

# **BOROUGH of GARWOOD**

## ***Workshop Session MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING*** **December 23, 2014**

Workshop session was opened by Mayor Quattrocchi at: 7:01 p.m.

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Westfield Leader, advertised on January 9, 2014, notification was sent to the Star Ledger and prominently posted on the municipal public bulletin board and filed in the office of the municipal clerk informing the Public of the time and place according to the Provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975).

### **Roll Call.**

**Present:** Mayor Quattrocchi (Not voting), Council President Tarantino, Councilman Mathieu, Councilman Nierstedt, Councilman Petruzzelli, Councilwoman Todisco.

Also Present: Borough Administrator/Clerk Christina M. Ariemma, Borough Attorney Robert Renaud and Borough Engineer Donald R. Guarriello.

Councilman Martin was excused.

Borough Engineer Donald Guarriello reporting on fencing and gas service.

It was mentioned that the contractor for the Westfield Senior Housing be contacted for daily site cleanup. Councilman Nierstedt suggested Mr. Vinegra be contacted to follow up on the matter. Council President Tarantino mentioned the badly broken sidewalk on South Avenue. Mr. Guarriello said he'd check the area. Councilman Petruzzelli said it was damaged by PSE&G when they installed the light pole in front of the new construction.

Borough Attorney Robert Renaud mentioned the ordinances on tonight's agenda. He wished everyone Happy Holidays and extended his best wishes to Mayor Quattrocchi.

Administrator/Clerk – Ms. Ariemma – no report.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

### NEW BUSINESS - NONE

### Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Council President Tarantino read the following statement:

Thank you Mayor. As everyone knows, you created a Parking Committee several months ago. This was in response to the many complaints that council has received about commuters parking on our residential streets and the growing parking problem around the borough. The committee you initially put together consists of Councilman Petruzzelli, Sgt Morelli, Kathy Villaggio, Bob Ehrenbeck and I. I also asked Officer Kleinsorgen and Chief Underhill to attend our meetings. We met several times over the last few months to discuss and brainstorm solutions. Officer Kleinsorgen conducted a parking study during the months of June to August. I reviewed the report a few months ago with council and I have copies here now if anyone would like to see the detailed results. The overall conclusion of Officer Kleinsorgen report was that a large number of vehicles being parked in certain specific areas are due to non-resident commuters who are able to park legally for free all day within close proximity of their chosen preference of mass transit. This, of course is taking up parking on the streets for residents to park in front of their own homes.

We as a committee believe that we owe it to our residents to clear the streets of commuters taking up these prime parking spots. As a result, this committee will be recommending a revision to Article 14, Chapter 21 – Residential Preferential Permit Parking to council to include the streets on the attached handout. I am passing out a list of streets along with a map so you can get a better of visual of our recommendation.

We are aggressive with the streets we are recommending because we didn't want to create a spillover effect. If we closed off 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, we were afraid we would just be moving the problem over to 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. And the same would be true for other streets on the South side of town.

We did not review the ordinance in its entirety to determine if any other changes needed to be made. I recommend this task be given to Laws and License for review if council chooses to accept the committee's recommendation.

So if council chooses to accept our recommendation, this should pose the question – What happens to the commuter's cars? As you know, we are striving to become a transit village. We are encouraging commuters to take our trains and buses. We've been petitioning NJ Transit to give us more train stops during peak hours and we were told that one of the ways to get that was to provide commuter parking. Recently we created 5 commuter parking spaces at Kennedy Plaza and they have all been purchased.

If we displaced these commuters we need to give them a place to park. I've been in communications with several land owners in town with parking lots that are willing to lease us space for commuter parking. I've been able to

negotiate approximately 35 spaces in 3 different lots. We would lease the space from them and then rent the spots to the commuters. Mr. Renaud of course is making sure that everything is above board. We would generate revenue from leasing these spots, but it's not going to be significant. The point of doing this is to satisfy the residents by clearing the streets of commuters and also providing a service to the commuters by offering them legal parking. We can then notify NJ Transit of this and hopefully down the line we'll get more stops during peak hours. We are hoping this is a win/win for Garwood.

