

Work Session
Mayor and Council
June 28, 2012

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, McSwiggan, Strauch, White, Wilczynski and Mayor Barra. Ms. LaMonica was absent. Mrs. McCarthy and Mr. Bole were also present.

Public Comments

Mayor Barra opened the meeting to the public for comments.

Lowell Schudel of Crescent Place said he is a Boy Scout and is working on a merit badge that requires him to attend a Council meeting and speak to the Council members about an issue in the community.

An issue that impacts him is the sidewalks in Allendale. He is aware that they are the responsibility of the individual property owners. He asked what is done about sidewalks that are unsafe or crumbling and might be hazardous.

Mayor Barra responded that our Construction Code Official follows up on any calls he received about unsafe sidewalks. He then issues a notice of violation to the homeowner and gives them a reasonable period of time to correct the situation. If the situation is not corrected, the homeowner can be fined and/or the town can correct the condition and put a lien against the property. Our Construction Code Official can also do this without a referral.

Mr. Schudel asked if the Construction Code Official goes around town on an annual basis to look for problems that need to be corrected.

Mr. Barra said when the Construction Code Official is in an area of town for any reason he will look for items that need to be corrected such as sidewalks. Mr. Barra is aware there are a number of sidewalks in town that are in need of repair.

Mr. Schudel asked which branch of the local government is responsible for sidewalk repair.

Mr. Barra responded that the Construction Code Official reports to the Land Use Committee of which Mr. Strauch is the Chairman. But he also is responsible to the DPW Committee and the Facilities Committee. Mrs. White who heads up the Public Works Committee has been trying to get sidewalks built through a Federal grant for a number of years. Hopefully the east side of Crescent Avenue from Franklin Turnpike to Ivers will get sidewalks beginning on October 1st.

Mr. Strauch noted that the Construction Code Official also reports to the State of New Jersey through the State Department of Community Affairs and the Uniform Construction Code division. He also works closely with the Police and Fire Departments to determine if a structure is safe for habitation.

Mr. Barra commented that the Borough Code specifically refers to sidewalks and the codebook is online. It will give more details about the homeowners' responsibilities for keeping sidewalks clear of snow and in good condition.

In response to a question about the sharing of services, Mr. Barra said Allendale currently shares the Construction Code Official with the Borough of Midland Park but that arrangement will be ending on July 31st. Only the Construction Code Official can issue a notice of violations or a summons.

Agenda Review

Ordinance 12-09- Chapter 270, Additions to Non-Conforming Structures

Mr. Bole noted that a two page resolution was received from the Planning Board earlier today with regard to this ordinance. The resolution that the Mayor and Council received contained language that was a handwritten addition. Mr. Bole's understanding is that the Board's recommended adding the word "principal or accessory" between the words "residential" and "structure" to the second paragraph. The rest of the changes were recommended by Planner Ed Snieckus.

Mr. Strauch said everyone on the Board seemed to agree that the words "principal or accessory" were a good addition.

There was confusion about the intention of Mr. Snieckus' additional proposed wording for the ordinance. It was decided to take the issue back to the Land Use Committee at which time there could be additional discussion with Mr. Snieckus about wording he suggested.

Mrs. McSwiggan commented that the resolution received from the Board was unsigned and did not include the vote. She stated it should have been signed as part of the permanent record of the meeting and she is not comfortable receiving the document this way.

After discussion it was decided that this ordinance will be carried until July 26, 2012.

Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreement with the PBA

Mayor Barra commented that there will be a two percent salary increase for each year of the three year contract. The Police Officers will begin making a contribution to health care this year as prescribed by the Statute.

Resolution 12-198 Authorization to Hire Patrolman

Mr. Barra said it is a pleasure to welcome back Vincent Rizzo who was formerly a dispatcher with Allendale. In 2008 Mr. Rizzo told the Mayor he would like to come back someday as a member of the Allendale Police Department. Mr. Barra said it was “great” to welcome Mr. Rizzo as a new Patrolman.

Downtown Parking

Councilman Bernstein said the Public Safety Committee met on June 13th to discuss the downtown crosswalks. There is a need to make the town safer for pedestrians and our crosswalks are non-conforming to safety standards. To make them conforming there would need to be 25 feet of clear space from the crosswalks. Compliance will come at a cost of seven or eight parking spots on West Allendale Avenue. We currently have seventy-one spots on West Allendale Avenue and this will result in approximately a ten percent reduction from what is existing. It was the feeling of the Committee that the Borough should bring this situation into compliance and enforceable.

Mayor Barra said there was an example of a car backing out of a space that went into a crosswalk and tapped a pedestrian. The Police Department and the Council would like to make the pedestrians as safe as possible.

Sgt. Griffith said the parking places that will be eliminated at the ones that are within twenty-five feet of the crosswalks. There are several by the Post Office and by Allendale Eats.

Mr. Barra said he will go to the Chamber of Commerce meeting and ask them to not allow their employees to park on West Allendale Avenue. Employee parking at this location violates our ordinance and is a disservice to the customers.

Mrs. McSwiggan asked if all the crosswalks that we have are necessary. Sgt. Griffith said they are all essential and actually an additional space could be added by Maple Avenue.

It was noted that Pedestrian crosswalk signs will also be added.

Mr. Bole will draft an amendment to our ordinance to introduce at a July meeting.

Mrs. White asked if the DPW will handle the elimination of the existing parking spaces. Mr. Barra said they would.

On a motion by Mrs. McSwiggan, seconded by Mrs. White, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn to Regular Session at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen McCarthy
Municipal Clerk