

MORTON BOROUGH
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
October 14, 2020

The regular council meeting of October 2020 was called to order by council president, Michelle Miller. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and roll was called. The following was roll call response: Michelle Miller-present, John Miller-present, Michele Roberts-present, Robert McGrath-present, Doug Eagar-present, Joe Boylan-present, and Mayor App-present.

Also present: Robert Scott – Solicitor in place for Carl Ewald, Kristin Acquarola-Tax Collector, Josh Fiorentino-Jr. Councilman.

Absent with excuse: Hiele Hodnett

COUNCIL COMMENTS – Jackie Guy was allowed to speak briefly and she explained to council the hybrid back to school has begun this week.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS – None

PUBLIC HEARING- PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE 767.

--there were no comments on this proposed ordinance. – The public hearing was closed. This ordinance will be voted on for approval later in the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING -PROPOSED SUBDIVISION AT 27 SYCAMORE AVENUE

-there were no comments on this proposed subdivision. The public hearing was closed. This subdivision plan will be voted on later in the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Miller made a Motion to approve the minutes for the month of September. Ms. Roberts seconded the Motion. All voiced approval. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MONTHLY BILLS

Mr. Boylan made a Motion to approve the payment of bills for September. Ms. Roberts seconded...however, Mr. Miller questioned a large itm under police. Mr. Pool and Mayor App explained that this was a steering problem on one of the police vehicles, and the repair was urgent and necessary. Mr. Miller also questioned the bill from Springfield Township and why we appear to be billed twice. Mr. Poole explained to council that the bill is actually for two months. Council then went ahead with the roll call vote: Ms. Miller-yes, Mr. Miller-yes, Ms. Roberts-yes, Mr. McGrath-yes, Mr Boylan-yes, Mr. Eagar, Yes. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PUBLIC FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Miller gave the inspectors report for September. There were 13 building permits, 1 use and occupancy and 5 Contractors licenses.

Mr. McGrath stated as we move forward in the budget process he would like to speak with Mr. Boylan to square away some financial issues based on what we are doing going forward. before the budget meeting. He would like to clarify some things before the meeting.

Engineer update: Mr. Catania informed council that the work on HVAC was completed. On October 22, 2020 there will be a bid opening for the police station renovations – this was a grant obtained with the help of Representative O’Mara’s office.

She also stated that there is no manual nor any place where there is direction on how to operate the HVAC system. Mr. Catania stated he would check with the contractor and look into this situation. Ms. Miller stated that we all still do not know how to work the system. Mr. Catania said he would follow up with an email on some preferred dates and forward this information. Ms. Miller questioned if the ladder that was put on the side of the building for the HVAC could be moved to a different location – due to the ongoing project. She was not aware that this would be a permanent structure. He stated he would take care of it.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATON

Mr. Boylan reported that the September tax reports, and sewer and rubbish reports are available in the office.

Sucher & Sons

Mr. Boylan made a Motion to approve the final payment #2 to Joseph E. Sucher and sons in the amount of \$3402.10 for 2020 road program. This is the final 10% after approvals by Catania Engineering. Ms. Miller seconded the Motion. Voice vote -all council voiced approval. Motion carried.

Budget meeting dates

Mr. Boylan stated the upcoming budget sessions are 10/21 for Facilities, then November 4th for Highway Aid, Sanitation and small committees, and the final session is November 18th for final preliminary budget. All are at 7:00 p.m. – masks and social distancing observed.

Moving meeting dates for November due to holidays. November 11th (Veteran’s Day), change to November 10th, and November 25th to November 24th. This will be advertised.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Miller reported 228 total incidents. Mr. Miller read the police report which is on file.

Fire Dept.

Mr. Miller did not have a report from the Fire Department and no representative was on the meeting.

Ms. Miller added that when we had a budget meeting with the fire department, they brought out that they would be sending out their mailers for donations. She stated that only the fire marshal and the fire chief receive remuneration (not the chief). She did stress that the fire department is all volunteer.

Mr. Miller added that the department sent out 1800 letters out and only received 350 back. They are as important as the police, but they do things voluntarily.

