

BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK
MAYOR & COUNCIL CONFERENCE MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2018

MINUTES

1. Mayor Brill Mittler called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. and 9:01 p.m.
2. PRESENT: Mayor; Council (Councilwoman Welkovits 6:13 p.m.); Borough Attorney; Borough Administrator; Borough Clerk.

NOTE: Upcoming Meeting schedule:

Oct. 16, 2018	Standing Committee Meetings; Special Meeting if needed.
Oct. 18, 2018	Arts and Recreation Committee Meeting 4:00 PM.
Oct. 23, 2018	Council Committee Reports 6:00 PM; Agenda Meeting 6:30 PM; Regular Meeting 7:00 PM; Conference Meeting to follow.

3. Agenda Discussion – none.
4. Public Discussion (15 minutes) – none.
5. Memorial or Commendatory Resolutions or Presentations scheduled as indicated:
 - a. Forward Not Back Presentation – October 23, 2018.
6. Ordinances on 1st Reading – no ordinances scheduled for introduction for 10/23/18:
 - a. Plastic Bag Ordinance – November Meeting.
 - b. Handicapped Parking Teen Center.
 - c. Property Acquisition Ordinance.
7. Ordinances on 2nd Reading – no public hearings scheduled for 10/23/18:
 - a. Handicapped Parking Ordinance Amendment.
 - b. Fair Share Housing Ordinance.
 - c.
8. Resolutions for Next Meeting - scheduled for 10/23/18:
 - a. Bills List (10/23/18).
 - b. Tuition Reimbursement.
 - c. Forestry Plan.
 - d.
9. Appointments – none.
10. Borough Attorney's Report – none.
11. Borough Administrator's Report – none.
12. Standing Committee Status Reports – none.

13. Discussion Items.

- a. Update Resolution Promoting a Fair and Welcoming Community Inclusivity – Councilman Hale explained that the Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs has come up with a resolution that is an extension of what was passed before. The resolution is restating again that Highland Park is a welcoming community. Highland Park cannot do an executive order due to their form of government. The new resolution will include the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Directive #23 concerning immigration and customs enforcement. Suggestion to put the resolution in draft format and post on the Borough website prior to introduction.
- b. Conference Agendas/Minutes – Borough Clerk Hullings noted that a question was raised by a resident as to why the Conference Agendas and Minutes were not posted on the Borough website. Effective immediately and going forward, all conference agendas and minutes to be posted on the website.
- c. Legalization of Marijuana Legislation – Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the League of Municipalities and the Mayor's Association have been closely monitoring this legislation. One of the issues concerning most Mayor's is that the current legislation calls for municipalities to only get 2% of the taxes. There are also issues with Police and Code enforcement. The Mayor's want the same percentage of taxes that goes to the State, 5%. Do not know the cost to the municipality if this legislation passes. There is a lot of pre-planning that would have to be put in place with regard to Public Safety and the Board of Health. Councilman George noted that the discussion amongst Prosecutors is the cost that will be associated with prosecuting DWI's and the difficulty in prosecuting such cases. Discussion about the impact on the Municipal Court. There was also discussion about recent Facebook post about this matter by a Council Member who was expressing his opinion on this issue. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Governing Body has always worked as a team. Councilwoman Foster-Dublin added that this issue is for the Council to discuss and for the Council to make a decision. Councilman Fine noted that he has been bringing up this issue since December of last year.
- d. 501(c)(3) Organizations for Borough Charities – Councilman George noted that donations to organizations that are 501(c)(3)'s are tax deductible. Need to make a list of those Boards/Commission that have that designation such as HP Gives a Hoot. Councilman Hale noted that the Food Pantry is under the umbrella of the County.
- e. Minimum Wage Resolution – Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the group Forward Not Back will give a presentation on a resolution they would like the Governing Body to support for a \$15 minimum wage.
- f. Stormwater Management Training – Borough Administrator Jover noted that all members of the Governing Body are mandated to watch a video and confirm that they have watched it. This is part of the stormwater management regulations.
- g. No Parking/Handicap Parking Space at Teen Center – Councilwoman Foster-Dublin explained that there is no handicapped parking at the Teen Center. They would like to put a space in front of the Teen Center and make the rest of that block on Benner Street as no parking.
- h. Volunteer Tuition Credit Program – Borough Administrator Jover noted that the State of New Jersey has a tuition credit program for Volunteer Firefighters and First Aid Squad Members. Need to adopt a resolution at the next meeting that confirms the Borough would like to participate in this program. This resolution should be made part of the annual resolutions adopted at the beginning of the year.
- i. Revised Plastic Bag Ordinance – Councilman George noted that there is a meeting to discuss this on October 16, 2018 and there will be another public meeting before it is introduced.

