

**BOROUGH OF STOCKTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
APPROVED:**

**REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 12, 2018**

A Regular Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton was called to order by Mayor Timothy Nemeth at 7:08 pm on February 12, 2018. Mayor Nemeth read the "Sunshine Statement" indicating the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and led the flag salute.

The following members of the Borough Council were present: Mr. Adam Juncosa, Mr. Aaron Lipsen, Mr. Michael Mann, Mr. Nic Messina and Mr. Don Vandegrift. Borough Attorney Michael Butler and Borough Administrator/Clerk Michele Hovan were also present. There were three members of the public present.

Mayor Nemeth opened the meeting to the public for comments.

Ms. Karen Edwards, 17 Risler Street and PTO member and member of the Stockton Final Celebration Committee announced an event scheduled for Saturday, June 9th, 11am to 2pm and asked the governing body to "save the date." Ms. Edwards said there would be guest speakers, former Stockton School students and more in attendance to celebrate the school as the doors closed for the final time. Ms. Edwards said that a Facebook page had been created for the event and encouraged all to "like" and stay informed of announcements. There was a brief discussion regarding parking needs and Ms. Hovan suggested the group seek a park permit and Mr. Juncosa suggested that the Mill be pursued as a parking site as well. Mayor Nemeth thanked Ms. Edwards for the invitation and encouraged all to spread the word.

There being no questions or comments, the meeting was closed to the public on motion by Mr. Juncosa, seconded by Mr. Messina and carried.

Discussion/Nominations to fill Council vacancy

(The Stockton Republican Committee had until 1/15 to submit 3 names; no names received. Full Council to consider. Appointee will serve through November 6, 2018. Successful candidate on 11/6 for unexpired term will serve until December 31, 2020)

Mayor Nemeth noted that no formal nominations to fill the vacant Council seat had been received and recommended that Mr. Paul Bergquist be considered as he had expressed interest and was also in attendance. At Mayor Nemeth's request, Mr. Bergquist introduced himself, said that he was a longtime Hunterdon County resident that moved to town with his wife in 2012. Mr. Bergquist stated his address as 10 N. Main Street and said he was a registered Independent voter. Mr. Bergquist said that he grew up in Ringoes, works in research and development for Merck and believes it is his civic duty to contribute to his community.

Mr. Vandegrift thanked Mr. Bergquist for stepping up and made a motion to appoint him to Council. On second motion by Mr. Juncosa and all in favor, Mr. Bergquist was appointed to the unexpired term through November 6, 2018. Mr. Butler administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Bergquist, who then took his place at the dais.

**BOROUGH OF STOCKTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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FEBRUARY 12, 2018**

Minutes -- the meeting minutes for the January 3, 2018 Reorganization/Regular Meeting were approved on motion by Mr. Juncosa, seconded by Mr. Vandegrift and carried, with Mr. Bergquist abstaining.

Ordinance No. 18-01 – Second Reading/Public Hearing
Parking Amendment in the CR Zone

Ms. Hovan read Ordinance by title and explained the ordinance amends the parking requirement for non-residential applications in the CR Zone to be based on additional gross floor added only and that new structures or additions to existing structures would be unaffected by the change. Ms. Hovan stated that the ordinance was referred to the Planning Board and read the response as provided by the Planning Board Secretary aloud:

“At last night’s Planning Board meeting a motion was made and approved finding Ordinance 18-01 not consistent with the Master Plan because as proposed it does not meet the purpose of reducing street congestion and doesn’t take public safety into consideration. It was also expressed that as written, the ordinance may actually worsen the current limited parking situation in the Borough.”

Mayor Nemeth opened the meeting to the public. Norm Torkelson, Risler Street, said that residential units are permitted in the CR Zone. He then asked to read comments prepared by Planning Board Chairman Tom Manning, as follows:

1. “The majority of the Planning Board determined that the proposed ordinance is inconsistent with the Master Plan.
2. The Master Plan is a Borough document and it’s the (Planning) Board’s responsibility to review the proposed ordinances for consistency with the (Master) Plan.
3. The Master Plan has sections that specifically address parking and the need to address the problem of insufficient parking in the Borough core.
4. The proposed ordinance can’t do anything to alleviate parking problems in the core, but it can make them worse. (Steve Giocondo’s example of converting a residence to a restaurant is an illustration.)
5. Is rescinding parts of the parking ordinance really the best way to attract new businesses?
6. The Planning Board is willing to work with Council to come up with solutions for parking and
7. To consider ways to make the Borough more business friendly”

In response to Mr. Lipsen’s question about the Board’s suggestions to remedy the parking concerns, Mr. Torkelson suggested that time-restricted parking be added downtown, noted that Bridge Street could have traffic calming features added, suggested striped or managed parking be considered and said that alternative ways to park on Bridge Street could be considered.

