

COUNCIL CHAMBERS ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

Minutes of the Virtual Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Bogota, held at the Bogota Council Chambers, 375 Larch Avenue, Bogota, NJ, on Tuesday, **October 5, 2021 at 7:38pm.**

Salute to Flag was led by Council President Carpenter.

The notice requirements of the Open Public meetings Law have been satisfied as notice was published in The Record on September 12, 2021 and in the Star Ledger on September 23, 2021 and posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board on September 13, 2021. Also, a display ad was published on September 12, 2021 in the Record and on September 13, 2021 in the Star Ledger. A Public Hearing sign has been posted in Olsen Park since September 3, 2021 at the intended location of the change of use or purpose.

Roll Call: Council President Carpenter and Council members Connors, Fede, Granquist and Murphy were present. Mayor Kelemen and Councilman Robbins were absent. Also attending were Borough Attorney Betesh, Borough Engineers Costa and Flores, and Borough Architect Bilow.

Public Hearing: A public hearing will be held to discuss changing the purpose or use of approximately 2 acres of Olsen Park from outdoor and open parkland to a Bogota Recreation Center, Recreation Center Parking Lot, Outdoor Basketball Courts and Tennis Courts. The Recreation Center will include an indoor conservation classroom, park administrative offices, concession area and seating, locker rooms and restrooms, equipment storage areas and a gymnasium.

Borough Attorney Betesh explained the need for a public hearing for a Green Acres designated property. He explained that the public hearing that was held on October 29, 2020 focused only on the Recreation Center itself, so it was not sized out correctly. It did not include other improvements to the area such as the parking lot and basketball courts. Therefore, the Public Hearing is being redone. This hearing will focus on the building as well as the Basketball Courts, the Parking Lot, and other improvements that are planned. Mr. Betesh continued that all Green Acres required notices concerning this Public Hearing are correct and were filed on time. He then introduced Borough Engineers Robert Costa and Jeyson Flores who designed the project as well as Architect Bilow who designed the interior of the building as the presenters for this public hearing. He said that once the presentation is concluded, the meeting will be turned over to the public for comments. There is no time limit for public comment. He continued that after public comment, the professionals will answer any questions and the meeting will be adjourned. He said that the public has 14 days after the meeting to send written comments.

Borough Engineer Costa presented drawings and explained that the project has two phases. Phase I is the Basketball and Tennis Courts which will be moved from their present location further to the west. This project was partially funded by a County grant. All permits for this project have been obtained.

He said that Phase II is the Recreation Center which will go where the Basketball and Tennis Courts are now. He said that in between that and the Senior Center is where the parking will go and then a new driveway coming off the County road. He explained that this meeting is being held because it is a Change of Use Hearing where the public can make comments as per State Statute NJSA 7:36-25.6. Two acres of property will be used for the two phases of the project, the Basketball and Tennis Courts, the Recreation Center, and the Parking Lot. He said that public comments can continue for 14 days past this public hearing. He then showed the Basketball and Tennis Court, Drainage, Fencing, and Lighting. He explained that there will be two full courts adjacent to a tennis court. Drainage is included and any runoff will be captured. He explained that a Waterfront Development Permit was obtained as well as a Bergen County Soil Conservation Permit (issued in March) and a Bergen County Planning Board Permit (issued in April). He repeated that these plans were submitted and approved and partially funded by a Bergen County grant.

Mr. Costa said that the Recreation Center had been discussed at length at another meeting, but other parts were not. He said that the building has not changed. There is a gym, a classroom, an interpretive center, an office, a storage area, and a parking lot for 65 spaces. There is a drainage system with new infrastructure as required by the state, a proposed generator in case power goes out in the area, a pump station to River Road because there is no sewer line there, a mitigation plan and landscape plan. He said that all of these have been approved by the NJDEP, and all required permits were issued.

Mr. Costa continued showing two full basketball courts adjacent to the tennis court. Drainage is included so any runoff will be captured. The next slide showed vehicular access to the parking lot and then pedestrian walkways around the park.

Next he showed the Recreation building and explained that the project had to be done in two phases. He had to re-apply to the DEP for the building which is Phase II. The re-application was approved on September 28, 2021. There is Flood Hazard verification and Waterfront Development. Because a pump station had to be put in, A Treatment Works Approval was needed and obtained on October 1, 2021. The Bergen County Soil Conservation Permit was also issued. Part of this was the County, and the County waived jurisdiction for this project. Mr. Costa then put on the screen a rendering of the interior of the building and turned the meeting over to Architect Matt Bilow.

