



**CITY OF LAMBERTVILLE
WORK SESSION
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2023
PHILLIP L. PITTORE JUSTICE CENTER
25 SOUTH UNION STREET
MINUTES**

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Mayor Nowick called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and he asked the City Clerk to read the statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act into the record.

The City Clerk read the following statement into the record: This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act with the annual meeting notice advertised in the Trenton Times, and provided to the Hunterdon County Democrat. The meeting notice was emailed to the listserv, department heads, and the City Engineer. The meeting agenda provides for action items known at the time of publication and is subject to change. This meeting is being streamed live and recorded using the Zoom Meeting Platform.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called the roll as follows:

Present: Councilwoman Kominsky, Councilwoman Lambert, Councilman Lide, Council President Stegman, and Mayor Nowick.

Also present: Cynthia Ege – City Clerk, Lindsay Hansche – Deputy Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Nowick led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

CLOSED SESSION: Closed Session of the Governing Body of the April 6, 2023 Lambertville City Council Meeting to discuss Issues related to Potential Contracts pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(7).

Please note: *The Governing Body will go into closed session at 6 p.m. and will reconvene in open session at 7 p.m.*

RESOLUTION

“Authorizing a Closed Session at the April 6, 2023 Lambertville City Council Meeting to Discuss Potential Contracts Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(7)”

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Lambertville is subject to certain requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, provides that a closed session, not open to the public, may be held for certain specified purposes when authorized by N.J.S.A 10:4-12(b).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Lambertville that a closed session shall be held on April 6, 2023, in-person at the Phillip L. Pittore Justice Center, to discuss *Potential Contracts Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(7)*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the deliberations conducted in closed session may be disclosed to the public upon the determination of the Lambertville Mayor and City Council.

ADOPTED: April 6, 2023

Mayor Nowick and City Council convened in closed session at 6:01 p.m. with a motion made by Council President Stegman and seconded by Councilman Lide. An affirmative voice/roll call vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Nowick and City Council re-convened in regular session at 6:49 p.m. with a motion made by Councilwoman Lambert and seconded by Councilman Lide. An affirmative voice/roll call vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mayor Nowick opened the meeting for public participation regarding agenda items.

Lisa Easton, of Lambertville, in regards to the Closson property: She commented that she is here to show support for Council and Mayor for the Closson property and keeping as much open space as possible. Lamberts Hill is a neighbor that borders the property and they are keen to offer their help.

Judy Gleason, of Lambertville, in regards to the Closson property and the City Budget: About Closson, I really believe we need to turn some part of this into a money making part. I'm in favor of saving the historic Washington home, and in favor of leaving the hill, but we need to seriously consider what we do with the property so that we get something. Several months ago people were here suggesting selling the house, selling the market, but that has all dropped off. I hear people saying it and I want to say it as well and lend support. Secondly, in connection with the budget and budget priorities, it's hard to make a comment without having seen the budget or knowing what you are going to say. I appreciate the early public comment period, but I don't know that we even have a budget yet? Not sure how to comment on priorities. It would have been good to have something in hand before our chance to comment on it.

Mayor Nowick responded that she will have plenty of time to ask questions about the budget. There will be a slideshow with initial thoughts about capital projects. Tonight is to discuss capital projects. The budget will be introduced at the April 20th Council Meeting with the budget consultant. Adoption will follow at the May 18th session so you will have plenty of time to ask questions.

Paul Stevens, of Lambertville, in regards to the Closson property: He commented that the City never got a third party assessment for the purchase of the Closson property and he is hoping we do that before we start the process for the sale of the property. He also felt the 3 minute time limit does not give a lot of opportunity to ask questions. Mayor Nowick responded that there will be a separate public meeting solely for discussion only. The last meeting held only 2 people who showed up and he hopes more will come and ask questions.

Cindy Sternfeld, of Lambertville asked if we will be able to go back and review what we did already (CAT Team). She asked about potentially making adjustments to the times of the Street

Sweeper, as parking is more challenging and moving your car is hard. What process can we go through to change it to 9 am?

Mayor Nowick responded that the community advisory work will be discussed, but it was largely centered around the use of the open space, not the buildings. Because of Ida, the City never really had conversations about the Closson property. The Sweeper discussion is a tough one. The Ordinance was adjusted to universal time last year. In order to make efficient use of the street sweeping program, it works best for universal time of 8 – 10 a.m.. Making it later will interfere with business in the CBD on the tail end. Even a seemingly small change to the hours is a massive change – it cost \$1800 to change the signs, a fairly significant cost. He said he is happy to consider it once the school is renovated.

