

## ***BOROUGH OF NETCONG***

### **MINUTES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG HELD MARCH 9, 2023 AT THE NETCONG MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 23 MAPLE AVENUE, NETCONG, NEW JERSEY COMMENCING AT 7:30 PM.**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nametko at 7:30 PM.

#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

#### **STATEMENT OF OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

The Borough Clerk read the following statement:

Adequate notice of this meeting as defined by the Open Public Meetings Act has been provided by:

1. Posting a notice of said meeting in the space provided for  
Such announcements at the Borough Hall on January 6, 2023.
2. Publishing a notice in the Daily Record, the official newspaper  
of the Borough of Netcong on January 11, 2023 and emailing a  
copy to the Star Ledger on January 6, 2023.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Those in attendance this evening were Councilman Albensi, Councilman Hathaway, Councilman Laureys, Councilman Morton, Councilman Still, Councilman Sylvester, and Mayor Nametko. Also present was Mr. Blakeslee, Borough Administrator and Mrs. Eckert, Borough Clerk

#### **PUBLIC PORTION OF MEETING**

Seeing no one stepping forward, a motion to close the meeting to the public was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Sylvester.

Roll Call: 5 Yes

#### **PRESENTATION**

##### ***Main St. and Maple Ave. Rehabilitation***

Mr. Robert Belkeman Esq. representing Rock Solid Developers stepped forward. He began by giving an overview of the plan for the rehabilitation of the corner of Maple Ave. and Main St.

Mr. Kenneth Fox, the architect, stepped forward to present the proposed plan for this area on Main St. He gave a brief history of the demise of the original structure on this property

several years prior. He went on to explain that this new building would cover 5 properties on Main St. He went on to show layouts of the area that would be rehabilitated. He also described the current access locations for this property. He then went on to explain the proposed new structure which will have retail on the first floor and apartments on the second and third floor. He then showed how the new structure would cover the area in question. He then gave a brief description of the current parking area. The existing area does not have sufficient parking. They will be improving that situation. There will be seven retail spaces with access on Maple Ave. and Main Street with sufficient parking on the site. The second and third levels will be 25 residential units on each floor with a community room on each level. The building has been designed with Victorian elements in keeping with current structures on Main St. The building has been designed so it appears as a 2 ½ story Victorian. There will be additional parking at the end of the building on Main St. He gave square footage of the retail spaces which is 6000 SF. There would need to be 123 parking spaces required by ordinance. Councilman Sylvester asked how many 3-bedroom units are there. Mr. Fox stated there would be 2- 3 bedrooms. There will be 8 affordable housing units. Mr. Blekeman stated affordable housing requires 2- and 3-bedroom units. He detailed the amount of parking spaces and how they would be assigned. He asked if there were any questions about the layout. Councilman Laureys asked if there would be parking underneath the structure. Mr. Fox presented a drawing showing where the parking would be under the structure. The mayor had a question about flex parking. He wanted to know if other businesses in town will be able to use the flex parking. Mr. Fox stated 'yes, during business hours anyone will be able to park in the flex parking area.' An area for truck deliveries has also been established.

