

REGULAR MEETING

CITY COUNCIL

APRIL 8, 2014

7:30 PM

The Regular Meeting of the Long Branch City Council was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 344 Broadway, Long Branch, New Jersey.

Present: John Pallone, Council President; Mary Jane Celli, Council Vice-President; Joy Bastelli, Councilwoman; Kathleen Billings, Councilwoman; Michael Sirianni, Councilman

Others Present: Mayor Adam Schneider; Barry Capp, City Attorneys' office; Kathy L. Schmelz, City Clerk

Absent: Howard Woolley, Business Administrator; James G. Aaron, City Attorney; Ronald Mehlhorn, Finance Director

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and certification was read into the record.

PRESENTATIONS:

None

HEARINGS:

None

READING AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

March 25, 2014 - A motion was made by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilwoman Billings to approve the minutes of March 25, 2014 was carried out upon the following roll call vote: Ayes 5

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES

PUBLIC HEARING AND FINAL CONSIDERATION

#7-14 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 325-3C, ENTITLED "NO PARKING" OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF LONG BRANCH (MARSHALL COURT)

A motion by Councilman Sirianni to open the public hearing on said ordinance was seconded by Councilwoman Bastelli.

After ample time was given and no one responded, a motion by Councilman Sirianni to close the hearing was seconded by Councilwoman Bastelli.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Billings, seconded by Councilman Sirianni to adopt on third and final reading was carried out upon the following roll call vote: Ayes 5

#8-14 CALENDAR YEAR 2014 MODEL ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (NJSA 40A:4-45)

A motion by Councilman Sirianni to open the public hearing on said ordinance was seconded by Councilwoman Bastelli.

After ample time was given and no one responded, a motion by Councilman Sirianni to close the hearing was seconded by Councilwoman Celli.

A motion was made by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilwoman Billings to adopt on third and final reading was carried out upon the following roll call vote: Ayes 5

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION:

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

A motion was made by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilwoman Celli to open the public portion of this meeting and carried out upon the following vote: Ayes 5

Dennis Sherman – 510 Ocean Avenue – Save Ocean Avenue Committee

Stated he believes that the City has abandoned the oceanfront. He would like the City to address issues that are in need of concern. Went on to speak about broken pavement on the north end, holes in the road, handicapped ramp that is not in compliance, fencing and other issues.

The Mayor responded explaining the process of rebuilding the bluffs and boardwalk. Explained that it is a very difficult engineering operation and unlike any other town along the Jersey Shore. It's not flat and you just can't come in and build it and be done. Everyone has a right to know and nothing has been hidden.

Avery Grant – 405 Atlantic Avenue

Spoke regarding the boardwalk and the development of lower Broadway wherein the new developers would like public input.

Steve Silver – 2 Whitman Terrace

Spoke regarding the sand ramps and the steep steps getting onto the beach.

The Mayor directed Mr. Silver to Stan Dziuba to take a look at the pictures he had.

Greg Umberto – Chelsea Avenue

Spoke regarding funding sources and unpaid fines to the City.

The Mayor responded regarding collection of debts.

Sue Mainberger – Ocean Avenue

Spoke regarding the fencing and riding / walking paths and obstructions.

The Mayor explained that the fence is there for safety reasons.

Charlie Aria – Born and raised in Long Branch

Spoke regarding the boardwalk and the pleasure he got from walking on it every night.

The Mayor went over the FEMA process.

Diana Multare – 21 North Bath Avenue

Spoke regarding the beach and boardwalk. Stated that the expansion of the beaches is wonderful. Stated the City should think of some temporary improvements. Went on to speak about lower Broadway and the new developers.

Lori Genesco – Hampton Avenue

Spoke regarding how she fell on the boardwalk and had four stitches put in her mouth. The fencing that sticks out into the bike path is dangerous.

Bernard Gorcey – 36 Second Avenue

Spoke regarding DRA and how they want the publics' input and also spoke regarding the carousel.

Bill McLaughlin – 448 Ocean Avenue

Spoke regarding fencing, handicapped ramp, benches, bonding, taxes, debt and pay to play.

