

BOROUGH OF BRADLEY BEACH
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 1, 2022 AT 6:30 p.m.

A Special Council Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Bradley Beach was held by means of communication equipment, N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), to include streaming services and other online meeting platforms and formal action will be taken on the above date.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fox opened the meeting with a salute to the flag.

Sunshine Law

The meeting has been noticed publicly according to the Open Public Meetings Act requirement for the “Annual Notice” and posted on the official bulletin board.

ROLL CALL 6:30 p.m.

Present: Council: Bonnell Gubitosi, Sexsmith, Mayor Fox
Municipal Clerk Erica Kostyz
Deputy Municipal Clerk Michele Whille

Mayor Fox stated this evening is a workshop meeting to discuss the United Methodist Church. On February 16th he and the Council looked at how they would go through this process which identifies as the first of two major deliverables providing design options based on input from the Programming Committee that worked with the project partners.

Mayor Fox continued the next step is moving forward with an option for the project partners, DIG Architecture and T&M Associates. Mayor Fox introduced three of the five Programming Committee Members, Christine Dickler, Robyn Flipse and Barbara Carlucci who were in attendance for this Workshop Meeting. Note, Rafet Kaplan, fourth member of the Committee was also in attendance shortly thereafter.

Mayor Fox stated during the five sessions, the Programming Committee members answered questions for the Engineers and Architects and fulfilled assignments for various options for the building. One Councilman would sit in on the meetings. The Mayor and Administrator attended meetings also to answer clarifying questions (ex. funding, facility) and did not participate in the assignments of the project partners or the Committee. Mayor Fox thanked the Committee Members for their service to the community and focus on this project.

Mayor Fox recommended to the Council not to come to a closure this evening on a decision for one of the three options based on some of the feedback received during the Town Hall Meeting that took place on February 28th. Mayor Fox explained questions that need to be answered for the project partners is what option the Borough wants to pursue and when to provide it. After a request on February 28th from the public to have more Town Hall Meetings, Mayor Fox decided

to provide two more Town Hall meetings to get more feedback and look at potentials for a hybrid option for this project in addition to the three options already presented.

Mayor Fox recapped some of the themes discussed last evening from residents which included parking, the renovation process, doing improvements in stages, questions on funding, uses, more meetings to discuss this before making a decision, amount that has been spent thus far, when do the costs become public, doing a resident survey in place of a referendum, bringing the asset to safe compliance.

Councilman Sexsmith stated is not ready to decide yet and feels after last evening parking needs to be explored more.

Councilman Gubitosi thanked the Programming Committee for their service that turned out to be the three option that have been presented.

Councilman Gubitosi stated he hopes to collect ideas from each option and collaborating with Council for an Option 4 to present to the professional partners and receive a cost estimate to provide to the public.

Mr. Gubitosi read a four point outline he created if the Borough moves forward with the project that consisted of the following:

- Keeping costs down.
- Preserve historical elements of the building.
- Functionality
- Minimize resident destruction.

Councilman Gubitosi encouraged the residents to think in broader terms for this evening's meeting to get to a consolidated design to present to the project partners and get an estimated cost soon.

Councilman Bonnell, thanked the Programming Committee. Councilman Bonnell stated the work presented this evening is premature concepts that can be done down the road and how much money it will cost.

Councilman Bonnell mentioned several projects within the building that are going to be a priority to make the building useable (Ex. roof, air conditioning, sprinkler system, ADA compliance).

Councilman Bonnell stated at this time he does not feel the Borough will be able to get a solid price.

Mayor Fox stated he favors Option 2 and feels it has the most functionality. Mayor Fox stated one of the main requests for the project partners is to provide estimated line item costs to better decide what is feasible and what is not.

Programming Committee Members:

Refet Kaplan, Programming Committee Member, explained the Committee was asked to aggressively produce ideas for the building without the thought of cost.

Robyn Flipse, stated the most impressive thing about this experience was the expertise of the project partners.

Public Comment:

Don Greenberg, 302 Park Place Avenue, suggested one of the Town Hall Meetings be held virtually and agreed with Councilman Bonnell's comments.

Brigitte McGuire, 610 Brinley Avenue, read a prepared statement that mentioned parking, taking the next step, the options presented, costs and virtual meetings.

Julie Nutaitis, 605 Newark Avenue, expressed concerns regarding costs, parking, shuttle service and more time to make this decision.

Paul Neshamkin, 411 ½ LaReine Avenue, thanked the Programming Committee. Mr. Neshamkin also mentioned parking alternatives, keeping the gymnasium, grant money and donations.

Thomas J. Coan, 612 Third Avenue, thanked the Programming Committee and expressed concerns regarding asbestos, roof repairs and removing the gymnasium.

Thomas Gavin, 414 Fourth Avenue, thanked the Programming Committee and suggested going with the simplest footprint and getting the cost.

