



Mayor and Common Council Borough of Flemington

September 12, 2016

Council Meeting Room

Work Session (7:00 PM)

Meeting moved to historic courthouse due to capacity concerns.

1. HART STREETSMART PEDESTRIAN SAFETY PROGRAM AND AWARD - TARA SHEPHERD (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HART) AND POLICE CHIEF JERRY ROTELLA

Tara Shepherd, executive director of HART, and acting Police Chief Jerry Rotella discussed results of a Streetsmart pedestrian safety effort conducted in the spring. The 8-week program included education efforts and observing activity at North Main St. And Garden Lane, North Main and Walter Foran Blvd., Church and Broad streets, and Church St. at Route 31.

Chief Rotella said officers issued 29 summonses for speeding, and 7 crosswalk summonses to pedestrians. The effort was mainly educational, he said, informing pedestrians of the requirements that they use the crosswalk more than 3/4 of the distance across the intersection, wait for a pedestrian signal when available, and not talk or text on a phone while crossing the street. Motorists are required to stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk, he added, and stay stopped until the person is across the street, and not be distracted by a cell phone.

Education efforts included posters, surveys, signal-head posters, tented cards in restaurants, digital message boards, and Facebook posts.

Results showed that the campaign produced double-digit improvement in compliance by pedestrians, and increased compliance for motorists in most areas.

HART gave the Flemington Police Department an award recognizing officers' efforts in the program.

Regular Meeting (7:30 PM Start)

This meeting is being held in conformance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

1. PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING CONSTITUTION WEEK
2. Flag Salute
3. Roll Call:

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Alan P. Brewer	Councilman	Present	
John Gorman	Councilman	Present	
Marc Hain	Council Vice President	Present	
Brooke Liebowitz	Councilwoman	Present	
Michelle Oberst	Councilwoman	Present	
Brian Swingle	Council President	Present	

Phil Greiner	Mayor	Present	
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4. Presentation by Flemington Community Partnership Executive Director Judy Goodwin of the organization's 2016 work plan

Flemington Community Partnership Executive Director Judy Goodwin and FCP board chairman Dr. Paul Marciano spoke about the partnership's goals: support for local businesses, attracting new businesses and simplifying the process of "doing business" in Flemington, and attracting customers to Flemington's businesses. Its efforts to date include the Flemington Filling Station and Patio area, a coupon book including local businesses, sponsoring the Thursday Night Lights effort, and beautifying the Main Street circle. In October it's planning Pumpkin Month activities.

Its plans in 2017 include establishing a logo, identity and webpage, creating a database of existing businesses and available commercial property, gathering contact information from stakeholders, surveying to identify long-standing and flagship businesses, building relationships with developers, and studying the feasibility of creating an indoor Flemington Borough Market that would give would-be business owners a place to test the climate for their businesses. It plans to initiate a facade improvement program, and collaborate with Grounds for Sculpture on a temporary art installation.

5. Public Comments, Session I (up to approximately 3 minutes each, for a maximum of approximately 30 minutes)

Lois Stewart, 26 Spring St., asked if the council had asked Mr. Jack Cust to rework his plans for the Union Hotel redevelopment area yet again. Mayor Greiner said Mr. Cust has voluntarily taken a number of steps. Mrs. Stewart asked if officials have ever told Mr. Cust that retention of the four historic buildings in the area is preferred; Mayor Greiner said Mr. Cust has access to all the documents regarding the area, and that the council hasn't spoken to him outside of public sessions.

Robert Shore, 47 Broad St., asked when a financial impact study would be done showing how the project will affect residents' tax rates. Mayor Greiner said that information won't be available until an agreement is finalized.

Kevin DeHaven of Pennsylvania Avenue asked if any agreement with Mr. Cust would be made public before the council votes on it. Mayor Greiner said that topic hasn't yet been discussed.

Richard Giffen, Highland Avenue, asked about the project's financing; Mayor Greiner said that will be dealt with as council gets deeper into the development agreement.

Marcia Karrow, 61 Elwood Ave., said it was ironic that council was talking about tearing down the Union Hotel during a meeting held in the historic courthouse. She urged council to look elsewhere for a plan "because you're ripping the community apart."

Council President Brian Swingle said it's sad how the project has gotten politicized, and he said the "yes" and "no" signs posted around town aren't the right approach. "What we can do is come back as a community and work through this," he said. "It's important to reel back the drama." Business people are struggling, he said.

