

BOROUGH OF LAUREL SPRINGS
REGULAR MEETING OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MONDAY, July 11, 2022
MAYOR THOMAS A. BARBERA PRESIDING

SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND MOMENT OF SILENCE was led by Mayor Barbera

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW—Mayor Barbera stated adequate notice of this meeting was given by emailing the Retrospect and the Courier-Post on January 11, 2022 and posting on Borough Website and bulletin board.

ROLL CALL recorded as present: DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino, and DelPidio; Cruz and Redstreak absent.

ENGINEER'S REPORT – Borough Engineer, Jeff Hanson, Environmental Resolutions, Inc.

CAPITAL ITEMS

1. 2020 Road Improvement Program (NJDOT FY 2019 & FY2020 Local Aid Grant)

A preconstruction meeting was held between project stakeholders on January 19, 2022. The contractor started construction on June 6, 2022. To date the tree removal, inlet reconstruction / refurbishment and replacement of inlet heads and bicycle safe grates has been completed. A new inlet has also been constructed along West Atlantic Avenue to help mitigate the existing downstream flooding issue. The concrete work is approximately 80 percent complete to date. The concrete subcontractor is schedule to start their portion of the work on June 20. It is anticipated that the project will be complete (i.e. final paving completed) in early-mid August 2022.

2. 2021 Road Improvement Program (NJDOT FY2021 Local Aid Grant)

In November, the Borough received correspondence from NJDOT awarding a FY2021 Municipal Aid Grant in the amount of \$174,930.00 for the reconstruction of Trenton Avenue and Virginia Avenue. The surveying work has been completed and base plans have been drafted. We are currently working on the design phase of the project. Once the Construction Plans and Specifications are completed we will advertise the project for bid. It is anticipated that bids will be advertised within the coming weeks, allowing for a construction start in early fall 2022.

3. NJDOT FY2022 Local Aid Grant Application

The Borough recently received confirmation of the award of a NJDOT FY2022 Local Aid Grant for the reconstruction of Poplar Avenue (Lindsay Avenue to West Elma Avenue) and Washington Avenue (Central Avenue to Chestnut Avenue) in the amount of \$167,769.00. ERI will provide a proposal for the requisite engineering design and CMCI services for the Governing Body's consideration within the coming weeks.

4. NJDOT FY2023 Local Aid Grant Application

Only June 28 our office submitted a FY2023 Local Aid Application for the reconstruction of Lakeview Avenue between Walnut Avenue and Glen Avenue. We will keep the Governing Body apprised as to the status of the application as we received any information.

5. 2022 NJDEP Lake Management Grant Application

Our office submitted an application for the hydro-raking and fallen tree removal at Laurel Lake on May 28, 2022. Also included was the construction of erosion control measures at the outfalls discharging stormwater from Walnut Avenue, Park Avenue, Glen Avenue and West Stafford Avenue. We will keep the Governing Body apprised as to the status of the application as we received any information.

6. NJDOT FY2023 Safe Routes to School Grants

Grant applications for FY2023 SRTS funding are due in October, 2022. The Borough's FY2022 application for installation of speed limit beacons on Stone Road in the vicinity of the school was not selected for funding. We seek input from the Governing Body regarding whether to submit an application for the same project or a different project.

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There was conversation that the road construction crew may be paving Thursday. Councilwoman DiMarco asked a question relating to the Lake Grant, for which Mr. Hanson said he would call the State for an update. There was additional conversation about concrete, tree removal, inlets, and that the concrete might be done tomorrow. A proposal was received for the 2022 road project.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Work Session Meeting of June 13, 2022 - The motion to approve by Councilman Riondino was seconded by Councilman DelPidio, with DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino, and DelPidio in favor, none opposed.

APPOINTMENTS

- Mateus Reissmann – Public Works Employee Part Time – the motion by Councilman Riondino was seconded by Councilman DelPidio with DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino and DelPidio in favor, none opposed and no abstentions.
- Joseph Cruz – Junior Member of the Volunteer Fire Department – the motion by Councilwoman DiGregorio was seconded by Councilwoman DiMarco with DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino and DelPidio in favor, none opposed and no abstentions.

ORDINANCES – first reading by title:

- #870-2022 - ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER 202 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF LAUREL SPRINGS ENTITLED “REGISTRATION AND DEFAULTED MORTGAGE PROPERTY”
 - Mayor Barbera read the Ordinance by Title
 - The motion to introduce by Councilman Riondino was seconded by Councilman DelPidio, with DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino and DelPidio in favor, none opposed and no abstentions.
 - Second Reading, Public Hearing and Adoption is August 8, 2022, 7 pm in the Recreation Center, 820 Grand Avenue, Laurel Springs, NJ 08021.