Mr. John Korak, a traffic engineer, provided a summary of his credentials. He explained that they have completed a traffic impact study due to this new development. The study was done on Main, Maple, Rt. 183 and Rt. 46. The timeframes that were tested in the study which generate the most amount of traffic was presented. He stated 50 rental units do not generate a large amount of traffic. He then provided the results of the study. He stated this project would add approximately 1-2 vehicles at each light cycle on the Rt. 183-Rt. 46 or Main St and Rt. 46 intersections. The conclusion of the study was the impact of traffic from this project will be minimal. It will not have a detrimental impact on traffic flow in this area. He added his opinion of the traffic impact for this Main St. area and he has a 120-page study. Councilman Hathaway asked about the current light cycles; do they clear out at this time? Mr. Korak stated not all vehicles get through every light. Councilman Laureys noted the train cycles cause a backup. Mr. Korak stated any area that is near a train station usually has some traffic issues. Councilman Laureys also asked if the traffic light cycle is based on the current lights. He wants to know if there will be a need to put in a different traffic light. Mr. Korak stated no, this project will not add the need for a new traffic light. He stated it is hard to speculate on this. Mr. Korak stated he needed to leave to attend to another matter at this time. Mr. Jerry Giosa, of Level G. Associates stepped forward and provided his credentials as a traffic and parking study engineer. He has been performing traffic studies for over 30 years. He provided several examples of other towns where he completed parking studies. He has much experience with mixed use developments. He gave a brief description of flex/shared parking. He once again gave the number of parking spaces for this project. There will be several tandem parking stalls which will be for the residents of the same unit. Councilman Sylvester asked if this was one car behind the other. There will be some spaces in the open and others

under the building protected from the elements. He confirmed that 123 parking spaces are required according to code. He then cited the RSIS exceptions to this rule. He stated since there is a rail station nearby and parking spaces on the street, the parking spaces provided, even though they don't meet the code, are sufficient for the building. He explained the differences for downtown and urban factors. He continued to provide more information on parking regulations and the differences in parking according to time of day. He stated because of Covid-19 and work at home, there may be changes to the factors in these studies. They have done additional studies to test this theory and the parking in this report have been considered with this study. He continued by detailing the amount of space used at certain times. He repeated that the parking proposed in this study is sufficient. Councilman Abensi asked about EV parking spaces. There will be 3 EV spaces. Councilman Sylvester asked with the shared parking. What if one retail unit becomes a restaurant, will this flex parking model no longer be valid? Mr. Fox added the size of the retail units is not conducive to a restaurant use. Councilman Laureys asked if it was considered to have less apartments to allow for more parking. Mr. Fox stated there were earlier versions of this plan and changes were made. He explained, again, that there would be enough parking to accommodate the units in the building. He stated there is overflow parking available in the area. Councilman Laureys wanted to know if there is a plan with fewer apartments. Councilman Hathaway stated this is the pared down project with less units. Mr. Fox stated they abandoned their first presentation of four stories and pared it down to the existing presentation tonight. There was brief discussion among the Council and presenters on this issue. Councilman Hathaway provided background about the original presentations that were made to the Economic Development Committee which were not acceptable. He stated there were several presentations to the committee with this final one being the compromise. He stated this developer has provided a realistic presentation. Councilman Laureys stated parking is the issue with several Council members. Mr. Fox stated they have completed a great deal of work and manipulation of this layout to bring the best possible presentation. They have broadened the sidewalk area as requested by the EDC. Working together with the EDC, they found ways to do what is best for Netcong. They have looked to make the access the best as possible. Mr. Fox stated there are ways to find uses that are not permitted. If this is done as an area in need of rehabilitation, standards could be included in the plan.

The mayor asked if Mr. Philips, our planner, could comment on this. 57 of the 81 spaces would be available for flex parking. The shared parking will be the use of the residents and retail of this property only. Mr. Philips stated these only work when they are assigned to one unit. His experience is that the tandem spaces go in places where there is controlled access. They cannot be available for the retail spaces. There needs to be care taken in the management of these spaces. There is another concern with the parking: there are 1.4 spaces for the residential areas. There are mostly 1-bedroom units in this building so he is not concerned about the number of parking spaces. He stated a restaurant in this location would definitely blow the parking plan out of the water. He added one more consideration, this would not conform to our existing B-C zoning, so there will need to be a zoning change. The rehabilitation route would be the best route to take because this project does not fit into the typical downtown zoning which would provide protection. Councilman Hathaway asked if restrictions could be included. Councilman Sylvester was not concerned about having restrictions for a restaurant, he was concerned about the parking that will be needed for this

