

**WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LITTLE FALLS WAS
HELD THIS EVENING IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

Monday, April 9, 2018

Council President Anthony Sgobba called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. with the following members present: Maria Cordonnier, William Liess, Tanya Seber, and Chris Vancheri. Also present were Mayor James Damiano, Township Attorney Joe Wenzel, Township Engineer Christopher Wright, Township Administrator Charles Cuccia and Municipal Clerk Cynthia Kraus.

Absent: None.

Township Employees present: DPW Superintendent Philip Simone, Police Chief Steven Post.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE: Take notice that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-10 as follows: A notice of the meeting was prominently posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Building, located at 225 Main Street, Little Falls, N.J. on January 2, 2018. A copy of the notice was faxed to the North Jersey Herald and News and The Record on the same date. Additionally, a copy of the notice was filed in the office of the Township Clerk on said date.

Council President SGOBBA explained the start of the Workshop Meeting was delayed due to the hearing which commenced at 6:30 pm and recently concluded.

CDH AWARENESS PROCLAMATION – Mayor Damiano explained he read the Proclamation in the rotunda with the public present while waiting for the dais to be available for the Workshop meeting.

AUTISM AWARENESS PROCLAMATION- Mayor Damiano stated he read the Proclamation for Autism Awareness as well, announcing that the Municipal Building’s cupola will be lit in blue for the entire month of April in recognition of Autism Awareness.

PSE&G SAFETY PRESENTATION-

Mayor Damiano stated the PSEG presentation will be tabled until later in the meeting due to technical difficulties.

PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL MATTERS

It was moved by Councilmember Vancheri, seconded by Councilmember Seber, that the meeting be and it was opened to the public.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Eva Visperas, 50 Lincoln Avenue, stated she and several neighbors discussed the proposed parking lot near the school with residents in the neighborhood. She related that many neighbors did not know about the proposal and signed a petition against it which Ms. Visperas made available. She requested clarification on several questions, such as where teachers currently park. Mayor Damiano stated that regarding resident awareness, a dual joint meeting was posted with the Board of Education and Township Council last month. The Mayor also attended a posted meeting at School No. 1 last month to discuss the topic. The Mayor reiterated that any time there is a project occurring in an area impacting residents, a letter will be sent to residents. The Mayor continued to explain that a letter has not been sent yet because the Council was only at the point of determining if the School Board had any interest in the proposal. In response to Ms. Visperas’s query, currently, the teachers have 7-8 spots on Stanley Street and another 30-40 spaces that run down Ridge Avenue. At the present time, teachers park along Ridge Avenue and Stanley Street when residents are not there and fill up the former municipal building lot, often overflowing into the Civic Center lot. Customers of the Library and Civic Center have expressed issues of parking to visit those facilities. All of the surrounding streets have limited parking times, so the teachers would not be able to park there for extended periods of time. As for the Civic Center and former Municipal Building, the Mayor expressed the intention to move toward metered parking in municipal parking areas as well as those areas. The proposed lot near the school, would allow the teachers to park there as well as all the parking spaces along Ridge Avenue by permit. Currently the teachers have about 60-70 staff. The proposed plan would provide 70-75 spaces in total, such that the needs of the school could be met. The proposed parking lot would avail about 35 spaces, and another 25-27 spaces would be gained on Stanley Street. The possibility of relocating the two buses to the former municipal building was also proposed.

Ms. Visperas questioned where teachers parked prior to closure of the old municipal building. Mayor Damiano acknowledged he did not know, however the administrative offices were previously located at School No. 3. In response to Ms. Visperas query about parking prohibitions, the Mayor stated parking will not be prohibited but the intent is to go to metered parking.

Ms. Visperas queried how the proposal fits into plans for parking at PNC bank and 60 Stanley Street. The Mayor elaborated that those areas will remain purely municipal parking 24/7 with the intention to transition to metered parking. The proposed school lot will be limited to teacher parking from 7am-4pm and be permit only.

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In response to Ms. Visperas’ concern for removing a grass area and its effects, Mayor Damiano stated the grass is used heavily in the beginning of the school year, and as time progresses, it is not. He maintained that infrastructure and draining would be addressed and should help to alleviate the flooding issues that residents currently experience.

Regarding Ms. Visperas’ question pertaining to the Board of Education involvement, the Mayor clarified that the Board of Education does not have the ability to spend on capital items that a municipality does, therefore, it is a financial issue. The municipality has the ability to make the improvement and it will function in a manner that will benefit the municipality over time. Mayor Damiano then explained the process for approval as per Ms. Visperas’ request. Council President SGOBBA requested Ms. Visperas provide Mr. Cuccia with the petition.

