

MINUTES – TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2021

FOREST CITY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

President Cost called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call taken: Present – President Nick Cost, V.P. Bernie Scalzo, Council Members Chris DeGonzague, Robert Lesjack, Mayor Ginton, Solicitor McAndrew & Secretary/Treas. Vannan, Arriving late: Councilwomen Matarese & Bean. Councilwoman Tracey Lazier was unavailable.

PUBLIC COMMENT (*specific to agenda items*)

President Cost opened the floor for public comment. Nothing offered.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

ADMINISTRATION: (Joann Matarese)

Councilman DeGonzague motioned to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from June 7. Councilman Scalzo seconded. All replied aye, motion carried. Councilman DeGonzague motioned to approve the June 2021 Treasurer's Reports and approve all disbursements for June 2021. Councilman Scalzo seconded. Roll call vote taken - 4 to 0 in favor, motion carried. Total disbursements in the amount of \$122,581.74 were approved.

Councilwomen Matarese and Bean arrived following these actions.

PUBLIC WORKS: (President Cost)

The Public Works reports for June 2021 reported recycling donations for May/June were \$411. Scrap metal netted \$721 at Franceski's Scrap Yard. Bob & Wally attended a 5-year re-certification class for the parking meter calibration/maintenance. Graduation banners put up on Main Street.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Robert Lesjack)

Councilman Lesjack reported that work on the roof would begin soon. He also reported that he and Solicitor McAndrew are working on the 3rd floor event/rental agreement.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (Amy Bean)

Main Street coordinator, Paul Daugevelo reported that recent events were a success. Despite the threat of rain, the light parade went off as planned. The 125th Anniversary of F.C. Police also was well-received. Thank you to the Historical Society and Peggy Brager for their contributions to the celebration.

Daugevelo also said that he and Councilwoman Bean continue to work with Eastwick on the "Outdoor Towns" campaign. Eastwick's June report is on the Borough website "Outdoor Towns" page at www.forestcityborough.com.

Councilwoman Bean congratulated and thanked everyone who participated in the Main Street Light Parade. She shared an idea about using some of the COVID money to help local Main Street businesses upgrade their storefronts.

Councilwoman Bean brought up the concerns expressed at the June meeting about the June Block Party. She stated that she and Paul Daugevelo reached out to all the business owners and the event was open to anyone who wanted to participate. The empty lot was chosen for its off-street location and so Main Street closure permit would not be needed. Alternate locations will be considered for future events.

PARKS & RECREATION: (Tracey Lazier)

Deanna Flood reported that 75 vendors are expected for the July Vendor Market, adding that the June Market was very successful. President Cost will be running the kitchen since she & Kathy will not be available that day. The fishing derby and Chicken BBQ are planned for August 1st. BBQ tickets are selling quickly, will probably be a sell-out.

The Reptile Show was a great success. An FOP Police Memorial is planned, but undecided yet whether it will be held at K.P. or on Main Street. Ms. Flood offered a list of issues at Kennedy Park that

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she felt Council needed to address. Repairs to the wall and grass at the Gazebo topped the list. Also, bathroom facility upgrades are desperately needed. Failure to unlock the bathrooms, remove garbage and the need for more police patrols. A request to consider hiring a part-time park attendant was offered. President Cost offered to discuss these issues further at the meeting with the Parks & Rec Board to follow.

CODE ENFORCEMENT/SAFETY & HEALTH: (C. DeGonzague/B. Scalzo)

Councilman Scalzo reported that he is working on getting a price to replace the metal stairs on upper Center Street. He is seeking a price from Pleasant Mt Welding and open to other suggestions. Councilman DeGonzague reminded residents to cut their grass and he reiterated the previous complaints about the park not getting unlocked and locked. This was always done by the officer on duty, but Mayor Ginton offered the defense, “Police just don’t have the time, they receive many calls and must respond to those calls, so sometimes just can’t get to the Park. Hiring a park ranger or safety officer may be needed.” Councilwoman Bean, Councilmen Scalzo and DeGonzague offered suggestions. Nothing was decided at this time. A meeting will be planned between the Park Board, President Cost, and Councilman DeGonzague to discuss possible solutions to the ongoing problems.

MAYOR’S REPORT: (Mayor Christopher Ginton)

June 2021 Police Report and the Vandling invoice for July patrols were distributed. Mayor Ginton said that he had a new hire but no information was available, so it will be revisited at the August meeting. Mayor Ginton continued, “I’m very proud of our officers and the nice presentation that was held commemorating the Forest City Police Department 125th Anniversary. Thank you to everyone who participated.”

