

PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2020
MINUTES

7:00 PM – Town Council Chambers, Portsmouth Town Hall, 2200 East Main Road

Time: 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin M. Aguiar, Michael Buddemeyer and Andrew V. Kelly in Town Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT BY ZOOM: Linda L. Ujifusa, J. Mark Ryan, Keith E. Hamilton and Daniela T. Abbott

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SITTING AS THE PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

1. Roll Call

PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – Mr. Aguiar thanked those who decorated the Christmas trees at the Portsmouth Middle School and recommended that residents swing by to look at all the trees.

CONSENT AGENDA – Motion to receive and place on file made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Buddemeyer. Motion passed 7-0.

1. Bills

SITTING AS THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS

1. Daily Liquor License, Class F1:

Island Park Preservation Society, 21 Beach Street, for a fundraiser at 706 Park Avenue, January 1, 2021 from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm (#1879) – Motion to approve made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Dr. Ryan. Motion passed 7-0.

2. Holiday License – Annual, New:

Bottega Bocconi d/b/a Bottega Bocconi, 1965 East Main Road (#1862) – Motion to approve made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 7-0.

ADJOURN – Motion to adjourn as Board of License Commissioners made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 7-0.

MINUTES – Motion to approve all minutes made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 7-0.

8/24/20 Exec

9/14/20 Exec

9/21/20 Exec

10/13/20 Exec

11/23/20 Exec

TAX VOUCHERS

Request approval for Tax Vouchers #20201214-01 to #20201214-09. – Motion approve made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 7-0.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

1. COVID Update

- I hope you and your family are doing well and staying safe.
- Rhode Island's coronavirus "pause" will be extended for an additional week until Dec. 20, followed by an ease of some restrictions on Dec. 21 while leaving others in place, as the State continues to set records for coronavirus hospitalizations.
 - It is important to limit your contacts and only gather with members of your immediate household. Reducing community spread is critical to re-opening our economy. Please stay home as much as possible, do not host or attend social gatherings, and wear a mask.
 - The current restrictions and those beginning on December 21st are listed on the Town Website in the COVID-19 page.
 - These restrictions present additional barriers for small businesses, during a time when they are already struggling. Please shop local this year – they really need our support.
- I'm sure everyone has heard the FDA has approved the COVID-19 vaccine. The administration of the vaccine will be accomplished in phases in RI:
 - PHASE ONE - December to February
 - 1A: High-risk healthcare workers (e.g. hospital staff, long-term care facility staff); first responders; long-term care facility residents.
 - 1B: People with significant comorbid conditions (two of more); older adults in congregate or overcrowded settings
 - PHASE TWO – February to April
 - K-12 teachers, school staff, child care workers
 - Critical workers in high-risk settings
 - People with moderate comorbid conditions
 - People in homeless shelters and group homes and staff
 - Incarcerated or detained people and staff
 - All older adults
 - PHASE THREE – April to June
 - Young adults
 - Children
 - Workers in critical industries
 - PHASE FOUR
 - Everyone who did not have access to vaccine in previous phases.
- There is much more information available on COVID-19 Section of our Web Site.

2. New Recreation Scheduling Program

- We have been evaluating scheduling programs over the past eight months for use by the Recreation Department.
- The new program is called RecDesk and will be used to make and process requests for reservations for use of town recreation facilities.
- It is an online program and will be accessed from the Town website.

- We will start using the program in January after Wendy Bulk has briefed league managers. We will concentrate first on the Seveney Complex and expand the use of the program for all recreation facilities throughout the late winter and early spring.

3. Police Toy Drive

- PPD hosted two Fill-A-Cruiser events this year, on 11/28 and 12/12 at Dollar General and Clements Market. During these toy drives, generous donations were made by the public, including toys, gift cards, cash and non-perishable foods. A total of \$1,514 dollars has been collected and deposited into the PPD Holiday Fund at Bank Newport.
- Gift cards to various stores, both retail and grocery, were provided the high school guidance counselors and Toys collected will be distributed to Portsmouth families in need of assistance.
- Donated Christmas trees were also donated by Costal Financial and distributed to Portsmouth families in need. All of the non-perishable goods were donated to Portsmouth churches, including, St. Barnabas, St. Mary's and St. Anthony's. The churches then provided the food to local families and shelters.
- Toys have also been given to #ProjectREgive, a Middletown non-profit organization that collects unused holiday presents & toys and donates them to help celebrate birthdays and provide gifts to Lucy Hearth, women's resource center, local schools and families.
- I wish to extend a most hearty "Bravo Zulu" to the officers of our PPD. For those without a Navy background – BZ is a signal code for "Well Done" with regard to action and performance.

4. SNEP (Southeast New England Program) Update

- Some of you may recall that the Town's application to the 2020 Southeast New England Network's call for participants for storm water and watershed management assistance was approved for services last spring.
- The Town requested assistance in developing a town-wide Climate Resiliency Planning and Financing strategy. The work, slated to begin next month, will entail:
 - A facilitated process with town officials to further refine and prioritize highest priority capital needs;
 - Public workshop(s);
 - Consultant services to work with municipal staff to provide cost estimates to include in the CIP, and to provide basis for financing options;
 - and leadership training with town council to ensure understanding and support for climate resiliency planning and financing.

5. DPW Collective Bargaining Agreement Update

- We have concluded collective bargaining negotiations with the Public Works Union and expected to present a proposed agreement to the Council tonight.
- However, last minute reviews and questions from the union are still being resolved.
- I hope to bring the agreement to the Council at the first meeting in January for your review and approval.

6. Transfer Station Sticker Sale Procedures

- At our last meeting, the Town Council set the sticker price for annual access to the Hedly Street and Prudence Island Transfer Stations. Transfer Station stickers will cost \$211 for the first vehicle per household and \$10 for one additional vehicle per household.

- At this time, Town Hall remains closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To keep all parties safe, the Town will only accept 2021 Transfer Station Sticker applications (all necessary documents and payment by check or money order) by mail or in the tax payment drop box, located on the south side of Town Hall.
- Beginning Wednesday, December 16th, blank 2021 applications will be available for pick up at the south side vestibule in Town Hall, or you can print your application by going to the Town Website.
- Because of the pandemic, this year the Town will allow sticker holders a two-month grace period to obtain a new sticker. That means last year's Transfer Station sticker will provide entry into the Transfer Station until the end of February 2021. A 3 to 4-week turnaround time is expected on Transfer Station stickers, so please plan accordingly.

ADDITIONALLY:

7. COMP Plan Update

- When we last updated the Town Council, the Planning Department was working on a punch list of responses to comments by Statewide Planning:
 - 10 of the 12 Elements had something in the text that needed correcting or needed some bit of text to be added. All but 2 Elements have been fixed. Planning is working on one and Weston & Sampson is working on the other.
 - 7 of the 12 Elements have mapping problems to correct or additional maps to be created. 3 of the 7 Elements have been fixed.
- In summary, 8 of a total of 12 Elements (the 13 is the Implementation Element and W&S already has that) are ready to transmit to Weston & Sampson for final assembly into one document with maps to be transmitted to Statewide Planning.
- None of the corrections/additions affects the Goals/Policies/Actions section of each Element. The text of this section for each of the Elements is untouched since the Planning Board approved them in their Public Hearing.
- Our plan is to have all of the Elements (with maps) ready to transmit to Weston & Sampson by the first of the year.

8. VBCH Grant

- We were notified late last week the Town's application for a van Beuren Charitable Foundation grant to fund the development of a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan had been approved.
- The Town will receive \$56,250 for the project.
- We are now developing an RFP which will be vetted through the Recreation Committee prior to release. A final report to the foundation will be due 28 FEB 2022.

RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. Resignations:

- a. West Side Development Advisory Committee – Motion to accept Mr. Humphrey's resignation with regret made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion passed 7-0.
- b. Solid Waste and Recycling Committee – Motion to accept Ms. McGaw's resignation with regret made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Ms. Ujifusa. Motion passed 7-0.

2. Appointments:

- a. Economic Development Committee – Motion to appoint Stephen Johnson made by Ms. Ujifusa, seconded by Dr. Ryan. Motion passed 7-0.

- b. Glen Manor House Authority – Motion to re-appoint Barbara Chase made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Dr. Ryan. Motion passed 7-0.
- c. West Side Development Advisory Committee – Motion to re-appoint Robert Andrews made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Ms. Ujifusa. Motion passed 7-0.
- d. West Side Development Advisory Committee – Motion to re-appoint Mark Thayer made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Ms. Ujifusa. Motion passed 7-0.
- e. Design Review Board – Motion to re-appoint Frank Munro made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Ms. Ujifusa. Motion passed 7-0.
- f. Juvenile Hearing Board – Motion to re-appoint Paul Kelly made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Dr. Ryan. Motion passed 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS (Discussion/Action)

- 1. Monthly finance report. – Motion to receive and place on file made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 7-0.
- 2. Proposed amendment to Chapter 405 of the Zoning Ordinance to include a Solar Ordinance. – Motion to approve retroactive to May 11, 2020 made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 4-3. Ms. Ujifusa, Ms. Abbott and Dr. Ryan in dissent.

NEW BUSINESS (Discussion/Action)

- 1. Melville Park Committee Grant Application Request. – Motion made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Dr. Ryan. Motion passed 7-0.
- 2. Resolution in Support of Earth Day 2021 Celebration, Aquidneck Island Earth Week. – Motion to approve made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion passed 7-0.

TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RI
RESOLUTION #2020-12-14

RESOLUTION FOR EARTH DAY 2021 CELEBRATION, AQUIDNECK ISLAND EARTH WEEK

WHEREAS, all species play a unique role in the complex web of life and contribute to the ecosystem services on which all life on Earth depends, and hence, protecting our species is crucial to the survival of this planet and its inhabitants; and

WHEREAS, wild animal populations have declined on average by more than half and the Earth is facing an era of mass extinction; and

WHEREAS, the loss of species is for the most part a result of human activity, including degradation of ecosystems, deforestation, pollution, and climate change; and

WHEREAS, species provide important services to the people, such as generating oxygen and purifying the air; controlling other animals considered pests or that spread disease; pollinating plants and crops; providing recreation opportunities and well-being, etc.; and

WHEREAS, many plants, wild animals, and pollinators live in urbanized landscapes, and cities thereby have a responsibility to examine the ecological impacts of expanding urban areas and how to protect biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, it is understood that sustainability will only be achieved by meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations; and

WHEREAS, Aquidneck Island communities are impacted by coastal hazards that are being exacerbated by sea-level rise and climate change; and

WHEREAS, given previous and ongoing events, we now find ourselves in a new era of more unpredictable and severe weather that can potentially cause extensive damage to our community's land and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to expand and diversify the local environmental movement to increase the resiliency of our communities; and

WHEREAS, it is more important than ever to cooperate locally and internationally to build on the environmental progress that has been heretofore gained; and

WHEREAS, Earth Day is an annual reminder of the constant need for environmental activism, stewardship commitments, and sustainability efforts; and

WHEREAS, Earth Day was founded in 1970 and celebrated by over 190 countries around the world; and

WHEREAS, representatives from local non-profits, Town committees, schools, and businesses created an extensive public program for Earth Day 2020 (Aquidneck Island Earth Week) that can be revisited with an improved understanding of how to engage safely with community members when social distancing is required due to the coronavirus; and

WHEREAS, Aquidneck Island Earth Week partners, including Middletown's Open Space and Fields Committee and Tree Commission, Newport's Energy and Environment Commission, and Clean Ocean Access, commit to building on the success of Aquidneck Island Earth Week in 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Portsmouth does hereby declare the week of April 17, 2021 to April 24, 2021 Aquidneck Island Earth Week; a celebration of the 51st Anniversary of Earth Day, and supports an island-wide effort to share in the celebration of our interconnectedness with nature, environmental sustainability, and conservation of natural resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council requests the administration to put forth an effort to engage the entire community of Portsmouth and the neighboring communities of Newport and Middletown to join the effort to create Aquidneck Island Earth Week.

Adopted this 14th day of December 2020.

Kevin M. Aguiar
Town Council President

Attested: _____
Jennifer M. West
Town Clerk

3. Proposed FY 2021-22 Budget Time Line. – Motion to approve made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 7-0.
4. State Legislative Priorities – Procedure and Time Table. – Motion to approve made by Ms. Ujifusa, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 7-0.
5. New Town Council Rules and Procedures regarding Council Member Behavior, Actions and following the Town Charter. – Motion to forward to Mr. Gavin to look into wording for procedural steps to be taken to police Council behavior under section 212 of the Town Charter to bring back to the Council within 6 months made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Buddemeyer. Motion passed 5-2. Ms. Ujifusa and Dr. Ryan in dissent.
6. Assignment of Town Council Liaisons to Town Committees. – No votes taken.

Agriculture Committee	Keith Hamilton
Aquidneck Island Planning Commission	Linda Ujifusa
Bristol Ferry Town Common	Andrew Kelly
Conservation Commission	Daniela Abbott
Dog Park Committee	Keith Hamilton
Economic Development Committee	Kevin Aguiar
Glen Manor House Authority	Linda Ujifusa and Andrew Kelly
Harbor Commission	Keith Hamilton
Melville Park Committee	Kevin Aguiar and J. Mark Ryan
Newport Chamber of Commerce	Keith Hamilton
Parks & Recreation Committee	Daniela Abbott/Michael Buddemeyer
Pension Investment Committee (2)	Keith Hamilton and Kevin Aguiar
Portsmouth Senior Center	Linda Ujifusa

School Committee

Linda Ujifusa / Andrew Kelly /
Michael Buddemeyer

Solid Waste/Recycling Study Committee

J. Mark Ryan

Tree Commission

Andrew Kelly and J. Mark Ryan

West Side Development Advisory Committee

Michael Buddemeyer

7. Proclamation of Sincere Appreciation and Thanks to Covid-19 Emergency Response Volunteers. – Motion to approve made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 7-0.

CORRESPONDENCE – Motion to receive and place on file made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion passed 7-0.

1. Monthly RIRRC Report. / R. Antaya
2. Thank you letter from the Melville Park Committee to the Public Works Department. / E. Rizy
3. Portsmouth Water and Fire District Quarterly Financials. / N. J. Larsen, Senior Accountant
4. Rhode Island Government Register Public Notice of Proposed Rule Making. / J. Boyd, CRMC
5. Award of Financial Reporting Achievement. / Government Finance Officers Association

FUTURE MEETINGS – Motion to cancel the December 28 meeting made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Ms. Abbott. Motion passed 6-1. Mr. Kelly in dissent.

~~Dec 28 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting~~

Jan 11 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting

Jan 25 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting

Feb 08 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting

ADJOURN – Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion passed 7-0.

Time: 8:19 PM

Jennifer M. West, Town Clerk