

Township of Vernon

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEETING MINTUES

June 24, 2019

The Regular Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on June 24, 2019 in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey with Council President Jean Murphy presiding.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Adequate notice of this meeting had been provided to the public and the press on January 3, 2019 and was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-7.

ROLL CALL

Present were Council Members Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger and Council President Murphy. Also present were Mayor Harry Shortway, Business Administrator Charles Voelker, CFO Donelle Bright DeCouto and Township Attorney Josh Zielinski.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Council President Murphy led the assemblage in the salute of the flag.

PUBLIC HEARING/2ND READING OF ORDINANCES

Council President Murphy asked Council to move Public Hearing of Ordinance #19-10 to here in agenda and gave a PowerPoint presentation containing documents and facts about decision at hand.

Council President Murphy stated Resolution #19-97 was approved by Council on March 25, 2019 authorizing the Township Engineer to design and prepare the contract documents for the turf field replacements at Maple Grange at cost of \$10,000.00 based on facts provided from administration. At that time, she stated that Council was in full agreement of pursuing replacement of the fields but noted test results from Sport Care were not yet received. Council President Murphy stated the Council then received reports from Sport Care based on the American Society Testing Materials (ASTM) Standards. Council President Murphy stated each field was tested and had been verified to be in compliance and met requirements for playing based on the specification as referenced ASTM 1936-10 F355. Each field was tested at 10 locations, with 3 drops at each location and all results were averaged to determine the GMAX value, which number must be less than 200 for safety.

Upper Soccer Field – on March 13, 2019 prior to any maintenance done, test results ranged between 133.5 to 192.5 for average of 167.9.

Middle Soccer Field – On March 13, 2019 prior to any maintenance done, test results ranged between 152.5 to 218 for average of 176.6.

Football Field - On March 13, 2019 prior to any maintenance done, test results ranged between 105 to 147 for average of 130.

Council President Murphy provided March 20, 2019 test results done at locations close to previous drops after scheduled maintenance done by Sport Care.

Upper Soccer Field – on March 20, 2019 after maintenance done, test results ranged between 123 to 162 for average of 137.9.

Middle Soccer Field – on March 20, 2019 after maintenance done, test results ranged between 126 to 164.5 for average of 141.4.

Council President Murphy stated she questioned why the Township tested again on May 9, 2019 which was done to ensure test results were maintained.

Upper Soccer Field – on May 9, 2019 with no further maintenance, test results ranged between 120.5 to 161.5 for average of 137.55.

Middle Soccer Field – on May 9, 2019 with no further maintenance, test results ranged between 128.5 to 171.5 for average of 143.6.

Council President Murphy opined that at the beginning of discussion, the Council was told both fields need to be replaced due to poor condition and liability concerns without any supportive documentation being provided to them. Council President Murphy noted the Township does not want children playing on dangerous fields. She added the Council is charged with responsibility of deciding how to spend public funds. Council President Murphy questioned how is the Council to make a decision to replace fields when the reports that they received that the Township paid for indicated that the fields met the safety standards. Council President Murphy commented that in Montclair the fields the same vendor through field maintenance and decompaction was able to postpone their field replacement for two years by doing the maintenance. Council President Murphy indicated that Sport Care had stated they performed a 2-tier maintenance to Maple Grange Fields to aid the aggressive decompaction to keep the field's compliance to safety standards. Also, the recommendation from the manufacturer was to repeat the process every 6-8 weeks until the field replacement, in addition to the current maintenance in place. Council President Murphy stated she had been advised that the cost for three maintenance services of the fields from now until the end of 2019 will cost \$2800.00 a visit nor per field but total. Council President Murphy stated that as a Council member, her decisions are made from the factual information provided to the Council and noted the documents speak for themselves.

Council Member Van Tassel stated he went to the fields and found spots on the turf fields with no fibers left and spots where the blades were very short. Council Member Van Tassel stated he understood that the fields had passed this time but perhaps in the future they will not. Council Member Van Tassel stated if you look at the part that has been replaced in the past and the portions that had not been replaced there is no comparison. . Council Member Van Tassel commented it is uncertain how long the fields will last if they are not replaced.

Council Member Curreri stated all Council Members were in agreement to contract the Township Engineer to see what is needed at the fields and added the turf fields are not equal as the middle one is in worse condition. Council Member Curreri added his concern that two large scale scientific studies found toxicity related to turf fields and questioned what that would mean for Vernon if we were to replace the fields with the same material while the study is in progress. Council Member Curreri stated that he had previously suggested to the Mayor not to close the fields because the safety ratings provided to the Council say they are safe for play. Council Member Curreri suggested the fields be put on a staggered schedule for the replacement as the Council had not been advised there would be any great cost savings by doing it all at once. Council Member Curreri explained it will cost over \$1 million to replace all three fields at Maple Grange which is a bright spot for the community. Council Member Curreri stated that if we stagger the field replacement over the next 24-36 months it would give the Township time to realize some revenue. He noted the Mayor had a creative solution of raising funds through fees for short term rentals to pay for the fields in cash. Council Member Curreri suggested staggering the field installation.

Council Member Ooms agreed that some states are trying to prevent installation of turf fields due to toxicity studies. She added her suggested idea to limit play or use to only Township teams is to increase the life of the fields.

Council President Murphy stated that the firm hired by the Township can continue to do the maintenance to keep the fields open. Council President Murphy noted she had discussed with Ms. Hamilton the Council's concerns that if the fields were replaced at this juncture and the current toxicity study concludes that the fields are toxic what position will that leave the township after spending almost \$1 million to replace the fields.

Shouting from the audience – The Municipal Clerk asked public to refrain from calling out, noting that the public would have the opportunity to speak at public comment.

Council Member Ooms asked if the field use could be limited to extend the life.

Council Member Van Tassel stated the fields are already fourteen years old.

