

MINUTES
WORKSHOP MEETING
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL – BOROUGH OF RED BANK
September 1, 2021
6:30 P.M.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Mayor Menna requested the minutes reflect that, in compliance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231 (Open Public Meetings Act), notice of this meeting has been provided by notifying the Asbury Park Press, the Two River Times and the Star Ledger and by placing a notice on the bulletin board and filing same with the Borough Clerk on December 16, 2020.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Menna called for a moment of silence courageous service members who had died in Afghanistan.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Menna and Council Members Triggiano, Ballard, Yngstrom, Zipprich and Horgan.

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Administrator McConnell, Borough Clerk Borghi, Attorney Cannon, Engineer Neumann and Department Heads.

ABSENT: Councilman Yassin

ENGINEERING

Engineer Neumann reviewed her report and offered an update on various projects. She explained the details behind a recent change order regarding Hudson Avenue and some other projects. She also said she was looking for feedback regarding the circulation study regarding how the Council wanted her to proceed.

Councilwoman Triggiano said she thought they had agreed on a plan.

Interim Administrator McConnell said they need to consider the possible extension of dates for Broadwalk and the pending construction on Broad. He said they had initially said they were going to start the study in September and continue through October to study the impact of Broadwalk. He said if the Council voted to extend the Broadwalk, they would have to change the timing of the study.

Mayor Menna said he was still concerned about the Hudson Avenue project and the contract/cost changes. He asked at what stage, chronologically, was Ms. Neumann's office aware that there were problems with the original specifications.

Ms. Neumann said the project has already been awarded and the contractor had mobilized in the spring. She said they became aware in the spring that the residents as well as the Shade Tree Committee had concerns about saving trees which prompted the curbing to change. She said the project had been awarded and that it was a scope change.

Mayor Menna asked if she had not thought that the change was substantial enough to stop work and rebid.

Ms. Neumann said they could not decline the contract as it had already been awarded.

Mayor Menna asked if her firm had had any conversations with the Environmental Commission before the contract had been awarded.

Ms. Neumann said Administrator Shehady had run the plans through the respective committees. She said she had not attended any meetings with the committees. She said it had been part of the road program. She said she could do that moving forward but said she had not been asked to present information at any committee meetings.

Councilman Zipprich said normally the committees would get copies of the plan prior to the award of the contract. He asked if Ms. Neumann could confirm if that had happened.

Ms. Neumann said she could not and said, in respect to the road program, it was her understanding through the former administrator that they had not been given to the respective committees.

Councilwoman Triggiano said she had never seen a road program project go through the Environmental Commission.

Councilman Zipprich said the Shade Tree Committee usually received copies.

Engineer Neumann said they had walked the roads with a member of the Shade Tree Committee. She said she was happy to share plans with any committee moving forward.

Councilwoman Horgan asked Ms. Neumann to confirm that the additional work was added because there was money available in the bond.

Ms. Neumann said that was correct and reviewed the process.

Councilman Yngstrom asked if Ms. Neumann could provide a timeline for the work on Broad Street once they had the pre-construction meeting.

Engineer Neumann said she could. She noted that the pre-construction meeting was scheduled for the following day and said RiverCenter was going to be included.

Councilwoman Triggiano asked if the restaurants or businesses in the area would have to close at any time due to the work.

Ms. Neumann said it was their goal to maintain access to all of the businesses.

Engineer Neumann reviewed a scheduled public hearing regarding the Monmouth County Open Space Grant Application.

IA McConnell reviewed details of the proposed project.

Regarding the traffic study, IA McConnell said it would depend on the dates for the closure of Broadwalk. He said he would review the schedule with the Engineer.

ADMINISTRATION

IA McConnell reviewed the request to extend the dates for the Broadwalk through the end of October.

Mayor Menna noted that the Broadwalk discussion was listed on the agenda but said he did not believe they should take action on it at this meeting because he had been receiving calls from many merchants who want to be heard on the matter. He said most were opposed to RiverCenter's request for an extension of time.

Councilman Zipprich how an extended closure would affect the upcoming construction project and the funding.

IA McConnell said he did not think it would affect it since there was an expected delay in getting materials as noted by the Engineer. He also noted that it was not on an agenda for action tonight but rather just for discussion.