RESOLUTIONS

- #062-2022 - AUTHORIZING AND SUPPORTING APPLICATION TO NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS FOR FIREFIGHTER GRANT

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Laurel Springs desires to apply for and obtain a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for approximately \$55,000 to carry out a project to purchase firefighting gear, clothing and equipment; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Laurel Springs does hereby authorize the application for such a grant; and, recognizes and accepts that the Department may offer a lesser or greater amount and therefore, upon receipt of the grant agreement from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, does further authorize the execution of any such grant agreement; and also, upon receipt of the fully executed agreement from the Department, does further authorize the expenditure of funds pursuant to the terms of the agreement between the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Laurel Springs and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the persons whose names, titles, and signatures appear below are authorized to sign the application, and that they or their successors in said titles are authorized to sign the agreement, and any other documents necessary in connection therewith.

- The motion to approve by Councilwoman DiGregorio, was seconded by Councilwoman DiMarco, with DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino, and DelPidio in favor, none opposed and no abstentions.

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- #063-2022 - CONFIRMING SUPPORT FOR AN OPEN SPACE HISTORIC PRESERVATION APPLICATION AT THE WHITMAN STAFFORD FARMHOUSE

WHEREAS, Camden County Open Space Preservation Trust Fund Advisory Committees is soliciting application for their 2022 Historic Preservation applications; and

WHEREAS, the Whitman Stafford Farmhouse is a handsomely restored and preserved 18th century structure of exceptional historic value due to its connection with famous author Walt Whitman owned by the Borough of Laurel Springs and maintained and managed by its Whitman Stafford Farmhouse Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Whitman Stafford Farmhouse Committee advised Mayor and Council that the Farmhouse requires completion of the brick walk and sidewalk project as part of the ongoing exterior repairs; and

WHEREAS, this resolution authorizing this municipality to apply for the 2022 Camden County Open Space Preservation Trust Fund Historic Preservation Grant will memorialize the commitment of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Laurel Springs to support the efforts undertaken by its Whitman Stafford Farmhouse Committee and its request for authorization to apply for this said grant; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by Mayor and Council of the Borough of Laurel Springs, that the Borough of Laurel Springs hereby endorses the submission of 2022 Camden County Open Space Preservation Trust Fund Historic Preservation Grant;

- The motion to approve by Councilwoman DiMarco, was seconded by Councilwoman DiGregorio, with DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino, and DelPidio in favor, none opposed and no abstentions

#064-2022 - REGARDING THE ANNUAL AUDIT

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-4 requires the governing body of every local unit to have made an annual audit of its books, accounts and financial transactions; and

WHEREAS, the Annual Report of Audit for the year 2021 has been filed by a Registered Municipal Accountant with the Borough of Laurel Springs pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-6 and a copy has been received by each member of the governing body; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 52:27BB-34 authorizes the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey to prescribe reports pertaining to the local fiscal affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Local Finance Board has promulgated N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5, a regulation requiring that the governing body of each municipality shall by resolution, certify to the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey that all members of the governing body have reviewed, as a minimum, the sections of the annual audit entitled "Findings and Questioned costs: or Findings and Recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the members of the governing body have personally reviewed as a minimum the Annual Report of Audit, and specifically the sections of the Annual Audit entitled "Findings and Questioned Costs" or "Findings and Recommendations; as evidenced by the group affidavit form of the governing body attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, such resolution of certification shall be adopted by the governing body no later than forty-five days after the receipt of the annual audit, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5; and

WHEREAS, all members of the governing body have received and have familiarized themselves with, at least, the minimum requirements of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey, as stated aforesaid and have subscribed to the affidavit, as provided by the Local Finance Board; and

WHEREAS, failure to comply with the regulations of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey may subject the members of the governing body to the penalty provisions of R.S. 52:27BB-52 – to wit:

R.S. 52:27BB-52 – A local officer or member of local governing body who, after a date fixed for compliance, fails or refuses to obey an order of the director (Director of Local Government Services), under the provisions of this Article, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be fined not more than one thousand dollars

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(\$1,000.00) or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both, in addition shall forfeit his/her office.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Laurel Springs in the County of Camden and State of New Jersey has complied with N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5 and does hereby submit a certified copy of this resolution and the required affidavit to said Board to show evidence of said compliance.

