

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 20, 2018
4:00pm

ATTENDANCE:

Councilwoman DeQuinzio
Councilman Feinstein
Councilwoman Lugardo-Hemple
Council President J. Curtis Edwards

Councilman Zapolski - Absent

Municipal Solicitor Rebecca Bertram
Mayor Albert Kelly
Municipal Clerk Kathleen Keen

CALLED TO ORDER: Councilwoman Lugardo-Hemple called the meeting to order at 4:15.

STATEMENT OF MEETING NOTICE: Read by the Municipal Clerk

Notice of this meeting of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton, as required by N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., the “Open Public Meetings Act”, has been provided by a public advertisement to the South Jersey Times and the Daily Journal on February 7th, 2018 of a schedule adopted by resolution setting forth the time, date and place of all the meetings of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton.

AGENDA REVIEW:

MINUTES: The minutes for February 6th were removed, they will be on the March 6th agenda.

G-1 Calendar year 2018 ordinance to exceed the municipal budget appropriation limits to establish a cap bank. Solicitor Bertram explained the ordinance and the need for it.

G-2 Authorizing the vacation of a portion of Church Lane and associated alleyways. Solicitor Bertram explained the ordinance is the same ordinance council saw last year; it is part of the redevelopment agreement.

Council President Edwards joined the meeting at this time; he apologized for being late, and thanked Councilwoman Lugardo-Hemple for “stepping-in” for him.

REPORTS:

1. Economic Development Project Status Report – Councilwoman DeQuinzio questioned the price of a property sold in October by the city.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS:

Councilwoman Lugardo-Hemple stated although she was not there, she heard the African Dance Troup presentation at the library was well attended and fantastic. Councilwoman DeQuinzio noted it was fabulous and well attended; Councilman Feinstein was also there and took many pictures.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/MAYORAL REPORTS:

Mayor Kelly announced the city will be receiving \$120,000 from the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the repaving of three streets in the city. He spoke of potholes being a problem not only in Bridgeton, but throughout the state. Mayor Kelly said he will be aggressively seeking funding from the new administration for grant funding to fix more streets in the city. Mayor Kelly then introduced Mr. John Cummings who explained 23 plus students in the city will receive full ride four (4) year scholarships to the college of their choice from the “Give Something Back” foundation founded by CEO, Philanthropist, and Entrepreneur Mr. Robert O. Carr.

OTHER BUSINESS/CONCERNS:

1. Offer city owned property - Andrews Ave. Solicitor Bertram explained the offer was made for three lots, she spoke of Councilman Zapolski’s concerns of the low offer. Council all agreed the offer is too low for three properties and will not accept
2. Offer city owned property – Vine St. Solicitor Bertram explained the offer made, there was a discussion regarding the condition of the property. Council all agreed the offer is too low, as the land alone is worth more than the offer, and will not accept.
3. Vacant and Abandoned Property Ordinance – Solicitor Bertram addressed Mr. Abbott and Mr. Martins concerns from the last council meeting regarding the ordinance. She explained specific modifications that were made to the ordinance and clarified the definitions. Councilwoman Lugardo-Hemple thanked the authors for making the changes needed. Councilwoman DeQuinzio stated this is not a money maker for the city it is more of a health issue; she explained no one should have to live next to homes that are abandoned, boarded up, and in disrepair. Councilman Feinstein questioned specific wording in §265-41 and §265-46 referring to the city taking possession of properties and rehabilitate the property. Mr. Dwight Saunders of Borger’s, Saunders, Taylor and Associates explained the definitions of vacant vs. vacant and abandoned with regard to the city implementing spot blight.

President Edwards opened the floor to the public for questions at this time.

Mr. Mike Abbott stated he has a problem the wording “temporary or with the approval of the code enforcement officer” in the ordinance, he then spoke of the history of a property he owns; noting it is the oldest inhabited property east of the Cohansey River in the city and has some of the original features. Mr. Abbott feels the way the ordinance is wrote is not fair.

Mr. Tom Martin thanked Solicitor Bertram for addressing his concerns with the ordinance, he cited some formatting issues and spoke of the six month registration period. He mentioned §265-31 refers to a vacant and abandoned property department, noting he is not aware one exist in the city. He questioned how the funds received from fines would be used, and said he was happy to see the provision incorporated in the ordinance that a property can be vacant and well maintained.

Mr. Dwight Saunders stated fines collected from the program is unanticipated revenue. The law states a percentage of the revenue generated must be used for code enforcement only.

Mr. Kevin Rabago also commented on the fees collected as anticipated revenue, noting the Administrator and Comptroller submit all revenues to city council for line by line review. Mr. Kris Taylor of Borger's, Saunders, Taylor and Associates noted the waiver referred to in the ordinance can be used more than once depending on council's preference.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Lugardo-Hemple and second by Councilman Feinstein:

RESOLUTION NO. 50-18 the City Council has determined that it is necessary to go into an executive session to discuss certain matters relating to the items as permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b was adopted by a unanimous roll call vote. The original resolution may be found in the Resolution Book.

1. Public Protection / Litigation – NJ Ethanol
2. Litigation – Jacobs v City of Bridgeton
3. Litigation – Bridgeton Municipal Port Authority

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further items of discussion, it was moved by Councilwoman Lugardo-Hemple and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio the Work Session be adjourned which motion was carried.

Council President Edwards adjourned the Work Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:

Kathleen L. Keen, RMC
Municipal Clerk

J. Curtis Edwards
Council President

Date Approved: March 6, 2018