Ms. Miller reported that the fire department did a dedication of the bridge at S. Morton in honor of Mike Malinowski, and had a very nice ceremony.

PUBLIC HEALTH , SANITATION& RECYCLING

Ms. Roberts reported that we did receive a report from Republic – 19 pick ups and 93.50 tonnage. We did send out for bids and 4 came in, but we are waiting for some acknowledgements, and the solicitor is reviewing as there is an addendum that had to be added. Once we receive that information from our solicitor, we can review. The manager stated we did get the information from the solicitor so we are awaiting the addendum from the contractor. We have 3 months from the bid opening to make a decision. Council can review, the committee will meet and make a recommendation. At next month's regular council meeting, we can make the decision.

LAW & ORDINANCE

Ord. 767

Mr. Eagar made a Motion to approve ordinance 767, the zoning ordinance amendment. Ms. Roberts seconded the Motion. Voice vote – all council voiced approval. Motion carried.

Subdivision – 27 Sycamore

Mr. Eagar made a Motion to approve subdivision at 27 Sycamore. Mr. Boylan seconded the Motion. Roll call: Michelle Miller-yes, John Miller-yes, Bob McGrath-abstain, Joe Boylan-yes, Michele Roberts-yes, Doug Eagar-yes, Motion carried.

Mayor App briefly discussed that the Chief met today with Lieutenant Governor Fetterman today, and the topic was decriminalizing small amounts of marijuana. There may be some changes or a new ordinance for this. They are speaking of decriminalizing 30 grams or less. The chief is in favor of this and asked us to pass this along to council. Mr. Eagar stated he is working on getting a draft with Mr. Ewald and will bring it before council.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Miller spoke about getting the vote out and the ballot box . Mr. Poole has been diligent on trying to find out what is going on with the County. Ms. Miller will put information out on social media when we find out.

Ms. Miller spoke about a donated second library which has been installed at Jacob's Park. There is a resident that lives near there and has books that she will be putting there. Mr. Bruce Blunt did the installation. She will put this on social media that we have two library boxes.

Tax Assessment

Ms. Miller reported that Springfield School district has agreed to represent us in court to go to the County to see what is going on with the problematic tax assessments. Mr. Sereni, the solicitor, should keep us informed.

2020-20

Mr. Lillicrapp added that the percentage of total value – residential went from 89 to 91, and will be higher than commercial. The school districts have decided that they are going to submit a lawsuit to determine why this deferential has happened.

Mr. Boylan questioned their goal is it to freeze the reassessment and go with the old figures for 2021.

Mr. Poole stated that is exactly what they are doing – they have asked for a stay – no further proceedings for this year, and then a determination that it is not fair and equitable and it would go away until it could be made fair and equitable. Mr. McGrath questioned if this was countywide freeze. Yes, there are a number of school districts asking for this besides Springfield.

Delinquent tax letters

Tax Collector Acquarola stated that she would be sending out as soon as her current deadline is followed. She will look to make sure before she mails out to make sure some late payments may or may not have come in.

PARK AND RECREATION

Meeting will be held October 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Josh Fiorentino- Jr. Councilman – tried to give council an update on his eagle scout project, however, his communication equipment did not work. Council will review what he sent in email and get back to him at the Park and recreation meeting.

Doggie Stations

Josh requested that the borough provide the grant funds for his doggie stations. Mayor App responded that he would be glad to offer the \$1800 that was donated from the race that did not happen.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. McGrath mentioned that the zoom meetings were actively being pursued for other committees.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Sunday Dyitt – 11 Mitchell – discussed having some police security on Election Day as she is there all day, and lot of the day alone. Mayor app reported that the police will be working however are not allowed to be near the voting area, unless there is an emergency problem. Constables have the primary duty to police the polling place.

Kristin Acquarola stated she would be available to help keep the place clean on election day. We do hope to have guidance from the Election Bureau in a few days. Mario Cimino (46 S Morton) stated he is a certified poll watcher.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Miller made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Boylan seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Preston, Secretary