Council Member Ooms noted that it was not the age of the fields she was concerned about. Council Member Ooms stated she was concerned about safety and the analysis provided said the fields were safe.

Shouting from the audience – Council President Murphy asked the public to refrain from calling out, noting that the public would have the opportunity to speak when the meeting was open for public comment.

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to move Ordinance #19-10 up in agenda.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Jean Murphy
All members were in Favor.

Council President Murphy read Ordinance #19-10 by title.

Ordinance #19-10: Bond Ordinance Appropriating \$2,038,668, And Authorizing The Issuance Of \$1,549,527 Bonds Or Notes Of The Township, For Various Improvements Or Purposes Authorized To Be Undertaken By The Township Of Vernon, In The County Of Sussex, New Jersey

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to open the Public Hearing for Ordinance #19-10.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel
All members were in favor.

Jennifer Hamilton thanked the Council Members for meeting with her to discuss the Maple Grange Turf Field issue. Ms. Hamilton thanked the Town Council for the time and effort they had put forward in finding a solution for the fields. Ms. Hamilton also thanked Administration for answering her questions. Ms. Hamilton also thanked sports groups for coming forward in support of the recreation department and the Ms. Hamilton stated she understands the financial impact to replace both fields this year but opined it is not practical. She explained the cost savings of doing both rather than continued repetitive tests and continuous maintenance. Ms. Hamilton expressed her agreement with the Township Council that the test reports can be open to interpretation but claimed that the Engineer and Risk Manger's reports state the risk is too high to continue using the fields in the current condition. She explained the Township was able to stretch the life of the fields 4 extra years from the recommended age.

Ms. Hamilton explained that should the Township approve of the replacement of two fields, the five youth organizations, Football & Cheer, Soccer, Softball, Baseball and PAL Lacrosse, are prepared to support the future maintenance and life of Maple Grange Park and be more flexible in respective schedules. She added all five youth organizations and the Vernon Police Athletic League have agreed to create a Maple Grange Fund to raise funds for future replacement of fields and a committee will be formed to oversee the fundraising ideas, sponsorships, and grant opportunities.

Ms. Hamilton noted the current Council is not responsible for the decisions or lack of planning done by other governing bodies since 2005 but urged Vernon to move forward for a solution for the present community. She added that all residents would like to see lower taxes, but there is no guarantee taxes will be lowered if fields are not replaced and further opined property values will decrease should the park close.

Ms. Hamilton stated many residents, students, families who came forward to explain how Maple Grange impacted their lives and have volunteered to join in the fundraising campaign at this last meeting. Ms. Hamilton added the residents are working hard for a solution and asked the Council to approve the replacement of the fields.

Ms. Hamilton stated that even though average test results are below 160, the Township Engineer has confirmed the specific spots on the field are unsafe to play. All analysis by the Town has come to the same conclusion: if fields are not replaced, they will be closed leaving Vernon another section of town to become an eyesore. She reiterated Vernon has already extended the life of the fields by four years, but no amount of continued maintenance will allow them to be kept open. Ms. Hamilton stated Vernon DPW has performed maintenance to allow the extra four years and questioned if same circumstance happened in Montclair as referenced earlier.

Tom Knutelsky, PE, Harold E. Pellow & Associates, on behalf of Township Engineer Cory Stoner, stated there is additional vital information based on reports to determine if field is suitable or not. Mr. Knutelsky advised the Council the GMAX rating to be used should be 165 for optimal field use according to the Synthetic Turf Council. He explained in 2005, the new blades were two inches long with 1 ½” rubber infill inserted for impact absorption but fourteen years of use and exposure to UV rays caused plastic blades to shorten and cause brittleness. Since the filament is shorter, when the rubber is fluffed at the surface, more black than green color. Mr. Knutelsky said the field is thinner and although fluffier. Mr. Knutelsky stated in concert with the GMAX results, looking at the structure of the fields from an Engineering standpoint, replacement is necessary at this time. He explained he cannot comment from a Risk Assessment standpoint, but blade height and rubber thickness impact the lateral cutting ability which should be taken into consideration. Mr. Knutelsky stated the rubber thickness is important for impact protection. Mr. Knutelsky stated that if the super-structure is not working properly it should be replaced. Mr. Knutelsky stated he feels strongly that these fields have to be replaced because they are not up to specifications of original installation and further impacting the rubber thickness will have a great impact going forward with use of the fields.

Lara O’Toole, senior at Vernon Twp. High School and 3-season athlete, explained she was introduced to competitive fitness at young age and family moved to Vernon because of sports. She stated sports encourage ethics, passion, competitive greatness and a healthy lifestyle where lasting friendships can be made. Ms. O’Toole commented that sports provided life lessons and lasting memories where teammates become family and expressed dismay that many organizations and residents will be affected should the fields be closed. Ms. O’Toole commented that some may not realize the bigger issue of closing the fields as the park and trail will still be open. She stated she has seen drug and alcohol paraphernalia in the woods at the park and if the fields are closed it may draw more of that undesirable behavior. She added the lack of teams present may reduce the use of the playground by the many families who attend the games. Closure of the two fields will result in less lessons being taught, less bonds created and less success to our athletes.

Ms. O’Toole asked the Council to imagine being a parent with children with work ethic larger than life and a passion for their sport but told fields will be closed causing heartbreak never being able to play there again. Ms. O’Toole urged the Council if they don’t want to save the park for themselves to please save it for the youth of this town and the youth before them tonight.

Carolyn Davies commented that the discussions included liability, and safety concerns of the fields, but questioned if the fields are closed who will be monitoring the fields so people do not use them. Ms. Davies asked if someone gets hurt playing on the fields when the fields are closed and there is a lawsuit who is going to pay for that. Council President Murphy explained public comment is not a question and answer session. Ms. Davies stated she understood but expressed her concern that people would play on the fields even though they are closed. Ms. Davies asked if a fence was to be installed or a police officer stationed there monitoring the fields. Council Member Ooms questioned if Vernon is closing the fields.

