

Work Session  
Mayor and Council  
September 8, 2011

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, LaMonica, Schoepflin, Strauch, White, Wilczynski and Mayor Barra. Mrs. McCarthy, Mrs. Mayer and Mr. Bole were also present.

*Public Comments*

Mr. Barra opened the meeting to the public for comments.

Hillary Murdock of 37 Harreton Road said she wanted to let the Council know that the part of Crescent Avenue between Harreton Road and Franklin Turnpike has become a hazardous stretch of roadway. Yesterday for the fourteenth time this year a very large tree came down on Crescent Avenue. This is an issue that affects everyone who drives on that public road. She wants on the record that the trees on the left hand side of the road have become unpredictable and unstable and are an accident waiting to happen. The town has been lucky so far that the trees have not hit a car or a pedestrian but she was minutes away from being hit by a tree yesterday. She had decided before leaving for the Post Office that she wouldn't drive down Crescent, but she did. When she returned the Fire Department was on Crescent because a tree had fallen. She realizes this is not the only stretch of road that has trees that fall down but the problem is consistent and not necessarily due to stormy weather. Ms. Murdock believes it is negligence on the part of the town not to review the situation and take some of the trees down.

Mr. Barra said the Director of Operations recently did an inspection of the town. He identified thirty trees in Allendale that need to be taken down and he contracted with a tree company to begin this work. Mr. Barra will check with him and find out which trees he has designated for removal. He is also not sure which trees are in the Borough right of way and which trees are on private property. It can be difficult to tell a resident to take down a tree that they believe is healthy. Almost all of the money in the Shade Tree Commission has been spent to remove trees instead of purchasing new ones.

Mr. Barra said the high side of West Crescent is generally the problem area and most of those trees are privately owned.

Mrs. White said Jackie McSwiggan was only seconds away from being hit by the tree Ms. Murdock spoke of earlier. Mrs. White said she brought the same issue to the Council two years ago and part of the problem was that a number of these trees are on private property.

Mr. Bernstein asked what the time line is for addressing this project.

Mr. Barra responded that he will find out from Mr. Cauwenberghs which trees are under discussion for removal. Also if any of the trees are on private property he doesn't know if the Borough has the authority to remove those trees.

Ms. Murdock said she would like to know if the trees that have come down in the last week were on the list of trees noted on Mr. Cauwenberghs' list.

Mr. Barra said he believes it is the sharp incline on that side of the road which has undermined those trees.

Ms. Murdock said that her neighbors on Harreton Road are also having an issue with the water being taken off of Knollton Road and piped onto Harreton Road. They have lived on Harreton for fifteen years without this problem. She thinks that the situation isn't due to the lack of curbing on Knollton but from residents adding piping. Her garage has been underwater because of this problem..

Mr. Barra said the Murdocks noted that a six inch pipe has been installed on some of the properties on Knollton. He commented that those individuals do not have the right to pump water on a neighbor's property. Mr. Barra said he believes the water is coming from the houses on Knollton Road not from the road itself. He added that he wants to correct the Murdocks' statement that this is occurring because there are no curbs on Knollton Road because that is inaccurate. The asphalt curbs that were always on Knollton Road are still on Knollton Road and they are equal to the height of any concrete curbing. Also that road has been slanted to the uphill side, away from the downhill side. He has been on that road along with Mrs. Wilczynski and Mrs. White and there is virtually no water on the downhill side, and very little water on the street itself at all. If pipes have been installed to move water from one property to another, he will have the Construction Code Official investigate the situation. He recommended Ms. Murdock fill out a property maintenance complaint about the water being discharged onto her property. The Construction Code Official must respond both to her and to the Land Use Committee about his observations.

Ms. Murdock said she previously filed a complaint about access to the Nursing Home from Harreton Road. She was pleased to read in the paper that action has been taken about that issue.

Mr. Barra responded that Mr. Wittekind issued a summons to the Nursing Home and they went to Court as a result of a complaint. The Nursing Home entered into negotiations with the Prosecutor and agreed to not use that gate except in emergency situations.

Ms. Murdock said when the existing gate was put in it was only to be used for emergency vehicles and not for employees.

Mr. Barra said he thought there may have been provisions for one or two employees who live in Allendale, but visitors, trucks and other employees should not be using that gate. He added that periodically the Police and the Construction Code official will watch and when violations occur, violators will be ticketed as well as the Nursing Home.

Ms. Murdock thanked the town for holding the Nursing Home accountable but until now she has not seen a change in people's behavior and they are still using the gate. She believes the time of most violations is between 5 and 6 a.m. although her husband believes the time is closer to 7 and 8 a.m.

