

BOROUGH OF PITMAN
WORK SESSION MINUTES
JUNE 28, 2021

Call to Order

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement – Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, I hereby announce that adequate notice of the time and date of this meeting was published in the South Jersey Times on January 7, 2021, posted on the Borough Hall front door, and advertised on the Borough of Pitman website continuously since January 7, 2021.

Roll Call

Council President Blass: Present
Councilwoman James: Present
Councilwoman Rudley: Present
Mayor Razze: Present
Clerk O'Donnell: Present

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Present
Councilman Mazzola: Present
Councilman Weng: Present
Borough Solicitor Krachun: Present

Discussion

Motion to Open Discussion: Blass
Time: 7:05 p.m.

Second: James

Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion Final Report

Councilwoman James thanked the members of the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion for their efforts, and introduced Lauren Canna, who is the Chairwoman of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. This committee was put in place by Borough Council in 2020 to investigate and recommend ways the Borough can promote diversity and inclusion in our hiring practices and employee relations as well as within the Borough as a whole. Ms. Canna provided Mayor and Council with the Final Report which was based on the research performed by the members of the committee who were formed into subcommittees for this purpose. The first part of the two part report pertains to concerns relating to Borough staff, the Commercial District, the Borough's Education System, Policing, and the Borough's public image. The second part of the report recommends the creation of a Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Committee and outlines the membership, community standards, and responsibilities of the proposed committee. Ms. Canna thanked the members of the committee and suggested to Council that the Final Report should serve as a blueprint going forward for implementing some of the changes recommended. A copy of the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion Final Report is attached to these Minutes.

Councilman Fitzpatrick stated that the recommendations for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act were a good idea but reminded everyone that many of the buildings in Pitman are old and it may not be possible to bring them into compliance due to their structure.

Councilman Weng stated that much of the record keeping recommended for the Police Department is already in place, as well as the training for crisis intervention. Councilman Weng said that more diversity is needed in Police Department personnel, and Councilwoman Rudley suggested additional training for the Police Officers and Fire Department volunteers pertaining to interacting with autistic individuals.

Ms. Canna stated that she was impressed by the Board of Education's program for updating history books and the subject matter of books being read by students.

Councilman Fitzpatrick questioned the recommendation by the Committee for the commission of a new Seal for the Borough. Ms. Canna stated that many individuals who completed the public survey mentioned the need for a new Seal and regarded its' design as antiquated. The survey, which was available on the Borough's website was responded to by 337 individuals.

Resident Request for Sewer Credit

Council President Blass asked to have this discussion removed from the Agenda due to the homeowner being non-responsive to information requested by the Borough.

Banner Ordinance

Councilman Weng mentioned that the banners hung along Broadway by the Pride Alliance in commemoration of Pride Month in June created some controversy in the Borough. He explained that the Pride Alliance group submitted an Event Permit requesting permission from Council to hang the banners, permission was given, and the banners were purchased and installed by the members of the Alliance. Councilman Weng said that the banners are protected under the First Amendment, and that Council cannot approve or deny these types of requests based on the personal feelings of Council or other individuals.

Borough Solicitor Krachun stated that based on the past practices of the Borough’s Economic Development Committee and the Greater Pitman Chamber of Commerce of purchasing and installing flags and banners along Broadway without permission from Council, it may be in the best interest of the Borough to require all groups to seek approval from Council, and that only Council can decide what banners and flags are hung on the Borough-owned lamp posts. Councilman Fitzpatrick asked that if that became the case, should the Borough set criteria of what can or cannot be approved? Solicitor Krachun stated that setting certain criteria is not necessary.

Councilwoman Rudley asked what other towns were doing in these instances and stated that to her it seems to be reactionary on the part of the Borough to make such a change in procedure at this time.

Public Referendum Question on Overnight Parking

Councilman Weng stated that if Council is interested in putting the question of abolishing the ordinance prohibiting overnight parking on the streets in Pitman, the language of the non-binding public referendum must be decided by August 9, 2021, to have the information to the County Clerk by the deadline of August 13, 2021, for inclusion on the General Election ballot in November.

Councilman Weng suggested a permit program where households would pay a nominal cost to be permitted to park up to three passenger vehicles on the street overnight. Councilman Fitzpatrick said that he would like to see only one vehicle per household permitted to park on the street. Councilman Mazzola said that he wants the ban on commercial vehicles, recreational vehicles, and trailers to remain intact. Councilwoman Rudley said that she would like to have multiple members of Council work on the wording for the public referendum.

Mayor Razze said that he has received and heard of complaints from residents about the overnight parking suspension and the problems that cars parked on the street overnight are causing.

Councilwoman James said that she feels that there should be exceptions to allowing overnight parking in certain areas of the Borough, such as the Grove where there is limited parking, and areas where the street is very narrow.

Councilman Weng said that he is willing to work with other members of Council to craft the wording for the non-binding public referendum question.

Motion to close discussion: James
Time: 7:40 p.m.

Second: Fitzpatrick

Public Portion

Motion to open to the public: Rudley
Time: 7:40 p.m.

Second: Weng

Dani Cooke, 227 Boulevard Avenue – Ms. Cooke volunteered to serve on the Diversity and Inclusion Board when it is formed by Council.

William J. Miller, 140 S. Woodbury Road – Mr. Miller said that he is not in favor of allowing cars to park on the street overnight in the Borough. He said that it will create problems for Public Works by making it impossible to

plow when it snows. In addition, by not allowing street parking overnight, it helps the Police Department who patrol the Borough to have clear visibility of neighborhoods and roadways.

Harry McCleish, 128 Glen Lake Avenue – Mr. McCleish asked approximately how many cars are parked on the street overnight now and was told by Councilman Weng that there are around 600 cars nightly. Mr. McCleish said that at one time he was a Pitman Police Officer and that he knows firsthand that it is an advantage for the citizens not to have cars parked on streets overnight. Off-street parking is a deterrent, and that experience tells him that people will abuse the ordinance and “push the envelope” when it comes to parking on the street overnight.

Scott McIlvaine, 818 S. Broadway – Mr. McIlvaine said that he is not in favor of allowing overnight parking on the street. Referencing the banners hung by the Pride Alliance, he said that they are “an embarrassment” to him and to many of the shop owners along Broadway. He stated his opinion that the “town is falling apart” and that the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force is trying to cancel the Borough’s culture by changing the Seal. He said that he is in favor of keeping the Borough’s traditional Seal.

Jim Fortney, 502 Carew Avenue – Mr. Fortney said that the banners that have hung on the lamp posts along Broadway for many years were purchased and are owned by the Greater Pitman Chamber of Commerce. He said that they pay to have them installed and taken down, so therefore, the GPCC should be permitted to maintain control over the banners, where they are hung, and what is on them.

Christian McIlvaine, 818 S. Broadway – Mr. McIlvaine said that the Pride Alliance banners do not represent the feelings of the entire population or even most of the population of the residents. He expressed that to him, the banners are not okay, that they represent a lifestyle just as Christianity does, and that they do not belong hanging from public property. He said they are not a way of showing caring to others in the community.

Patrick Rumaker, 41 Simpson Avenue – Mr. Rumaker stated that he is proud of both his identities, that of a Christian and that of a Gay man.

Motion to close public portion: Weng
Time: 8:00 p.m.

Second: Rudley

Adjournment

Motion: Weng
Time: 8:00 p.m.

Second: Rudley

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith O’Donnell
Borough Clerk/Administrator