

BOROUGH OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS

MINUTES

April 25, 2006

A Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights was held on Tuesday, April 25, 2006 at 8:05 p.m. at Borough Hall, 320 Boulevard, Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey.

Borough Clerk Rose Marie Sees stated that the meeting complied with the Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting having been made to all members of the Council by personal service on January 3, 2006 and transmitted to The Observer, The Record and The Herald News on January 3, 2006.

ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Ronald R. Jones, Councilwoman Maryetta Saccomano, Councilwoman Carol J. Skiba, Councilman Leonard Introna, Councilman Thomas E. Meli, Councilman Ronald F. Kistner, Councilman Justin A. DiPisa

Absent: None

SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Jones led in the Salute to the Flag and Pledge of Allegiance.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CLERK:

On a motion by Councilwoman Saccomano to appoint CFO/Administrator Michael Kronyak as Acting Borough Clerk for this meeting, seconded by Councilwoman Skiba, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Appointment was approved.

INVOCATION: Deacon Vincent DeFedele, Corpus Christi R.C. Church

PROCLAMATION:

A Proclamation requested by the Elks naming the first week in May as Youth Week:

WHEREAS, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has designated the fourth week in May, as Youth Week to honor America's Junior Citizens for their accomplishments, and to give fitting recognition of their services to Community, State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Hasbrouck Heights B.P.O. Elks Lodge No. 1962 will sponsor an observance during that week in tribute to the Junior Citizens of this Community; and

PROCLAMATION (cont'd):

WHEREAS, no event could be more deserving of our support and participation than one dedicated to these young people who represent the nation's greatest resource, and who in the years ahead will assume the responsibility for the advancement of our free society; and

WHEREAS, our Youth need the guidance, inspiration and encouragement which we alone can give in order to help develop those qualities of character essential for future leadership; and go forth to serve America; and,

WHEREAS, to achieve this worthy objective we should demonstrate our partnership with Youth, our understanding of their hopes and aspirations and a sincere willingness to help prepare them in every way for the responsibilities and opportunities of citizenship;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim the first week in May as Youth Week, and urge all departments of government, civic, fraternal and patriotic groups, and our citizens generally, to participate wholeheartedly in its observance.

Dated: April 25, 2006

*/s/Mayor Ronald R. Jones
and Members of the Council*

Joyce Powell, representative of the Hasbrouck Heights Elks Lodge #1962 noted that although Youth Week will be held in the third week of the month, the Elks Organization requested the first week be proclaimed. She also noted that this past Saturday, firefighters Richard Giarratana and former Fire Chief Robert Thomasey were honored by this organization.

COMMUNICATIONS: 1) Letter of Resignation from the Board of Health from John Baratta

Councilwoman Skiba questioned why a letter from former Assemblyman Robert Burns was not listed on Communications. She was told this would be addressed under Personnel.

On a motion by Councilman DiPisa, seconded by Councilwoman Meli, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Correspondence was accepted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: (February 28, 2006 Regular Meeting and Closed Session)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (cont'd):

On a motion by Councilman DiPisa, seconded by Councilwoman Skiba, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Minutes were approved.

Residents of Baldwin Avenue requesting closing of one end of street and creating a cul-de-sac at the east end of Baldwin Avenue at the Rt. 17 highway exit ramp for Terrace Avenue (48 signatures)

The Borough Attorney requested this Petition be referred to the Borough Attorney, Borough Engineer, Police Chief and Administrator for review. Councilwoman Skiba referred to a recent request for a street light at the intersection of Baldwin and Collins Avenue.

On a motion by Councilwoman Saccomano, seconded by Councilman DiPisa, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Petition with Borough Attorney's request was accepted.

BE IT RESOLVED that the claims and accounts amounting to \$354,624.01 specified in the schedule hereto annexed, having been examined and approved by the Finance Commissioner, or his Deputy, be paid and that warrants be issued therefore.

Thomas E. Meli
Commissioner of Finance

Councilwoman Skiba questioned why a substitute Judge was needed. She was told that certain cases are reserved and go onto a separate calendar which are heard by a substitute Judge. The fees paid are per session, which should not result in additional cost. She questioned what type of cases and was told direct complaints under the Municipal ordinances to avoid any appearance of a conflict between the Judge and anyone else. Also, anything that the present Judge handled when serving as prosecutor or of a personal nature, must be turned over to another Judge. It was also noted that in these instances, the Judge does not receive payment.

On a motion by Councilman Meli, seconded by Councilman Kistner, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Resolution was adopted.