Caroline Wanzer of Locktown-Flemington Road asked about property tax impact, and Mayor Greiner answered that it would be a compromise. "We would get more than we'd get now, and he'd pay less than he would have to pay without a PILOT." Ms. Wanzer also asked about where the Police Department would be relocated, and Mayor Greiner said that's undetermined. Steve Tuccio, 61 Elwood Ave., asked if any elected or appointed officials "have any responsibility to Mr. Cust due to financial contributions." Mayor Greiner said he knew of none.

6. Mayor's Report

- Tonight's venue was changed to the courthouse on very short notice. This was in response to uncertainty about the expected number of attendees that only arose in the middle of the afternoon today. We found that the courthouse was available, so here we are. Thanks to Rebecca and Sallie for getting everything relocated on such short notice.
- Attended two beer garden and one Thursday Night Lights events
- 8/23 - visited Family Success Center to participate in an ESL graduation ceremony and speak with several first-generation Latino students about their day-to-day experiences in school with limited English-speaking capability
- 8/24 - attended veterans' recognition event at the opening of the 4H Fair in Ringoes
- 9/1 - attended the swearing-in ceremony of Acting Police Chief Jerry Rotella. Every officer was in attendance except for one who was making a drug-related presentation to a full meeting of the state Police Chiefs Association. (Recognized Jerry)
- Attended two planning board meetings and participated in a steady stream of other meetings that council members will cover in their reports.
- Redevelopment: Since the August 22 meeting, the redeveloper has advised us that he has sought a second opinion about the hotel, including an on-site visit, from an out-of-state architectural firm that does more restoration of old buildings; he is also evaluating if there is any way to retain the 90-100 Main building and incorporate it into the project. Meanwhile, the redevelopment committee is continuing work on other items such as the redevelopment agreement so that things should be able to move rapidly once the design is finalized.

7. Council Members' Reports

Councilman John Gorman: reported that work on Capner and Allen streets, halted when state road projects were put on hold, was finished because school was starting. He also read a letter from Hunterdon Helpline praising Mike Campion and the Public Works department for their work during the Salsa Night event.

Council Vice President Marc Hain: reported that the Fire Department and the Parks and Recreation Department will work together on a raffle, with the Fire Department running it. The two will split the proceeds. He also reported that Burger King has applied to open in the PNC Bank building off the Route 202-31 circle, and hopes to open by early November. Police are interviewing for two vacant positions, and the renewal process for the PBA contract will be starting soon.

Councilwoman Brooke Liebowitz: waived her report, but noted that a plan for the Global Ag property is likely to come before the Planning Board within the next 30 days.

Councilwoman Michelle Oberst: said the Administrative Committee is beginning interviews to fill the part-time administrative assistant position in Borough Hall. She and Councilwoman Liebowitz are working together on a Fire Department grant to address exhaust from the fire trucks seeping into Borough Hall. She also reported that the Samuel Fleming House board is looking for a few Flemington Borough residents to join the board of trustees.

Council President Brian Swingle: reported that work continues on the property maintenance ordinance, which is complex. The de-designated Flemington Business Improvement District board turned over a check to the borough for \$50,517; that leaves about \$7,000 to close things out. About \$10,000 is unaccounted for, he said, but noted that it doesn't seem to make financial sense to pursue an audit.

Councilman Alan P. Brewer: reported that he's conveyed dissatisfaction with Mr. Cust's development plan to Mr. Cust. "He got that," Mr. Brewer said. He said the key to the night's vote was to continue the opportunity to work for changes in the development plan. Mr. Cust "is a developer. He's listening," Mr. Brewer said.

8. Approve Minutes

Motion to: Approve minutes from Aug. 22, 2016 Regular Council Meeting. Moved by Mr. Hain, seconded by Mr. Brewer. Ms. Liebowitz and Mr. Swingle abstained. Mr. Brewer, Mr. Gorman, Mr. Hain and Ms. Oberst voted yes.

Motion to: Approve minutes from Aug. 22, 2016 Executive Session. Moved by Mr. Hain, seconded by Mr. Brewer. Ms. Liebowitz, Mr. Swingle and Mr. Gorman abstained. Mr. Brewer, Mr. Hain and Ms. Oberst voted yes.

Consent Agenda

Councilman Marc Hain moved to adopt the consent agenda, and was seconded by Councilwoman Michelle Oberst. Council members were unanimous in approving the agenda.