Mr. Bilow showed the latest rendering of the building. He explained that it was a construction drawing, so it would be hard to read. He pointed out the entrance off the parking lot and the entrance through Main Street. He then pointed out Administrative Offices, a Conservation Classroom, and an Interpretive Center. He then pointed out the concession stand to support the park and the facility. He showed the locker rooms and bathrooms for men and women as well as a family bathroom. He then pointed out the main Recreation Area with the full court Basketball court. He explained that one side could hold 3 individual hoops, and the other side can facilitate a volley board court. The remainder is concession seating with breakaway space for the concession stand. The remainder is park equipment storage and park maintenance

storage. He pointed out the equipment storage facilities and the electrical room which is required for the generator, etc.

At this point, Mr. Betesh asked Mr. Bilow what percentage of the building is required to be for Recreation by Green Acres. Mr. Bilow did not have the number with him, but said that the basketball court is the Recreation portion of the building. Mr. Betesh said that he believed it was 25% that had to be for Recreation and Mr. Bilow confirmed that the basketball court covered that. The remainder of the building supports the park. Mr. Bilow continued that Green Acres also required outdoor space for the facilities, so he pointed out the covered canopy in the back and the canopy in the front that will provide shelter to people in the part during a rainstorm.

Mr. Costa then showed a schematic of the park area and pointed out items going west to east starting with the Basketball court, the tennis court, the existing playground in the Center. 21,000 square feet inside and outside. To the east is where the parking lot will go, and continue east to the existing building. The pump station will be there which will have roughly 775 linear feet traveling up Main Street to River Road. There will be a generator there as well. He explained the drainage system which is part of the infrastructure and was approved. He then went on to the mitigation plan and landscaping plan. He said that it would be impossible to build a Recreation Center, Basketball and Tennis Courts, and a parking lot without the removal of trees. There are roughly 30 trees to be removed, 4 additional trees possibly may be removed. He said that he will do the best he can to save those 4 trees. Part of the approval from NJDEP was that we must re-vegetate because of the loss of trees. He said he is proposing 89 trees. (The upper right hand portion of the screen is showing the landscape plan which shows where the plantings will go.) There will be sweet gum, poplars, waterberries, dogwoods, black gums, oaks, and maples. The sanitary system will be there as well which will be pumped up to River Road. There will be 65 parking spaces as well, 3 will meet the ADA requirements for Van accessible. There will be reconstruction of the driveway, and all of this has been approved by the County of Bergen as Main Street is a County Thoroughfare. Mr. Costa said that the generator could be changed during the bid process. He said that the elevation of the building and generator meets the NJDEP requirements. He said permits were received for Phase I and II of the project last week. He said that this was an overview of the entire project, and he encouraged anyone to ask questions. He said that after this meeting, the public will have 14 days to submit a comment in writing to the Borough.

Mr. Betesh asked Mr. Costa to explain what the disturbance area of the project was. Mr. Costa said that it was roughly 2 acres in total. Mr. Betesh continued that Green Acres made stipulations that must be followed. He said that this building must be open to the public, and any Recreation programs to be conducted there must be conducted through the town. Any DPW equipment stored there must be used by the park. The Interpretive Room is a room that is informative to the public and display the natural history of the area.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilman Connors, to open the meeting up to Public Comment which will not be time restrictive. Motion carried.

Rudy Gutierrez asked if the trees that will be removed are mostly on the Main Street side.

Susan Harper of River Road said that no one was at the original meeting about this only lasted 7 minutes. She is all for the Recreation Center , but does not approve of the plan in place for it. So many trees are being cut down. She said the large trees being cut down are over 100 year old and provide enormous protection to our environment. They provide clean air, protection from train noise, provide canopies for our homes and cool roadways. She asked for people to go on social media and see the trees that will be cut down. She is proud that bald eagles live in Bogota and does not want them impacted by this plan. She said that a new parking lot is not needed. There are 160 parking spaces. She is concerned about light shining on homes. She said that many trees have fallen, and the town has been neglectful in replanting. Trees that are being replaced are not as large as the ones being cut down. People want to know why the current Recreation Center is needed. She suggests redrawing the plans.

Adriana would like to echo what Susan Harper said. She is upset that 100 year old trees will be removed to build a parking lot. It seems unreasonable and sad and would like the borough to find a different way to get around it.