REPORTS:

HEALTH AND PARKS: Under Health, Commissioner DiPisa reported issues addressed at the Board of Health monthly meeting included food establishments with repeated violations for a period of years should be re-evaluated as a separate category and

HEALTH AND PARKS (cont'd):

made known to the governing body. He urged residents to attend the monthly meetings held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. The second Senior Housing Forum was held on April 17. He presented a copy of the results and ideas. The Community Awareness Access to All Committee is continuing its work on the handicap facilities and ramp at Woodland Park as well as plans to change the curbing at the Veterans Memorial on Terrace Avenue. The CD grant of \$116,800 was received for additional funding for Woodland Park. Under Parks, Commissioner DiPisa reported the 1,000 decorative bricks which comprised the decorative wall behind the Commerce Bank construction project were given to the DPW to be used throughout the parks.

POLICE AND RECREATION: Under Police, Commissioner Kistner reported the Citizens Academy has begun and well attended. The Bicycle Marathon is scheduled for Memorial weekend, with Bill Kundert a large contributor. The Battle of the Bands was held with five bands participating, three from other towns with over 250 children attending. These bands will play at the Bicycle Marathon. The Police Department is raising funds for the Torch Run to support Special Olympics. Under Recreation, the Rec Center will have Movie Nights during May on Saturday nights. Sign ups for summer camp have begun with some great field trips planned.

FINANCE AND FIRE: Under Fire, Commissioner Meli reported the department is continuing to go out at least five times per day. A house fire on Longworth Avenue was quickly extinguished by the department, with no injuries. Training is ongoing for Ambulance Squad at Hackensack University Medical Center and the Fire Department with Port Authority. The Fire Department Inspection is scheduled for May 20 at 7 p.m. The Townwide Garage Sale is also planned for that day. Under Finance, Commissioner Meli read the following Finance Report: The current fund cash balance as of March 31, 2006 was \$594,767.37; on February 28, 2006 was \$3,471,635.56 which represents an decrease of \$2,876,868.19. The entire balance was invested and is earning 4.54%. Cash receipts for March totaled \$327,106.52 of which \$185,812.94 was for current taxes, \$15,028.49 was for Delinquent Taxes, \$6,457.84 was Grants and Aid and \$119,807.25 was miscellaneous revenues. Cash disbursements for March totaled \$3,203,974.71 of which \$1,473,969.42 was local school taxes, \$100,000.00 was interfund transfers, \$566,402.81 was salaries, \$298,907.07 was debt service and \$764,695.41 was for other expenses.

STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2006 BUDGET:

Finance Commissioner Meli read the following statement:

“Tonight we will be having the public hearing on the 2006 Municipal Budget as introduced, but we will not be voting on or adopting it tonight.

STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2006 BUDGET (cont'd):

“The budget as introduced calls for a six point increase and the finance committee continues to review all aspects of the budget in an effort to make any possible modifications that would result in any tax savings.

“As mentioned when the budget was introduced on March 21, in light of the tax increase as proposed we have applied for Extraordinary Aid in the amount of \$650,000 to offset the increase, last year we received \$150,000 under this program. The application must be reviewed by the Department of Community Affairs and hopefully they will make their determination and awards within the next month or two. The budget cannot be adopted tonight because by doing so we would also be withdrawing our application for Extraordinary Aid.

“While we are waiting for the decision on Extraordinary Aid the Finance committee continues to review all appropriations for potential cuts as well as all revenue items in an effort to reduce the tax increase as proposed. Please keep in mind that the budget as introduced can be amended right up until the time of adoption.”

SANITATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES: Under Sanitation, Commissioner Introna reported the annual Recycling tonnage Grant Report was filed with the NJ DEP which consisted of 30 categories in which items are recycled. 2005 totals were 2,432 tons of residential items and 4,784 tons of commercial items totaling 7,216 tons. A public auction was held on April 5 at the DPW facility consisting of old police vehicles and bicycles which brought in \$6,745.00.

TRANSPORTATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES: Under Social Services, Councilwoman Skiba thanked the Boys Scouts and Mr. James Taranto who donated a vast amount of supplies to the Food Bank which they received from their Annual Food Drive throughout the Borough, and thanked the residents who donated to this drive. She thanked Alice and Louise Davenport who have been volunteers to the Food Bank from the onset who were resigning for personal reasons. She wished them well and hope to see them again in the near future. And thank you also to Corpus Christi Brown Bag Sunday and the First Reformed Church for their donations this past month. Under Transportation, she noted that on May 8 at 7:30 p.m. the Coalition and Public Safety Meeting will be held in Carlstadt. She attended the FAA Airspace Redesign meeting which she found very informative. Comments are being accepted.

