

District council meeting of 16 December 2020

Convened and announced on 10 December 2020

Present: ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET Marion (CSV), Mayor, SCHILTZ Fernand (LSAP), Deputy Mayor, JUNGBLUT Tom (CSV), Deputy Mayor, LORENT Guy (DP), EIFES Eric (DP), DI GENOVA Jean-Pierre (CSV), LAKAFF Laurent (CSV), ARRENSDORFF Jean-Jacques (Déi Gréng), SCHMIT Claude (Déi Gréng), WEYMERSKIRCH Patrick (LSAP), Councillors, TAZIAUX Tim, Acting Municipal Secretary, REIFFERS Cindy, Secretary

Apologies: SCHMITZ Jean-Pierre (CSV)

1. Determination of venue for the district council meeting

The district council unanimously approved the Cultural Centre in Moutfort as the venue for this district council meeting.

2. HR matters

In closed session

3. Creation of a post

The Council unanimously approved the creation of one employee post. This position is to assist the forest warden. The post was created by agreement with Sandweiler Council and the costs arising are being split between the two councils.

4. Approval of resignation by a member from a committee

The Council unanimously accepted the resignation of Jean-Jacques Arrensdorff from the Comic Festival Committee. The Mayor thanked him for his contribution.

5. Approval of a document – exchange of land in Oetrange (parcel of forest)

The Council unanimously accepted the exchange of land in Oetrange. The exchange concerns 2 forest parcels owned by Ms Anne-Marie Françoise Wurth and Mr Michel Alphonse Léon Wurth, located in “Kackeschbusch” in Oetrange, of 47 are and 50 m², which are being exchanged for 2 forest parcels owned by Contern district council, located in “Kackeschbusch” in Oetrange, of 46 are and 40 m². A balancing payment of € 275 is being paid by the Council to Ms Anne-Marie Françoise Wurth and Mr Michel Alphonse Léon Wurth. This exchange is of public benefit and was agreed due to the extension of the drinking water distribution network.

6. Approval of a document – exchange of land in Oetrange

By 6 votes in favour and 4 votes against, the Council agreed the document for land exchange in Oetrange. The Council is exchanging a parcel located on “Auf der Stras”, of 11 are and 50 m², for a parcel owned by Mr Jean Aloyse Schmit and Ms Gabrielle Brigitte Hoffmann, located in “In der Delt”, of 5 are and 90 m². Under this exchange, the Council is acquiring a larger, contiguous area of land, since the adjoining parcels already belong to the Council.

7. Approval of a document – purchase of 4 parcels in Oetrange

The Council unanimously approved the purchase from Mr Jean-Paul Weitz and Ms Viviane Marie-José Fischbach of 4 parcels of land, located in Contern in “Auf der Haide”, of 140 are and 70 m², for a price of € 140,700. This purchase was agreed in order to construct a new water supply.

8. Approval of a tenancy agreement with the Red Cross Luxembourg in Medingen

The Council unanimously approved the tenancy agreement with the Red Cross Luxembourg. This relates to the parking spaces opposite the Cultural Centre in Medingen, which are being leased by the Red Cross Luxembourg to Contern District Council for a price of € 100 per annum.

9. Approval of a request from Weiler-la-Tour Council to join the SEC

The Council unanimously approved the request from Weiler-la-Tour Council to join the SEC (Syndicat des eaux du Centre, the central district water board).

10. Determination of grants to clubs 2020 (continued)

The Council unanimously approved to accept the outstanding club grants for 2020. The majority of the grants were already approved by the Council on 18 November 2020.

11. Confirmation of changes to the traffic orders for Contern district – temporary changes

The Council unanimously accepts the temporary changes to the traffic orders for the Contern district.

12. Approval of income

Income totalling € 327,301 was accepted.

13. Approval of the Council budget 2021

By 6 votes in favour (4 CSV votes and 2 LSAP votes) and 4 votes against (2 DP votes and 2 Déi Gréng votes), the Council approved the Council budget 2021.

