**BOROUGH OF CALIFON**

**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**July 18, 2022**

Mayor Charles Daniel called the regular meeting to order at 7:36 p.m. with the reading of the following Sunshine Law announcement: “***I would like to announce and have placed in the minutes that adequate notice of this regular in person meeting of the Califon Borough Council has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by publication of the annual notice in the Hunterdon Review and the Hunterdon County Democrat.”***

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL: PRESENT: R. BAGGSTROM, J. COLLINS, E. HAVERSANG,**

**L. JANAS, C. SMITH**

**ABSENT: M. MEDEA**

**ALSO PRESENT: M. ANDERSON, BOROUGH ATTORNEY**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by C. Smith seconded by L. Janas to approve the meeting minutes of June 6, 2022.

For: J. Collins, L. Janas, C. Smith

Opposed: None

Abstain: R. Baggstrom, E. Haversang

Absent: M. Medea

**LIST OF BILLS**

Motion was made by R. Baggstrom seconded by E. Haversang to approve the list of bills in the amount of $ 442,509.30.

For: R. Baggstrom, J. Collins, E. Haversang, L. Janas, C. Smith

Opposed: None

Absent: M. Medea

Mayor Daniel asked that since there were several members in the audience wishing to discuss agenda item C. under New Business, the meeting be moved to this item on the agenda.

**TAX COLLECTOR REPORT**

The Tax Collector’s report was reviewed and filed

**NEW BUSINESS**

**C. REVIEW AND DISCUSS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION’S RECOMMENDATION OF RESUMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, REGARDING THE TRANSFER OF COUNTY OWNED LAND**

The following were present to answer questions and provide information on this subject:

* Bill Kibler- Raritan Headwaters Association
* Brian Cowden- Trout Scapes River Restoration LLC
* Jim Kinney- Member of Califon Environmental Commission and President of the local chapter of Trout Unlimited
* Several members of the Califon Environmental Commission

J. Kinney, began by referencing the letter sent by the members of the Califon Environmental Commission of May 15, 2022. J. Kinney advised that the members would like the Council to consider reopening a conversation with the county regarding the transferring of the county park lands surrounding Califon Island Park.

The Califon Environmental Commission would like to move forward with the removal of the Weiss Mill dam remnants which will result in a healthier, safer river. J. Kinney advised that the town’s concern over inheriting the cost of removal of ash trees that are dying or dead could, possibly be pulled into the scope of the river restoration project.

J. Kinney advised that a copy the phase one environmental study was submitted to the Environmental Commission members and a copy can be shared with council members. J. Kinney at this time asked resident and director of policy at Raritan Headwaters Association, Bill Kibler to speak about the study.

B. Kibler advised that Raritan Headwaters Association is interested in this project as it directly deals with improving the quality of water in the South Branch of the Raritan River. B. Kibler advised that although the Weiss Mill Dam has been breached and dismantled, in areas, much of the debris remains which creates sediment upstream and still water. Since the water is not moving the way, it should, the temperature rises and in the late summer months it can reach into the eighty-degree marks. This in turn results in an unhealthy environment for the natural habitat and is a condition that is only good for unhealthy algae and bacteria such as fecal coliform. Removing the dam remnants will help with this. B. Kibler advised a river restoration is always done in conjunction with a dam removal. They do not just take out a dam and then leave. There is a whole restoration process that must be done, moving sediment being one item.

B. Kibler advised that they (RHA) have the funding already in place for this project and they have the project team in place. They would like to partner with the municipality where a management contract would be formed with the town so funding could be obtained.

B. Kibler advised that the phase one study did not find anything; no known spills no negative environmental occurrences.

Councilman J. Collins suggested that we send a copy of the phase one report to our engineer and also to David Blair, who is also an engineer and a member of the Califon Board of Health and the Califon Environmental Commission.

Councilman L. Janas asked would there be a phase 2 study? B. Kibler advised that you would do a phase 2 only if there were red flags in your phase 1.

Councilman L. Janas brought up the cost to take over the responsibility of making the old mill site safe. Mayor Daniel advised that D. Friebergs, president of the Califon Historical Society is interested in taking out the remnants of old machines used in the mill and put it on display. The area within the old foundation would have to be filled in and old barb wire taken out.

Brian Cowden from Trout Scapes River Restoration LLC advised the restoration is pretty straightforward. Councilman R. Baggstrom asked if the sediment that is present now, will it be removed? B. Cowden advised that they do testing for the density and yes it will be distributed.

B. Kibler advised that some will be distributed along the banks for base for planting shrubs and grasses which is part of the project.

Art Owens asked if this will dry out the mill race? B. Kibler advised that he did not believe it will have an impact on the mill race.

