

Work Session
Mayor and Council
January 24, 2013

A Work Session of the Mayor and Council was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Mayor Barra who announced that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act were met by the required posting and notice to publications.

The following individuals answered roll call: Council members Bernstein, Strauch, White, Wilczynski and Mayor Barra. Ms. LaMonica and Mrs. McSwiggan were absent. Mrs. McCarthy and Mr. Bole were also present.

Public Comments

Mr. Joe Phillips of 30 Elmwood Avenue was present to speak to the Council about the traffic signal on West Orchard and Franklin Turnpike.

Mr. Phillips said he needs help from other drivers to get out of his street because he doesn't have clear visibility due to the traffic backup caused by the signal. He suggested having a left turn arrow which will clear out a portion of the traffic and allow the other drivers get through the intersection more quickly.

Mayor Barra said the Council is very aware of the situation. He said the town first asked the County to allow right turns on a red light for vehicles coming out of Orchard Street. Then Allendale's Traffic Sergeant recommended having an advance green light going northbound toward Mahwah in order to keep the traffic moving. The County agreed with the idea but the signal that they put in doesn't have that capability. They have promised Allendale a new traffic signal. At this time there is a backorder on traffic signals which has also delayed the traffic light installation on Myrtle and Crescent Avenues.

Mr. Barra agreed that the situation must be dealt with because in the evening the traffic backs up almost all the way to Rohsler's Nursery. He has impressed on the County that this must be done. The County has agreed and they have suggested a ten to twelve second advance green light for the northbound lane. Hopefully this improvement will be made as quickly as possible.

Mayor Barra recommended that Mr. Phillips write to Kathy Donovan, Bergen County Executive to tell her the residents in his area could use the County's help. When she knows there are a sufficient number of residents who are concerned about an issue, she is very responsive. He added that Mr. Phillips could also say that the Mayor and Council are in favor of his recommendation.

Mr. Barra noted that two Boy Scouts were in the audience this evening. They introduced themselves as Ryan Trinkler of Bonnie Way and Maxwell Buchanan of West Crescent Avenue. They were both present as part of the requirements for completing the Merit Badge for Citizenship in the Community.

Mayor Barra told the Boy Scouts that there will be two new Police Officers sworn in later this evening.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Barra said that thanks to Allendale's AAA rating we went out for a bond anticipation note and the low bidder will be giving us a .65% interest rate.

Legal

Mr. Bole said the Mayor had asked a question about whether the State permits the towns to fine utility companies for their failure to repair, replace, remove and restore power lines such as the one at the intersection at Myrtle and Crescent Avenue.

Mr. Bole researched the matter and he could not find enabling legislation for permission to levy such fines. There is legislation allowing for a municipality to adopt an ordinance regarding the replacement of utility poles.

Mr. Bole spoke to the League of Municipalities and they were also unable to find any pertinent legislation.

Mr. Bole said there was an article in today's Record about certain changes that will be taking place at the Board of Public Utilities regarding rules and regulations in response to major storms such as Hurricane Sandy. If a Municipality has a significant issue with a utility, they can file a complaint with the Board of Public Utilities or with their State Representative.

Mr. Yakimik said that the most effective way to handle these situations seems to be by contacting the BPU or the utility's External Affairs Officer. He stated that all the work on Myrtle and West Crescent Avenue has been completed and he will find out the status of the Brookside Bridge improvements.

Mayor Barra noted that there is legislation pending that will allow DPW employees to secure downed power lines and clear trees from roadways. There have also been comments about reconnecting lines. Mr. Barra indicated that both he and Councilwoman White have concerns about employee safety with regard to this issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen McCarthy
Municipal Clerk