The Mayor thanked the Acting Municipal Secretary and the Finance Department for its excellent work in preparing the Council budget. This was now presented in a more comprehensible format. The Mayor also thanked the Finance Committee, which had devoted 2 sessions to analysing the budget and arrived at a judgement of soundness. The Mayor quoted from the Committee's work: "In an unfavourable economic context, the Cabinet is not losing sight of the investments that are necessary, whilst keeping the budget in line with the Cabinet's declaration."

The Mayor emphasised that preparing the budget was a challenge for every council, in these times.

The Cabinet had a list of priorities which it intended to implement – adapted at all times to the Council's financial situation. It needed to be understood that the Council was receiving € 1.6 million less from the state for 2020, due to the pandemic.

Expansion of the school, the sports infrastructure, and "De séchere Schoulwee"

The education and well-being of our children is an absolute priority, and for that reason the school infrastructure, the Maison Relais day-care centre and the sports infrastructure at "Ewent" are being expanded.

Given the increase in the number of residents over the coming four to five years, expanding the school and the day-care centre is an absolute necessity and an investment in the future. A new sports hall is also planned, primarily for school sports and for the sports-related activities of the day-care centre. Naturally, the new hall is also intended to be used outside school hours by sports clubs and for the Council's sports courses.

The new sports hall will also provide the caretakers with their own rooms, along with sanitary facilities and sufficient space for vehicles and for storing all the materials.

“De séchere Schoulwee” was planned. Implementing this will not only improve the safety of the schoolchildren, but will also benefit all pedestrians.

Safety and well-being of our residents

To counteract the increasing volume of through traffic, the Cabinet is planning a “shared space”, to include works to enhance the centre of the village in Contern. A large village square is to be created, and traffic reduced to a minimum via the 20 or 30 km/h zone.

In Oetrange, two new car parks with a total of over 25 spaces are being created by the Cultural Centre.

The residential parking arrangements will come into force at the end of 2021 and a Council officer and civil enforcement officers are being recruited.

In addition, traffic calming measures in the Rue de Syren and in the Rue de Luxembourg are being undertaken. These are costed at € 325,000 and € 270,000 respectively. The works on the Rue de Syren are to be arranged to follow on from the drain works.

Substantial investment is being made in our cemeteries. New columbaria are being added in Contern, Moutfort and Oetrange. Meadow orchards are then being laid out in Moutfort, Oetrange und Medingen, while the orchards in Contern are being made over. The morgue in Moutfort is being fully renovated, and the cold room is being enlarged.

In these difficult times, the Cabinet considers it important to create a pleasant environment in our district, where all residents can enjoy their free time.

The Cabinet will adapt its expenditures to the situation and, as previously mentioned, progressively implement the priorities defined in advance.

Fire brigade

The Mayor announced that the Cabinet had already submitted several requests to the Ministry of the Environment for various possible sites in the Contern district for construction of a fire station. The Ministry’s response in one case was negative, and the other response has not been received as yet. The last site was submitted to the Ministry of the Environment following a suggestion from the acting Commander of the local fire brigade.

Property

The purchase of “Conterstuff” (€ 4,950,000) represents a major investment.

The Mayor announced that it had not yet been possible to complete the purchase of “Conterstuff”, and that its acquisition will be carried forward into 2021. This listed building will play a key role in the redevelopment of the centre of the village. The Conterstuff is the largest of the areas in Contern village centre that are, as yet, not owned by the Council. The Council now already owns several hectares in the centre of Contern.

Jean-Jacques Arrensdorff proposed that the Council administration should be accommodated in the “Conterstuff” barn.

Fernand Schiltz, Deputy Mayor, acknowledged that the costs of acquiring “Conterstuff” were high, but made reference to the social component that this building offers: the intention is that it should also serve as a venue for meetings.

The Council building is already too small, just five years after its completion. In that regard, it would surely have been appropriate to scope the project at the time. The Mayor made reference to the planning of the Cabinet back then, which was not geared to the future.