STREETS AND LAND USE: Under Streets, Commissioner Saccomano reported the DPW repair of the “Park Terrace Apartments” sidewalk/apron project is being done remedying the problems of trucks causing ruts in the sidewalk apron along Terrace Avenue and Passaic Street. She continued the DPW is surveying stormwater outfall pipe that drain into Riser Ditch in compliance with the NJ DEP. PSE&G has been notified to replace the street lamp post and light at Franklin and Boulevard. Under Land Use, she

STREETS AND LAND USE (cont'd):

reported 12 Property Maintenance compliants, two warnings of trash out on curbs too early, eight violations of construction signs, four complaints over permits not displayed during construction which were rectified. Several complaints required advice of the Borough Attorney and turned over to the Police Department. Two certified letters were sent to residents regarding the condition of their homes.

REPORT OF MAYOR:

Mayor Jones commended the DPW with regard to Woodland Park and clean up at the Route 46 area and bridges. Acting DPW Supt. Spindler had sent letters to the NJ DOT regarding cleanup of its areas in town. He was also commended with starting the handicap accessible walkway to the Veterans Memorial. He and other members of the Council had attended the FAA meeting as well. He noted that the school budget was voted down, and must now be referred to the Finance Committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

Councilwoman Skiba had contacted Mr. Burgis who told her he had sent a letter on the 3rd Tier COAH obligations. She requested a copy.

Councilman Introna asked when copies of the school budget would be received, and was told copies were available in the caucus room.

APPOINTMENTS: Michael Cribben to Fire Department Engine One
John Baratta to Recreation Advisory Board

On a motion by Councilman Meli, seconded by Councilwoman Skiba, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Appointments were approved.

RESIGNATIONS: John Baratta from the Board of Health
Tony McCann from Recreation Advisory Board

On a motion by Councilman Kistner, seconded by Councilman Meli, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Resignations were approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

CONSENT AGENDA: None

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2006 BUDGET:

Finance Commissioner Tom Meli read a letter he had placed in the Letters to the Editor of The Observer on April 27, 2006 as follows:

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2006 BUDGET (cont'd):

"I was very disappointed to see in a recent Observer a resident raise an issue regarding the increases incurred by our non-union employees, that is basically the people who work in our Borough Hall and the various offices throughout the Borough.

"Let me start by saying there is no one more than myself who wants to see property taxes brought under control. I am a property owner in town and certainly feel the pain of these tax increases as much as anyone else does. I have been on the Council for two years and in my third year, this one, I have been given the job of Finance Commissioner. I take all responsibilities the Borough gives me very seriously and have been working diligently with Michael Kronyak on this year's budget. I have 18 years experience doing budgets in the private sector, having been Regional Vice President of Operations for A&S department stores and for the last 10 years I have been running over \$300 million in private assets for private individuals. I am well aware of how hard people work for their money and how everyone wants to keep as much as they make. I can also make the statement that doing private sector budgets compared to Government budgets is like comparing apples to oranges. Although the basic concepts are the same, reduce expenses or increase revenues, the rules and procedures for accomplishing these aims are completely different.

"I state the above just to let people know I may have some idea of what I am talking about.

"This article to begin with is riddled with inaccuracies, first to compare us to the Borough of Wood-Ridge is absurd. We are in fact NOT the same size as Wood-Ridge, our population is almost 12,000, Wood-Ridge is 7,500. With the increase the writer of the article uses, we have a 52% higher population, but this part of our budget is only 39% higher than Wood-Ridge. In addition our budget includes a full-time ambulance attendant and we went from a part-time to a full-time construction official. Maybe the writer of this article would like to volunteer for our ambulance squad to help the cause. The construction official going to full time was an overwhelming need supported by the people of this Borough to get a handle on the construction going on in this town. This position more than pays for itself in construction fee increases being realized as a result of expanding this position. In spite of these two positions, we still run more efficiently than the Borough of Wood-Ridge. Our Moody's rating is A2, Wood-Ridge is A3. The biggest credit rating agency in the world rates us higher than Wood-Ridge. I will not even mention that in the daytime the population of our Borough balloons to approximately 25,000+ because of the two major hotels and the filling of the office complexes in our Borough. We also have responsibilities to Teterboro which puts an extra burden on some of our office personnel. Let me also say, the two jobs I mentioned above were put on public introduction, then public hearing and voted on UNANIMOUSLY by the Council, both Republicans and Democrats.

