations.**

1. A recommendation is requested to hire Christopher Cracknel for the Water 1 Vacancy.
2. A recommendation is requested to offer employment for the Water 1 Operator vacancy to the candidate discussed in the Executive Session.

**The following business will be discussed:**

1. The Water Operator 1 vacancy will be advertised.
1. An executive session was held at 5:30 this evening for a personnel matter.
2. Chief Borkowski requests authorization to begin the civil service testing procedures to fill an upcoming vacancy in the department.

**Recommendations**

1. A recommendation is requested to hire Christopher Cracknel for the Water 1 Vacancy. **Carried 8 – Aye.**
2. A recommendation is requested to offer employment for the Water 1 Operator vacancy to the candidate discussed in the Executive Session. **Carried 8 – Aye.**

Ms. Siskind made motions to approve the report. **Carried 8 – Aye.**

**There was no further Public Comment.**

There being no further public comment or other business, Ms. Siskind moved the meeting to be adjourned. **Carried 8 – Aye.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Wahl Kunzier  
Assistant Secretary  
Borough of Ambler