Councilwoman Triggiano said she had attended the last RiverCenter Executive Committee meeting and had spoken with individual merchants. She said she was hearing positive feedback on the Broadwalk. She said she thought it was unfortunate that they would not be able to do the traffic circulation study during and after Broadwalk to compare.

IA McConnell clarified that he had not said that that would not happen. He said they just had to wait to see what action the Council took regarding the timing of the closure.

Councilman Yngstrom said it should be listed for the next Council meeting so people could call in and give their input.

Mayor Menna acknowledged receipt of the Grant Consultant's report.

CLERK

Clerk Borghi reported that, so far, she had received eight petitions for Charter Study Commissioner. She said the deadline was Friday at 4pm. She said there were five positions to be elected.

There were no questions on her report.

FINANCE

Mayor Menna acknowledged receipt of the Tax Assessor's report and the Tax Collector's report.

OEM/FIRE MARSHAL/CODE

Fire Marshal Welsh reviewed his report. He said he was still working on updating the Tenant Registration Ordinance. He said he would meet with the Attorney and Administrator and was looking for sample ordinance.

POLICE

Chief McConnell said he had not submitted a written report yet because the month had just ended. He gave a verbal report on statistics in the department.

FIRE

There was no report from the Fire Department.

PUBLIC WORKS

Director Keen said his department was preparing for the expected storm. He said there had been some issues on certain streets with the garbage contractor getting access. He reviewed actions that had been taken and said, if the issue continued, they may have to make some parking modifications. He said they were starting to see improvements in the parks but would leave the details to the Parks & Recreation Director to report. He said he was happy to report that parking revenue was up and said they were on target to meet their goals. He reported that there were brush pick up issues with people putting items out at the wrong time. He thanked the Code Enforcement and DPW staff for assisting with education on the matter.

Mayor Menna asked him to extend the appreciation of the Council to the department and said it had good to see so many DPW employees attending a memorial service for an employee's mother.

Councilman Ballard asked for an update on the catch basin at River Street and Leighton Avenue.

Director Keen said they had analyzed the area and found the price was going to be less than he thought so the project was going to be included in the next Road Program project. He reviewed the work that would be included.

Councilman Zipprich said, in regard to trash pickup issues, he was encouraging Director Keen to work with the residents before making changes.

Director Keen reviewed efforts that had already be made.

Councilwoman Triggiano asked about the Plastic Film program.

Director Keen said he was waiting for the delivery of buckets. He said he anticipated a September start.

Councilwoman Triggiano asked if interested residents could sign up through the Borough website.

Director Keen said he wasn't sure if it was on the Borough's website but said the Environmental Commission had the information on their Facebook page.

Councilwoman Triggiano asked him to make sure it was on the Borough's DPW page. She also asked him to review the program.

Director Keen went over the amount of plastic film that had the potential to be recycled.

Councilwoman Triggiano offered more information on the program.

RECREATION

Director Dal Pra reviewed his report and reviewed August programs. He said the showing of the movie Ghostbusters had been rained out so he said they may show it around Halloween. He reviewed the status of the turf replacement project and review problems with installation. A discussion followed on the upcoming programs scheduled for the field. He also reported that the backboard for the basketball court was expected soon. He also gave an update on the status of work at Eastside Park and reported on upcoming fall sports programs. He reported on a 9-11 Memorial Ceremony and said they were working on the Halloween parade.

Councilman Ballard asked that he had a column to the finance section of his report to show a year-to-date comparison from the prior year.

SENIOR CENTER

Director Reynolds reviewed her report and asked if there were any questions. She said they were bringing back their book club and said their Farmer's Market program was going well. She said there would be a cookout and fire prevention presentation as Westside Hose Company.

Councilman Zipprich about the section of her report labeled "clients." He asked for an explanation of the numbers for August and year-to-date.

Ms. Reynolds reviewed the new memberships in August and for the year so far. A discussion followed on memberships.

LAND USE

Director Ebanks reviewed her report. She said the previous day had been the deadline for the Master Plan RFP. She said she had received five proposals which had been sent to the Planning Board's Master Plan Committee. She said she was hoping for a decision by the next workshop meeting for presentation to the Mayor and Council.

Councilman Zipprich asked that Ms. Ebanks include the Historic Preservation Commission activities in her report in the future as well as any applications concerning historic buildings.