Zoom attendance– 2 people

Mayor Nowick asked for a motion to close the public comment session for agenda items. Councilwoman Lambert made the motion and Councilman Lide seconded the motion. An affirmative voice vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Nowick informed the members of the public that the City has the following vacancies: Parks and Recreation Commission: Alternate I, Shade Tree Commission, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment. Interested residents should send a resume and cover letter to Mayor Nowick at mayornowick@lambertvillenj.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Street One-way Update – Council President Stegman gave an update. He informed the members of the public that the City is waiting for the State of New Jersey Department of Transportation to provide us with their requirements.

Mayor Nowick gave an update on the following announcements:

Flood Damage Prevention: There will be a Public Information Session on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 12:00 noon, via the Zoom Meeting Platform. The City did have a couple requests from the DEP - one of which is prompting a change but we just got the wording today. It is not a substantial change and will be on the City website. Regarding substantial improvements and determination, Section 1 of 103-14, as introduced, reads “to estimate the market value will **require** the applicant...” is changed to “to estimate the market value will **allow** the applicant...” The change in wording allows them to have a choice of what to do.

Stormwater Management, Tier A, MS4 Permit: There are several updates required to City Ordinances as part of the Storm Water Management, Tier A, MS4 Permit and they include: Pet Waste, Yard Waste, Litter, Prohibited Feeding of Nondomestic Pets, Refuse, Dumpsters, and Resolution In Support Of The Ability Of Municipalities To Adopt Regulations To Protect Public Health, Safety, And Welfare From Threats Of Flooding. The City took our existing ordinances

and merged them with the State of NJ DEP's language. They will be on the April 20th meeting agenda.

Short Term Rentals: The City has been compiling information and there have been a lot of conversations over the last year and half about short term rentals. The Council has some information and has started to look at it. We will have a conversation in May about the ways we might approach this. We'll be reviewing what's been done in other communities – some that have banned and restricted them, others who allow them with regulations. Stay tuned. We have about 40 Air BnBs in the City and not all have registered as landlords, which is required. City staff has started cross referencing with landlord registration and we will be sending out letters very soon.

Vending Machine Licensing: Ryan Spreen recently opened a social club with a lot of games. The City's ordinance is old and only references the use of coin-op machines.

Sunday Farm Market at the Library: The idea is to have three or four local farmers participate in a farm market for the months of July and August on a Sunday morning. He thought of the Library as a location and has spoken to a couple of the residents about parking with no issues. It would necessitate no parking from 9 am to 2 pm. Members of the Governing Body expressed interest in considering other locations and times of day, because the parking lot is heavily used and the timing may interfere with church services. Mayor Nowick will do some research on other venues. He will reach out to residents around the Library to see what hours are better for them.

Sparkle Week: 2023 DATES ARE ESTABLISHED BY ZONES AND ARE AS FOLLOWS:

MAY 2 AND MAY 3, 2023: *Zone One* - Tuesday pick-ups, *Zone Two:* - Wednesday pick-ups

MAY 11 AND MAY 12, 2023: *Zone Three* – Thursday pick-ups, *Zone Four* – Friday pick-ups

Budget and Bond Priorities: A slideshow introducing some capital projects for the year was shown and is marked as addendum A. The following is a list of priorities for 2023: Library steps, ramp and sidewalk, City Hall steps and sidewalk, City Hall Roof and interior ceiling, North Union Street Parking Lot sidewalk and planters, Holiday Decorations, North Franklin Street (Rt 179 to Ely Field) - \$259,000, Studdiford Street, Swan Street, Coryell Road - \$396,000, Curbing as part of stormwater management, a new police vehicle, security cameras, EV charging stations, and technology upgrades.

Sale of Public Property: Mayor Nowick informed the Governing Body and members of the public that the City has hired Max Spann to handle the sale of 150 Swan Street.

Street Sweeper resumed the normal schedule beginning Monday, April 3, 2023

Convenience Center Hours: Saturday, April 15, 2023, from 9 am to 12 noon, Wednesday, April 19, 2023, from 3 – 5 pm

Landlord Registration was due on March 31. If you are late, you owe an additional \$50.00 penalty.

PROJECTS

Valet Parking: Mayor Nowick informed the members of the Governing Body and public that the Valet Parking Service was not implemented because the company Under the Moon was going to hire did not meet the City's requirements. The resolution authorizing this service will be on the April 20th agenda.