usage. Mr. Giosa stated there are options in our area because we have parking in the train station within 500 feet of the building. He provided examples of how this could be accomplished. Councilman Sylvester stated this is all based on models, but it is not looking at possible issues that could go wrong. Councilman Sylvester asked if age restriction was ever considered. They stated it was not. He asked if the last space on Maple Ave is elevated. They replied 'yes'. There were no further questions for Mr. Giosa. Mr. Fox stepped forward to more information regarding the details of this project. Higher end products will be used in this project that will be long lasting and contemporary. There will be brick on the outside. The indoor areas will have higher end materials, granite countertops and stainless-steel appliances. The mayor asked if there would be spot zoning. Mr. Philips stated this is the beauty of the rehabilitation route, then you have more control over the plans for this. He stated there can even be controls on parking for the restaurant. Councilman Still stated we already don't have enough parking currently and this is a problem. The mayor stated if we can restrict this then it is not a problem.

Mr. Philips stated he has never seen a restaurant in a downtown complex that provides enough onsite parking. It is the nature of a downtown environment. Councilman Still stated we are trying to make this a walking area. Mr. Bucco asked if a study was done to see how many cars currently are considered as 'overflow' at the train station. Mr. Fox stated this project has enough parking on site, but there is additional parking available. Mr. Belkeman stated there will be ways to accommodate restaurants. Mr. Bucco agrees there are ways to work around this in a redevelopment agreement.

Mr. Fox stated they are here tonight to gain the support of the Council for this project. They can work with the Council to make any changes. Councilman Sylvester stated this is an attractive project. The mayor thanked them for their time.

### **PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SID COST ESTIMATE**

A Motion to close the public hearing was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Morton.

Roll Call: 5 Yes      No: Councilman Laureys

**Resolution #2023-32** - Resolution to Approve the 2023 Cost Estimate for the Borough's Special Improvement District.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Morton.

Roll Call: 5 Yes      No: Councilman Laureys

## **ORDINANCE ADOPTIONS**

**1. Ordinance 2023-2-** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF OF POLICE TO EXECUTE AN APPLICATION FOR A CHARITABLE SOLICITATION PERMIT FOR NETCONG VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY NO. 1'S "COIN DROP" ON MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND AND COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF ALLEN STREET AND LEDGEWOOD AVENUE AND MAIN STREET AND ROUTE 46 AND ROUTE 183 IN THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

A Motion to Read Ordinance 2023-2 - by Title Only on Second Reading and a Hearing Held Thereon was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 6 Yes

A Motion to Close Public Hearing was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 6 Yes

A Motion to Adopt Ordinance #2023-2 was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 6 Yes

**2. Ordinance 2023-3-** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE POLICE CHIEF TO EXECUTE AN APPLICATION FOR A CHARITABLE SOLICITATION PERMIT FOR AMERICAN LEGION AMBULANCE CORP OF STANHOPE/NETCONG'S "COIN DROP" ON JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup>, JUNE 10<sup>TH</sup> 2023 AND ON SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, AND SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF ALLEN STREET AND LEDGEWOOD AVENUE AND MAIN STREET AND ROUTE 46 IN THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

A Motion to Read Ordinance 2023-3 - by Title Only on Second Reading and a Hearing Held Thereon was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 6 Yes

A Motion to Close Public Hearing was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 6 Yes

A Motion to Adopt Ordinance #2023-3 was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 6 Yes

3. **Bond Ordinance 2023-4-** BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE ACQUISITION OF A NEW PUMPER FIRE ENGINE, INCLUDING ORIGINAL APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT, IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG, IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$900,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.