Director Ebanks said she had forgotten to mention at the August meeting that GovPilot was up and running for the Development Permit Zoning Applications. She said her Department was now only receiving applications through the online process.

Councilman Zipprich said he did not know if Ms. Ebanks had the ability to edit the GovPilot program but said he had been browsing through it and notice that there were a lot of users on the application that were no longer Borough employees.

Ms. Ebanks said, for her end of the program, she had requested that the emails for a few people be removed. She said she would follow up on the Planning & Zoning access.

Councilman Zipprich asked IA McConnell to take a look at having former employees removed..

IA McConnell said he would have the Department Heads look into it.

Councilman Ballard asked for more information regarding removing emails for former employees.

IA McConnell clarified that the emails were still listed in the GovPilot program but said the accounts had been disabled or forwarded to the replacement employee.

Councilwoman Triggiano asked about an event Ms. Ebanks was going to be hosting at the library.

Director Ebanks said she had been asked by the Library to do a brief presentation on the Planning Process and the purpose of the Planning and Zoning boards.

Councilwoman Triggiano said it was being held on 9/21 and further reviewed the program.

Councilman Zipprich asked her to include the Historic Preservation Commission in her presentation.

BUILDING

Construction Official Neibert reviewed his report and asked for questions. There were none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Menna called for a motion to open Public Comment.

Councilwoman Triggiano offered a motion, seconded by Councilman Yngstrom.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Triggiano, Ballard, Yngstrom, Zipprich and Horgan.

NAYS: None

There being five ayes and no nays, the motion was declared approved.

Tiffany Harris—1 Cedar Crossing—asked for an update on the Senior Center restoration project.

IA McConnell gave a detailed status report.

Ms. Harris asked for a start date.

IA McConnell said they didn't have construction plans yet but expected them in the coming weeks. He reviewed the next steps in the project.

Councilwoman Triggiano said it was on the same timeline that had been previously stated.

Councilman Ballard said he understood Borough officials had met with the architects and that they were drawing up place to presentation to the Council. He asked what the Council would do with those plans.

IA McConnell said it would be up to the Council to approve the plans and authorize them going out to bid.

Councilman Ballard said he had always understood that the residents and users of the Senior Center would have input on what the final Senior Center would look like. He said it sounded like that wasn't going to happen.

IA McConnell said there would be a public presentation of the plans.

Mayor Menna said he agreed that the Council had discussed that, as soon as the rough drawings had been prepared, they would hold a public hearing on the matter.

A discussion followed on the public input process.

Councilwoman Triggiano said there had already been a massive amount of public input on the project that had been brought to the Redevelopment Agency. She said that public input was what had led to the agency to not consider large changes to the facility.

The discussion continued on the process.

Cindy Burnham—71 Wallace Street—said she wanted to give input on the project and asked where the HVAC would be.

IA McConnell said the main point was that it would not be in the attic and said details would be on the plans to be presented.

Ms. Burnham offered specific suggestions including that she would like to see the fireplace remain where it was. She also asked about the Open Space Grant in regard to Marine Park and confirmed that it was a matching grant. She asked what money would be used to fund the project. She said Engineer Neumann had said that the project was going to cost more than anticipated because the Borough would have to obtain DEP and CAFRA permits. She said Engineer Neumann had suggested that they pause the project and asked how much more it was going to cost for the permits.

Mayor Menna said it was a good question and said he would have it on an agenda to be discussed with the Engineer.

Ms. Burnham asked if IA McConnell could address her questions.

IA McConnell said it was up to the Council to decide how to fund the project. Regarding the permits, he said he did not remember the exact amount but said, a couple of months ago, the Council had passed a resolution to authorize the Engineer to review the plans and make the permit applications.

Ms. Burnham criticized the expense and again claimed that the Engineer had suggested that they should pause the project.

Mayor Menna said they would seek her opinion when they had the discussion at a future Council meeting.

Ms. Burnham also asked for an update on personal issues with the recently appointed Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency.

Mayor Menna said that was litigation and said he was not aware of any information regarding that litigation. He said the matter did not involve Red Bank.

Adrienne Bilaal—266 South Pearl Street—said she wanted to comment of having public input before the Engineers go forward with the design. She compared it to the Marine Park public input process which she said was a healthy process. She said the Senior Center input had not been a healthy process. She asked about security measures. She urged the Council to include the Seniors in the process.