Ms. Davies questioned is the same company that is doing the testing the same one doing the replacement. Council President Murphy explained that Council is not the entity tasked with closing the fields. Council President Murphy noted the only person who could close those fields is the Mayor. Council President Murphy noted that Council Member Curreri sent an email to the Mayor asking him to schedule the needed maintenance to keep the fields open, but the Mayor’s response was no. Council President Murphy stated if residents would like the fields to remain open they should ask the Mayor to schedule the proposed maintenance from the company who did the repairs. Council President Murphy noted that the company submitted a proposal for the maintenance and the Township simply needed to sign it as they had done before to have the maintenance done. Council President Murphy stated if you are asking additional information those questions should be directed to Administration.

Jessica Swanson, originally from Warwick, moved to Vernon because of the family oriented area and pride in the unbelievable facilities even though her commute is four hours every day. She commented the Town is closing the one healthy thing to deter kids from drug use and expressed her disbelief that the debate is over \$18/ tax per household. Ms. Swanson commented that the next time she is asked why she lives in Vernon; she hopes to answer that the community and amenities for families keep her here. Ms. Swanson commented that Vernon has attractions for visitors to come but who then go to Warwick to eat due to lack of offerings. She added that this community deserves a place for children to gather and enjoy and again noted that it is pathetic that Vernon’s most valuable asset is up for discussion to close. Ms. Swanson urged the Council to reconsider and fix the fields as economically

as possible but noted that putting a Band-Aid on it is not the answer. The children of Vernon work hard and deserve a place to showcase their talents and abilities.

Tiffany Tavares commented that the cover of the Vernon Community Guide displays beautiful pictures of Maple Grange, and Vernon Football, Softball, and Baseball teams showing the heart of Vernon - our children. She added Vernon offers a competitive advantage to our athletes with use of turf and grass fields and being able to play in wet weather when many other towns cancel games. Ms. Tavares commented that the Flats used to be a vibrant area but is now closed and doesn't want Maple Grange to become a sports graveyard also. She acknowledged her understanding that some residents are on a fixed income but closing the fields will decrease property values and urges the Council to think of the future and not just now.

Mary Jo Paulison, Vernon read letters from other residents concerning Maple Grange Fields.

- Catherine Petillo – It is important to preserve the future for our kids
- Nicholas Zanis – children need facilities to participate in sports for their physical and emotional health
- Brittany Lenhart - Why get rid of the one place that allows people an outlet from school; invest in your kids and allow healthy outlets – invest in the town
- Kathleen Peterson - The youth of Vernon need this park to grow and play sports. She stated that Mountain Creek should pay their back taxes to ensure the youth this park. The Town Council better wake up.
- Cesar Galinga - Sports are valuable to learn teamwork and discipline.

Ms. Paulison noted this is a few people who wanted their feelings read to preserve Maple Grange Park. She added that a significant amount of people came to this meeting, as well as 4470 signatures on document displayed to show support to keep the park open.

Travis Babau commented it is a shame the fields are closed as he spent many days creating friendships and it could be all taken away.

Brian Lally one of five siblings who have used Maple Grange Park extensively through many township programs. He noted the motion to limit the usage of the fields by Council Member Ooms may seem practical but pointed out the overwhelming presence at the meeting of supporters as the only obvious solution is to fix them now. He recited a quote from his father, 'You can fix it temporary and damage it permanently.'

Scott U'glay, Boys Lacrosse Coach explained that boy lacrosse players wear helmets for protection, but girl players and soccer players do not. He noted his firsthand experience serious head injuries and then performing concussion protocol on an injured child while parents and other players stand by. Mr. U'glay explained some spots on the fields are harder than a table and need to be replaced for the player's safety. He noted that Maple Grange is a shining star to many of our visiting teams and replacing them will bring Vernon back to where it was. He commented he does not understand why this is an issue and urged Council to protect our children and the future of this town. Mr. U'glay explained the importance of allowing our children to play sports from youth to high school without the worry about concussions. He opined that Maple Grange is gorgeous and the most important thing is the safety of Vernon's children.

Katie O'Toole, Executive Board Member of Vernon Youth soccer, commented that Council has a report from a company who stands to make money from the regular scheduled maintenance and the Engineer's opinion who clearly said the fields are not safe. Ms. O'Toole urged Council to keep our kids safe with future plan from sports clubs to move forward.

Tammy Witters opined that it is incredibly short-sided of Council to repair the fields and allow the children to be seriously injured because the test met a minimally safety standard. She added it would be hard to sleep at night if she voted against replacing the fields and a child's life is ruined as a result of my action. Ms. Witters expressed respect for the Mayor to make a difficult decision to close the fields because they are unsafe and urged Council to please replace them for the children.

Matt Wolak stated he played soccer through high school and college and reminisced when Maple Grange was opened as the happiest moment for many. He questioned when was last time this many residents came to support such a big cause as the safety of the fields need to be addressed. Mr. Wolak urged the Council to take time to listen to the residents here and replace the fields at Maple Grange to protect our children and the future of this community.

Melanie Hart stated her daughter plays goalie in the area with lowest GMAX rating and is concerned over the test results for the safety of the players.

Bri White stated she started her lacrosse career at Maple Grange since 5th grade and noted that she is now at Lockhaven University. Ms. White stated her sister read a letter at last meeting in support of replacing the fields. She stated that Mayor Shortway's action to close the fields was for the main reason to keep the children safe. Ms. White said Mayor Shortway closed them because they need to be closed. Ms. White opined that Mayor Shortway and his wife are great role models for the youth of Vernon and stated there is no reason why the fields shouldn't be replaced.

Denise Hart commented her daughter recently had ACL surgery not related to the Maple Grange fields but explained the cost exceeding \$100,000 luckily mostly covered by insurance. Ms. Hart explained the move is essential in most sports and as noted earlier the current field conditions are dangerous for these moves. Ms. Hart opined the reports have gray areas and the repairs seem to be a Band-Aid, putting good money over bad. She added everybody is struggling, the state, the country but she explained parents still want to raise their children in a good environment and fixing the fields is the responsible thing to do.

Alton Kellerman, Rutgers Freshman expressed his disappointment in Council Members trying to justify postponing the replacement of the fields with unfounded studies linking turf fields that are used worldwide with cancer. He added that trying to use fear to intimidate is unethical. Mr. Kellerman stated that the Council has the option to do something great which may help their reelection chances in the fall and urged Council to do their job.

Zoe Heath commented the request from the community has been made to replace the fields and the job of the Council is to represent the community and urged Council to fulfill the request.

Chris Hordych, referring to Mr. Knutelsky's statement, commented that Council should take the advice of the Township Engineer to replace the fields who represents this town on a daily basis for the community's safety on roads, bridges, fields and not of a private company who stands to benefit financially.

Tom Knutelsky stated that Cory Stoner is his boss at firm of Harold Pellow & Associates not the other way around.

Seeing no more members of the public wishing to come forward, Council President Murphy asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing for Ordinance #19-10.

MOVED: Mark Van Tassel

SECOND: John Auberger

All members were in favor.

Council Member Curreri stated this is the first time he has heard the statement from the Engineer Knutelsky. Council Member Curreri asked was there a report sent that he had missed because the comments made this evening had not been made before. Council Member Curreri stated that the Council had letters from Cory Stoner which are a public record that were not clear or that detailed

Council President Murphy added it was the Engineer's opinion that one section can continue to be loosened in an attempt to lower the overall hardness levels but the shortening of the turf blades will continue. Council President Murphy noted this was in the Engineer report to the Council. Council President Murphy indicated the repair was an attempt to push some of the payments out because it is a lot of money. Council President Murphy stated she spoke with Jennifer Hamilton to try and stagger the fields so the Township is not always hit with the same thing and the cost of replacing all fields at once. She added Vernon will never get out of cycle of replacement of fields after upper two, then the football field, replacement cost of \$525,000, then the high school field will follow. She praised the idea to start a 501c3 for fundraising of future replacements. Council President Murphy noted that by the vote in March it was clear that the Council was not against the replacement of the field but they were being portrayed as being against the fields but that was absolutely the opposite as can be seen by the public document. Council President Murphy commented the Engineer's report in writing is different than the statement by Mr. Knutelsky.

Council Member Curreri asked Mr. Knutelsky if he was now amending Cory Stoner's report. Mr. Knutelsky stated from an engineering standpoint; he stands by the fact that shortening the blade length requires ½" blade to be stuck above the field infill which will require less infill. The less infill will lessen shock absorption even with the fluffed maintenance. He added the Town may get a couple months of use, but grass will continue to decay so the next time maybe you only get a month or a few weeks. Mr. Knutelsky said it was hard to tell because he did not know the degradation process and how quickly it was going to be. Mr. Knutelsky noted in 2016 some portions had to be replaced. Mr. Knutelsky stated he discussed this with Cory Stoner, and this was exactly what they had discussed, and it stands as his engineering opinion.

Council President Murphy stated both the Engineer and Sport Care are paid Township services.

Council Member Ooms commented that Vernon Township relied on GMAX tests for all years of the field's existence but now we are dismissing their results. Council Member Ooms noted that when the Township plays at away games, they do not know what their test results are. She further explained her opinion to limit use was for fields to be used by only Township organizations.

Council Member Auberger agreed with comment that it is an election year and officials must be held accountable. He expressed regret that the children who are willing to give up their time playing sports are hurt the worst. He added if prior governing bodies had planned for the future, not using funds for other purposes, Vernon would not be here debating the issue. Council Member Auberger stated the Township needs to start saving for the future and the money has to be set aside. Council Member Auberger stated that he had seen it happen again and again that money gets taken from the accounts to pay for something else. Council Member Auberger stated people need to run who care about everyone in Town. Council Member Auberger stated we need to replace the fields and start fresh with the maintenance.

Council Member Van Tassel commented it is a bad idea to just perform the maintenance to the fields and recommended to close the fields if not replaced.

Council Member Curreri requested the Engineer's report to be amended.

Council Member Ooms made a motion to Table the Ordinance due to the new information presented and questioned if the items can be separated into two ordinances with fields in one and all other Capital items in another.

Public Speaking Out of Order. Council President Murphy repeatedly requested that the public not shout out.

Attorney Zielinski stated Council Member Ooms made a motion to table the ordinance and asked for a second.

Council Member Ooms asked if the bond could be separated. Attorney Zielinski noted it would have to be reintroduced.

Council President Murphy stated that she had suggested separating the ordinance on May 13, 2019. She added the letter from Pinnacle Risk Solutions was troubling as the required results referred to in the letter was the result requirements provided for by the self-governing body of the turf industry not Sports Care (who tested the fields). She noted she spoke with Rich Duthie, Township Risk Manager from Pinnacle, who had adopted the Turf Council recommendation of rating 165 because he thought that Sports Care was stating the standard was 165. Council President Murphy then stated that Mr. Duthie discounted his own letter. She further stated that Sport Care does not have any affiliation with the turf governing body. She also noted additional inaccuracies in the letter about what are the safety standards. Council President Murphy reiterated that the risk management company itself had the standards confused.

Council Member Auberger made a motion to adopt Ordinance #19-10. Attorney Zielinski noted there was no second to the prior motion to table by Council Member Ooms.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel

Council Member Curreri requested if the ordinance can be separated into two ordinances with fields in one and all other Capital items in another. Council President Murphy reiterated the question. Attorney Zielinski stated it could be separated but it would have to be reintroduced. The Council discussed getting more information and breaking the bond into two separate ordinances. Attorney Zielinski noted a vote must be taken on Motion on the table.

The public shouted from the floor.

Council President Murphy noted there was a motion on the floor to adopt. The Council could vote to adopt it as written or vote to separate it out. Council Member Auberger questioned if this would delay all items in ordinance 19-10. Council President Murphy noted she had made the recommendation on May 13 to separate these items so that everything else could be approved while the discussion continued about the fields. Council Member Auberger stated there was a motion for adoption now.

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger

NAYES: Sandra Ooms, Jean Murphy

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion failed to adopt Ordinance 19-10.

The public began shouting out of order. Council President Murphy requested the police be contacted. The Municipal Clerk requested that members of the public refrain from calling out as the Council had not concluded its business on this matter.

Members of the public continued to disrupt the Council meeting.

Council Member Ooms motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:27. Motion failed to carry.

Council Member Van Tassel asked what happened with ordinance 19-10. Attorney Zielinski explained it had failed. Council Member Auberger questioned if the ordinance would be re-addressed. Attorney Zielinski stated it would have to be reintroduced in whatever increments.

Council Member Ooms made a motion to separate Ordinance #19-10 into two separate ordinances: Ordinance #19-15 for fields and Ordinance #19-16 for all other Capital.

MOVED: Sandra Ooms

SECOND: Patrick Curreri

Attorney Zielinski requested clarification if they were being introduced tonight with a public hearing at the next meeting. Council President Murphy indicated that both should be introduced pending further information from the Township Engineer. Council Member Ooms concurred that would be good idea. Attorney Zielinski stated there would be two separate bond ordinances being introduced this evening. Township Clerk Kirkman noted 19-15 and 19-16 as separate ordinances. Township Clerk Kirkman noted there was a motion to split the ordinances.

Ms. Bright, CFO stated that the Bond Ordinance #19-10 cannot be split because it needs to be redone as far as debt and the average useful life. CFO Bright noted it cannot just be split on the spot as authorization are not the same. Attorney Zielinski explained this action will need to go to Bond Counsel for review and approval. Attorney Zielinski noted ordinance 19-10 failed. CFO Bright requested the ordinance go to bond council before it is introduced. Attorney Zielinski indicated it should be referred to bond Counsel. Council Member Ooms noted the ordinance should be split.

Clerk Kirkman requested the motion be clarified; it was noted it is directing bond counsel split the ordinance.

MOVED: Sandra Ooms

SECOND: Patrick Curreri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Jean Murphy

NAYES: Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried to split the ordinance into two and have bond counsel draft the appropriate documents.

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to take a short recess at 8:36 pm.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Patrick Curreri
All members were in favor.

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to return to meeting at 8:39 pm.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel
All members were in favor.

PROCLAMATIONS

Council Member Curreri read the Proclamation for Pride Month.

Proclamation

Pride Month

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has a diverse Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) community and its committed to supporting visibility, dignity and equality for all people in the community; and

WHEREAS, many of the residents, Township employees, students, visitors and business owners within the Township of Vernon who contribute to the enrichment of our community are part of the LGBTQ community; and

WHEREAS, June has become a symbolic month in which the LGBTQ community and its supporters, come together in various celebrations of pride; and

WHEREAS, events are held annually to recognize and celebrate the diversity of the community ; and

WHEREAS, by protecting the rights of every individual, we enhance the value of our entire society; and

WHEREAS, this is the 50th anniversary of the movement toward LGBTQ rights which begun on June 28, 1969 at the Stonewall Inn in New York City.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Vernon, do hereby proclaim **June 2019 as Pride Month in Vernon Township.**

Given under my hand in these free United States in the Township of Vernon, on this 24th day of June two thousand nineteen, and to which I have caused the Seal of the Township of Vernon to be affixed and have made this proclamation public.

Council President Murphy acknowledged that June is Brain Awareness Month and noted the Town will recognize Alzheimer's Awareness at a November Council Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Current Agenda Items Only)

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to open the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: Sandra Ooms
SECOND: Patrick Curreri
All members voted in favor.

Seeing no more members of the public wishing to come forward, Council President Murphy asked for a motion to close the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: Sandra Ooms
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel
All members voted in favor.

MINUTES

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to approve the Special meeting Minutes of June 12, 2019.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri
ABSENT: None

Motion to approve the Special meeting Minutes of June 12, 2019 passed.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- A) Ordinance of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Amending Chapter 89 of the Municipal Code of the Township of Vernon Entitled "Personnel Policies" to Create Article IV Entitled "Anti-Nepotism Policy"

Council Member Ooms commented the proposed Anti-Nepotism Ordinance would prevent elected officials from working for the Township for four years from term ending and prevent relative of any elected officials to work for the town. Council President Murphy stated that the ordinance does not affect any current employees. Any further questions can be directed to the Township Attorney.

- B) Resolution Authorizing Agreement with Conservation Advising Services, LLC for Open Space Consulting

Council Member Ooms stated she is not in favor of approving this contract as it is an offshoot of prior company Greener By Design.

Mayor Shortway explained the prior Consultant contract expired and should the Council need Open Space advice, this Consultant would be available on an hourly/as needed basis only.

CONSENT AGENDA

Council President Murphy read the titles and gave a brief explanation of Resolutions #19-138 through #19-147. Resolution #19-146 and #19-147 were removed from Consent Agenda.

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to approve Resolutions #19-138 through #19-145.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None5

Motion Passed to approve Resolutions #19-138 through #19-145.