Discussion ensued regarding past attempts to identify solutions and concerns regarding development at the Stockton Inn. Mr. Vandegrift said that desirable spaces will always be taken

**BOROUGH OF STOCKTON
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FEBRUARY 12, 2018**

first even if there was a larger pool of spaces. Mr. Vandegrift said that when he goes grocery shopping, he doesn't expect to get the closest one to the front door and yet people in town express displeasure if they don't get the spot closest to their house. Mr. Vandegrift said he was unconvinced there was a parking problem in the Borough that was not centered around the issue of preferred parking spaces. More discussion followed and included available space at the park that go unused as a matter of inconvenience. Mr. Butler responded to a suggestion that applicants contribute to an off-site fund that could be used to purchase land, saying the theory is possible not not likely probable due to the volume of applications typically received. Mr. Juncosa responded to a comment by Mr. Torkelson regarding a lack of denied applications for parking variance by asking what the purpose in seeking a variance really is. Council members unanimously agreed that they would continue to investigate options to add parking wherever possible, as they have been.

Mayor Nemeth closed the meeting to the public on motion by Mr. Vandegrift, seconded by Mr. Mann and carried. Mr. Vandegrift motioned to adopt the Ordinance with the following conditions/statement:

The Borough Council believes that the Planning Board has insufficiently demonstrated the contradiction between Ordinance No. 18-01 and the Borough of Stockton Master Plan.

The Borough Council recognizes that certain high demand parking areas exist in the Borough of Stockton, particularly on weekends, regardless of the passage or failure of Ordinance No. 18-01.

The Borough Council believes that the parking regulations in effect prior to the adoption of Ordinance 18-01 may be unduly burdensome to economic development.

The Borough Council shall continue to explore traffic control measures and public parking options in an effort to proactively address public safety concerns in the Borough of Stockton.

The Borough Council is aware that Ordinance No. 18-01 and others may be amended from time to time, as may be required, to improve public safety with the Borough.

Mr. Lipsen made a motion to table the ordinance.

Mr. Messina seconded the motion made by Mr. Vandegrift and Ordinance No. 18-01 was adopted.

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergquist, Juncosa Mann, Messina, Vandegrift
 Nays: Lipsen
 Absent: None
 Abstain: None

**BOROUGH OF STOCKTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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**REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 12, 2018**

Resolutions – the following Resolution, as listed below and as filed in the Borough Clerk's office, was adopted on motion by Mr. Vandegrift, seconded by Mr. Lipsen and carried unanimously:

2018-30	Personnel – Deputy Borough Clerk/Utility Clerk
2018-31	Cancellation of Appropriation Balances
2018-32	Budget Transfers

Mayor Nemeth and Mr. Lipsen stated that the pending retirement of Donna Griffiths will be a huge loss for the Borough, even as they welcomed her replacement. Ms. Hovan credited Ms. Griffiths for many positive changes in the Borough's operations and said she will certainly be missed.

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergquist, Juncosa, Lipsen, Mann, Messina, Vandegrift
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Abstain: None

Claims for Payment – On motion by Mr. Juncosa, seconded by Mr. Vandegrift and carried, the claims for payment were approved.

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergquist, Juncosa, Lipsen, Mann, Messina, Vandegrift
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Abstain: None

Meeting Open to the Public – Hearing no comments or questions, motion to close the meeting to the public was set forth by Mr. Messina, seconded by Mr. Bergquist and carried.

Council Liaison Reports

Mr. Lipsen said that an expansion of the parking area in the park could alleviate some of the concerns expressed during the ordinance discussion. Ms. Hovan said that the gravel could be included in the 2018 budget costs and discussion followed regarding park plans and the open space referendum. Mr. Lipsen and Mr. Vandegrift discussed landscaping needs and tree work. Mr. Lipsen said there was still some wood available. Mr. Vandegrift said that a landscape architect is needed for the park plan. Discussion continued regarding trees and ash borer disease and treatment costs that the subcommittee will review and recommend. Mr. Vandegrift inquired if the PO was issued for the crosswalk planters and Ms. Hovan said she believed it was.

Mr. Butler announced that the cemetery acquisition was complete and that the Borough now owned a cemetery!

**BOROUGH OF STOCKTON
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**OFFICIAL MINUTES
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Next Meeting

Mayor Nemeth announced the next Council meeting will be held on March 12, 2018 at 7pm. There being no additional discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:46pm on motion by Mr. Vandegrift, seconded by Mr. Messina and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Hovan, RMC
Borough Administrator/Clerk