A Motion to Read Bond Ordinance 2023-4 - by Title Only on Second Reading and a Hearing Held Thereon was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 4 Yes      Abstain: Councilmen Still and Sylvester

A Motion to Close Public Hearing was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Morton.  
Roll Call: 4 Yes      Abstain: Councilmen Still and Sylvester

A Motion to Adopt Bond Ordinance #2023-4 made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Morton.  
Roll Call: 4 Yes      Abstain: Councilmen Still and Sylvester

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Netcong Planning Board – Resolution 2023-07 – 2022 Variances Granted
2. Netcong Planning Board – Granting Preliminary and Final Subdivision Approval with Variances for Property Owned by the Borough Located at Terrace Street, Bocks 22 and 26, Lots 15 and 10.03.
3. Email – Thomas Huffman Planning Board Resignation
4. American Legion – Memorial Day Parade  
The mayor stated there was a meeting this month. The parade will be the same as usual

A Motion to approve Item #4 by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 6 Yes

### **BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Mr. Blakeslee provided his report to the Committee previously. There were no questions or comments.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Finance & Insurance:

E. Still

J. Sylvester

Councilman Still noted for the record that there is a Finance Committee Meeting this Tuesday and there are many issues to be discussed.

For the month of February 2023, the Borough had a total income of \$1,974,300.50 as compared to \$1,924,212.75 in February 2022.

*For the month of February 2023:*

Miscellaneous Revenue Not Anticipated (MRNA):

In 2023 the Borough received \$7,479.65 compared to \$26,140.50 in 2022.

Other Licenses/Borough Clerks Fees:

The Borough received \$28,710.33 in 2023 compared to \$5,917.26 in 2022.

State Aid:

There was no state aid in either 2022 or 2023.

Grants in Aid:

There was \$4,268.93 received in Grants in Aid for 2023 and \$0 in 2022.

Taxes Collected:

The Borough collected \$1,933,841.59 in 2023 compared to \$1,892,154.99 in 2022.

Income Total Year to Date:

The Total Income Year to date for 2023 is \$2,882,031.36 as opposed to \$2,586,112.77 in 2022.

Economic Development:

R. Hathaway

E. Still

The committee met with two members of the highlands committee about a study and whether Netcong conforms. We will have our planner attend next month to report on this. There are advantages for the borough in this. The downtown application would be done by the Highlands and this would be permanent; it would no longer require maintenance every 10 years. They would also grant planning proposals for stormwater, parking, traffic etc. We would have our own professional financed by them. He feels this would be smart for the borough to consider. Their presentation was compelling but we have not had our planner report yet.

Mr. Blakeslee stated there will be a meeting set up for the highlands to meet with the EDC and then a presentation would be given to the Council at the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. The mayor wants to hear our planner's opinion. Mr. Bucco stated most towns have found that the requirements for the highlands are not too difficult. He is concerned about the lake, if it would be enhanced. There is a lot of money from the Highlands for planning, but brick and mortar would be up to the town. Mr. Blakeslee stated once this is done, it is a baseline for grant

applications. There is concern this is too good to be true. The mayor stated we are scheduled for a downtown meeting. There was further discussion about this topic.

Public Safety: J. Sylvester T. Laureys  
(Police, Fire, Rescue)

Councilman Sylvester reported that one of our police officers and several of our firefighters are being honored at the 200 club.

Police Department

Radar: 42  
Traffic Enforcement/Stop: 126  
Parking Enforcement: 29  
Administrative Duties: 65  
Total Calls: 669

Netcong Fire Department for the month of February 2023:

Total Calls: 6  
General Alarms: 2  
Squad Assists: 0  
Mutual Aid: 4  
Total Members: 23  
Time Volunteered: 44 Hours & 23 Minutes  
Drills: 5  
Total Members: 33  
Time Volunteered: 112 Hours  
Administrative Details: 6  
Total Members: 39  
Time Volunteered: 81 Hours & 43 Minutes  
TOTAL MEMBERS: 42  
Total Time Volunteered: 238 Hours & 6 Minutes

Dept. of Public  
Works & Utilities: J. Albensi R. Hathaway

**Water Department:** Performed multiple markouts for lead line survey info and NJ Nat Gas main project....

**Buildings & Grounds:** Boiler inspections were performed at FH 1 and 2.....Installed No Idling signs at Boro Hall and DiRenzo Park....Clean leaves and chipped brush at the reservoir.....

**Sewer Department:** Cleared a sewer lateral blockage at 21 RR Ave....

**Snow:** Plow and salt on February 27th....

**Recycling Department:** New pole barn was installed at the Recycle Center....Installed metal dumpster stops behind the containers inside the new building....

**Other:** New Sr. van had lettering installed by Signarama....Sr van also had undercoating applied by A&K....

Recreation: T. Morton J. Albensi

St. Patrick's Day pancake breakfast this Saturday pending weather. There will be several bus trips and Broadway plays.

Public Services: T. Laureys T. Morton  
(Human Services  
Recycling & Solid  
Waste Disposal

Dial a Ride Report: February, 2023

Days of Service: 19

Miles:864

# of Stops: 57

Nutrition for one: 11

Food Shopping: 24

# of Meals on Wheels: 15

Medical Appointments: 36

Other Appointments: 29

People Using Services: 34

Cancels: 8

Denials: 0

Units: 150

Hours: 75.25

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None presented.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None presented.

### **PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR TO THE COUNCIL**

Councilman Hathaway asked "what sort of community do we want to be?" Bedroom community etc. He had Ricky research this. We are 54% owner occupied. What do we want to be? We want to be autonomous. How do we remain Netcong? We need to bring in revenue to support our expenses. We need to be responsible in generating revenue and saving on expenses. We cannot afford to do our court or construction now. If we do not start bringing

in more revenue, what will be next? He feels we need to bring in development to generate revenue. He went on with details on this subject. He is concerned about the purchase of the firetruck, without development.

Councilman Sylvester provided his opinion. There was heated discussion between Councilman Hathaway and Councilman Sylvester. Councilman Hathaway's takeaway is the Area in Need of Rehabilitation for the downtown is necessary as it will provide the borough with more control. Councilman Sylvester stated "why can't we do this one project at a time."

### **MAYOR COMMENTS**

No comments at this time.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **1. Resolution 2023-36- Authorizing Participation in the Leap Implementation Grant**

Mr. Blakeslee provided the details regarding this resolution and a definition of the LEAP grant. The state prefers a combined application with the borough and Mt. Olive.

A Motion was made by Councilman Albensi and seconded by Councilman Hathaway to approve this resolution.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

### **ORDINANCE INTRODUCTIONS**

None

### **REPORTS**

A Motion to Incorporate All Reports into the Minutes was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

### **BILLS**

A Motion to Pay All Bills When Funds are Available was made by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Sylvester.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

### **PUBLIC PORTION OF MEETING**

Mr. Parks stepped forward to talk about Hilts Lane. The NJ transit lot is already being used throughout the day. Cars also use Hilts Lane as an exit from the Transit lot. Many cars park on Hilts Lane during the day.

Councilman Sylvester suggested we put NJ barriers to cut the access from the parking lot. He would like to know how to change the name of the street. Mr. Bucco stated changing the name of Hilts Lane would take a lot of effort. The borough would have to decide if they change the name since they maintain the road. There was discussion on private roads which Hilts Lane is. The mayor asked why he would like the name change and what the name would be. He would like to name it Parks Place. The mayor explained name changes must be for those who have passed or retired elected officials. Mr. Bucco reiterated it is the borough's responsibility for renaming roads and it will cause confusion for emergency access. Councilman Hathaway stated they can at best block the access.

A Motion to Close the Meeting to the Public was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

### **CLOSED SESSION**

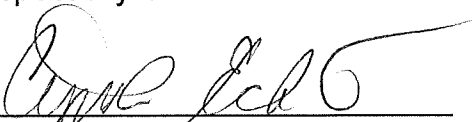
No closed session was held.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A Motion to Adjourn the Meeting was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway at 9:20PM.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Respectfully Submitted

  
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Cynthia Eckert, Borough Clerk