To review, Under the Moon will pay the meters for 2 parking spaces which they will use for valet parking. The valet stand will be on their property. They will take the cars to Finkle's where they have an agreement to park 50 vehicles. The service will be open to the general public. They are working on the final details and plan to trial the service for the months of May, June and July. They will provide the City with monthly reports with details about the service. This has been pretty well vetted.

Councilman Lide asked if they had 50 -75 spaces at Finkle's? Mayor Nowick confirmed that they have 50 parking spaces.

Councilwoman Lambert commented that Under the Moon isn't the only organization in town doing valet parking. Mayor Nowick confirmed that the Lambertville Station and The Hawke are offering valet services, but they conduct it on their own property. Councilwoman Lambert asked if we want to consider a more holistic approach to valet parking? The Hawke is pulling cars into their side parking lot, stacking cars and taking them to another parking lot (River Walk).

Councilman Lide asked if there is a pre-planned route? Mayor Nowick commented that it is the same route as proposed in 2022. They are open to changing the route if it isn't working. Cars will pull in in front of the restaurant. Councilman Lide commented that the City needs to make sure they don't make u-turn in the street and was assured that would not be permitted.

Closson Property Discussion

Mayor Nowick commented that we have had several conversations about Closson. We've hosted two days up at the property with 45-50 people visiting even on a rainy day. The recent newsletter was all about the Closson property. We had all the work by the Community Advisory Team, which found very broad support for preserving the land and open space. We found out that some of the numbers that were floated about the value changed significantly with the appraisals. We acknowledge that the situation shifts when the space is not worth 1.5 million, maybe worth half a million, maybe more if another agency supports us.

There are a couple of things I would like to see happen:

- 1) To verbally commit, together as a Council, to adopting a resolution at the April 20th meeting to move forward with Green Acres and seek every preservation dollar we can.
- 2) To move forward with the next step to get appraisals for the farm market and the log cabin, to determine how much they are worth, and establish the most appropriate demarcation lines.

- 3) To change the name from the Closson Farm. Councilman Lide had a great idea, let's throw it out to the public to help us decide.

Council President Stegman commented that he is in favor of changing the name. He felt it was important to offer a short history of the buildings and property so people can get a feel for what they are naming. A couple of months ago, he participated on a phone call with the State Office of Historic Preservation who is responsible for making decisions on the use of the property. In the phone call, we were assured that there were no red flags about our ideas - we would still be able to do what we want in the exclusion zones and with the historic home, farm market, and log cabin. I have no real problem with accepting the Green Acres money but it's also important that we monetize what we spoke about tonight and hopefully put those two properties back on the tax roll. I'm ready to put up a For Sale sign already.

Mayor Nowick commented that if the City receives any money from the sale of the property, it must go towards the debt and pay down the bond ordinance, it is a requirement.

Councilwoman Lambert commented that, as a number of members of the public already stated, she is in favor of selling portions of the property and using those funds to pay down debt. It is unfortunate that the financial realities didn't match the information we were given and we took on debt we shouldn't have. Then six months later we took on more debt from Ida. So selling off portions of the property is prudent and fiscally responsible. Having to sell off pieces of the property to defray expenses indicates the purchase of the property was not revenue neutral. She also supports open space and that was the whole purpose for purchasing the property. Regardless of the disparity on the financials, gaining open space was the intent of the purchase and we should honor the intent.

Councilman Lide commented that he agrees and feels we have an obligation to explore selling the log cabin and the market. There is a lot of opportunity for the market. Perhaps a new farm market would be great but also adding it to the tax roll is important. It would be nice to find a way to get more people to enjoy the property. We should move forward at a good speed to sell. Excited about the name change.

Councilwoman Kominsky commented that she agrees, and has always been in favor of selling those portions that don't have open space value. She felt the sale should have been structured like that to begin with. The cost only continues to increase as you look at the interest rate for the bond. We owe it to our taxpayers since we overpaid and try to get great use out of the property – trails, picnic tables, and get the buildings ready for public use.

Mayor Nowick commented that at the next Council Meeting, the agenda will include a resolution to move forward on the open space funding, and with hiring appraisers to look at two sections of the property.