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2006 BUDGET (cont'd):

“This leads me to the insinuation that the increases for all the employees were snuck by somehow deviously past under the noses of the people of Hasbrouck Heights – this is absurd and frankly an insult to me and the other members of the governing body. I certainly will never be a part of ‘sneaking’ anything by. These ordinances were introduced in December of 2005 and public hearings were held. The writer of the article never showed up!!! They then were passed.

“There is so much more I can say. But let me just state the Human side of this. Think of the people this person is ATTACKING, these are the non-union employees in our Borough Hall offices. They are the lowest paid people in our Borough, take a look at the ordinance and you will see that the salaries are extremely reasonable, in line and competitive. Also, most of these people have been with the Borough for many years. It is also not unusual to give the non-union employee the same increase as the union environment. I know I did it in the private sector. These people get no overtime and work hours well beyond the ‘OFFICIAL HOURS’. When you see a clerk from whatever department at a meeting at night they are not being paid!!! When you see an employee hosting or running a community event they are not being paid!!! When an emergency occurs and you see them respond to help they are not being paid!!! The writer of this article in my opinion should get her facts straight and take her focus off of these hard-working dedicated people!!!

“Lastly, I can tell you as finance commissioner, myself and Mr. Kronyak are looking at all options to reduce the budget, nothing is off the table. But anything presented will be done in a fiscally-responsible manner. It will also take in consideration our current employees in all areas and the dedication they have given this Borough. There is a proper way to do things and changes take time.

“If anyone has any questions on the budget or any ideas, please contact me through Borough Hall. I will respond to any ideas or concerns.”

MISCELLANEOUS FROM PUBLIC ON 2006 BUDGET:

Patricia Godfrey, 215 Boulevard, she said the piece in The Observer that Mr. Meli was referring to was a letter, not an article.

Nancy Wells, 42 Central Avenue, she said she wrote the letter, and that she had gone to Borough Hall to get a dog tag, and also decided to get a copy of the budget, that she was attacked, she had gone to Wood-Ridge and Lodi to get the facts comparing salaries, that she wasn't questioning anyone's salary, but a 4% increase is a lot of money. She asked for fairness and why are medical benefits provided as well. She questioned why raises were given out on an unapproved budget. Mr. Kronyak said you can give out raises, and as two union contracts were put in force in 2005, the general employees salary ordinance was also done to avoid retroactive checks.

MISCELLANEOUS FROM PUBLIC ON 2006 BUDGET:

Ed Cheery, 20 Terrace Avenue, a new resident was concerned about the 12% increase in taxes, also a state employee and an electrician, received no raises for two years and his co-payment in prescriptions went up. He gave some examples of Passaic County increases and some issues he was concerned with in the State of New Jersey and agreed that 4% was high. Mayor Jones responded, noting that there are mandatory expenses from the State and County level, that Hasbrouck Heights raises and tax rate is probably lower than most neighboring communities. Mr. Cheery also noted the arbitration laws have increased taxes, but was in government for the security and benefits. Mayor Jones also noted some adjustment including the elimination of the social services position, with duties conducted by volunteers and the borough clerk.

Gary Wells, 42 Central Avenue, received a 2% raise in his employ, agreed 4% is too high and that medical benefits should be examined.

Rose Heck, 501 Collins Avenue, questioned if the budget is still being examined and if discretionary aid was being applied for, and was told yes, that suggestions are always taken and looked at by the Finance Committee.

Martin Saccomano, 57 Ottawa Avenue, with escalating costs, asked Councilwoman Saccomano what she thought. She agreed the budget should be reduced, but services should not be cut and would do her share of keeping it in line. He questioned the administrator on the coffee room in the library and the administrator thought it was not being offered.

Mayor Jones noted some sharing of services and programs instituted at no expense to borough.

Mr. Kronyak said to be fiscally responsible is not cutting the budget and reduce taxes, it is the most efficient government but still providing current services.

Mr. Saccomano referred to a comment of cutting the budget by 2%. Mr. Kronyak explained that it was not that easy, and explained the process.

Steven Altobelli, 67 Hamilton Avenue, questioned the renovation of the Athletic Field and if this was in the budget. Mr. Kronyak explained that would be in the capital budget, that in this instance it is funded by the sale of the property. If there is an increase in the costs of the project, the difference is either raised by taxpayers, you reduce the scope of the job, or apply for grants, and in this case corporate sponsors are being contacted.

John Fitzin, 234 Columbus Avenue, regarding raises, thought it unfair to Mr. Kronyak and other employees who put in hours of overtime not paid for, and that 4% is not bad.

