

BOROUGH OF BARRINGTON CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2025, 6:00PM, MAYOR/COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Mayor Hanson called the meeting to order in council chambers at 6:00pm with the Sunshine Statement and led everyone present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Borough Clerk called the roll of council, and the following were present: Council President Beach, Councilman Cerrito, Councilman Beyer, Councilwoman Mercado-Miller and Councilman Robenolt. Councilman Drumm was absent with prior notice. Also present were Secretary Eileen Holcombe, Solicitor Tim Higgins, Engineer Greg Evans, CFO Denise Moules and Clerk Terry Shannon.

Engineer's report

Greg Evans reported we will have a change order for the police department renovations and also for the rubber surface at Lost World Park.

- We held the pre-con for Lost World Park. Public Works will commence with demolition and removal of the wood mulch. We will be putting in an underdrain to help drain the area.
- Beaverbrook drainage project—Mayor received notification that the project is eligible for USDA funding which is great news. We will prepare for the formal application submission. This would complete the first phase for the Shreve Avenue discharge area.
- 4th Avenue force main—we will commence mid-April and will notify all residents in the area.

Public Portion

On a motion by Councilman Beach second by Councilman Beyer, the first public portion was opened.

Present was Warren Wright, a resident of Warwick Road. He has been a resident for 37 years. He is interested in converting his detached garage to a mother-in-law suite. He said it was discussed at the last Planning Board meeting to amend the ordinance to include washers and dryers and stoves and unanimously passed by the Planning Board. He understands it then goes to council for consideration. He wanted to know what the status is. His wife is very sick on hospice and he has a large house that his children will probably move into and he would live in the in-law suite. Clerk Shannon explained that once the Planning Board approves, they should send a letter to council asking that they consider amending the ordinance. Mayor Hanson asked an in-law suite is the same as an ADU (accessory dwelling unit). Mr. Wright explained that an in-law suite is typically attached where an ADU is a detached unit. Mayor Hanson asked that Solicitor Higgins get us information on what other towns are doing regarding this for consideration. This will be discussed further when we have more information. He invited Mr. Wright to come to the next caucus for an update and explained that an ordinance requires one month for introduction and another month for adoption.

Seeing no further public comment, on a motion by Robenolt, second by Mercado-Miller, the public portion was closed.

Administration

Clerk Shannon reported on the following:

Re-introduction of ordinance 1207, Amending Chapter 172, Fire Prevention, in the Borough Code. The ordinance was not written clearly when first introduced so we need to reintroduce at the April council meeting. Revised language is attached.

Proposals received for possible sale of VFW—two proposals were received for the sale of the VFW. Committee reviewed and will report on their recommendation for discussion.

Ordinance to increase Building permit fee for solar installations—the Construction Official has reported that the fees we are currently charging for the building portion of solar installations are too low and do not cover the required inspections. He is recommending we raise the Building fee to a flat \$300. If all are in agreement, ordinance to amend this fee will be on the agenda.

Financial Disclosure—reminder that Financial Disclosure statements need to be filed by April 30.

Tree plantings—the trees that were supposed to be planted last fall but could not be because the weather did not cooperate, will be planted within the next few weeks. Mike and I are going back out to remark all of the locations.

Town Wide Yard Sale is set for April 26 (rain date April 27)

Resolution for fireworks—the new vendor we used last year, Schaeffer Fireworks, is holding the price for us for this year. A resolution awarding a contract to them will be on the council agenda.

Council agenda review

Ordinances for introduction on first reading:

- Ord. 1207 Amending Chapter 172, Fire Prevention, in the Borough Code (revised)
- Ord. 1208 To Amend the Fee Charged for Solar Installations

Resolutions for approval by consent agenda: *preliminary—more may be added*

- Resolution to accept proposal for sale of VFW
- Resolution awarding a contract to Schaeffer Fireworks
- Resolution to introduce the 2025 Municipal Budget
- Resolution to sell equipment no longer needed by Fire Alliance on GovDeals
- Resolution to approve April bill list
- Resolution for change order for police renovations
- Resolution for change order for rubber surface at Lost World Park