1. RESOLUTION 2016-137: CLOSURE OF STANGL ROAD FOR FALL FESTIVAL
2. RESOLUTION 2016-138: APPOINTING A COAH STEERING COMMITTEE
3. RESOLUTION 2016-139: APPOINTING MEMBERS OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Agenda (8:47 PM Start)

1. RESOLUTION 2016-140: DESIGNATION OF REDEVELOPER FOR UNION HOTEL REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Councilman Al Brewer said Mr. Cust is listening to the council's and residents' concerns, and voting yes would allow those discussions to continue. He noted no one came forward with an alternate plan in the 3 weeks since Mr. Cust's original designation expired. Councilman John Gorman said something has to be done about the hotel, that it's been sitting for 8 years and he doesn't want to see it sit another 10 years. Councilwoman Brooke Liebowitz said Mr. Cust has been putting a lot of effort into his plan, and she wants to give him more time. "It's not a vote to tear down the hotel, it's a vote to continue discussions about development." Councilwoman Michelle Oberst said no one's come forward with another plan, and she thinks Mr. Cust's plan is a great proposal that's worth continuing to develop. Councilman Marc Hain said Mr. Cust is doing what he can to get the plan to work. Councilman Brian Swingle said there is a lot of history to look at, including failed attempts to renovate the hotel. Mr. Cust's plan would be tremendously economically beneficial to the borough.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Michelle Oberst, Councilwoman
SECONDER:	Brian Swingle, Council President
AYES:	Brewer, Gorman, Hain, Liebowitz, Oberst, Swingle

2. Public Comments, Session II

Maureen Hand, a Clinton Township resident who used to work at the Union Hotel, said once the hotel's torn down you can't get it back. She said when she was growing up in Flemington, Main Street was full of carriage rides and activity. "We don't need a community college. The community needs to come together to embrace its history."

Maryann Isham of Capner Street, Raritan Twp., read parts of a letter addressed to council, encouraging Mr. Cust to submit massing models of the project, saying it's important to see what people are talking about.

Following more general questions about what colleges might be interested, how the traffic would be accommodated, Mayor Greiner said, "So many questions are asking us to negotiate in public, which we cannot do."

Debbie Korpell of Clark, NJ said she's contemplating moving to Flemington and said the borough doesn't need to make the downtown more like Route 202, and asked, "What do you really value?" Mayor Greiner answered, "I value the town more than I value any of its buildings." Council is working toward an integrated solution, he said, noting Flemington has the lowest income in the county, double the rental rates, and could use successful retail establishments, and a liquor license back on Main Street.

Joey Novick commented on the county's restoration of the historic courthouse and asked, "What is it about the Union Hotel that makes it easy to knock down?" Councilwoman Oberst said the hotel and other buildings are privately owned, except 90-100 Main St. In the last few hotel redevelopment attempts the council has encouraged the owners to make renovations, but the borough doesn't have the money to come forward and buy it, she said.

Rich Cornelison, 134 Main St., said if residents don't let the council do something, "this town won't have a heart."

Tony Previte, North Main Street, said sacrifices have to be made. "It's nice to keep something old, if you can bear the cost to maintain it." He said Mr. Cust "is not Donald Trump. This is not the Taj Mahal."

Steve Karpew, 38 Bonnell St., raised a question about property maintenance. Councilman Swingle said there's a legal process that must be followed to enforce property maintenance codes. He noted there are 12 houses in the borough that are in foreclosure or vacant.

Joann Braun, Jefferson Court in Raritan Twp., asked if the agreement will allow Mr. Cust to raze the whole block at once. Mayor Greiner said the first thing that would have to happen is work on the underground parking, so everything would have to come down. Ms. Braun also asked about the Cut Glass property, and Mr. Greiner said the owner has approached the redevelopment committee about possibly acquiring more land.

Betsy Driver, 50 Main St., asked what kinds of professionals the borough has contracted with and what protections will be given to existing businesses during the project so people can get to them. Mayor Greiner said officials don't anticipate problems with street access, and that the borough has always hired professionals appropriate to the task at hand.

Robert Shore of Broad Street asked if council anticipates voting on a plan by the end of the year, and Mayor Greiner said yes.

Others who spoke about the hotel project were:

Elaine Gorman, New York Avenue

Steve Moore, 69 Broad St.

Art Wetzky, Union Township

Chuck Taylor, Delaware Township

Kenneth Cummings, Delaware Township

Deborah Murray, Raritan Township
Joanne Elacqua, Raritan Township
J. Fullerton, Readington
Lois Stewart (second comment)
Maureen Hand (second comment)

Attorney's Report

No report.

4. Payment of Bills

Motion to: Pay the bills. Moved by Councilman Hain; seconded by Councilwoman Oberst. All council members voted in the affirmative.

Executive Session

For any other applicable matter identified during the regular meeting. Action may be taken.

No executive session needed.

Adjournment

Motion to: Adjourn. Moved by Councilman Hain, seconded by Councilman Brewer. Adjourned at 10 p.m.