Mayor Daniel asked what would the next step be? B. Kibler stated that the town would have to go back to the county to advise we will take their original offer.

Councilman Baggstrom asked what the time frame would be? B. Kibler advised 2-to-5-year project from start to finish.

With no further questions regarding this agenda item, B. Kibler, B. Cowden, J. Kinney and members of the EC left the meeting.

Mayor Daniel asked Police Chief, Jeff Almer if he had anything to report?

Chief Almer advised that it has been relatively quiet with calls.

Administratively they have been very busy with the changes in the gun laws.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Daniel asked resident A. Owens of 1 Scheffer Court if he had anything he would like to share? A. Owens advised that he believes the town would benefit from installing an electric vehicle charging station in the lot the town owns behind the Post Office. They could be placed right along Main St, across from Rambo’s, where there use to be a parking lot. Mayor Daniel advised that there are grants available and Councilman J. Collins advised that this was one of the EC’s Green Team initiatives they were looking at doing.

**NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED**

1. **RESOLUTION- AUTHORIZING AN EXTENSION OF THE 3RD QUARTER TAX REMITTANCE GRACE PERIOD**

The following Resolution was introduced for adoption:

**RESOLUTION 2022-53**

**AUTHORIZING AN EXTENSION OF THE 3RD QUARTER TAX REMITTANCE GRACE PERIOD FOR THE AUGUST 1, 2022 TAX BILL TO THE DATE OF AUGUST 29, 2022**

**WHEREAS,** the printing and mailing of the 2022 property tax bills was setback due to the delay in the certification of the annual tax rate by the Department of Community Affairs and the Hunterdon County Tax Board:

**WHEREAS,** the 2022 tax bills will be printed and mailed to the property owners of the Borough of Califon prior to 08/04/22; and

**WHEREAS,** NJSA 54:4-66.3(d) provides that the current years taxes shall not be subject to interest until the twenty-fifth day after the tax bill for the third installment is mailed and the NJSA 54:4-64 further provides that the property taxpayers shall be given adequate notice of the date when taxes are due before interest is charged on delinquent tax payments.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE RESOLVED,** by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Califon, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that in accordance with the State Law, the grace period for the August 2022 property tax bill is extended to August 29, 2022 after which time said payments will be delinquent and subject to interest penalties calculated from August 1, 2022, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that interest will be charged on all tax payments received after August 29, 2022.

Motion was made by C. Smith seconded by L. Janas to adopt Resolution 2022-53 as read.

For: R. Baggstrom, J. Collins, L. Janas, E. Haversang, C. Smith

Opposed: None

Absent: M. Medea

1. **MAYORAL APPOINTEMENT OF MEGHAN CASSERLY OF 22 ACADEMY ST, CALIFON, TO THE CALIFON PLANNING/ZOINING BOARD**

With no objections from any Council members or members of the audience, Meghan Casserly was appointed to the Califon Planning and Zoning Board.

1. **SIDEWALK ORDINANCE – REVIEW AND DISCUSSION**

Currently the Borough does not have a specific sidewalk ordinance. The Borough attorney provided members of Council a sample sidewalk ordinance for review and consideration.

A discussion as to whether or not there was a need for a specific sidewalk ordinance took place. Councilman R. Baggstrom felt that this is definitely needed so that the residents know and understand what they are responsible for. Currently the only ordinance we have concerning sidewalks is the snow and ice removal requirement. Councilman L. Janas asked what would the mechanism be for the engineer to become involved and certify to the council that a sidewalk is in need of repair? Do we set up quarterly inspections? By who? Also, the ordinance states that the owner would have only 30 days to repair. This time span seemed a little onerous and suggested that as long as the resident is making a good faith effort, to rectify the situation would be more reasonable.

Borough Attorney, Mark Anderson advised that this is just a sample ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is not to require the homeowner to install sidewalks but to require that where they were installed by either the municipality, developer or even homeowner, that the repair and maintenance is the duty of the adjoining owner. The time frame to repair can be whatever the council chooses.

Councilwoman Smith advised that many of the sidewalks are heaved up due to the adjoining trees. Should this ordinance include the that the trees along the street/sidewalk are also the responsibility of the homeowner?

Mayor Daniel inquired as to if instead of sidewalk ordinance, could this ordinance be just for the trees?

Councilman Baggstrom felt that both the trees and the sidewalk be tied together in an ordinance.

Councilman Collins brought up the scenario where neighbors could report neighbors, using the ordinance to require a homeowner to fix cracks in their sidewalk.

Discussion continued and it was agreed that the Borough attorney will make some changes to the sample ordinance and this will be placed on a future agenda for further discussion.

