

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, April 6, 2020

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:22 p.m. via Zoom.

Public Hearing

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:23 pm for Ordinance 2020-03 Zoning Map Change to Downtown Zone. There were no public comments. Mayor Grenier closed the Public Hearing at 7:24 pm.

Regular Meeting

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Remillard, Otis, Morgan, Eastman, Higbee, and Theberge

Absent: Councilors Rozek and Berthiaume

Also present: James Wheeler, Susan Tremblay, Fire Chief James Watkins, Pamela Laflamme, Shelli Fortin, Patricia Chase, Ben Hall, and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to accept the minutes of the March 16, 2020 Regular Meeting and Work Session, the March 18, 2020 and March 25, 2020 Budget meetings, and the March 30, 2020 Work Session. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier - yes

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1860 start date 03/17/2020 end date 04/06/2020 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,613,878.90. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier - yes

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

There were no Council Committee Reports.

2. Ordinance 2020-03 Zoning Map Change to Downtown Zone (tabled 3/16/2020)

In the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty

AN ORDINANCE amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Berlin, Chapter 17, ZONING, ARTICLE IV, Establishment of Zoning Districts, Section 17-41, Zoning Districts

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Berlin as follows:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council that the Code of Ordinances of the City of Berlin Chapter 17, ZONING, ARTICLE IV, Establishment of Zoning Districts, Section 17-41, Zoning Districts is hereby amended as follows

OFFICIAL ZONING MAP

The City of Berlin Zoning Map shall be changed to reflect the following:

1. A map is attached to this ordinance to clearly reflect the change being made to the current downtown zone – the zone is being resized to reflect a more realistic footprint that matches the zoning requirements of downtown. The north/south boundaries are Mason Street and Mechanic Street and cover the parcels from east of Pleasant Street to the east of Main Street.
2. The parcels remaining that are currently zoned downtown in the zone will become Business General as reflected by the map.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after passage.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to remove this item from the table. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to read Ordinance 2020-03 by short title for a second time. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier - yes

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to read Ordinance 2020-03 by short title for a third time. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier - yes

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, that Ordinance 2020-03 be passed. So moved, the motion passed by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier - yes

NEW BUSINESS

3. Resolution 2020-10 Appropriating \$44,220.92 for Fire Dept Apparatus Floor (1st read)

Councilor Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for April 20, 2020. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

4. Resolution 2020-11 Authorizing Operation Stonegarden Grant for \$13,426 (1st read)

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for April 20, 2020. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

5. City Manager's Report

City Manager Wheeler advised there was no report beyond the COVID-19 update during the work session.

6. Mayor's Report

- a. Letters from Northern Edge Property Management ref: Pay as You Throw Garbage Collection

Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council:

It has come to our attention that you have been discussing the possibility of commencing a "Pay-as-you-Throw" trash program. It has also been mentioned that the "Pay-as-you-Throw" trash program could at least be instituted for "Commercial Properties" (buildings with 3+ units) due to the greater amount of trash resulting from these properties.

On behalf of the owners of many single, duplex, and multi-family buildings in the City of Berlin, we would like to express that we would not be in favor of any such programs due to the additional cost burden that would result upon our property owners and we would think that there would be increased littering due to the lack of cooperation by the tenants. If the "special trash bags" are the responsibility of each apartment tenant, we can see them not putting

their garbage out on a weekly basis and dumping items on the side of the road or in the woods, etc., which would cause even more sanitation issues. The additional costs involved in the purchase of "special trash bags" would also result in a financial burden to the tenants or landlords and the trash collection fees would result in rent increases, which would place an additional burden on tenants.

We would appreciate your taking our concerns into consideration during your decision-making process.

Very Truly Yours,

Monique F. Dube
Northern Edge Property Management

Dear Mayor Grenier and City Council Members:

The proposed "Pay-as-you-Throw" trash program has been brought to our attention by our property manager. We are just average people trying to afford retirement some day by way of rental property investment. We have 6 kids and would love to be members of your community. Currently we reside in Florida but hope to spend summers in Berlin one day.

We have been faced with many repairs and maintenance items on our rentals since purchasing in the past two years. We are also carrying the burden of heating oil costs and snow removal. A proposal of this nature would be one more element to consider in regards to future investment in Berlin.

Lastly, due to the current pandemic situation I am concerned my tenants may incur financial hardship. This proposal would just add fuel to the potential economic calamity coming our way.

We hope our plea does not fall on deaf ears as we have much hope in your community and it's future.

Sincerely,

Renee and Steven Spillman

Dear Mayor Paul Grenier:

It has come to my attention that Berlin is considering a pay as you go for trash collection. This is a bad idea because tenants won't buy the bags and stockpile trash on property or dump illegally. In the past I've had to force tenants to put trash out when it's free. Even if the landlords buy the bags tenants won't use them. It's too bad that Berlin doesn't have enough industry for job creation and a better tax base.

Sincerely,

Darrin Bennett
Owner
578 Rockingham Street, Berlin, NH

Hello Mayor Grenier,

I understand you are deciding whether to implement a pay-as-you-go trash pickup in Berlin, NH.

I own one building in Berlin, and another in Maine, where I have not had a positive experiences with any pay-as-you-go trash pickup system. The problem is it involves a tenant having to go someplace to purchase stickers or bags. The trash was frequently left to build up for weeks, and in the worst cases a couple of months. Beside being an eyesore for everyone else, the trash buildup resulted in insect and rodent issues.

Please try to consider ways to fund city wide trash pickup that does not involve people having regularly purchase items such as stickers or bags.

Thank you,
Brandon Casci

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second from Councilor Otis, to accept the Mayor's report and place the letters received on file.

Councilor Theberge asked that this be tabled for further study and Mayor Grenier advised it would be part of the ongoing discussion.

Councilor Higbee stated that he hoped that the Council would continue to talk about it.

So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pamela Laflamme read comments received via Facebook:

KC Hart commented "I agree pay as you throw is a bad idea. It's hard enough to get folks to put trash where it belongs... for free!"

David Poudrier commented "Not a good idea".

Jen Law commented "Life needs to go back to normal".

8. Council Comments

Councilor Higbee commended Pamela Laflamme for the great job setting up the meetings.

Councilor Morgan stated that they were informative and was glad to see them open to the public, however she thought there would be more comments. Pamela Laflamme advised that 51 people were currently watching.

Councilor Higbee noted that the number watching may grow as people get used to the technology. Councilor Remillard agreed with Councilor Higbee.

Mayor Grenier stated that now that the technology is in place, once things are back to normal he would like to continue to livestream the meetings.

9. Adjournment

At approximately 7:51 p.m. Councilor Higbee moved with a second by Councilor Morgan to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

A True Record, Attest:

Shelli Fortin
City Clerk

Note: Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the Council by motion.