Mayor Hanson reported that we received two proposals for the purchase of the VFW. One was from Kaffe Korner for a diner-type restaurant and the other was from Kyle Wright Landscaping for an expansion of his business. The selection committee reviewed the proposals and selected the proposal submitted by Kaffe Korner. We believe this would be the best use of that property and would benefit the town. Councilman Beyer asked what happened to their original business and Mayor Hanson responded they were in town for five years in the location that is now Lil Jalapeno but got priced-out on their lease. They ran the kitchen at the Old Rail until Covid hit and then just never reopened. Chief Minardi added they were a good partner and hosted Coffee with a Cop events. Beyer asked if we are worried about turnover which is common with restaurants. Mayor Hanson replied they will have a stable mortgage rate and also had a good following in town. Councilwoman Mercado-Miller added that we really can't decide based on that as it is always a risk but their proposal also included community events including book clubs and the like and they are willing to open the space to the public. They are talking about music, art shows, etc. Councilman Beyer added the proposal read as positive for the community but his feelings are about the history of the building and value to the borough. Councilman Robenolt added he is not a fan of selling either but he and his family were fans of Kaffe Korner. He has no reservation about them at all—he just wants the borough to keep the property. It was determined that the resolution to sell will be outside the consent agenda.

Mayor Hanson then reported that we also received a request to amend the redevelopment plan to allow events at the Avenue building. Currently they are not allowable in the zone. One of the businesses in the Avenue wants to hold public events like bridal showers, baby showers, etc., which will draw at least 40 people, possibly more. We already have a parking problem in that area and parking is

overburdened and there is a new food hall/bar coming too. She currently has an event planning business but wants to actually host these events. My opinion would be to oppose amending the ordinance. After more discussion, council agreed that unless we are able to come up with more public parking, we will not consider amending the ordinance at this time.

Finance

CFO Moules presented the monthly reports showing account balances for the temporary budget. There are budget lines in the negative but once the budget is adopted, they will be addressed. The meetings for the budget took place on March 19. You have the budget reports I prepared showing the detail. Mayor Hanson added we have a less than 4.5 cent increase which is less than \$90 annually on the average assessment. We are helping the school district and will pickup the full cost of the school resource officer. The CFO and budget committee went through all of the line items with the department heads. Thank you to all of them but especially to Denise for her work on this. Denise added we are looking at funding our own capital projects rather than issuing debt. We will be introducing the budget next week and will adopt at the May meeting. Let me know if you have any questions.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Cerrito reported we will be doing our third annual military appreciation event this year. If you know anyone whose son or daughter is entering service, get the information to me.

Councilwoman Robenolt reported we are pushing the Earth Day cleanup one week to move it away from Easter. Information will be going out tomorrow. Date will be April 26, with the 27th as the rain date.

Councilwoman Mercado-Miller reported the Mews has been sold. Please relay questions from residents to me. We have not received any communication yet from the new owner. Board of Health is working on the Mayor's Wellness Campaign and will be doing a 5K. It will be focused around suicide prevention. Wellness Week—owner of Heart and Grit yoga studio will be working with Board of Health on a collaboration with town businesses for discounts related to wellness.

Council President Beach reported we had one person from Public Works move on to Stratford. We will be talking with the Public Works Committee in the next week regarding replacement.

Chief Minardi reported that next week we will be presenting four awards. Matt Charlton had a car stop and the guy had a Molotov cocktail in the car. This resulted in an investigation and search of the individual's home and they found silencers, vests, a town of ammo and more and this possibly saved a potentially tragic event. Charlton, D'Asceno, Hovern, Beckas and Obie will all be receiving an award.

Mayor Hanson reported the 8th grade governing body will be shadowing us next week at council. Little League opening day is this Saturday at 9am. Softball is next Saturday at 10am. Barrington Day is May 3 from 10am-2pm behind Woodland. Thanks to DPW for the demolition on the park and helping with the cleanup upstairs. They have been going above and beyond. Shout out to Senator Booker for the longest speech given in Washington.

Chief Minardi added that he attend a county press conference at the Prosecutor's Office regarding Autism awareness. They will provide a blue envelope with relevant documents so if involved in a car stop, that envelope can be given to the officer so they are aware there is an Autistic person in the vehicle.

Seeing no additional business to be discussed, on a motion by Councilman Drumm, second by Councilwoman Mercado-Miller, the meeting adjourned at 6:48pm.

Approved: Terry Shannon
Terry Shannon, Clerk/RMC