- j. Community Forestry Management Plan – Councilman George noted that the Shade Tree Advisory Committee gets grants from the State for tree planting and programming. The State requires that they submit a management plan every five years. STAC came to do a presentation for the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee on Friday of the draft management plan. With regard to the Emerald Ash Borer Trees, Highland Park is the only town in the County that asked to participate with the County in addressing this issue. The State and the County are recommending that the trees be recycled in place. There is a need to put down chips on the Meadows Trail. The 5 year Forestry Management Plan and the 2 year Ash Borer Plan will be forwarded to all once they are fine tuned. The Forestry Management Plan needs to be adopted at the next meeting as it is due by October 31st. STAC to come to the next Borough Council Meeting to do a brief presentation. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that there is an issue of ash trees being on private property. Councilman George noted that STAC has pictures that can be shared with the residents to help identify the trees.
- k. Water/Sewer Bill Forgiveness Policy and Water/Sewer Billing Update – Borough Administrator Jover noted that it came to her attention that a resident had a high meter reading. There is nothing in the ordinance for forgiveness of water/sewer charges. Average bills that are sent out, require the minimum payment. The Utility Collector estimated the residents' first quarter bill. Some of the older meters have remotes at the curb that talks to the meter reading guns. The Water & Sewer Department needed to gain access to the resident's home to read the meter. There was a delay in getting into the resident's home. Notes on the account indicate that there might be a leak. The Water & Sewer Department tried to alert the resident that there might be a problem and that the meter needed to be tested. Barbara McKiethen, the resident in question, noted that her normal water/sewer bills are usually no more than \$50 a quarter. Borough Administrator Jover noted that she found a policy from another municipality. Need to have some sort of criteria in place to address these types of issues. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that a provision could be put into the water/sewer ordinance that would allow for appeals to the Borough Administrator and that the provision could allow for solving issues retroactively. Borough Administrator Jover to send a letter to Ms. McKiethen outlining this conversation. Letter to be sent Certified Mail and Regular Mail. She also gave an update on the water/sewer billing for 2018. She noted that the 2nd quarter is very low. If the Borough did nothing and had a 4th quarter like 2017, there would be a shortfall of approximately \$206,000. With the best case scenario, there would be a shortfall of approximately \$78,000. Middlesex Water Company put her in touch with the Monroe Water Utility. They suggested looking at the tiers and increasing the number of accounts that go into those tiers and that could potentially solve the problem. Suggestion to change 4th tier from 10,000 & up to 4,000 & up. A typical family of four, has a consumption of approximately 2,000. If this change is made the deficit would be approximately \$4,000. The change in tiers would affect about 394 accounts. Discussion about amending the rates and potentially getting a \$53,000 surplus and expanding the 4th tier level to 3,5000.
- l. Conditional Developer Designation – 31 River Road – Borough Administrator Jover explained that a resolution was adopted naming a conditional developer for 31 River Road. The developer will pay for the study that will be conducted by the Borough Planner.

- m. Airbnb Taxes – Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Borough could potentially collect taxes on Airbnb rentals. There is a large number of homes that rent out their homes and the number expands during graduation times and football games. She and the Public Information Officer met with representatives from Airbnb. They have a list of houses and will come to a Council Meeting to figure out how to move forward.
 - n. 2019 Budget Timeline – Borough Administrator Jover distributed a 2019 budget timeline to the Governing Body. Budget worksheets to be distributed next week to the Department Heads with the requests being due November 15th. Department Heads and Board Chairpersons to meet with the Borough Administrator and their Council Liaisons before a draft budget is submitted to the Governing Body for review.
 - o. 2018 League Conference – Borough Clerk Hullings noted that she needs to finalize the reservations for the League Conference. Hotel reservations were made at the Sheraton and Caesar's.
 - p. Renaming Senior/Youth Recreation Center – Councilwoman Kim-Chohan noted that they would like to rename this building to the Community Center. The staff at the center and the Recreation Advisory Committee agree with the renaming.
 - q. Fracking Waste Storage at Carney Point – Councilman George noted that Sustainable Highland Park and the Environmental Commission oppose this and would like the Borough Council to pass a resolution opposing this as they have done in the past with regard to fracking.
14. On motion made by Councilwoman Foster-Dublin, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, Council went into Executive Session at 9:52 PM to discuss one matter involving property acquisition. On motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the Council returned to open session at 10:04 PM.

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 10:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings
Borough Clerk