

Chatham Borough Addresses Watchung Avenue Sidewalk Petition; Council Remembers Cordelia Fuller

The AlternativePress.com

by Laura Sassano at 04:44PM on Tuesday, October 26 2010



CHATHAM BOROUGH, NJ - Chatham Borough Zoning Officer Vincent DeNave addressed a petition recently brought forth by residents regarding the possible implementation of a Watchung Avenue sidewalk during the Monday, October 25 Chatham Borough Council meeting. The sidewalk would enable safe passage from Hillside Avenue to the center of town.

“From an engineering standpoint, it is possible,” DeNave said. “But unlike the other sidewalk installations we have had, it’s a bit challenging.”

Potentially costly challenges include the erection of a retaining wall along Girard Avenue and Hillside Avenue, as well as the removal of some trees that would impair construction. DeNave is willing to approach Morris County for the expense of removing at least one tree, which is on a county road, but expressed that the county traditionally does not step in on such matters. DeNave estimated that the project, if implemented, will cost upward of \$78,000.

Council President James Collander questioned the feasibility of constructing a type of pathway around the trees that would perhaps not be as expensive. DeNave responded that this might prove problematic for the borough’s liability in the long run.

“It’s a [matter] of prioritizing, and my sense is that this should move closer to the top,” Collander stated regarding the issue. DeNave is expected to address homeowners that would be impacted by the project if it moves forward.

The council also approved the first reading of an ordinance which prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco-related products within the borough’s parks, playgrounds, recreation halls, library, and Borough Hall. Councilman John Holman stated that the ordinance’s

purpose is not to be a “vendetta” against those who smoke or use tobacco, but to set a good example and provide a safe environment for the borough’s children.

Karen Blumenfeld, Executive Director of Global Advisors Smokefree Policy (GASP) commended and thanked members of the council. Further information about GASP can be found at www.njGASP.org.

Potential environmental improvements were further discussed with the adoption of a resolution that addresses the community garden that was to be planted in the power line right-of-way near Brooklake Road.

Chatham Borough obtained approval for the garden from PSE&G in 2009, but the agreement has since been terminated due to increasing concerns among Madison Borough residents.

The resolution requests that the Madison Borough Council formally express to PSE&G that they have no objection to the garden.

Councilman Bruce Harris noted that several members of the Madison Borough Council are also disappointed by the faltering of the garden plans.

“We want to be good neighbors, and we want them to be good neighbors. It is as simple as that,” Mayor Vaughan said.

Mayor Nelson Vaughan and council also took time to acknowledge the recent passing of Cordelia Fuller. Fuller was a lifelong resident of Chatham, and among their most dedicated and inspiring community members. The council read a resolution in tribute to Fuller, which recognized the many ways she positively impacted the borough.

Fuller’s husband, Bill Fuller, was present, along with daughter and son-in-law, Cordelia and Philippe Carvonis.

“Cory loved Chatham, and she would be very gratified to know how Chatham is loving her back right now,” Fuller said.

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