Vincent Lapore – 80 North Broadway

Spoke regarding Mr. McLaughlin's remarks, City financing, medical benefits for part time administration, different plans for lower Broadway and 149 Broadway.

Tom Clarico – Ocean County

Spoke regarding the boardwalk, bluffs and the ocean. Asked that the boardwalk gets up and going soon.

After ample time was given and no one else came forward, a motion was made by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilwoman Celli to close the public portion of this meeting. Ayes 5

RESOLUTIONS:

On file in the Clerks Office and posted on the City's Web Site.

APPLICATIONS:

None

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Councilwoman Bastelli – Well I'm glad that a good portion of you are still here. We've been accused of many things tonight but, and we've listened to you as we always do and I would like to ask a question, do you really think that we don't see how the ocean looks? Do you really think that we don't want a new boardwalk? I was born and raised here. I walked that boardwalk all the time myself. I don't prefer walking on the road but we want a new boardwalk, we want our oceanfront to be rebuilt and changed but we want to do it right and I ask for your patience with us because our hearts desire is the same as yours. We do see it, we do want it and we are working to try to make that happen. Some of the comments tonight were a slap in the face to many people that are working very hard and to say that they are doing nothing? We've hired experts, we have employees that have been working very hard and we have been in contact with the departments and with the government institutions that we're required to and to come here tonight and accuse us of these things that we can't see it, that we don't want it, personally I'm surprised in a sense and in another sense I'm not because some people are just going to accuse even when they hear the truth and I hope tonight that you'll consider that we do want to see things happen, we do want change to happen but we ask for your patience, we want to do this right, we don't want to waste tax payer dollars but I thank you so much for coming out. We are listening, we are listening to you. I want you to know that and I thank you again for taking the time to come out and give us your comments. Thank you.

Councilwoman Billings – I'd like to agree with my fellow Councilwoman and there are some of you in this audience that share a beach with me. I go to the public beach in the summer. I buy my \$45.00 badge and I'm down there every day it's sunny. I walk the boards every morning, Mr. Sherman, you see me walking in the morning. Am I happy? No, I'm not

happy but it's the best we can do for now. We don't want to become and I don't know, a lot of you say you read the paper, Beach Haven down in Ocean County just got told by FEMA that they have to return \$650,000 because you did things wrong. We're not going to be that. We are going to cross the t's and dot the i's and do things the right way to make sure we get that FEMA money and it stays in Long Branch and doesn't go back to the government. Thank you.

Councilman Sirianni – Thank you very much for coming out. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and your feelings. We do listen. We did go paperless, we're following the agenda on these, not the news or games or things of that nature, that's why we have them. Your comments that were made, I've made notes and I'm sure, I know I am and I'm sure the other Council members will be following up with the Mayor, City Manager and the Department heads with them. Thank you for taking the time to come out but as my Council members before me just said, it is on the top of our list. We may not wear it on our sleeve but it is on the top of our list. We do want to do it the right way. If you look at the other areas that were affected by Sandy where people have lost their homes, take that and put it to the bluff. The bluff saved West End, the bluff saved the central part of Long Branch. There is no bluff at the north end, they got it the worst with the power surges coming from the river and from the ocean and this woman (Councilwoman Billings) was out of her home for 10 months, the bluff saved our areas, the bluff got beat up. This cannot be turned and said, oh it's nothing. It is something and now it's time for us to take care of that. Now, you got your check books with you? I'll be glad to take a check and you can start paying for it or we cross the t's and dot the i's and we answer to FEMA and we jump through all of their hoops so that we can get the correct amount of money and take care of it properly or we'll be in a situation as Councilwoman Billings said of the City down south that's giving back money. It's a hard scale that we're balancing. We're doing a balancing act right now and I'm sorry you don't appreciate it or you don't see it the way we are but we're doing our best and we will listen you. I'm so glad you came out tonight because we need to listen to people. Thank you.