I'd just like to mention one more thing. If council chooses to take our recommendation, we would like to notify the residents of the affected streets by mail to attend a council meeting to let them know of the proposed ordinance changes before to we go 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading to give them a chance to voice their opinions to council before the ordinance is adopted.

Councilman Mathieu asked what residential preferred parking means. Council President Tarantino said it is the existing section of the code defining restricted parking on certain streets.

Councilman Mathieu asked if the police department would be able to enforce the ordinance. Captain Stoffer replied that the department would be able to enforce the ordinance.

Councilman Nierstedt asked about the parking negotiations locations. Council President Tarantino said she is in the process of finalizing this.

Councilwoman Todisco asked if she would have the spaces available when the restricted parking is implemented. Council President Tarantino responded that is the goal of this procedure. Councilwoman Todisco said she supports this idea.

Councilman Mathieu suggested council be aware of the cost involved. Brief discussion followed. Mayor Quattrocchi suggested this be referred to Laws and License for further review.

Councilman Mathieu requested an update on the procedures committee. Mayor Quattrocchi responded she has advised Mayor Elect Lombardo regarding the committee.

It was mentioned that Recreation Director Kathleen Pender has submitted her resignation effective 12/31/2014.

Councilman Martin excused.

Councilman Mathieu no report.

Councilman Nierstedt no report.

Councilman Petruzzelli no report.

Councilwoman Todisco read the following statement:

1. RVSA

I spoke with our representative to the Rahway Valley Sewage Authority Steve Greet and would like to update the Council on our conversation regarding the increasing cost expected next year in Garwood's payment to the RVSA. Garwood is presently looking at a 17% increase or about \$90,000. This translates to an increase of more than \$45 in taxes for the average home in Garwood next year. Representative Greet expressed his disappointment at the RVSA budget meeting and voted no to the proposed budget, which passed 7-2 as 2 other municipalities out of the 11 total were absent. That night he stated that Garwood is the smallest of the 11 member municipalities and has an insignificant flow increase or decrease, yet is receiving an increase supposedly due to an increase in bio solids. However, Garwood has not had a significant increase in population or business expansion in the last 5 years. In terms of the 5 year moving average, a low 1.59% (2009) is being dropped out of the five year moving average and replaced with a 3.43% (2014). This comes at a time when the RVSA is realizing a negative budget increase over 2014. He said that although he commends the Authority for holding costs down and seeking new sources of revenue, there appears to be a significant flaw in how the individual municipalities are assessed. Although the budget passed, the individual member municipalities' budget allocations have not yet been finalized, so there is still hope that Garwood may see some relief. Representative Greet, like all of us, are not happy with the news, but he is continuing to work with the Director Jim Meehan on seeking relief for Garwood. We will learn whether or not we will see this increase go down in the next couple of months.

2. Minutes – Garwood Ranked #1

About a month ago we received an email from the New Jersey Foundation for Open Government. They checked the websites of the 21 municipalities in Union County to see who had the most up to date record of the meeting minutes and Garwood came in first place out of all 21 towns. This is very positive recognition for our Borough in terms of keeping citizens informed and having a transparent government. I would like to thank our Borough Administrator/Clerk Ms. Ariemma for all her work in making sure the minutes are written and posted in a timely manner.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Bruce Paterson of 325 Willow Avenue mentioned that Anne Leonard has moved away. He said she asked if council has visited the borough owned area behind Hess for commuter parking. Councilman Nierstedt said yes and that the area is too small for parking. Mr. Paterson mentioned the RVSA increase matter and brief discussion followed. He

mentioned the restricted parking stickers being very durable. Councilman Mathieu commented on the RVSA increase, as well as did Mr. Renaud and Mr. Guarriello. Mr. Paterson asked about outstanding change orders for the complex. Councilman Petruzzelli responded there are change orders and Ms. Ariemma confirmed same. Mr. Paterson mentioned the Open Space Trust Fund matching grant program and his letter. Mr. Paterson questioned the salary resolution for DPW and Mr. Renaud responded.

Kathleen Villaggio of 313 Fourth Avenue wished everyone a happy and healthy new year and thanked Mayor Quattrocchi for her services and leadership. She extended her best to the mayor and her family.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion:** 7:39 p.m. Workshop, **Action:** Adjourn, **Moved by** Councilman Nierstedt, **Seconded by** Councilwoman Todisco.