RESOLUTION #19-138

RENEWAL OF LIQUOR LICENSES IN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON FOR THE 2019-2020 LICENSING TERM

WHEREAS, all licenses to dispense alcoholic beverages must be renewed and reissued annually no later than June 30, 2019; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 33:1-1 et. seq., the Vernon Township Police Department has made the necessary inspections and reported same to the Township Clerk; and

WHEREAS, all of the licensees have complied with all of the regulations as set forth by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission of the State of New Jersey;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the following licenses shall be reissued for the 2019-2020 licensing period effective as of July 1, 2019.

CLUB LICENSE

Walkkill Valley VFW Memorial Post #8441 1922-31-010-002

PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION

FLME, Inc. (The George Inn) 1922-33-008-003
Smokeys Glenwood Grill, LLC (Smokeys Brick Oven Tavern) 1922-33-013-003
Great Gorge Entertainment LLC 1922-33-003-008
Appalachian Liq. Debtor In Possession 1922-33-007-015
Drew's Tavern, Inc. (Lamp Post Inn) 1922-33-001-004

PLENARY RETAIL DISTRIBUTION

Highland General Store Inc. 1922-44-002-002
LWS2 Inc. (Lake Wanda Store) 1922-43-005-003
Mac & Lindy's LLC (Mac & Lindy's Fine Wine & Spirits) 1922-44-012-001

HOTEL EXCEPTION

Stone Hill Recreation Corp. 1922-36-011-001

RESOLUTION #19-139

**AUTHORIZING CONTRACTS
WITH CERTAIN APPROVED STATE CONTRACT VENDORS**

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon may by resolution, and without advertising for bids or obtaining quotations, purchase any goods or services under the State Contract; and

WHEREAS, the Township has the need on a timely basis to provide for auction of its surplus property; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has determined that the surplus property described on Schedule "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein is no longer needed for public use; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon through this Resolution gives notice by the intention to the public, that the sale will be by the means of an online auction with Municibid through State Contract T2581 - Auctioneering Services: Internet Auctions to Sell Surplus Property, applicable to all the conditions to current State contracts.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, authorizes the Business Administrator to use the services of Municibid through state contract T2581 to sell the surplus property as indicated on Schedule "A" on an online auction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-36 that formal public notification will be provided by the publication of a Legal Notice in the official newspaper, the New Jersey Herald, not less than seven (7) or more than fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled auction.

This Resolution will take effect immediately according to law.

RESOLUTION #19-140

APPOINTMENT TO THE LAND USE BOARD

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, and STATE OF NEW JERSEY, as follows:

1. That the following individual is hereby appointed as a member of the Vernon Township Land Use Board for a term specified as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Township Clerk shall send a certified copy of this resolution to the following:

- a. Land use Board Secretary

RESOLUTION # 19-141
(REFUND OVERPAYMENT- (WELLS FARGO) Block 199.01 Lot 33 C0004

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Wells Fargo in the amount of \$760.89 representing refund for overpayment of 2nd qtr. 2017 property taxes for Block 199.01 Lot 33 C0004 also known as [REDACTED]

#19-142

REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 221.11 Lot 31 – Panicci)

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded Albert Panicci a 100% permanent and totally disabled veteran: and,

WHEREAS, the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to refund 1st & 2nd quarter 2019 property tax in the amount of \$3,548.59 to Corelogic.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Township Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION # 19-143

REFUND OVERPAYMENT DUE TO STATE TAX COURT JUDGMENT
(HO PROPERTY, LLC BLOCK 127.01 LOT 10) 2017

WHEREAS, a Tax Court Judgment has been favorably awarded for the year 2017: and,

WHEREAS, such Judgment has resulted in an overpayment of 2017 property taxes for Block 127.01 Lot 10 also known as [REDACTED]

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Vernon, to authorize the Tax Collector to refund the 2017 overpayment in the amount of \$526.83 to Saiber Trust Account, Attorney for Plaintiff

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION # 19-144

REFUND OVERPAYMENT DUE TO STATE TAX COURT JUDGMENT
(HO PROPERTY, LLC BLOCK 127.01 LOT 10) 2018

WHEREAS, a Tax Court Judgment has been favorably awarded for the year 2018: and,

WHEREAS, such Judgment has resulted in an overpayment of 2018 property taxes for Block 127.01 Lot 10 also known as [REDACTED]

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Vernon, to authorize the Tax Collector to refund the 2018 overpayment in the amount of \$541.30 to Saiber Trust Account, Attorney for Plaintiff

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION #19-145

**AUTHORIZING APPLICATION AND EXECUTION OF THE
“2019 DRIVE SOBER OR GET PULLED OVER STATEWIDE LABOR DAY
CRACKDOWN” GRANT ADMINISTERED BY THE
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

WHEREAS, the Vernon Township Police Department wishes to apply for funding from the National Highway Safety Administration “2019 Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Labor Day Crackdown”, Grant; and

WHEREAS, the grant project consists of an enforcement overtime campaign from August 16 through September 2, 2019 to raise awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving, to offer deterrence through visible enforcement, to arrest impaired drivers, and to issue summonses for relevant motor vehicle violations; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township will initially incur the cost of the program not to exceed \$5,500.00 and then will submit the necessary documentation to the Division of Highway Traffic Safety for total reimbursement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Vernon Township declares its support for the “2019 Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Labor Day Crackdown”, Grant; from August 16 through September 2, 2019 to increase awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Mayor, CFO and Township Clerk are hereby authorized to execute and sign any and all documents in order to effectuate the receipt of the Grant monies between the Township of Vernon and the Division of Highway Traffic Safety for the “2019 Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Labor Day Crackdown” Grant in the amount of \$5,500.00.

The effective dates for this program will be from August 16 through September 2, 2019.

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to approve Resolutions #19-146 and #19-147.

MOVED: Mark Van Tassel

SECOND: Sandra Ooms

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, Jean Murphy

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: John Auberger

ABSENT: None

Motion Passed to approve Resolutions #19-146 and #19-147.