The “Henkeshaus” renovation works were progressing and were set for completion in summer 2021.

HR policy

The Mayor emphasised that the HR policy is a key pillar of a well-functioning council, and one in which consistent investment was being made. This was evidenced, for instance, in the creation and recruitment to new posts, the recent founding of new departments (Finance Department, Schools Department) and the ensuring of good working conditions (“Südkollektivvertrag” – the collective agreement for council workers in the Southern districts, and the introduction of flexible working time).

In order that Council employees can work to their best in serving our residents, they are provided with the necessary equipment, respecting the highest possible safety standards.

Through new staffing appointments and internal reorganisations, preparations are underway for all those who in the coming months and years will find a new home in our district.

Social matters

The municipality’s Plan for the Third Age has been funded for € 15,000, and € 12,000 has been committed for integration work.

Following the purchase of the old post office in Oetrange, this is being renovated for the regional social welfare office.

The Cabinet is also planning several projects with social housing.

Finance matters, studies and planning

The Mayor emphasised that the current Cabinet looked to a basis of facts before committing to projects. Studies needed to be realised for major planning projects, such as converting the village centres and the safety and traffic-calming measures in our villages.

Tom Jungblut, Deputy Mayor for Finance, explained that the Council was under pressure to expand the school buildings due to the rising number of residents, and he made reference to the potential of the school site, which was being planned with a far-sighted vision. A second site for the school, as proposed by Eric Eifes, could not be considered, as the capacity of the current site was far from being exhausted, and moreover the proposal would necessarily result in even more surface sealing.

Climate matters, environment and mobility

Fernand Schiltz, Deputy Mayor for Climate Matters, wished to remind members that despite Covid-19, the climate should not get forgotten. The year 2020 was notable for the worst forest fires. Contern Council will continue its commitment to the Climate Pact and will sign up to “Klimapakt 2.0”. The Council is also planning to commit itself to the “Nature Pact”, as soon as the project has

cleared the official channels for approval. He emphasised that the Cabinet was ‘walking the talk’ and being active at the district level, with a strongly practical focus.

So far, 24 associations had signed up to the climate charter. The “Fair Trade Label” document was being progressed consistently, and the Cycle 1 photovoltaic system at the primary school had been taken into service. When it comes to water conservation, Contern Council was taking on a pioneering role, and the new law on waste, seeking to bring about a circular economy, was coming into force on 01.01.2021. The 2021 budget included a sum of € 145,000 partly for the environment.

Mobility also affects our climate, and for that reason work was continuing on expanding the network of cycle paths and on the mobility concept, while the grants for bicycles and electric bikes were being adjusted.

Fernand Schiltz, Deputy Mayor for Climate Matters and Fair Trade, thanked Claude Schmit for his excellent contribution to the climate team and in the fair trade group over many years.

Patrick Weymerskirch expressed his appreciation of the value of the water supply network, and stated that the cost factor and the work invested in it should not be underestimated. He reminded members of the ‘polluter pays’ principle, which was the basis for the new waste provisions. He rated the Cabinet as excellent for its budget plan.

The provision of a cycle path between Contern and Hesperange is lodged with the official channels for approval and is set to be implemented soon.

14. Announcements and councillor questions

The Mayor announced that, due to the current health crisis, the Christmas party for Council employees cannot be held. Accordingly, the Cabinet has decided to gift Council staff, and the members of the district council, a bottle of Luxembourg Crémant and a voucher that can be redeemed in local restaurants.

Eric Eifes asked about insurance for under-12s visiting the youth centre. The Mayor replied that the Cabinet would clarify this with the youth centre managers.

Claude Schmit, district councillor for the party “Déi Gréng”, announced that he was standing down from the Council because he was moving to another area. He thanked the Council and stated that he had learned a lot from his time as councillor.

Guy Lorent, district councillor for the party “DP”, similarly announced that he was standing down. He likewise thanked the Council for his many years of working on it.