Council Vice President Celli – I'm delighted to see so many people here tonight. I wish you'd come out every two weeks and tell us what's really on your mind. I listened and I heard and we're doing what we can about it. For anybody who knows anything about working for the Federal government, things are very slow and if you don't do what they tell you, you're not going to get the money and that's why the Mayor keeps saying, we have to do what FEMA says. It's very very important. If you look at some of the other shore towns that have built, some of them are having to tear it down now. I'm not going to name municipalities but we listen to you so please listen to what was being said. For those of you that saw the workshop this evening, it was a pleasure to see what is in the future but it's not going to happen tomorrow and it's not going to happen next week. You've heard the Mayor say that we are not going to have our boardwalk for this summer but what we have in 2015, I'm sure you will be proud of and many people don't understand what the bluffs are. Go down and take a look at it. There's a famous painting by Winslow who did a picture of it and it's a beautiful picture but it's not there anymore so those of us that have the painting are most fortunate. I would ask you to have patience. I know you're tired of hearing that and you want this and you want that and well I want it too. I'm no different than anybody else. I'd like to see everything moving along but it is moving along just as quickly as it can and I'm just asking you and I'll say thank you again for coming but I also wanted to tell you that this happens to be National Volunteer Week and for all of you in the audience and I know several of you who have volunteered your time particularly during Sandy and for that I say thank you and I wish everybody a happy Passover and happy Easter.

Council President Pallone – You know I'd like to say as my fellow Council members have pointed out that we are all on the same page with this. I, and I don't think anyone else here disagrees with anything that you said but you know we need to make choices. You may agree with some of those choices, you may disagree with some of them. Let's look at the boardwalk, if you look at some of the other communities, their commercial centers are

on the boardwalk so they had no choice but to rebuild and as Councilwoman Billings pointed out, they are not maybe paying the price for that for maybe being a little too quick. What do we have? Well the commercial district, if you want, Pier Village and beyond, that boardwalk is there so what can we do? Well we can walk the entire length of our boardwalk, we don't have the boardwalk right now but all those people who like to walk and bike can do that. They were able to do that last year. All the beaches that were opened in 2012 were opened in 2013. Mr. Sherman, you talk about access with the ramp, I mean you're right. I think the Mayor explained the situation with that but on the other hand he's also made a point to buy new equipment for this year and for last year to make it a priority that if there is somebody who is handicapped and wants access to the beach, they can get down there. Sue, I agree with you. I mean the 6' fence is unsightly but there are some of the issues here that, look, you mentioned a few more benches, I counted 8 between Brighton and Bath, if we can get a few more out there I think that's a good idea. Miss Multare you mentioned the shade, why not if we can spend a few dollars and do it. Ma'am I'm very sorry that you were injured. I think we have to address that but let me just get back for example to the 6' fence; we mentioned this in a meeting a few weeks ago. I went down there and I agree with you. You know, you want to call it a prison cage, whatever you want to call it but remember that 6' fence was put there specifically a month after hurricane Sandy and it was done there deliberately because there is no bluff. I don't have to tell you, you can look at that fence and there is a drop. I have a 6 year old son who loves to climb that fence. I mean if there was a 3' fence where there's some of that drop there between Brighton and Bath, I'd be scared to death. That money, again, another choice to be made. That money was funded, that's part of the FEMA package that we expect to get back. I was informed that to re-do the 3' fence, I don't think it's even available, would cost 2 to 3 times the price of the 6' fence and again, but more importantly than that, when I talked to Sgt. Shirley who's basically handling all this FEMA stuff and the fence, I said well, if you had the fencing, if we had the money to pay for it, would you put a 3' fence down there? He said no. I'd keep it at a 6' fence for the safety of the public so again, I just want to end with...(Sue Mainberger from the audience asked about paving)...

The Mayor stated that they would take a look at it within the next couple of days.

Council President Pallone – I am glad you're here to mention that. I apologize, I'm glad you're here for many of the things that you mentioned today but like I said, some choices need to be made and we made them and they may not be the right ones, hopefully they were but in the long run I think they were the right ones and we may always disagree but that's okay too because the bottom line is I think we are all on the same page with this, again, thank you all for coming and I appreciate you being here, appreciate your comments because as everyone said, we learn from you as well, thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Sirianni seconded by Councilwoman Celli to adjourn this meeting at 8:45 p.m.