RESOLUTION # 19-146

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FIREWORKS TO BE DISPLAYED ON JULY 6, 2019
WITH RAIN DATE OF JULY 7, 2019 WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON**

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A.21:3-1et seq. Explosive and Fireworks, provides that a Municipal Governing Body must authorize the display of fireworks within its boundaries as a pre-condition to such display in accordance with the New Jersey Fire Prevention Code; and

WHEREAS, Highland Lakes and Vernon Fire Departments have submitted an application to Vernon Township to conduct a fireworks display on Saturday July 6, 2019 with rain date of Sunday July 7, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the proposed fireworks display will take place on the Lounsberry Hollow School grounds on property owned and approved by the Vernon Township Board of Education and further requests closure of Sammis Road for the event; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Departments have engaged in a contract with Garden State Fireworks, Inc., to perform the public fireworks and special effects display and has provided the required certificate of liability insurance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, hereby authorizes the fireworks display with special effects, performed by Garden State Fireworks, Inc. and sponsored by the Highland Lakes and Vernon Fire Departments on Saturday July 6, 2019 with rain date of Sunday July 7, 2019 upon satisfaction of all statutory and departmental requirements.

RESOLUTION # 19-147

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FIREWORKS TO BE DISPLAYED ON AUGUST 4, 2019 WITH RAINDATE OF AUGUST 11, 2019 WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A.21:3-1et seq. Explosive and Fireworks, provides that a Municipal Governing Body must authorize the display of fireworks within its boundaries as a pre-condition to such display in accordance with the New Jersey Fire Prevention Code; and

WHEREAS, Highland Lakes Country Club and Community Association has submitted an application to Vernon Township to conduct a fireworks display on Sunday August 4, 2019 with a rain date of Sunday August 11, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the proposed fireworks display will take place on Lakeside Drive East on the Dam of Highland Lake on property owned by Highland Lakes Country Club & Community Association; and

WHEREAS, the Association has engaged in a contract with Garden State Fireworks, Inc., to perform the public fireworks and special effects display and has provided the required certificate of liability insurance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, hereby authorizes the fireworks display with special effects, performed by Garden State Fireworks, Inc. and sponsored by the Highland Lakes Country Club and Community Association on August 4, 2019 with a rain date of Sunday August 11, 2019 upon satisfaction of all statutory and departmental requirements.

2018 ANNUAL AUDIT

The Council Members and the CFO had no comments on the 2018 Annual Audit.

Council President Murphy read the title of Resolution #19-149 (2018 Annual Audit) and asked for a motion approve.

MOVED: Sandra Ooms
SECOND: Patrick Curreri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion Passed to approve Resolution #19-149.

2018 Annual Audit

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-4 requires the governing body of every local unit to have made an annual audit of its books, accounts and financial transactions, and

WHEREAS, the Annual Report of Audit for the year 2018 has been filed by a Registered Municipal Accountant with the Municipal Clerk pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-6, and a copy has been received by each member of the governing body; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 52:27BB-34 authorizes the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey to prescribe reports pertaining to the local fiscal affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Local Finance Board has promulgated N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5, a regulation requiring that the governing body of each municipality shall, by resolution, certify to the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey that all members of the governing body have reviewed, as a minimum, the sections of the annual audit entitled "Comments and Recommendations"; and

WHEREAS, the members of the governing body have personally reviewed, as a minimum, the Annual Report of Audit, and specifically the sections of the Annual Audit entitled "Comments and Recommendations," as evidenced by the group affidavit form of the governing body attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, such resolution of certification shall be adopted by the Governing Body no later than forty-five days after the receipt of the annual audit, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5; and

WHEREAS, all members of the governing body have received and have familiarized themselves with, at least, the minimum requirements of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey, as stated aforesaid and have subscribed to the affidavit, as provided by the Local Finance Board; and

WHEREAS, failure to comply with the regulations of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey may subject the members of the local governing body to the penalty provisions of R.S. 52:27BB-52, to wit:

R.S. 52:27BB-52: A local officer or member of a local governing body who, after date fixed for compliance, fails or refuses to obey an order of the director (Director of Local Government Services), under the provisions of this Article, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both, in addition shall forfeit his office.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, hereby states that it has complied with N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5 and does hereby submit a certified copy of this resolution and the required

Council President Murphy read the title of Resolution #19-150: Corrective Action Plan 2018 Audit and asked for a motion approve.

MOVED: Sandra Ooms
SECOND: Patrick Curreri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion Passed to approve Resolution #19-150.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN 2018 AUDIT

WHEREAS, the 2018 Annual Audit Report was delivered in June 2019 and regulations promulgated by the Local Fiscal Affairs Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:5 requires that the Chief Financial Officer prepare a Corrective Action Plan covering all findings and recommendations in the audit report; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5 further requires approval of the Corrective Action Plan within 60 days of audit receipt by the Township Council;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the Corrective Action Plan for the 2018 Annual Audit Report prepared by the Township Chief Financial Officer and attached hereto as “Appendix A” be approved.

APPENDIX “A”
TOWNSHIP OF VERNON

Corrective Action Plan for the 2018 Audit Report

Findings:

The various departments/offices of the Township are responsible for the issuance of permits and licenses; collection of taxes, utility charges, and permit and license fees; and recording of collections.

Recommendation:

Adequate segregation of duties be maintained with respect to the recording and treasury functions.

Corrective Action:

Budget constraints do not allow the hiring of additional employees to ensure that each employee have a separate duty; however, management has cross-trained more employees to allow for more segregation of duties. Deposits are now centralized and posted by one individual in the Township. All treasury functions are now approved by the Chief Financial Officer prior to recording. Other treasury functions are spread across the Finance and Tax Department to ensure compliance and increased internal controls. Management has invested in an electronic submission of forms which would allow for online payment of fees and is looking at additional tools for online payment of revenues through their new finance system.