MISCELLANEOUS FROM PUBLIC ON 2006 BUDGET:

John Baratta, 269 Walter Avenue, understands everyone's frustration, that the real problem is with the State and asked that the council look at health benefits.

Martin Saccomano, 57 Ottawa Avenue, regarding the refreshment room in the Library, was surprised and was told more information would be forthcoming.

There being no one else wishing to speak on the Budget, the public hearing was closed.

RESOLUTIONS: 73. Canceling Added Assessment for 2005 for Block 45, Lot 31.02

74. Authorizing Award of Radio Maintenance Contract

On a motion by Councilwoman Saccomano, seconded by Councilman Meli, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Resolutions were approved (Copies attached).

ORDINANCE(S) ON INTRODUCTION:

ORDINANCE NO. 2132:

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance entitled: **"AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 275 ENTITLED "ZONING" OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS SO AS TO DESIGNATE THAT PORTION OF THE BOROUGH OWNED LOT 1.05 IN BLOCK 168.01 WHICH IS PROPOSED TO BE SOLD AT PUBLIC AUCTION AS BEING WITHIN THE R-2 ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT"** was introduced this date be and the same is hereby passed on first reading and the Borough Clerk be directed to advertise notice of public hearing on said Ordinance to be held at the regular meeting of the Borough Council on May 9, 2006.

ORDINANCE NO. 2133:

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance entitled: **"AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING CERTAIN BARRIER FREE IMPROVEMENTS TO WOODLAND PARK IN THE BOROUGH OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS INCLUDING NEW RESTROOMS, A BARRIER FREE ACCESS RAMP AND APPURTENANCES THERETO AND TO APPROPRIATE THE TOTAL SUM OF \$170,000.00 CONSISTING OF \$53,200.00 FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND AND \$116,800.00 PROVIDED BY A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT"** was introduced this date be and the same is hereby passed on first reading and the Borough Clerk be directed to advertise notice of public hearing on said Ordinance to be held at the regular meeting of the Borough Council on May 9, 2006.

ORDINANCE(S) ON INTRODUCTION (cont'd):

On a motion by Councilman DiPisa, seconded by Councilman Meli, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Ordinances on Introduction were approved.

ORDINANCE(S) ON PUBLIC HEARING:

Mayor Jones opened the Public Hearing on Ordinances No. 2127, 2130 and 2131. There being no one wishing to speak, the Public Hearing was closed.

ORDINANCE NO. 2127:

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance entitled: **“AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14) CALENDAR YEAR 2006”** be now passed on second and final reading and the Borough Clerk be and is hereby authorized and directed to publish said Ordinance, same to be published in The Observer, a newspaper circulating and published in the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights.

ORDINANCE NO. 2130:

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance entitled: **“AN ORDINANCE SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER 236 ENTITLED “STREETS AND SIDEWALKS” OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS SO AS TO FURTHER INCLUDE PROVISIONS THEREIN DEALING WITH REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF ANY SIDEWALKS FOUND TO BE DANGEROUS”** be now passed on second and final reading and the Borough Clerk be and is hereby authorized and directed to publish said Ordinance, same to be published in The Observer, a newspaper circulating and published in the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights.

ORDINANCE NO. 2131:

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance entitled: **“AN ORDINANCE PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12-14 & 15 TO AUTHORIZE THE BOROUGH OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS TO ENTER INTO A LEASE MODIFICATION AND EXTENSION AGREEMENT WITH THE HASBROUCK HEIGHTS SWIM CLUB, INC., A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY”** be now passed on second and final reading and the Borough Clerk be and is hereby authorized and directed to publish said Ordinance, same to be published in The Observer, a newspaper circulating and published in the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights.

On a motion by Councilwoman Kistner, seconded by Councilman Meli, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Ordinances on Public Hearing were approved.

MISCELLANEOUS FROM PUBLIC:

Janet Kretzdorn, 393 Church Street, questioned if the Swim Club was open to the public and as it is a private club, she thought it was exclusionary.

Mona McCorrey, 304 Division Avenue, questioned if the Swim Club could be turned into a municipal pool.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to be conducted by the Mayor and Council, the public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 10:31 p.m.

RESOLUTION TO CLOSE: No. 75. Personnel

On a motion by Councilwoman Saccomano, seconded by Councilman Introna, and unanimously carried, the foregoing Resolution to Close was approved.

I, ROSE MARIE SEES, Borough Clerk of the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights, do hereby certify that the foregoing Minutes are to the best of my knowledge a true account of the Regular Meeting held on April 25, 2006.

Rose Marie Sees, RMC
Borough Clerk