

BOROUGH OF PITMAN
WORK SESSION MINUTES
NOVEMBER 22, 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: 7:00 p.m.

Second: Rudley

New Mantua Joint Municipal Court Shared Service Agreement

Borough Clerk O'Donnell explained to Council that the Mantua Joint Municipal Court, of which Pitman is a member, will be adding two new municipalities to the Agreement between the Township of Mantua, the Borough of Pitman, the Borough of Woodbury Heights, and the Borough of Wenonah. The two additional courts are the Township of West Deptford and the Borough of National Park. It is asked by the Court that the Shared Service Agreement be amended by resolution and the new Agreement signed and returned before the end of 2021. The addition of the two courts will result in a decrease in Pitman's annual payment by \$1,000.00. The new payment will be \$131,000.00 annually.

Action will be taken on the proposed amendment by resolution at the December 13, 2021, regular meeting of Mayor and Council.

Ordinance Creating Mantua Creek Conservation Area

Councilwoman James proposed an ordinance to amend Chapter 16, entitled "Parks and Recreation Areas" of the Code of the Borough of Pitman to create the Mantua Creek Conservation Area. The area to be designated is currently owned by the Borough of Pitman and includes Block 141 Lot 5, Block 140 Lots 2,14,15, and 16 on the official tax map of the Borough. The area shall remain an unimproved area and be conserved in its natural state. An ordinance creating the Mantua Creek Conservation Area will be introduced at the December 13, 2021, regular meeting of the Mayor and Council.

Proposed Pitman Day of Service, Monday, January 17, 2022

Councilwoman James has proposed Monday, January 17, 2022, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, to be a day of service for Mayor and Council to participate in voluntary community based service projects. Members of Council agreed with Councilwoman James and Mayor Razze suggested that if the January event is successful, another day of service could be planned for Patriot's Day, September 11.

Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 12, 2016 – Establishing a Senior Outreach Committee

Councilwoman Rudley proposed amending Ordinance No. 12, 2016, which established the Senior Outreach Committee. The changes would raise the number of appointed members from seven to eleven, with eight members being residents of Pitman. Also proposed would be to lower the age of the members from age 60 to age 55. The term of appointment of each member will be a three year term. The amending ordinance will be Introduced at the December 13, 2021, meeting of Mayor and Council.

Salary Increase for Non-Contractual Employees

Councilman Mazzola and Borough Clerk O'Donnell discussed the percentage increase to be given to the non-contractual employees of the Borough. Percentage increases negotiated for the contractual employees covered by three unions and the recent incremental increases in the New Jersey minimum wage hourly rate were reviewed. Councilman Mazzola said that he supported a three percent salary increase for 2021 for all non-contractual employees of the Borough, retroactive to January 1, 2021. Resolution No. 175, 2021 is on the Formal Meeting Agenda for Council consideration this evening. Councilman Mazzola said that he will introduce the Resolution proposing a three percent salary increase based on Council discussion at this meeting.

Miscellaneous

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Councilwoman James cited the success of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force which was created last year to research and provide feedback to Council on ways to create a more diverse and inclusive Pitman for all residents and visitors. She said that the insightful feedback and suggestions presented to Council in June and July of this year led her to believe that there is room for the creation of a standing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee which would be tasked to continue the mission of the Task Force and review and potentially implement some or all of the suggestions found in the report submitted to Council by the Task Force.

Councilwoman James proposed a committee comprised of at least eight members serving staggered three year terms. The language of the proposed ordinance was also discussed and the suggestion to create an application for individuals interested in becoming a member of the committee was also discussed and agreed on. Appointments of members would be made with the approval of Council.

An ordinance creating the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will be Introduced at the regular meeting of Mayor and Council scheduled for December 13, 2021.

Pitman Youth Council

Council President Blass said that the deadline for applications from Pitman Middle and High School students to serve on the Borough's newly formed Youth Council has passed. He suggested that all personal information on each application be redacted by the Borough Clerk and the redacted applications then be distributed to Council members. Council would then review each application and rank them beginning with number one as being their first choice. The Clerk would then tally the rankings and the top seven members would be chosen to serve on Youth Council. Alternates may also be chosen to serve in the event of an absence or resignation of a member.

There will be discussion at the Work Session meeting of December 13, 2021, and the individuals to be appointed will be decided at that time.

Motion to close discussion: Blass

Second: Rudley

Time: 7:40 p.m.

Public Portion

Motion to open to the public: Weng

Second: James

Time: 7:40 p.m.

Scott McIlvaine, 818 S. Broadway – Mr. McIlvaine stated that the formation of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is happening very quickly. He said that the idea of the formation should be discussed with the community as a whole.

Councilwoman James said that the committee will not have a political focus, it will focus on the report submitted by the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion with the idea of making the Borough more inclusive. She said that it would not be a collaboration with the Pitman School district; it will address issues within the Borough.

Mr. McIlvaine said that to him the issues in the report do not exist and that the committee brought in ideas with no proof that the problems referred to actually exist. Mr. McIlvaine asked who could be appointed to the Committee.

Councilwoman James said that it is not designed to be a teaching committee, and that anyone can apply.

Mr. McIlvaine said that he would like to share his views as a member of the committee and would like to have the ideas brought out to the community more than they have been.

Beth McIlvaine, 818 S. Broadway – Ms. McIlvaine asked why there seems to be a rush to establish and appoint members to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee before the end of the year. Ms. McIlvaine also asked why the Committee would make suggestions to the Pitman Board of Education?

Councilwoman James said that the Committee would start when other Borough committees start, with the appointment of members at the Reorganization Meeting of Borough Council in January. She also explained the purpose and differences between the Task Force and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. She explained that the Committee will not be making suggestions to the Pitman Board of Education.

Mayor Razzo stated that the Committee would seek equal input from all of the participating members, where the Task Force was composed of members from many different entities divided into groups with each group having been given a specific department, idea, or standard to investigate, gather information, and return their findings to the Borough.

Jason James, 91 Circle Avenue – Mr. James asked how the Task Force Report would be utilized by the Committee, and wondered if having a committee to study Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will help lessen the Borough's liability with matters pertaining to reports of discrimination.

Frank Stech, 755 N. Broadway – Mr. Stech asked why the rush to appoint a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and why invite non-Pitman residents to serve on the committee. Mr. Stech also said that the wording of the Ordinance establishing the Committee makes it sound like there is a problem already in the Borough, and that it does not read like an ordinary ordinance that establishes a Committee.

Kara Knauss, 222 Embury Avenue – Ms. Knauss pointed out that many of the business owners in the Borough do not live in Pitman. For that reason, she is in favor of having non-residents as members of the Committee to allow for the appointment of some of these business owners.

Motion to close public portion: Weng
Time: 7:58 p.m.

Second: James

Adjournment

Motion: Blass
Time: 7:58 p.m.

Second: Rudley

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith O'Donnell
Borough Clerk/Administrator