Implementation Date:

December 2019

INTRODUCTION/1ST READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES

Council President Murphy read by title Ordinance #19-13:

Ordinance #19-13: An Ordinance Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Vernon, County Of Sussex And State Of New Jersey Amending Certain Portions Of Chapter 99 Entitled “Vehicles And Traffic,” Section 50 Entitled “Hiring Of Off Duty Police Officers” Of The Township Code

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to Introduce Ordinance#19-13 with a public hearing to be held on July 8, 2019.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Sandra Ooms

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion passed to adopt Ordinance #19-13 with a public hearing to be held on July 8, 2019.

Council President Murphy read by title Ordinance #19-14:

Ordinance #19-14: Capital Ordinance providing for Veteran’s Memorial Park Improvements by the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, appropriating therefore the sum of \$15,000.00 and providing that such sum so appropriated shall be raised from the Capital Improvement Fund of the Township

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to Introduce Ordinance#19-14 with a public hearing to be held on July 8, 2019.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion passed to adopt Ordinance #19-14 with a public hearing to be held on July 8, 2019.

PUBLIC HEARING/2ND READING OF ORDINANCES

Council President Murphy read ordinance 19-07 by title:

Ordinance #19-07: Ordinance Of The Township Of Vernon, County Of Sussex, State Of New Jersey, Amending And Supplementing Chapter 99 Of The Code Of The Township Of Vernon Entitled “Vehicles And Traffic”

Council President Murphy announced Ordinance #19-07 Public Hearing could not move forward because further information is needed from Sussex County.

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to Table the Public Hearing for Ordinance#19-07 to July 22, 2019.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Jean Murphy

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion passed to table Ordinance #19-07 to July 22, 2019.

Council President Murphy read by title Ordinance #19-11.

Ordinance #19-11: Capital Ordinance providing for various improvements by the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, appropriating therefore the sum of \$292,800.00 and providing that such sum so appropriated shall be raised from the Capital Improvement Fund and Capital Fund Balance of the Township

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to open Public Hearing for Ordinance#19-11.

MOVED: Sandra Ooms
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel
All Members were in favor.

Seeing no one wishing to come forward, Council President Murphy asked for a motion to close Public Hearing for Ordinance#19-11.

MOVED: Mark Van Tassel
SECOND: John Auberger
All Members were in favor

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to adopt Ordinance#19-11.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion passed to adopt Ordinance #19-11.

Council President Murphy read by title Ordinance #19-12.

Ordinance #19-12: An Ordinance Of The Township Of Vernon, County Of Sussex, State Of New Jersey, Amending Ordinance #16-17 Authorizing Purchase Of Real Property Commonly Known As 9 Wisteria Court And Identified As Lot 2, Block 92 On The Tax Map Of The Township Of Vernon

Council President Murphy announced that Ordinance #19-12 the public hearing needs to be tabled because further information is needed from Sussex County.

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to table the public hearing for Ordinance#19-12 to July 8, 2019.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Mark Van Tassel

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sandra Ooms, Patrick Curreri, Mark Van Tassel, John Auberger, Jean Murphy
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion passed to table Ordinance #19-12 to July 8, 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENTS *(Limited to 3 minutes on any topic)*

Council President Murphy asked for a motion to open the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: John Auberger
SECOND: Sandra Ooms
All members voted in favor.

Lisa Anderson thanked the Council Proclaiming June as Pride Month in Vernon, as the only Sussex County town to recognize.

Seeing no more members of the public wishing to come forward, Council President Murphy asked for a motion to close the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: Sandra Ooms
SECOND: Mark VanTassel
All members voted in favor.

MAYORAL APPOINTMENT

Mayor Shortway announced the appointment Martin O'Donnell to the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Shortway expressed his disappointment that the Bond Ordinance was not approved. He commented he has been a coach and player for many teams for over 40 years and seen hundreds of fields. Mayor Shortway stated he had fallen on worn turn and injured his own ACL injury which subsequently affected his police career. Mayor Shortway stated that on July 1, 2019 he would be closing the two fields to permitted use because the liability to the Township is indeed present. He explained the Township Engineer cannot defend the Township should any litigation arise, and the health and welfare of the children is at stake. . Mayor Shortway stated there would be signs placed that said use at your own risk but he would not expose any child or collegiate athlete to the potential of injury. Mayor Shortway stated safety comes first. Mayor Shortway said the trails and park would still be open. He added that splitting the Ordinance will cause added delay and cost the Township more and jeopardizes the fall season for our township sports leagues.

Mayor Shortway announced that many residents enjoyed watching the Bergen County Caballeros practicing last month.

Mayor Shortway announced that many young artists came out to enjoy the Sidewalk Art event held last Saturday at Maple Grange Park which was organized by the Recreation Committee and thanked all the Township volunteers for their time spent on this outstanding program.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Auberger announced the Annual Fire Department sponsored Fireworks Fundraiser will be held on July 6, 2019 and all proceeds are applied to next year's show. Council Member Auberger urged all residents to help out and enjoy the show.

Council Member Van Tassel had no comments.

Council Member Ooms had no comments.

Council Member Curreri thanked our Emergency responders who had numerous calls last week serving our community. He added the previous comment about toxicity studies on turf fields was not for fear mongering and not a reason to vote either way but was research as a parent with children who play on that field.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Council President Murphy stated that Council Member Curreri and she investigated the fields and had attempted to propose the staggering of the field replacement, but the Mayor was not in favor in that. Council President Murphy stated that was the initial proposal and what they were attempting to do but the Council was shut down.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business to be conducted on the agenda, a motion for Adjournment was made by Council Member Auberger and was seconded by Council Member Van Tassel with all members voting in favor.

The Regular Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Kirkman, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk

Jean Murphy,
Council President

Minutes approved: July 22, 2019