

LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL
CAUCUS MINUTES
June 8, 2016

Council President Ralph Paolone called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M., noting that the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

1. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Rick DePamphilis; Councilman Elliot Beinfest; Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis; Councilman Eric Ford; Councilman Brian Heun; Councilman Darren Matik; and Council President Ralph Paolone.

Absent: Councilman Todd Gordon

Also Present: Joseph L. Youngblood, Jr., City Solicitor; Vince Polistina, City Engineer; Anthony Strazzeri, CFO; and Leigh Ann Napoli, Municipal Clerk.

2. Approval of Minutes Without Formal Reading

Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned, seconded by Councilman Beinfest, to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2016 Caucus meeting without formal reading. All members of Council were in favor. Motion was approved.

3. Councilman Beinfest

A. Neighborhood Services

1. Councilman Beinfest discussed a Resolution on the agenda authorizing the appointment of Pam Kallen as the Drug Alliance Coordinator.

4. Councilwoman DeDomenicis

A. Public Works

- B. Councilwoman DeDomenicis reported that Belhaven Middle School's 8th grade graduation is June 16. She will be presenting two awards on behalf of Council.

5. Councilman Gordon

A. Engineering

1. Councilman Heun discussed two change orders on the agenda with regard to the Bikepath Extension project. One change order was an increase to the contract for the installation of bollards at the entrance to the bike path on the corner of Route 9 and Monroe Avenue. This was due to a safety concern by the Chief of Police after a vehicle drove onto the bike path. The second change order was for a decrease in the contract due to pricing, which resulted in an overall net decrease of the final contract amount.
2. Councilman Heun advised of a Resolution on the agenda to award a Contract for a trailer mounted diesel generator to be used for the pump stations. Councilman Matik reported that grant money was received through the Hazard Mitigation program. The City will also be going out to bid for a permanent generator to be installed at the Poplar Avenue pump station.
3. Councilman Heun motioned to add Resolution No. 109 to the agenda in order to reject the bids received for the ADA improvements to Memorial Park. The bids are too high. Councilman Matik seconded the motion. All present members of Council were in favor.

6. Councilman Matik

A. Revenue & Finance

1. Councilman Matik discussed a Resolution on the agenda for an insertion of item revenue for the Clean Communities Grant.
2. Councilman Matik discussed concerns with regard to the reassessment. Councilman Beinfest indicated that prices are still going down and it could be a gamble to spend \$167,000 on a reassessment if the City still gets numerous tax appeals next year. Councilman Matik discussed the revenue that was lost last year due to appeals. Councilman Paolone read a response from Diane Hesley regarding a reassessment, "One of the major factors is that we do not have a solid base to work with which would allow us to monitor and

if needed, request for annual adjustments to neighborhoods. Of course none of us can predict what truly will happen but based on the last 9 years real estate economics topped with the issues facing Atlantic County, it is not looking like a bounce back too soon. If you recall the problems that now plague Atlantic City stem from a revaluation at the height of the market with no tools in place to adjust after that year. Linwood can easily be falling into that trap. The solution for any municipality is to set up the program to be a continual one and not that of a one year bubble. If a town is proactive in the assessment department, they can easily avoid costly revaluations in the future. So how is that done? Once you have a good solid base of data, you can apply to adjust neighborhoods as they stray from the market as long as you *change less* than 50% of the line items of taxable properties. However you will need re-inspections at some time in the future. The best practice however would be annual reassessment. This program requires that 25% of all taxable properties be re-inspected annually that way every four years the data is updated and all values are adjusted annually if need be. This helps to soften any spikes in the market. That can be accomplished if we start with a workable file. Once we would get through this total reassessment, we can set up the system so that future cost would be for the periodic inspections only, which is minimal, and the valuation would be based on up to date programming at no additional costs as long as your Assessor knows how to conduct mass valuations.” Councilwoman DeDomenicis indicated that the reassessment would be proactive and could help stabilize the tax rate. Discussion ensued upon whether to have the reassessment done now or later and whether or not to authorize the company conducting the home inspections for the tax appeals to conduct all 355 inspections. Councilman Matik motioned, seconded by Councilman Heun, to authorize Professional Property Appraisers to conduct inspections needed for all the 2016 tax appeals. All present members of Council were in favor. The motion was approved. Council President Paolone suggested Council members contact Mrs. Hesley with any questions. Should Council decide to do the reassessment, a meeting can be held on June 22.

7. Council President Paolone

A. Administration

1. Council President Paolone reviewed two Resolutions authorizing Raffle Licenses to the ARC of Atlantic County.
2. Council President Paolone discussed a Resolution on the agenda for a referendum question on the November 8, 2016 ballot to permit the sale of alcoholic beverages at retail, for off premises consumption, from the principal barroom of restaurants. Councilman Matik explained the rules of the license. All members of Council agreed that this provision would make the liquor license more valuable.

8. Mr. Youngblood

- A. Mr. Youngblood discussed a Resolution on the agenda in support of the adoption of S2254/A3821 to clarify Municipal Affordable Housing Obligations. This is related to the COAH declaratory judgement actions.

At 6:34 P.M., Council President Paolone called a recess.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC
Municipal Clerk