

BOROUGH OF INTERLAKEN
WORKSHOP MINUTES
OCTOBER 15, 2014
7:00 P.M. AT BOROUGH HALL

The meeting of the Borough of Interlaken was called to order at 7:00 p.m., by Council President White. The following statement was read by Borough Administrator Reibrich. "The notice of the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act has been satisfied by forwarding annual notice to the Coaster and Asbury Park Press. A copy of annual notice is posted on the Borough bulletin board and is on file in the Borough Clerk's office."

Present: Council President White, Council members: Cohen, Franks, Handerhan, Miller, Napoli

Also Present: Borough Attorney Richard Shaklee, Municipal Clerk Lori Reibrich

Absent: Mayor Nohilly

1. LOCH ARBOUR –

Council discussed whether to agree to a joint meeting requested by Loch Arbour for the purpose of discussing a merger between the Village of Loch Arbour and the Borough of Interlaken.

Councilman Miller stated that he feels the meeting should go forward. He believes that the Village of Loch Arbour has been a good neighbor. The Borough shares many services with them through the Borough of Allenhurst. Loch Arbour came to our Mayor and asked for a meeting. Councilman Miller feels that the questions that have been raised are legitimate and they could be asked at a joint meeting with the people who prepared the merger proposal information. A meeting would start the process.

Councilman Napoli referenced the statute regarding consolidation and agreed that there should be a joint meeting to assemble the parties and to decide through deliberation whether or not a proposal should be sent to the Department of Community Affairs for a consolidation. He feels a meeting would be an opportunity to listen to Loch Arbour's proposal and to get additional information. It would also be a forum for everyone, including the public, to ask questions. Councilman Napoli feels the meeting should be held. Subsequent meetings for further clarification could always be arranged. He wants to respect Loch Arbour and give them the opportunity to present their case to us.

Councilman Cohen stated that he does not feel that Council should go forward with a meeting with Loch Arbour. He feels the residents should be asked if they are interested in meeting with Loch Arbour to discuss a merger. The question should be on a ballot. Councilman Cohen feels that Loch Arbour already asked Allenhurst to consolidate; maybe Interlaken should stay out of it.

Councilman Handerhan stated that a ballot question may not be a bad idea, but thinks a meeting to get more facts about the merger would be helpful. Councilman Handerhan feels nothing is lost by going forward with a meeting. There are no costs involved. Councilman Handerhan feels that this meeting has nothing to do with Allenhurst. It is a meeting to see if a merger will benefit Interlaken residents in the long run.

Councilman Franks stated that he is not opposed to having a joint meeting, but that the Council has a responsibility to the residents of Interlaken to investigate this thoroughly before a joint meeting. There are so many unanswered questions. Councilman Franks feels the information provided by Loch Arbour regarding the merger is incomplete.

Council President White is of the opinion that the information that was received from Loch Arbour has not been researched by Interlaken. Council President White feels that the Council should be proactive with our Borough Attorney and our Administrator. He said that the Council should review the information and figure out how to get that information out to our residents. This way when there is a joint meeting the Interlaken residents will have the information and be on the same page to protect their interest in this town. Council President White feels that cannot be done in 25 days. Council President White sees no reason against having joint meeting, but there should not be a rush to the table. Council President White would like to get the facts, present the facts to the public and then sit down for a meeting.

Councilman Handerhan raised concerns regarding the cost of a review by the Borough Attorney.

Borough Attorney Shaklee stated that he addressed consolidation procedures in a memo to Council earlier in the year and feels that there are some things a lawyer would look into, but a consolidation would require more fiscal review than attorney review when making these decision. The main review would concern finances.

Council discussed the proposed joint meeting date of November 12, 2014.

2. **NEW BUSINESS** - There was no new business at this time.
3. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**- Council President White opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Paul Fernicola, Mayor of Loch Arbour, stated that what was presented was based on the request of Interlaken’s Mayor. Loch Arbour suggested November 12, 2014 as a date for the joint meeting. Mr. Fernicola stated that the fiscal impact study was commissioned based upon the specific request of Interlaken’s Mayor to provide Council with a fiscal impact study. The study was prepared specifically for Interlaken by an independent company hired by Loch Arbour and shows that if the two towns were merged, based on the economy of scales, Interlaken residents would save 15 percent on their taxes. According to the study, a payment from a special tax district to Interlaken of \$500,000.00, each year, for ten years reduces the average resident of Interlaken’s taxes an additional nine percent for a total of 24 percent. The Loch Arbour commissioned study shows a special tax district being created that could allow for expenses associated with the consolidation to be allocated to only one of the towns. Loch Arbour would like to begin to make the presentation to Interlaken and its residents. Loch Arbour would like everything to be discussed in joint public meetings. That is where the dialogue begins to take place to begin to answer the questions of both towns. The Nov. 12th meeting would be to start the process of gathering information. Loch Arbour asks Interlaken to do its due diligence and investigation. Loch Arbour’s intention is to bring the expert who did the fiscal impact to make a presentation, to bring an expert on consolidation, to bring one of the mayors from Princeton (a town that successfully consolidated) and to hopefully get the state officials to at least attend a meeting.

Mr. Richard Knight, 214 Buttermere Avenue, stated that he felt that Mr. Fernicola was more prepared for this meeting than Council President White was regarding the matter.

Mr. Robert Cancellari, 714 Bridlemre Avenue, stated that he did not see harm in having a meeting to hear Loch Arbour’s presentation. Mr. Cancellari appreciates open transparent meetings. Mr. Cancellari questioned whether the 24% decrease in taxes would be offset by additional Board of Education expenses for an additional 30 children.

Ms. Elizabeth Hardy, 605 Fernmere Avenue, stated that she was interested in learning why Allenhurst rejected Loch Arbour. They share a common beach front and are geographically next to one another. Ms. Hardy also questioned why the Borough would want to take on the responsibility of a beach on top of everything else.

Ms. Jeanne Held, 414 Bridlemere Avenue, stated that she has known Mr. Fernicola for years and she feels he is a very honest and transparent individual who wants to provide the Borough with all of the information. Ms. Held feels that it would benefit the Borough to have an opportunity to ask questions. Ms. Held feels that the Borough is looking for the benefit to Interlaken. If the people believe it is a good idea than we will move forward. If the people think it is going to be an issue and potentially a hazard, than we are going to make a decision that it is not going to work. Ms. Held thanked Council for letting her comment.

Council President White clarified a previous statement. Council President White expressed his concern that the residents would not have enough information before the meeting. The residents should have the information, so that they were able to prepare questions regarding the matter.

With no further comment, Council President White closed the floor for public comment.

4. **ADJOURNMENT** – With no further discussion, Councilman Napoli made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Handerhan and unanimously carried.

	Mayor Nohilly	Council President White	Councilman Miller	Councilman Napoli	Councilman Cohen	Councilman Handerhan	Councilman Franks
Motion to Approve				X			
Motion to Second						X	
Approved		X	X	X	X	X	X
Opposed							
Abstain/Recuse							
Absent/Excused							