

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
January 24, 2019**

Start time: 7:00 p.m.

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Westfield Leader, advertised on January 3, 2019, 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).

Mayor Todisco	P		
Councilman Benoit	P	Councilman Ince	P
Councilwoman Blumenstock	P	Councilman McCormack	P
Councilman Graham	P	Council President Lazarow	P

Also present Borough Administrator/Municipal Clerk Christina M. Ariemma and Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim, Esq.

Mayor Todisco presented Mayor's Awards to the Girl Scout Troops for their participation in Toys for Tots Campaign.

Neil Rubenstein of Reality Appraisal Company and Tax Assessor Ann Switzer were present to outline the process for Revaluation as ordered by the County Tax Court. Discussion followed regarding letter being mailed to residents and the public meeting to be held the second or third week of February.

Councilman McCormack asked a few questions and made a few comments.

Mr. Jardim commented on the process.

Councilman Benoit commented on the second letter and the appeal process.

Ms. Ariemma asked if property records are done electronically or on paper or both.

Mayor Todisco commented on the letter mailing being sent to tenants or owners.

Mr. Rubenstein commented on the matter.

Councilman Benoit commented on town hall meeting.

Mr. Jardim commented on the letter and how it's prepared.

Council President Lazarow commented on inspector's ID's

Mark Burnett, Maple Court asked how the townhomes people are contacted. Mr. Rubenstein responded.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue asked questions. His questions were answered.

John Casoni, 212 Walnut Street commented on the letter and other matters.

Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim commented on the ordinances on tonight's agenda.

Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma: **No Report**

Mayor Todisco's Report:

1. Update from Engineer- Our engineer has notified me that the contractor has cleaned up the tar leak into the firehouse as a result of the roof replacement project, which was reported at the last Council meeting. I checked in with Fire Chief Tweedle and he said he was satisfied with the cleanup, but will likely need one damaged turnout gear replaced by the contractor. Also, our engineer took a look at the ramps at the corners of all the streets on intersecting with Center Street. As for the resident's question at the last Council meeting, the cement work has cracks in it and we are looking at the maintenance bond duration to see if it falls under the contractor's responsibility or the Borough's. This was one of the last projects of our previous engineer and our current engineer has put in place a two year maintenance period on the projects he has worked on for the Borough, so this is good news for us as we move forward.

2. Russo South Avenue Update - As I'm sure you've noticed, the demolition of the buildings on site is now complete. Russo's demolition contractor, North Star is trucking out approximately 10 loads of steel and debris per day, subject to weather related delays (because the trucks will not work in bad weather such as rain or snow). They estimate they should have all the steel / demo removed from the site within the next 2 weeks.

As to the next phase of work, their excavation contractor, KP Excavation will start pulling up slabs and building foundations on Monday 1/28. Immediately thereafter, our environmental consultant and LSRP (Licensed Site Remediation Professional) EcolSciences will work with KP to begin soil remediation during the first week in February, which work will take several weeks.

3. Meeting with Cranford & Westfield Mayor - Last Saturday, I met with Cranford Mayor Patrick Giblin and Westfield Mayor Shelley Brindle for a breakfast meeting at the Rustic Mill Diner. While we speak to one another from time to time, we are all looking forward to making these meetings on a regular, quarterly basis so we can set time aside to ensure better communication between our towns and see how we can help one another out. We'll rotate going to businesses in each of our towns, too. This time, we spoke about many different topics including NJ Transit service, public outreach, planning, flood control, and revaluation.

4. Water Company cleaning and lining the mains work is expected to start next week on the north side of town. The water company put out a revised flyer and delivered to all homes affected by the project.

5. Meeting with Dr. Quigley - I met with Superintendent Dr. Quigley last week and it was a great meeting. I will be setting up a joint committee of myself, a Councilmember, Planning Board Chair and Vice Chair and two representatives of the Board of Education to discuss development, opportunities for collaboration, and other topics to make sure we have strong communication between our groups.

6. Snow parking - As I'm sure we all know, there has been concern expressed by residents without driveway regarding where to park during snow emergencies. Russo Development allowed them to park there the past several years as a courtesy, but can no longer allow that due to their construction work. I am still looking for one more person without a driveway to be part of a committee to tackle this issue and hopefully come up with a solution. My thought was to have three members who are affected by the problem and two other residents work with the Police Chief and DPW Superintendent to come up with a solution. As soon as I get one more member, they will begin this task and I hope they can come to a conclusion sooner rather than later.