There is no need to rush into passing an ordinance.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**\_**6-8-22- letter from Statewide Insurance advising that they have contracted with AssetWorks Risk Management to conduce property insurance appraisals for Statewide members. Asset Works will be contacting us to schedule a date to collect relevant building details and take photographs of municipal owned buildings.

**\_**6-21-22- letter from Comcast regarding the franchise renewal process

\_6-28-22-email from Brian Connor regarding several street signs that are missing: Kellie Ct, Pershing Ave, Raritan Dr and School St. Brian will order replacements.

\_6-29-22 email from Lt. Lucas Allen of the WTPD concerning new procedures in place for requesting extra duty police officers. WTPD will now be using a third party, Extra Duty Solutions to manage these requests.

\_7-8-22- email from JCPL reporting outage that affected 293 Califon Borough residents

\_ 7-14-22- email from DCA regarding Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds available for communities impacted by hurricane Ida.

\_7-15-22- email from Patty Seitz-Jones of Groendyke Insurance Agency regarding the 3-year renewal with Statewide. Discussion regarding whether or not Califon would be interested in looking at a different carrier took place. Clerk, K. Mastro advised that she was informed that Public Alliance Insurance Carrier can not offer the same limits as Statewide does and they require an application fee as well as a fee for risk management. We could look into Somerset County JIFF but P. Sietz-Jones advised she did not believe they would be able to offer a better deal than Statewide. We have not had any issues with Statewide.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Haversang reported that the Califon Fun days was a big success. Recreation member, Melina Bolcar did an outstanding job planning and executing fun and educational activities for the children the whole week, by herself!

The batting cage in memory of resident Jerry Sabatini is currently being installed at the park.

Councilman Haversang stated that Leilani is doing a great job heading up the Street Fair and they are getting new vendors every day. They are currently looking for a 5 K race to replace the Slusher 5k as the Slushers have retired.

The next Parks and Rec meeting is August 10th.

Councilman Janas advised that the last Planning Board meeting was June 15th where members of the public were encouraged to attend to learn about the Open Space and Recreation Plan and present any ideas. Councilman Janas advised that our planner, James Kyle took everyone through the necessary steps in completing an Open Space and Rec Plan and discussed targeting properties that the plan would identify as potential properties for open space.

Councilman Janas advised there were quite a few residents who shared their concerns about the land along the banks of the river on First St that could become open space and the impact on their properties. Concerns that the Open Space Plan is tied into the removal of the Coles Mill dam was also made.

Discussion of the park and what some felt is needed such as: more seating for parents watching their kids in the playground, bathrooms, garbage removal, security to name a few. Councilman Janas advised that he believes our planner received enough information to come up with a plan.

Councilman Janas advised that a few of the residents were adamant about discussing the dam and stated they would be attending a future council meeting to find out more information.

Mayor Daniel advised that he would like to state that the dam is privately owned and he does not know what the owner is going to do with this dam. He advised that concerned residents should take a moment out and review the DEP requirements for dam removals and they will see that IF the owner decides to remove the dam, they are required to provide public outreach.

The July Planning Board meeting has been cancelled and the next meeting will be on August 17th.

Councilwoman Smith advised she attended the June 15th Board of Education meeting which was right before the 8th grade graduation. At the time of the meeting on June 15th the school enrollment was 89 which was up 2 students. An open house is scheduled for June 20th for interested tuition paying students.

Councilwoman Smith advised that there were 6 students in the 8th grade graduating class.

The 7th grade has 12 students who will now become the 8th grade.

The current Kindergarten class has 6 students that will be entering 1st grade and there are 3 students registered currently for kindergarten in the fall of 2022.

There is a Board of Education meeting scheduled for July 20th. As of July 18th, the enrollment is 83.

Councilwoman Smith expressed her concern that the enrollment is not going in the right direction. She spoke with the BOE president who advised that although there are new families in town, many are opting to school choice “out” of Califon and into Tewksbury.

Councilman Janas stated that he thought that we were out of the school choice program.

Councilwoman Smith stated that the school is out of the program but people can still choose to send their children to another school. Councilwoman Smith advised that she had heard there were 19 students that have “choiced” out of the Califon School.

Councilman Baggstrom advised that calls were down in June from 542 to 498.

No criminal cases filed in our court in June.

He has received several calls concerning oil stains and “mess” on School St. Much of it was cleaned up by the paving company of Lime rock. There was an oil stain left by a truck taking down a tree on the corner of School and Lime rock.

Councilman Collins advised he had nothing to report.

**MAYORS REPORT**

Mayor Daniel advised that he has nothing new to report as everything was discussed already.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, motion was made by C. Smith seconded by R. Baggstrom and unanimously accepted to adjourn at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Mastro, RMC

Municipal Clerk/Administrator