Mr. Schoepflin said the Police are usually busy during those times because of the start of school.

Mr. Barra said the Construction Code Official can also issue a summons and he will speak to him about watching the gate in the morning hours. He also believes that in the future a swipe card will be used to open the gate instead of a number code.

Ms. Murdock said she and her husband enjoyed the outdoor eating at Allendale Eats this summer but there is no stop sign on the corner where that restaurant is. She and her husband have witnessed quite a few near misses this summer.

Mr. Barra said he would speak with Sgt. Griffith, the Traffic Safety Officer.

Ms. Murdock said she would like to be contacted with follow-up about the tree issue.

Mr. Pete Brannigan of 81 Chestnut Street said he has noticed high school students use the corner of West Maple Avenue and Crescent to cross where there is not crosswalk. He asked if there has ever been a discussion about adding a crosswalk at that location.

Mr. Barra said a young high school student was hit by a car at that location approximately five months ago. She was heading up West Maple to go back to the high school. Sgt. Griffith did not want to add a third crosswalk in the same area where two others previously exist. The discussion was left open and perhaps it should be reexamined.

Mrs. White said many people use West Maple to bypass the traffic signal and the area is a hub for both the high school and Brookside School.

Mr. Bernstein thanked Mr. Cauwenberghs and all the CERT members for their help during hurricane Irene.

Mr. Barra added his thanks to Mr. Brannigan for his leadership of the CERT team. Members went to people's homes and checked on them and readied the evacuation center at the hospital.

Mr. Brannigan said they didn't have to do as much as they were prepared for during the hurricane.

Mr. Bernstein said the emergency personnel were well prepared for the hurricane and he wanted to express his thanks to all of them.

*Budget Process*

Ms. LaMonica said a timetable has been finalized regarding the budget process for the upcoming year. It has been laid out on a month-by-month basis. The capital budgets are already in process. She asked the Council Committee heads to meet with their Department Heads to review their budgets. This year will again be a difficult year due to the potential number of tax appeals. She doesn't see anything besides a possible credit from the Sewer Authority that will be helpful in providing unanticipated revenue to the Borough. It is hoped the municipal budget can be introduced in March.

One of the things being put together is a monthly printout on how every department is doing with their budget on both the expense and revenue side. Comparisons will also be available between the current year and the previous year.

Ms. LaMonica thanked Mrs. Mayer and her staff for their assistance in preparing budget materials for the Council.

### *Mayor's Report*

Mr. Barra went to a breakfast this morning at the Governor's mansion and Governor Christie spoke. The Governor and his staff were complimented on how they handled Hurricane Irene. The Governor complimented the OEM teams across the state for their help. Mayor Barra complimented Allendale's team, consisting of Police, Fire, CERT, the Ambulance Corps, the OEM Director, Mr. Strauch, Mr. Bernstein and others. They laid out their plan on how issues would be dealt with in advance of the hurricane. There wasn't anything left out of the discussions and everyone was well prepared for the storm. The Fire Department stayed at the Firehouse overnight, CERT was ready to go and the Ambulance Corps had coordinated with the high school. There was flooding and some loss of power but the first responders were complimented on how well they worked together. Mayor Barra said he received many favorable comments on how well the Borough residents were kept informed. The middle school had some damage and the fourth grade wing was flooded but school opened on time. Rockland Electric also did a good job of bringing in out of state crews to make sure issues could be addressed as soon as possible.

Sunday is the tenth anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the traditional candlelight vigil will be held at dusk. Ted Clarke will again be the Master of Ceremonies for this program. Mr. Barra complimented the DPW for their work in preparing the memorial for this upcoming event. He urged everyone to attend the ceremony.

### *Legal*

Mr. Bole said Cross River Fiber has asked the permission of the Borough to put up their fiber optic cable as other companies have done in the past. Traditionally the Council approves a resolution and Allendale asks for a signed Hold Harmless agreement and Insurance. Mr. Bole said he could ask Cross River Fiber to make a presentation to the Council, but he could also ask them for a map of where they plan to install their fiber.

The Council agreed there it was not necessary to have Cross River Fiber speak to the Council. Mr. Bole said if he has any concerns when he speaks to a representative of the company, he will bring them to the attention of the Council.

Mr. Bole and Mr. Yakimik will review the agreement.

Mrs. White moved, seconded by Mr. Strauch, to adjourn to Regular Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen McCarthy  
Municipal Clerk