Marybeth Maida—84 Branch Avenue—said she wanted to echo the comments of Ms. Bilaal. She said she wanted to take issue with statements made by Councilwoman Triggiano and criticized the process.

Councilwoman Triggiano challenged some of Ms. Maida's comments.

Councilman Ballard and Councilman Zipprich responded.

Anne Kelterborn—108 Herbert Street—asked about the status of a crossing light at Shrewsbury Avenue and Chestnut Street. She stressed the need.

Mayor Menna said he was aware of recent discussions with the County and asked IA McConnell to give an update.

IA McConnell said he had met with the County the previous day. He said there was a plan to add crosswalks and some ADA ramps. He said he did not see any immediate plan for a hawk light which was outside of the Borough jurisdiction as it was a County Roadway. He said some improvements may occur as part of the Shrewsbury Avenue TAP grant but said that was not expected for two years. He said the County would be adding crosswalks and non-electric signage. He said he had also recently spoken with JCP&L and had provided a list of locations where they would be adding Cobra head street lights to improve lighting in the area.

Mayor Menna said the County had a history of working with the Borough to install Hawk lights and reviewed other locations where they had been installed on County roads. He said he had told the County that there was an equal need on Shrewsbury Avenue.

Ms. Kelterborn called for putting pressure on the County.

Patricia Brander—122 Riverside Avenue—asked if there was any information regarding a recent meeting between residents of her building with Mayor Menna and Councilwoman Horgan.

Mayor Menna thanked the residents for inviting them for an onsite visit. He said he had prepared a memo for various Borough Officers. He reviewed other actions that had been taken regarding violations at the property.

Councilwoman Horgan asked Ms. Brander to encourage the residents to fill out the complaint forms that she had dropped off.

Bruce Erikson—122 Riverside Avenue—thanked the Mayor and said he had also participated in the meeting. He reviewed improvements to the property since the meeting. He asked for more information on the forms.

Ben Forest—16 Locust Avenue—said he appreciated the Parks & Recreation Department. He said the Jazz in the Park series had been fabulous. He thanked the Mayor and Council for the program. He said Shrewsbury Avenue had been intense when they moved to the area in 1996 but was even more intense now. He also said he wanted to note that Shrewsbury Avenue was not just dangerous for kids.

Memone Crystian—15 Marion Street—criticized Councilwoman Triggiano's demeanor and comments. She said public comment was a standard process and said she had been disappointed to see her argue against it.

Councilwoman Triggiano responded to Ms. Crystian's comments and said she supported public comment.

Tiffany Harris—1 Cedar Crossing—she said earlier she had been told that the Senior Center project was on the established timeline. She asked someone to reiterate that timeline. She said it has been 1,000 days that the seniors had not been in their building.

Councilwoman Triggiano said a timeline had been discussed from the time the plan was approved. She asked IA McConnell to review.

IA McConnell said he did not have exact dates but said the former Administrator had outlined a details and realistic timeline. He reviewed the steps in the process.

Cindy Burnham—71 Wallace Street—said she wanted to thank Councilmembers Ballard and Zipprich for bringing clarity to the Senior Center situation. She reviewed previous discussions that she believed occurred. She praised previous speakers for their comments.

Lillian Settles—72 Bank Street—said she was glad the Council had agreed to fix the Senior Center. She suggested that when they present choices to the public they should be limited. She said she didn't believe the Center needed many changes. She said she wished Councilmembers would be less confrontational. She also agreed that crossing Shrewsbury Avenue was a problem and criticized the amount of building going on in town. She also said she was opposed to the PILOT program.

Phil Blackwood—34 Chestnut Street—spoke on the issue of climate change and encouraged the Council to keep moving forward with the energy aggregation program. He also called for electrifying the municipal fleet.

No one else appearing, Mayor Menna called for a motion to close the Public Comment.

Councilman Zipprich offered a motion to close the Public Comment, seconded by Councilwoman Horgan.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Triggiano, Ballard, Yngstrom, Zipprich and Horgan.

NAYS: None

There being five ayes and no nays, the motion was declared approved.

Councilman Zipprich offered a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Ballard.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Triggiano, Ballard, Yngstrom, Zipprich and Horgan.

NAYS: None

There being five ayes and no nays, the motion was declared approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Borghi