7. Community Spirit Forms - As I mentioned in my address at Re-Org, I will be starting a Community Spirit Award given seasonally and plan to present the first one in March at a Council meeting. I've begun to receive nominations, but I just wanted to remind everyone that the short, easy to fill out nomination form can be found on www.garwood.org. It can be found on the homepage or under the "Useful Links" tab on the left side of the website. Also, paper copies can be found in the hallway display at Borough Hall and completed and returned to the Clerk's Office.

8. Breakfast with the Mayor - My first breakfast with the Mayor event will take place on Saturday, February 2nd from 10am to noon right here at Borough Hall. Our Chief of Police Jim Wright will be joining me to hear from residents and to answer their questions. Also, our headquarters will be open for tours for the kids that come with their families that day. This is a free event and bagels, donuts, coffee, and juice will be served.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Councilman Benoit: commented on the Social Media Policy

He asked if any council members had questions. Councilwoman Blumenstock asked about other Facebook pages that are not under the Administrator's review. Councilman Benoit commented on the Baseball League and field use and lack of written agreement.

Councilwoman Blumenstock: I'm happy to be able to report back that Garwood's First Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service was beyond a success. We had a packed house both in the Firehouse, as well as in Borough Hall. The senior safety kits and hygiene kits for the teenage homeless were packed up in the Firehouse, with over 600 kits made. Over 800 sandwiches were also made at the Firehouse and delivered to the Elizabeth Coalition for the Homeless. Garwood's Girl Scout Troops and many other Garwood children and teens made over 220 bookmarks for the Children's Specialized Hospital and over 100 cards for veterans at our second location in Borough Hall. Both were packed with volunteers and I couldn't be more thankful for all of their hard work. We even had Union County Freeholders Sergio Granados and Rebecca Williams working hard at our event and they also commemorated it with a ceremonial resolution for our committee. I thank them for that, and I also want to thank all of the generous donors. Many residents in Garwood and surrounding towns donated items off our lists and we wouldn't have been able to do it without them. RWJ University Hospital in Rahway donated food for our sandwich making and brought volunteers, as did the Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield. Fiamma Pizza will be providing all of the pizzas for our winning grade over at Lincoln School who competed to see which grade could donate the most. The 8th grade will be getting that pizza party, but it was really gratifying to see the kids work so hard both at donating and volunteering that day. Thank you to Chief Wright and Officer Suggs for making all of those sandwiches that day and for the whole department's support. Our Fire Department was again, generous enough to let us use their Firehouse and the DPW was kind enough to help us with set-up and take-down of the tables. Garwood really pulled together on Monday and I think we truly embodied the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr. and honored his message to give to others.

On another note, I'd like to encourage everyone to attend the EFG's next fundraiser on Thursday, February 7th. We will be having a wine tasting at Rosie's Wine Bar from 6:00-9:00pm. Tickets are \$30 a person and include a 6 pour wine tasting and light appetizers. Tickets can be purchased at Lincoln School, and the library and I do have some with me tonight. They are also available at the door. All money raised contributes to grants for Garwood teachers to enhance their curriculum and for scholarships for Garwood students graduating 8th grade. So show some love for Garwood students on February 7th.

That's all for my report, mayor.

Councilman Ince commented that he will report on Board of Health at the next meeting.

Councilman McCormack commented the Planning Board meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 30th has been cancelled and the next meeting is scheduled for February 27th

Council President Lazarow - No Report

Board of Chosen Freeholders Liaison Report: by Councilman McCormack

Mayor Todisco and I attended the agenda setting meeting of the Freeholders Board last Thursday night. It was a relatively short meeting, but we had the opportunity to see our County government in action. The Freeholders spent the meeting asking the department heads many questions about the Union County Police fire boats as the insurance policy for them is up for renewal, which showed the Freeholders are interested in finding out how frequently those boats are used and whether or not they are worthwhile to keep available. Also for signage along County roads, as Fanwood is doing with pedestrian warning signs, the County must approve them, but the town is responsible for paying for them.

Mayor Todisco reported The County is providing resources to help federal workers affected by the shutdown. For more information about how to get assistance or how you can contribute if you are interested in helping out is available at <http://ucnj.org/federal-shutdown/>.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Is there anyone in the audience that wishes to address the mayor and council please step to the microphone, state your full name and address. Please limit your comments to five minutes.

NO COMMENTS

Motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, second by Councilman Benoit, to close public comments session.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:13 p.m., a motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, and seconded by Council President Lazarow to adjourn the workshop session. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood