



Meeting Minutes

Special Session of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Bogota held on Thursday, December 29, 2016, in the Bogota Senior Center at 7:30PM.

Salute to the Flag was led by Councilman Connors.

Roll Call: Council members Connors, Fede, Miranda, Mitchell, Murphy and Napolitano were present. Also present were Borough Attorney Bossong and Financial Advisor Brian Morris. Mayor Kelemen was absent, so Council President Mitchell presided over the meeting as Acting Mayor.

The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law have been satisfied as notice was sent to two newspapers and posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board on December 21, 2016.

Borough Attorney Bossong explained that the Planning and Zoning Board was responsible for the site plan approval including drainage issues which engineers discussed at meetings. At this point, all that is before Council is the Financial Agreement for the PILOT. The Financial Agreement is a negotiated number of years and a negotiated percentage based on annual gross revenue generated by the Development. The audited financial statement is reviewed each year by the Borough and the DCA.

Public Hearing and adoption of the following Ordinance took place:

#1490 - Authorizing the Execution of a Financial Agreement with River Development Bogota Urban Renewal LLC **One five (5) minute time limit per person**

Kathryn Gates-Ferris asked how the numbers change if they do not reach 90% occupancy, and who is responsible for assessing the overall impact on town services.

Steve Lonagan requested that the Council vote against the project due to increase in students at schools and increase in low income housing when buildings won't fill up.

Juanita Sayres agreed with Steve Lonagan.

Charles Severino said that the Rutgers Study is flawed, and there will be a large influx of students for the schools.

Rosemary Gasiewicz was concerned with Environmental Protection on the site.

Kathy VanBuren felt that not enough people were made aware of the public hearing.

George Silos expressed concern about the increase in population creating an increase in services needed.

John Wolberg felt that there was no real cost analysis, no transparency, and no guarantee the apartments will be rented.

Larry Minhart said that the area needs to be developed. He is concerned with costs associated with an increase in population.

Lisa Kohles said that 297 Palisade Avenue is not filled yet because the rents are too high. She is concerned about the cost to Fire and Police Departments.

David Macfarlane felt that the financial end should be looked into further and the Council should vote against it at this time.

Patricia Adriance asked about the difference between money collected in taxes and money collected from the project.

Mr. Bossong explained that a lot of agencies will be overseeing this project including the DCA, the DEP, the Army Corps of Engineers, Soil Conservation, etc. He said that 90% occupancy is not correct. The Borough will be paid based on 90% of Gross Revenue. He said that the Financial Analyst was paid out of the escrow account for this project. The Property Maintenance officer will be responsible for the upkeep of the property. The Rutgers Study is industry standard. 45 new children are projected.

Reports:

Councilwoman Murphy said that she is not arguing the pilot. She just feels that there was no transparency. Also, the Planning and Zoning Board did not have answers for the flooding issue. Councilwoman Murphy made a motion to table the ordinance. No one seconded her motion.

Acting Mayor Mitchell reminded everyone that Enterprise has stored a lot of cars in that area for many years. How much flooding could there be if that company was not worried about storing cars there.

Councilman Miranda said that he lived in a city that had a population growth from 7,400 to 10,000 in a matter of months. The growth increased businesses. Without a growing population, you cannot have supermarkets, etc.

Councilwoman Fede said that she participated in many meetings both Council and Planning and Zoning concerning this project. The Fire Department, the Police Department, and Property Maintenance all visited the site in order to comment on it. The town is receiving \$3,000,000 in Community Benefits. It will be the new 2017 Council that will decide what to do with that money. As for Environmental Protection, the DEP must okay the site before construction can begin. The Council relied on professionals.

Councilman Connors thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He explained that this was not shoved down people's throats. The Council wisely and carefully took advice of professionals. He said that it is not fair to compare this project to 297 Palisade. He said that he is a taxpayer and does not want to get hurt. This is a good project.

Councilman Napolitano said that this benefit has been going on throughout the county. It has been discussed for two years. The property is an eyesore and needs to be redeveloped. He reminded everyone that the town is waiting for two major grants for the schools. There will be many improvements to the town.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilman Miranda, to open the meeting up to Citizen Remarks. Motion carried.

Lisa Kohles, Johnny Sayres, George Silos, Charles Severino, Connie Carpenter, Patrick McHale, and Kathy VanBuren all expressed concern about the PILOT's effects on the schools and town finances.

Motion was made by Councilman Napolitano, seconded by Councilman Miranda, to close Citizen Remarks.

Meeting ended without adjourning. Sine Die will be held on January 5, 2017.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Borough Clerk Jeanne Cook.