SOLICITOR’S REPORT: (Melissa McAndrew, Esq.)

Solicitor McAndrew asked that a meeting with Park Board members and Council members be held following the regular meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a Non-Profit organization. Public is welcome to attend.

Solicitor McAndrew requested approval to cover the cost to participate in a PSAB training “2021 PA Municipal Legal Update on 8/4 & 8/5/21 at a cost of \$150, plus \$50 for CLE (continuing credits). Councilman DeGonzague offered a motion to approve the cost. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken, six in favor, none opposed. Ms. Vannan will complete registration and forward information to Solicitor McAndrew.

CORRESPONDENCE: (President Cost)

President Cost reported that a check for \$91,114.55 (1/2 of what the Borough will receive, the balance next year) was received from the state. Although the guidelines for its use have so far been vague, it’s expected that more information will be forthcoming.

Everyone received an invitation from the GFCBA for the July 24, 2021 “Mingle & Jingle” Summer Mixer. The cost is \$50 and it will be held at Camp Bluestone. Proceeds will benefit the Main Street Holiday Light Fund.

Susq. Co. Conservation District extended an invitation to their annual Free BBQ on 8/20/21 in Montrose starting at 4:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS or QUESTIONS: (President Cost)

President Cost opened the floor for comment:

Brian Fisher, 738 Hudson St, reported that his property is having drainage issues. The curbs need to be raised to divert storm water into the catch basin. President Cost asked how many feet, Brian responded about 30 ft. President Cost will have Bob & Wally meet him there to see what needs to be done. Mr. Fisher added, “Parks & Recreation are doing a great job, thank you”.

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Deanna Flood then took the floor and read from several sheets of complaints for problems that were reported two or three meetings ago and still not resolved. Starting with the ATV complaints, what has been done since April? Is there any progress on plans to issue permits for crossing common areas as previously discussed? Councilwoman Bean said she would contact the local ATV community for more information. Ms. Flood said it should be advertised so a public meeting could be held so all would be heard. Ms. Flood then commented on the beach area at Kennedy Park and offered thanks to the Winan family for their donation for water testing, but also the many others who have offered their time and money to get the beach ready for swimmers. This has been a community effort. Ms. Flood then went on to report on the following: deplorable conditions of the bathrooms, work around the flag pole area that was never completed, conditions at the damn area that is overflowing. These are just some of the repairs that need to be done. Impact fees should be used for these things, the Park Board are volunteers. Repairs and maintenance fall under the borough employees. Work is also needed at the Center Street green space. Benches have been ordered. President Cost said, “The steps were mentioned earlier by Councilman Scalzo, we’re working on it, no benches are to be put up there until the safety of residents is insured with the replacement of the stairs.” Councilman Lesjack noted that the Franceski family had donated the gazebo at the Center Street space and should be contacted before any decision is made to remove the gazebo if it can’t be restored. Brett Pelick added concerns about the police, stating that he has witnessed the car parked in the Vision 2000 area, sitting in the dark and asked why they can sit down there, but don’t have time to patrol the park.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: (President Cost)

The next Council Meeting will be held on Monday August 2, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilwoman Matarese, the motion carried with all in favor. The meeting ended at 7:19 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Session – 7:20 p.m.

The meeting was informal. Minutes were not kept. The following is a brief synopsis of what was presented by Solicitor McAndrew.

Solicitor McAndrew stated that she could not represent the Parks & Rec Board in their efforts to form a Non-profit group. It would be a “conflict of interest” if something happened between the Borough Council & the Board as she represents the Borough, The Board would have to lease the park from the Borough for their events and follow the rules for a Non-Profit group holding an event in the park that requires providing proof of insurance and covering the cost of or hiring security. She thought that they did not understand the complexity and expense the group would be facing entering into this kind of commitment. To begin with, each person listed on the application could be held personally responsible for any liability issues that occur during their events. The Board would need to have an attorney, an auditor, insurance, etc. The money raised so far would stay with the borough in the parks account and could be used for improvements at the park, but not for the costs related to the development of a Non-Profit Organization. Ms. Flood expressed her dissatisfaction with the information being shared and insisted she was told to go after Non-Profit status by President Cost. President Cost defended himself saying he had not told her to do it, he had just said to “go for it” when Ms. Flood said that was the group’s plan. President Cost added that he didn’t care what they did, he just agreed that she could and felt it would be easier for the Borough. Things got heated and Ms. Flood stood up, announced she was through with it, left her paperwork on the table with the P&R secretary, Michele Miller, and angrily left the meeting. Members from P&R that were present agreed that it was a lot more than they realized and thanked her for her time. They would not pursue it further at this time.