

Work Session
Mayor and Council
November 8, 2012

A Work Session of the Mayor and Council was called to order at 7:34 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, McSwiggan, Strauch, White, Wilczynski and Mayor Barra. Mrs. McCarthy and Mr. Bole were also present.

Public Comments

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

There were none.

Administration

Mayor's Report

Mayor Barra said Allendale came back to full power on Wednesday, November 7th at 8:00 p.m. There are a few homes that don't have power which is generally because the service was torn off their houses. A crew is still in town that our Construction Code Official is taking around to work with individual homeowners to get their power restored.

The Nor'easter was relatively modest with no further loss of power or damage. Allendale is in much better shape than many of our neighboring towns and certainly better than other parts of our State.

Mayor Barra had another conversation with the President of Rockland Electric this evening who will be attending the next meeting of the Northwest Mayors group on November 17th to voluntarily answer questions. The hope is that suggestions will be offered that will improve service in the future. He invited the Council members to give him their questions.

Mr. Barra commented that he would like to discuss the following issues with the President of Rockland Electric:

- He would recommend a person be assigned to each municipality to interact directly with the Mayor or OEM representative of that town.
- Rockland's website was inconsistent with the information that was on the State's website.

Mrs. McSwiggan complimented the members of the Allendale community who invited the repairmen into their homes and fed them. She believes the communication companies should be more accountable to the public because some members of the community rely on their home phones as their only source of communication.

Mayor Barra said he spoke to Cablevision and a representative put through a work order for the downed lines on Franklin Turnpike near the Police Department. The representative assured him that a crew would be going out to follow up on the work order. He asked Mrs. McSwiggan to call on Friday to confirm that the repair is underway.

Mr. Barra said Crescent Commons will be having a ribbon cutting on November 19th. Allendale has already received approximately \$5 million for this project but there is a shortfall of about \$150,000 to complete this project. Some of this shortage was caused because a few agencies cut our funding back by approximately \$50,000 each.

Allendale's Housing Board is asking for another draw down from the housing trust to cover the \$150,000 to make up for this shortfall. The housing trust has \$250,000 in it today with additional money that will be coming in the next five months or so. There are no other projects that are anticipated for the foreseeable future other than possible supplemental rent assistance. If the \$150,000 was removed, the fund will be back at \$350,000 in the coming months and more money will be added as residents make COAH contributions into the trust fund.

When the Allendale Housing Board met, they agreed to make this request to the Council.

Mr. Barra noted that the money that is being requested is not taxpayer money but money that was paid by developers to the COAH trust fund. The Governor and the legislature have passed forfeiture provisions so that if trust funds are not utilized, the money will be returned to the State.

Mayor Barra said Mrs. White and Mrs. McSwiggan are also on the Allendale Housing Board and they are in full support of this decision. If the Council decides to proceed, COAH must be notified of this action. He added that Allendale is doing what the Governor has asked the municipalities to do and that is to use the trust fund money to build housing.

When Crescent Commons is complete, Allendale will have 35 special needs beds.

Mr. Bernstein asked if there was a concern about the Council taking this action.

Mr. Barra responded that the only concern would be if in the future, more than \$350,000 was needed for a project.

Mrs. White said she believes Allendale may have more special needs housing than any other municipality in New Jersey. This is another opportunity to support this population.

Mayor Barra added that there are 8,000 people on the special needs waiting list throughout the State. If every municipality provided 15 special needs housing units it would enable everyone in this population to have housing.

Mr. Strauch commented that this is a rare situation where there does not seem to be a down side.

The Council agreed to fund the extra \$150,000 as requested by the Allendale Housing Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen McCarthy
Municipal Clerk