- The motion to approve by Councilman Riondino, was seconded by Councilman DelPidio, with DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino, and DelPidio in favor, none opposed and no abstentions
- Resolved to pay \$223,537.01 from Current Fund and \$21,541.22 from the Trust/Capital Accounts. The motion by Councilman DelPidio, was seconded by Councilwoman DelPidio, with DiGregorio, DiMarco, Riondino, and DelPidio in favor, none opposed and no abstentions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS –

- DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, BOARDS, SERVICES/PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL- Councilman Redstreak was absent.
- DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Councilman Cruz was absent.
- DIRECTOR OF MUNICIPAL COURT – Councilwoman DiGregorio was not provided with a report.
- DIRECTOR OF RECREATION – Councilman DelPidio offered thank you for the Fourth of July Parade especially Roy Kane for the parade and field events. He is starting to make plans for the horse and carriage and carolers for the Tree Lighting event.
- DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE – Councilman Riondino was not provided with a report.
- DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – Councilwoman DiMarco reported that on June 15th she had the privilege of awarding the highest-ranking students from Laurel Springs at Sterling High School. Information for the Fourth of July went out early, and it was a good day, and the events were nostalgic and fun. An electronic copy of the newsletter was successfully communicated.
- DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY – POLICE AND FIRE – Chief Mazziotta reviewed the Police Report for the month of June, 2022. Roy Kane reviewed the Fire Department Report for the month of June, 2022.
- MAYOR’S REPORT – Mayor Barbera reported on his activities since the time of the last Regular meeting in June, 2022. Mayor Barbera explained his activities with Senator Madden and Senator Beach which he felt contributed to his ability to announce the restoration of the Energy Receipts Tax revenues directly to the municipalities. He discussed how the history of the tax, the gradual overreach of the State and the now restoration directly to municipalities. He also reported on the restoration of the school funding ratios to a more appropriate distribution. He announced that the Borough has received information that it will be receiving special State funding in the amount of \$500,000 for the rehabilitation of the Cord Mansion in the 2022 State budget. Municipal Clerk Amadio read an email from Council President James Redstreak regarding the effort to reestablish and gain funding opportunities for the Borough and thanked Mayor Barbera.

OLD BUSINESS

- EMS Coverage – Mayor Barbera reviewed correspondence from Stratford which had been received and reviewed, saying there was more to come on this matter.

NEW BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE –

- From DCA regarding 518 Beech Avenue – Mayor Barbera read the letter from NJDCA. He directed it to and spoke with the Borough Attorney, who had phoned the sender of the letter at DCA and reviewed the process. They spoke and concluded that nothing can really be done by the municipality as the State is the agencies who inspect and license. The Borough really has not entrée into the process. There was further

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explanation of how they operate. There was discussion of whether it was in the venue of the Fire Inspector or if the Fire inspection was done by the State. There was discussion that NJAC 5:27-1 et seq. does include a local involvement portion, and discussion of the second paragraph that says "The Office of Regulatory Affairs, NJ Department of Community Affairs will visit your office to retrieve the municipal property file. There was reiteration of the idea that the Borough is not involved in the process, and that it is one of five exceptions to the State Zoning Law. There were also questions regarding the State's authority to license versus their authority to enforce. Mayor Barbera said the Borough Attorney will be consulted again and the Planning and Zoning Attorney will be reached out to.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC -

- Maureen Gardiner – 521 Beech Avenue – commented her displeasure at the home at 518 Beech Avenue, saying it is upsetting. She is at home alone and finds it a little scary. She had questions regarding the sale of the property which segued into discussion of how the home works and that the Borough had been told that there would be one person there 24 hours per day and up to ten people there. There were questions about Megan's law.
- Eric Ford – 600 Beech Avenue – said he reached out to Assemblyman Greenwald about the matter and discussed the differences between enforcement and licensing, certificates of occupancy and zoning. He said that the due process of the citizens of Laurel Springs is being subjugated. There was additional discussion of the difference between licensing and enforcement. He believes that there is recourse available and discussed what can and cannot be done. He spoke about the safety and security of children and the public and reiterated that their due process rights have been violated without proper licensing. Mayor Barbera responded that there are several attorneys and politicians looking into the matter, who will all be consulted to address the matter. There was additional discussion that the home is clearly operating and discussion of operating without a license. There was surprise that the Borough did not know before receiving the letter from the DCA. Chief Mazziotta said he was not aware of any report coming into the Police Department about this activity.
- Jill DiOrio – 529 Beech Avenue – confirmed that the home had been operating for a month or two, and also questioned how they could be operating without a license.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Thursday, July 21st Land Use Board Meeting @7pm @Rec Center
- No Board of Education meeting in July
- No Work Session Meetings in June, July, August or October
- Monday, August 8th – Regular Meeting @ 7 pm @Rec Center

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business a motion was made by Councilman DelPidio which was seconded by Councilwoman DiGregorio to adjourn at 8:05 pm with all in favor and none opposed.

Respectfully submitted

Dawn T. Amadio, RMC, Municipal Clerk