Council President Stegman commented that during this process we can have a parallel track for the use of open space – we can work on both. Mayor Nowick responded that we can, but temper expectations with process, because there is a lot of paperwork required to complete the Green Acres application. We own the land, people are using it, and it is time to re_engage the

community. There's been a lot of interest in a dog run, trails, and we should revisit some of this and give the community more input on the open space ideas. We resubmitted a grant request to the National Federation of Fish and Wildlife and are waiting to hear back from Green Acres to make sure it is fine to implement the things in the grant. They looked at it before we submitted the grant and said it aligned with their view. We will need parking, site planning, and ideas, and that will be the fun part. We need to first work on the administrative paperwork. Jackie Middleton will work with us for money from the county, and there are a couple other small nonprofits showing interest in putting dollars as well.

First: complete Green Acres application. Parking on open space is allowed because it provides public access

Second: obtain quotes for appraisals.

There are a lot of opportunities and Green Acres is all about public access.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mayor Nowick opened the meeting for public participation.

Paul Stevens of Lambertville commented that separating the two public participation sections makes it difficult because if there is a discussion, the public can't comment on it. He asked for reconsideration. He would like to comment on the Sunday farmers market idea and suggested possibly using the spaces of businesses that aren't open on Sunday like the PNC. He noted that due to the structure of the public comment sections, he can't ask how The Hawke can use the streets for their valet. In the spirit of community involvement, maybe limit the first session to comments on resolutions and ordinances but not discussion items. He said he loves what you have done and maybe we can tweak it a little bit. Mayor Nowick responded that it was the Council's idea, and that he personally feels there are other opportunities to engage with the Council outside of the bi-weekly meetings. He wants to be mindful, but is worried about everyone getting 6 minutes no matter what. Mr. Stevens commented that he doesn't want to go back and rehash things. He also puts in time and effort to attend the meetings, and part of it is to be able to publicly comment so the rest of the town can hear ideas.

Councilwoman Lambert commented that maybe the first public participation can be only on things that will be voted on during the meeting. And then at the end they can talk about other ideas.

Councilwoman Kominsky said she would like to take it a little further, if we have two comment periods, let's have two on whatever is on the agenda. If someone was that interested and got up twice, I think it's great, we are here to listen to people.

Councilman Lide commented that the public has a lot of ways to reach the Governing Body but we can't have a discussion unless we are here because of the Open Public Meeting laws. He said he appreciates the change, and doesn't think it's been a problem, and encourages more public comment. If we have a meeting that runs long, for someone to have to wait until the end to

comment on a non-agenda item is asking a lot. If there is an issue, maybe they speak during one public comment. We have to have comments in a public meeting.

Judy Gleason of Lambertville commented that Lambertville is a tourist town and we don't have any public restrooms for people who come to town. Two or three years ago we said we would have our public buildings open. She said she tried the doors at the Justice Center many times when they should have been open but they have been locked. Second: we don't have the fees on parking tickets, and there's no sign for the fees. Maybe we can post a sign. Third: We did a survey of people's thoughts about Hurricane Ida. One of the things that was supposed to come out of that was a public meeting to talk about what happened. I have been bringing it up ever since October 2021. I think people want to hear or say what they experienced. It's not over for people who lived through it.

Mayor Nowick responded that unless he is mistaken, the Justice Center opens on Saturdays around 10, 10:15 am, and on Sundays it is open at 1 pm. During the week, the Court administrator opens it at 9 am and closes it at 5 pm. Mayor Nowick will double check. He encouraged people to call him if there is an issue and the doors are locked. In regards to the parking ticket fees, Lt. Brown commented that the assignment judge of the court said we cannot put the fees on the tickets, we are not allowed to do it. The court's website indicates what the violations are and what the fees are.

Council President Stegman commented that if people don't know what the fee is, we could put signs on the meter of what the violations are.

Mayor Nowick responded about the proposed Ida meeting and apologized for dropping the ball. He asked that Judy Gleason and Dave Burd work on it. They were asked to work with the City Clerk and select a date.

Cindy Sternfield commented that she receives a ticket every year and she writes "parking ticket" into the City website and is able to find the amount due. She offered it as a resource.

Mayor Nowick asked for a motion to close the public participation section of the meeting.

Councilwoman Lambert made the motion to close the public participation section.

Councilwoman Kominsky seconded the motion. An affirmative voice vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

7 people on Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Nowick asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:21 p.m. Councilwoman Lambert made the motion to adjourn and Council President Stegman seconded the motion. An affirmative voice vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

City of Lambertville
Work Session
6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 6, 2023
Phillip L. Pittore Justice Center, 25 South Union Street
MINUTES
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Cynthia L. Ege
CMR, RMC, City Clerk