

BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE
Mayor & Borough Council Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2022

Mayor Mary Jane Canose called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom. Present were Council Members Jay Ambelang, Diane Greenfield, Jena McCredie, Chad McQueen, Al Ribeiro, and Christine Zamarra. Also present were John Pidgeon, Borough Attorney, Tom Czerniecki, Administrator, and Anthony Suriano, Borough Clerk.

STATEMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICER

Notice of this meeting was provided to the Bernardsville News and Courier News, filed with the Municipal Clerk and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board on January 13, 2022 and revised January 24, 2022.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATIONS

RFP for Borough Engineer, Paul Ferriero and Bob Brightly were present representing Ferriero Engineering. David Battaglia, Angela Knowles, Stanley Schrek, and Cynthia Norfleet were present representing Van Cleef Engineering. Each engineering firm discussed their staff's background, qualifications, and various projects that they have worked on in the past.

Council Priorities, Mr. Czerniecki discussed the results of a residents' survey that was originated by an intern last summer. The survey included residents' responses rating the quality of life in the borough, quality of municipal services, quality of customer service, overall appearance of the borough, road quality and maintenance, availability and quality of playgrounds, overall police service, the building permit process, overall communication from the borough, and future recreation program priorities. The key takeaways were listed as considering a new playground area, continuing to invest in a road program, and recreational infrastructure that appeals to adults and seniors. Mr. Czerniecki said there were excellent scores for the overall municipal staff.

Mr. McQueen discussed the following goals for the council.

- 1) Economic Development/Revitalization with master tasks being: Palmer property; Quimby Village; Audi property; designating an appropriate tenant for the train station building.
- 2) Recreation Master Plan Implementation with master tasks being:
 - Phase 1: Polo Grounds walking path; Pickleball Courts; 271 Mine Brook trails; Pavilion/bathrooms at Polo Grounds; Field Lighting at Polo Grounds; Connecting Polo Grounds Trail/Old Army Trail/Audubon.
 - Phase 2: Pool Master Plan; Master Plan for 271 Mine Brook Road.

- 3) Public Works/Safety: continually monitoring road conditions; maintain all roads up to 80% level; Sidewalk studies on Childs Road, Anderson Hill Road, Mount Airy Road, Old Army Road; transition to integrated pest management all borough properties.
- 4) Borough Organization and Communication: Branding; Develop Communication Plan; Process Improvement Training; Review of Borough Committees; Council training.
- 5) Infrastructure: Assessing which areas need to be addressed such as Cell Service, Power, Water, Sewer, and Cable.

OPEN SESSION

John Donahue, South Street, said he feels two of the properties the borough already owns can quickly and cheaply be made much better and then put to immediate beneficial use. He said at 271 Mine Brook Road, the cyclocross was held in the spring and then again in the fall. He said they will do that again in the fall, but that property could be used for so much else if we were to tear down the chicken coop and clear brush in that area. It also will free up some parking spots which is always a necessary thing. Mr. Donahue said instead of doing a spring cyclocross, they're hoping to have mountain bike racing at Peters' Tract. He said our deer management hunting club did a great job cutting a six-foot swath through the bushes towards the back of the property so it's much more open. He said he was hoping that could be maintained and also bring in a brush mower and make a connecting trail so we can have a loop. He said they plan to be using it hopefully in the spring but in mid-May to mid-June they will have mountain biking. Parking is always an issue but the short-term solution would be to park on the lawn. He said they will propose it more formally at a future time.

Kerry Haselton, Mine Brook Road, said she's excited about all the trail work that is being proposed and to see that there are a lot of allies for creating and improving trails. Ms. Haselton said the deer hunting group originally cleared the trail at Peters' Tract but several people including herself, Chris D'Amato, Ed English and Jeff Hammond dug out by hand a lot of the roots of the barberry that were along that trail. She said they can maintain that on their own. She agreed with Mr. Donahue that there's a very large open area that would be good for mountain biking. Ms. Haselton thought it would be ideal for a playground of natural logs for kids to climb on. Parents could sit on the logs and we wouldn't have to put any money into it. We could use what we already have and create a place where you would walk up the circular trail, do mountain biking as Mr. Donahue is proposing, and also have a playground. She said all this could be with really no capital costs. She said we can find willing volunteers that know the difference between barberry and native species that could help get this done.

Olivia Manning, Downtown Bernardsville, said they had their own session on Saturday and it seems that their visions are aligned with the whole idea of promoting Bernardsville as a destination. Downtown Bernardsville's committees are working on plans right now while

council is working on its own priorities. Ms. Manning said she is looking forward to working more with council. Mr. McQueen asked Ms. Manning if she would be willing to share their plans with council when they are done because it is important that we are aligned. Ms. Manning said she would share them and it is a goal of theirs to share some publicly as well. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Canose closed the open session.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved to adjourn to an executive session to consider Contract Negotiations and that the time when and circumstances under which the matter can be disclosed to the public is when it is finally resolved. The motion was seconded and approved with six yes votes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30pm.