Camilia is a sophomore majoring in Civil Engineering. She said the current Recreation building is hardly used and, it would not be good to use for Senior citizens. She asked if another bathroom could be added, and she was concerned with sound absorption. Many buildings are being built in the area which has created a greater need for environmental protection.

Robert Moss of 17 New Street in Bloomfield is concerned with the calculation used for the indoor calculation. That outdoor space with the roofing is being put in the denominator. Support of outdoor recreation would mean restrooms, storage, the kitchen area for the food vendor, athletic equipment, and office space to keep track of who is using the fields, etc. Playing in an outdoor area can not be used to calculate the % of indoor recreation area. Indoor recreation divided by total indoor area. You cannot add the porch area to the calculation. NJ Administrative Code 7:36-25.7 Paragraph D explains the calculation.

Erica Reyes 443 Feller Place is new to the neighborhood. She is in agreement with Susan Harper and other residents that spoke up concerning the protection of the trees and the environment.

Carmel Birney of E. Fort Lee Road asked how many spaces are required for a public building. Are 65 spaces needed? She also heard that the current Recreation Center would house the pump station which is definitely needed as well as the generator. She asked if she is correct about the pump station and generator. She thought it would be strange to put a Senior Center by a Pump station. She asked if Joe-Joe's park will be protected during construction and if the rest of the playground will be protected, and if some trees can be spared. She also asked if there was thought given to an Environmental Green building.

Jorge Nunez said that he is happy that so many people are at this meeting. \$3 million is coming from the development for the Recreation Center. He said that all surrounding communities have Recreation centers. He would like to know how much has been spent and how much is

needed to finish it. He said that to have the plans redrawn will be an added expense although it will be a shame to cut down so many trees. He asked when this stops being a viable project.

DK Dyson of Main Street is concerned about the trees just like Susan Harper and the others that complained about the trees and the parking spaces. She is against having large trees cut down.

Wanita Briggs is new to town. She picked this location because of its beauty. She walks through Olsen Park a lot. She said that parking is hardly utilized. Her son told her how amazing the very large trees are. She says the shade is important as is the noise control. She said that when big trees come down and small trees are planted, it never looks the same.

Rebecca Youla said that it was exciting to get the \$3 million from Atwater to build a recreation center. Many of the very large trees are dead on top and it is only a matter of time until those dead branches fall on someone. On Bogota Day, and the Fall Festival Day, all the parking is packed. There will not be police officers every day when children are trying to walk down to the field to play ball. A parking lot is helpful and safe. There has been road block after road block in getting this recreation center built. The town needs the recreation center. Sacrifices have to be made. A new Recreation Center will give the children a place to go. The town and community need this.

Camilia at River Road said that trees are important. People walk more on tree lit streets. Cars drive slower on tree lined streets. Trees are more important than people realize.

Susan Cruz of Walnut Avenue whole heartedly agree with everyone. She asked if the engineer could change the parking lot a little bit without redoing the whole plan. She does not want to stop the progress on the Recreation Center.

Barbara Sorrano of River Road said that a new Recreation Center is needed, but 65 Parking spaces are not needed. The cement factory needs the large trees to clean the air. She said that the old Recreation Center can come down.

Rudy Gutierrez agrees with everyone on the necessity of keeping the trees and modifying the parking lot.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilman Connors, to close Public Comments. Motion carried.

Mr. Cost explained that the building 20,000 square feet. Parking is necessary for events, etc. Residential requires 2 spots per 1,000 sq ft. Office requires 4 spots, Retail requires 6 spots and medical requires 8 to 10 spots. He said that the consensus of people seem to want the center. Infrastructure is important. 20 trees coming down are only 6 inch to 8 inch caliber. Only 4 or 5 trees are very large of 24 or 27 caliber. The area is not a perfect rectangle. 18 feet for parking and 24 feet for egress. Trying to save trees is tough. Large trees do not survive. Parking is needed. Save a few trees and plant a few more. Mr. Betesh said that 25% of the building is

5,261 square feet. The gym is 4,777 square feet which is less than 25%. He also said that Green Acres is very strict on what any Green Acres property can be used for, and it would never be allowed to be changed to a senior facility. It is a Recreation Center. The majority of trees coming down are 6 to 8 caliber trees. Councilwoman Fede said a project was done in Olsen Park 15 years ago. A walking path was put in. Thirty-six trees were planted to replace trees that were taken down. This town has always been committed to replacing trees.

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilman Connors. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:20PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Borough Clerk Jeanne Cook.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne Cook". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name in the previous block.