Christine Dickler, Programming Committee Member, clarified multiple conversations Took place regarding parking at the Committee Meetings.

Lauren Egbert, 404 ½ Brinley Avenue, thanked the Programming Committee, strongly expressed she is in favor of restoring the building, concerns about Councilman Bonnell's comments about the roof structure.

Ms. Egbert read a segment from "Six Practical Reasons to Save Old Buildings."

Paula Gentempo, 103 Fourth Avenue, expressed she is in favor of restoring the Church as a Community Center.

Mayor Fox stated the Governing Body will be working together to schedule a few more public sessions to discuss this project.

Councilman Gubitosi suggested the public consider all the discussions and comments from the Governing Body this evening for the next meeting.

Public Comment via email:

Chris DeLuca, 318 Brinley Avenue

I have reviewed all of the well prepared materials available on the BB website. My concerns regarding this project mount.

My main concern is the disruption it will cause in the heart of our community. Would we put a restaurant there? Parking; trucks loading and unloading for events; large and small groups of people coming, going or milling about. It will change the character of the surrounding area dramatically.

What problem are we trying to solve? Do we have a thriving Community Activities program that is bursting at the seams and in need of more and better space. Maybe I'm unaware; but I haven't seen it. Is the idea that if we build it they will come. In my mind I see a beautiful and expensive Community Center where six people meet weekly for book club.

I'm glad we bought the property. Thank you to those that said "Wait a minute, let's think about this". We have had our time to think about it. I've heard it said that we can make a profit; it has cost us 1.2 million, we can sell it for 3 million. Sounds right, but I know that there is more to it than that. And that is a problem. We have had no real discussion about the potential costs of the project. I want to know how much it has cost us so far, we surely have that figure available.

The folks that only want to preserve the building; I don't think they care how much it costs. I love old stuff. They don't make anything like they used to. I will be sad if we can't have an architectural salvage company recycle the beautiful artifacts in the old church. I want Bradley Beach to build for the future efficiently, economically, and sustainably. In this case it means letting go of the past.

Nicole Riccio (No address given)

Why is there a continuous lack of information on the financial implications of decisions, whether it be regarding money that would be saved or money that would be spent? How do you expect people to make decisions, ask questions, and voice opinions if they are not presented with necessary information?

Has the option been explored to utilize existing spaces, like the rec center, library, boardwalk, and parks instead of embarking on this new project?

Aric Gitomer, 420 McCabe Avenue

Questions:

1. Option 1 looks great on paper however the architect failed to draw the actual footprint of the building at the corner entry tower (he does not show how the building which flares out about 4 feet at its base, the buttressed stone base). Because of this I do not think it is even feasible given the amount of ramp required to get up to the entry doors. Can this be verified if this is even an option?
2. Option 1 looks like the more ideal plan in terms of accessibility and interesting landscaping, but why did the architect create a crossover effect on the west side (Madison Ave) with the ramps traffic crossing over the stair pathway? That does not seem like a safe line of egress. I would like the architect to address this design decision.

3. In regards to all of the options, why would you not propose to eliminate all of the columns in the lower-level meeting room designated as room 10. This would provide for greater flex space and seems like a great value. Can the Architect address this?
4. I hope you realize that Option 2 will not allow for a very nice entrance due to the restrictions of the existing building. You will most likely be entering a small vestibule and will be going up a very narrow stair to enter into the main areas. The architect tried to show a wide stair but in reality, this is not the case due to stair width minimums required by the building code. I hope the architect can address this.
5. All of the options block the natural light into the meeting room on the lower level. Is this ideal? Can the architect address this design flaw?

At first glance the designs look well thought out and are rendered nicely but I do not think they are thought all the way through and will require a much closer study into its feasibility.

Gail Osterman, 402 Brinley Avenue (3/1/22 Special Workshop Meeting)

Although I think the architectural plans presented last week provide a grand vision of the church transformed into a state-of-the-art community center, I have another thought I believe is worth considering.

I propose a more modest beginning, starting with a structural, mechanical, and access assessment and remediation of the immediate building needs, followed by refreshing selected interior spaces with paint and minor improvements. The building could then be opened for use.

Within a short period of time we will learn how the community wants to use the building, the efficacy of the programs, what additional space needs rejuvenating, and if future modifications or renovations would better serve the community.

The bonus to this plan is that the borough would only need to commit to minor funding while simultaneously growing an understanding of how the building will be used by the community. It also allows for funding sources (grants, gifts, endowments, etc.) to be explored that would help offset any future public expenditures.

ON MOTION by Fox/Sexsmith to adjourn the Special Council Meeting.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Bonnell, Gubitosi, Sexsmith, Mayor Fox
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Weber
ABSTAIN: None

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:00 p.m.


Erica Kostyz, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk