

BOROUGH OF PITMAN  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
MAY 24, 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 Razzo: 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: 7:01 p.m.

Second: Rudley

**Cannabis Legalization**

Mayor Razzo stated that on May 17, 2021, an open discussion meeting was held in the Conference Room of Borough Hall to discuss the recent Legislation passed concerning recreational use of cannabis. He said that the meeting provided few answers and many new questions for the attendees. The consensus of the attendees is that the State of New Jersey must provide some guidance for licensure and guidelines for the operation of dispensaries before the Borough can make an educated decision on whether to issue licenses within the Borough. Realizing that many of the residents that came to the meeting did so with the idea of getting some answers, Mayor Razzo said that the group will meet again after Memorial Day.

Mayor Razzo also stated that the State Cannabis Commission meets again on June 1, 2021, and he wondered if questions could be submitted to the Commission prior to the meeting for discussion at that time.

Borough Solicitor Krachun said that the Borough has the option to opt out of the program initially with the understanding that the decision can be revisited later and the Borough would be permitted to opt back in and participate in the program. Mr. Krachun also said that he has spoken to the Solicitor for the Combined Planning and Zoning Board and has been told that should the Borough decide to participate in the future, an amendment to the Borough's Master Plan will be needed.

**Overnight Parking**

Mayor Razzo stated that the discussion on the overnight parking ban on Borough streets will be tabled until the June 14, 2021, meeting when Pitman Police Department Chief Daniel McAteer is in attendance.

**Relief for High Sewer Bill due to Broken Pipe**

Council President Blass said that the Borough was contacted by the owner of Block 40 Lot 13, known as 223 West Avenue, about a broken pipe in the basement of the house causing flooding and consequently a

large water and sewer bill. The homeowner provided photos of the basement and subsequent repairs to the water pipe. The Data Logger Report generated by the Borough's Water and Sewer Department indicates that a continuous flow of water, upwards of 220 gallons per hour, went through the meter at the unoccupied property from January 31, 2021, through February 22, 2021. Borough Council agreed to issue a \$1,543.96 credit to the sewer portion of the bill since the water from the broken pipe went out of the basement through the dirt floor and not through the sewer system.

Resolution No. 77, 2021 was added to the Formal Meeting Agenda authorizing a credit to the first quarter 2021 sewer bill for Block 40 Lot 13, known as 223 West Avenue, in the amount of \$1,543.96.

**Backyard Chicken Pilot Program Ordinance Review**

Councilman Fitzpatrick reviewed the amendments to the Backyard Chicken Pilot Program Ordinance with members of Council. It will be introduced as Ordinance No. 4, 2021 at the Formal Meeting following this Work Session Meeting.

**Miscellaneous**

Borough Clerk O'Donnell distributed copies of Ordinance No. 26, 2011 which provides for the implementation of a five year tax exemption and abatement program in the Borough. This Ordinance has a Sunset Provision that requires the ordinance to be readopted by the Mayor and Council in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:21-4. The readoption must take place in the tenth year after the final adoption date of September 26, 2011. Council was asked to review the ordinance for any other amendments to be proposed at the time of readoption.

Motion to close discussion: Blass  
Time: 7:24 p.m.

Second: Rudley

**Public Portion**

Motion to open to the public: Weng  
Time: 7:24 p.m.

Second: James

**Noah Burrows, 232 Lake Avenue** – Mr. Burrows said that he was hoping for more than ten licenses to be issued to residents who are interested in keeping backyard chickens. He also asked if Council would consider a waiver for the residents that are currently housing chickens illegally.

Councilman Weng said the ten licenses is a “soft amount” with Council having the authority to grant additional licenses. Councilwoman Rudley asked if the existing illegal chicken populations would be “grandfathered in”, with Councilman Fitzpatrick saying that the answer should be no to the idea of grandfathering in the illegally housed chickens in the Borough.

Mayor Razze stated that Council must be sensitive to the residents who are against the ordinance.

Councilman Fitzpatrick said that the members of the Combined Planning and Zoning Board hold a very conservative view regarding the program and would like to see the duration of the Pilot Program held to two years initially.

Councilwoman Rudley said that she is struggling with the idea of appointing individuals to the Chicken Advisory Board who have broken the existing ban on owning chickens.

**Kristen Socco, 728 Lambs Road** – Ms. Socco said that she understands Councilwoman Rudley's point on appointing non-compliant individuals to the Chicken Advisory Board but stressed the importance of

having “chicken people” on the Board who understand what is involved in raising chickens, and that would be people who have or have had chickens.

**Walt Madison, 152 West Avenue** – Mr. Madison volunteered to be a member of the Chicken Advisory Board saying he has had experience with raising chickens in the past.

**Jim Pierpont, 23 Crafton Avenue** – Mr. Pierpont said that on a recent visit to Evanston Illinois, he visited a recreational marijuana dispensary. He recounted his experience and the protocols that are in place for customers interested in purchasing marijuana for recreational use. He also mentioned that on an \$84.00 purchase, \$41.00 in state, county, and local taxes were added to his total. Mr. Pierpont said that it would be to the advantage of the Borough for Council to meet the State’s deadline to investigate the potential revenue for the Borough to have licensed dispensaries. He suggested that this revenue could be used to balance the municipal budget instead of using surplus funds as has been done over the past few years. Mr. Pierpont also stated that these dispensaries would also bring employment opportunities to the Borough.

Mayor Razze said that a recent article in the New York Times referred to the supply issue in this area and suggested that the State Commission may decide to put licenses in blighted areas to provide funds to rejuvenate these areas.

Councilwoman Rudley said that she does not feel the Borough needs to rush in on deciding at this time.

Motion to close public portion: Weng  
Time: 7:45 p.m.

Second: James

**Adjournment**

Motion: Blass  
Time: 7:45 p.m.

Second: Mazzola

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith O’Donnell  
Borough Clerk/Administrator