Al Attianese, 27 Dewey Avenue, questioned how many administrative staff moved from School No. 3 and what impact it would have if the staff moved back to School No. 3. Mayor Damiano stated he did not have the information and indicated Mr. Attianeses’ query be addressed with the Board of Education.

Ed Hawkins, resident of 28 Ridge Avenue and pastor of Second Reformed at 6 Walnut Street, addressed the Council regarding the proposed parking at the school. He read a statement on behalf of the church requesting the Township provide a written description of changes to the parking and traffic patterns that are under consideration to the property owners affected by the changes, and make available a public hearing for residents. He added that if the proposal comes under more detailed discussion, a written notice be provided to residents. Councilmember SEBER questioned what the additional spaces would be available for in the proposed lot. The Mayor stated the proposed lot would be a regular metered municipal lot where anyone can park after the permit hours. Rev. Hawkins questioned whether parking permits could be considered for church parking along Ridge Avenue.

Arnold Korotkin, 181 Long Hill Road, requested that the specific topic to be discussed be indicated on the agenda for future Council Meetings and other bodies that meet in the Township. He also discussed his concern for handicap parking in the Township, specifying the Great Notch NJ Transit, Inwood playground, and playground near Wilmore Road as areas to be addressed. Council President SGOBBA stated his agreement that the Agenda can include the specific topic to which the Mayor will speak. He asked Mr. Korotkin to leave a list of the suggested areas in need of handicap parking with the Council.

George Eaton, 69 Lincoln Avenue, stated his presence tonight was to speak against the proposed parking lot. He commended the idea of a municipal parking lot at the PNC bank and 60 Stanley Street. He identified specific areas of land located behind several properties on Main Street that could be considered for lease or purchase to relieve parking issues. He recommended the Council develop an alternative and more comprehensive plan to alleviate parking in the long term, as he expressed his opinion that the proposal is a temporary plan. Mr. Eaton provided a handout to Mr. Cuccia.

Elsa McShirley, 53 Lincoln Avenue, expressed her position against taking away green space from the school for proposed parking. She also stated that school busing was taken away. She proposed the teachers walk from Lincoln Avenue and other streets where there is available parking. Council President SGOBBA clarified that busing was a decision of the Board of Education. He stated the Council appreciates the concerns of the residents, and that the Council will discuss the issues brought forth.

No one further having come forward to be heard, it was moved by Councilmember Cordonnier, seconded by Councilmember Liess, that the meeting be and it was closed to the public.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

RESOLUTIONS

It was moved by Councilmember Vancheri, seconded by Councilmember Cordonnier, to approve the following:

Bill List

RESOLUTION [A] 18-04-09 #1

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Little Falls the Council having received the Treasurer’s certification of the availability of funds for payment of all bills presented, that payment of all bills approved by the Finance Committee be and is hereby authorized, subject to the availability of funds and subject to the appropriate and available appropriation in the line item.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

At this time, Mayor Damiano introduced two representatives from PSE&G present tonight so speak about the dangers of carbon monoxide. A presentation was made available on the television screens on the dais.

Councilmember VANCHERI requested the presentation be made available on the Township website, as well as in an email blast to residents, and print copies be made available for residents at Town Hall, the Civic Center, Recreation Center, and Library.

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ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED:

MAYOR/ADMINISTRATOR:

1. PROPOSED SUMP PUMP ORDINANCE -Mayor Damiano stated that there will be some changes prior to presentation of the ordinance at the April 23, 2018 Regular meeting. Consideration was given to concerns and issues expressed by Mr. Simone and resident comments at the last Meeting regarding the topic. The ordinance will address individuals who pump into our sanitary sewers, as well as onto streets and onto neighboring properties as well.
2. PROPOSED SIGN ORDINANCE – Mayor Damiano described the type of signs the ordinance concerns. He added that an ordinance does exist, however it is not as comprehensive as the proposed ordinance, which will respond to resident concerns as well as advertising and signs throughout the municipality. The ordinance is slated for Council review at the April 23, 2018 Regular Meeting. Councilmember VANCHERI questioned whether a standardized requirement would be applied or whether requirements would be individualized according to the business. The Mayor stated his hope to gain insight as to whether sign designation and percentage of window coverage should be addressed by zone, when he presents the ordinance at the April 23, 2018 Regular Meeting. Council President SGOBBA stated his support of designating different zoning for signage requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

It was moved by Councilmember Cordonnier, seconded by Councilmember Liess, that the meeting be and it was opened to the public.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Al Attianese, 27 Dewey Avenue, commended the Mayor and Council for looking into the sump pump problem, and hopes the ordinance addresses not only the situation of a neighbors sump pump running over a neighbor's impervious ground, but also drain pipes. He also recommended a fine be issued should the situation not be rectified.

