

**BOROUGH OF STOCKTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
APPROVED:**

**REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2020**

The December Regular Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton was called to order by Mayor Timothy Nemeth at 7:03 pm on December 14, 2020. The meeting was held online using Zoom technology due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Nemeth read the “Sunshine Statement” indicating the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Ms. Christine Rosikiewicz called the roll. The following members of Council were present: Mr. Paul Bergquist, Mr. Adam Juncosa, Mr. Aaron Lipsen, Mr. Michael Mann, and Mr. Donald Vandegrift. Mr. Nic Messina was absent. Borough Attorney Michael Butler and Borough Deputy Clerk Rosikiewicz were also present. In addition, Mr. Robert Berman, Mr. Mario LaGuardia, Mr. Rich Mongelli, Attorney, Mr. Bill Wolf, and three other members of the public were present.

Mayor Nemeth opened the meeting to the public for any items not on the agenda. He announced that Attorney Mongelli could present during item #5 on the agenda, when the meeting is open to the public for the second time. There being no questions or comments the meeting was closed to the public on motion by Mr. Mann seconded by Mr. Lipson and carried.

The following Resolutions were presented as filed in the Borough Clerk's office and for approval:

Resolution 2020-69 Snow Plowing Services Contract

Resolution 2020-70 Cancellation of 2020 Capital Balances, Reserves

Adopted on motion by Mr. Berquist, seconded by Mr. Vandegrift and carried unanimously.

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

Claims for Payment – the claims for payment, as attached, were approved on motion by Mr. Juncosa, seconded by Mr. Mann and carried unanimously.

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

Mayor Nemeth opened the meeting to the public. Attorney Rich Mongelli introduced Mr. Robert Berman, who is interested in purchasing the Stockton Inn, and Architect Mario LaGuardia. A PDF of the proposed plans for the Stockton Inn were provided to Council in their packet and shared on the screen by Mr. LaGuardia.

Mr. Berman explained that he lives in New Hope and his family has a background in Hospitality. He introduced his partner, Bill Wolf, who lives in New Hope. Mr. Berman spoke favorably about

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the property and its history. He would like to create a performing arts center that would operate from spring to fall. He spoke of the hotel and venue coming together and there being nothing else like it in the world.

Mr. LaGuardia spoke of an opportunity to reinvest and recreate, preserving history, and seeing success in Lambertville and New Hope. He commented on the Stockton Inn being “fragile” at this point, needing “TLC”, and key to the whole center of town. He is seeking input from Council, residents, and Planning Board. Mr. LaGuardia went over the PDF. He would like to make it a destination and spoke of the other opportunities in Stockton for recreation commenting favorably on the Borough.

The plan for the project includes the following:

- Entry drive for hotel and theater
- Historic Inn- preserve murals and woodworking
- Connectors for buildings to maintain street scale
- open amphitheater with stage
- garden
- main guestrooms – 20 rooms, 4-5 star quality
- parking on grade, eliminate Victorian house
- spa, fitness center (barn, other Victorian)
- trees on Main St.

Mr. LaGuardia spoke of patrons to the theater parking at the park and supporting local businesses, he anticipated 400 cars for performances. There was an extensive discussion on parking of the vehicles. Ways to mitigate sound from the amphitheater were mentioned.

Attorney Mongelli said a determination could be made that this is an area in need of rehabilitation, referring to State statute allowing the Mayor and Council can collaborate with Planning Board on a property rather than the applicant only being heard by Planning Board. Attorney Butler provided a summary of this process.

There was further discussion on parking and noise from the amphitheater. Mr. Berman spoke of the hotel needing the amphitheater for the hotel to be sustainable long term, and the theater and hotel “playing off each other”. Attorney Mongelli said he will contact the Planning Board. Attorney Butler said he would reach out to Clerk/Administrator Hovan to go over the next steps. Favorable comments were made by Council regarding the presentation.

Mr. Mann made a motion to close to the public. Mr. Juncosa seconded it. All were in favor.

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Mayor's Report/Council Liaison Reports – Mayor Nemeth commented that there will be more discussions regarding the Stockton Inn. He reported that he and Clerk/Administrator Hovan have discussed animal control and this should go on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Vandegrift provided on an update on the signs; they will be a larger and “settled” will be changed to “incorporated”. A grant from the County will cover the cost. Mayor Nemeth said the proposal will be submitted by this year and a presentation may be needed. A map sign will be added to the grant proposal.

Mr. Juncosa commented on the upcoming snow with regard to power; Mayor Nemeth commented favorably on his rapport with JCP&L.

The Board discussed when the reorganization meeting should be held as it has to be held before Planning Board can meet. Mayor Nemeth announced that the Reorganization meeting would be held on Tuesday, January 5th, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom and the Regular Meeting on January 11th.

Executive Resolution 2020-71 NJS-10:4-12b(7) Litigation – Water Billing

A motion was made by Mr. Juncosa, seconded by Mr. Vandegrift. All were in favor.

Executive session began at 8:45pm. Mr. Vandegrift left the meeting at 8:50pm.

Regular session resumed at 9:06pm.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm on motion by Mr. Juncosa, seconded by Mr. Mann and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine A. Rosikiewicz, RMC
Deputy Clerk