No one further having come forward to be heard, it was moved by Councilmember Cordonnier, seconded by Councilmember Seber, that the meeting be and it was closed to the public.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

COUNCIL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Councilmember VANCHERI acknowledged that it is Autism Awareness Month, and announced it is also Distracted Driving Month. He announced that Chuck Silverstein, Traffic Engineer from the County, will attend the Transportation Committee tomorrow evening. Topics will include discussion of some of the County roads and the possibility of a traffic light on Francisco Ave, Cedar Grove Road as well as Wilmore Road. The Police Department has provided Mr. Silverstein with data relevant to the area. Mr. Silverstein will present data findings and recommendations at the Transportation Committee meeting. Councilmember VANCHERI announced the Memorial Day is scheduled for Saturday May 26, 2018 at 10 am. The parade will begin at Clarence Avenue and proceed to Wilmore Park, followed by a ceremony honoring veterans. Councilmember Liess and he have been working with the Parade Committee and have had a successful response from businesses and clubs. The Committee continues to seek participation from classic cars owners and businesses or clubs that would like to be in the parade. Councilmember VANCHERI also stated he reached out to Montclair State and hopes to have some community affairs representatives attend the parade as well. Lastly, the Boy Scouts equipment container, discussed previously, may be possibly moved to the DPW yard.

Councilmember SEBER announced the Municipal Alliance will be held on Thursday, April 12, 2018. The Municipal Alliance will work on the National Night Out on August 7, 2018. Additionally, a dance will be hosted for School No. 1 students on April 27, 2018, and a Staying on the Right Track day will be held on May 21, 2018 for eight grade students to educate them on substance abuse and healthy decision making. In recognition of Earth Day on April 22, 2018, the Little Falls ABC will host a clean up session on Main Street, and if time allows, along the river. Participants will meet at the Recreation Center at 10 am. The Town Tasting will be held at the Falls on April 24, 2018 hosted by the Little Falls ABC. Proceeds fund the concerts in the park and marketplace from June 28, 2018 to August 30, 2018. Lastly, the Shade Tree Commission will be celebrating Arbor Day on April 27, 2018. Ten cherry trees will be planted along the bike path on Wilmore Park Road and the celebration will commence at 5pm.

Councilmember CORDONNIER announced the Artwalk will occur on April 28, 2018 in the center of Town. There will be thirty artists participating as well as the Little Falls ABC, Business Association and school No. 1. Information will be disseminated via email blast.

Councilmember VANCHERI added that the LFAC will hold their opening day parade this weekend, with an opening ceremony commencing at the Recreation Center. The Little Falls ABC and LFAC are hosting Little Falls Night at the Jackals game on June 9, 2018 at 6pm.

Councilmember LIESS stated the Memorial Day parade is a great parade and does a lot for the Town. He encouraged everyone to attend. He announced that the Senior Advisory Board will be meeting tomorrow to discuss new activities for seniors.

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Council President SGOBBA reported on the Domestic Violence Committee. A County representative, Jennifer Singleton, was the guest speaker at the last meeting and spoke on the different sides of domestic violence. She offered to help the Police Department with training. The Committee hopes to have their own Domestic Violence response team here in the Township.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was moved by Councilmember Cordonnier, seconded by Councilmember Liess that the Council approve the following:

RESOLUTION [EX]

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 allows for a Public Body to go into executive session during a Public Meeting; and
WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the Township of Little Falls has deemed it necessary to go into executive session to discuss certain matters which are exempted for the Public; and
WHEREAS, the regular meeting of this Governing Body with reconvene;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Little Falls will go into executive session for the following reason(s) – contract negotiations.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.
The Council entered Executive Session at 9:17 p.m.

At 9:41 p. m. the Council returned and it was moved by Councilmember Vancheri, seconded by Councilmember Seber that the meeting return to Open Session.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was moved by Councilmember Vancheri, seconded by Councilmember Seber, that the meeting be and it was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Cynthia Kraus
Municipal Clerk