

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
May 8, 2018**

Start Time: 7:02 p.m.

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Westfield Leader, advertised on January 4, 2018, 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 Lombardo	P		
Councilwoman Blumenstock	P	Councilman McCormack	P
Councilwoman Cuccaro	P	Councilman Sarno	P
Councilman Lazarow	P	Council President Todisco	P

Also, present: Borough Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma, Borough Attorney Robert Renaud and Borough Engineer Michael Disko.

At 7:03 p.m. Ms. Ariemma read Resolution 18-116

[RESOLUTION NO. 18-116](#)

CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THE PILOT FINANCIAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF GARWOOD AND THE DEVELOPER OF SOUTH AVENUE URBAN RENEWAL PHASE II PROJECT AND MATTERS OF ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE RELATING TO THE ABOVE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A., 10:4-12, Closed session, Meetings open to public; exclusion of public; subject of matter.

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Garwood to conduct an executive session closed to the public in order to discuss the above listed matters.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Borough of Garwood hereby move to go into executive session in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq., for the purpose of discussing the subjects stated above; and **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the matters discussed in and minutes of the closed session shall be disclosed to the public when the reason for confidentiality no longer exists.

A motion was made by Councilman Sarno, second by Councilwoman Cuccaro, to adopt Resolution 18-116.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Cuccaro	AYE	Councilman Sarno	AYE
Councilman Lazarow	AYE	Councilwoman Todisco	AYE
Councilman McCormack	AYE	Council President Blumenstock	AYE

6-AYE, 0-NAY, Resolution 18-116 was adopted

At 7:20 p.m. Workshop Session resumed

Michael Disko, Borough Engineer - **CURB RAMPS:** PERFORMED BY J.B. RAGONESE CONSTRUCTION QUOTES SOLICITED JANUARY 2018. COST \$4,150.00. TWO RAMPS AT THE CORNER OF BEECH AVENUE AND EAST STREET AND ONE RAMP AT THE CORNER OF LOCUST AVENUE AND EAST STREET. **RECREATION BUILDING:** PADOVANNI CONSTRUCTION ON SITE. COMPLETION ESTIMATED AS NEXT WEDNESDAY. **ELIZABETHTOWN GAS:** CURRENTLY ON SPRUCE AVENUE. COMPLETION BY TOMORROW, IF NOT TODAY. WILL SHIFT WORK OPERATIONS TO THIRD AVENUE. PENN BOWER IS CONTRACTOR. UNDERSTANDS THE NEED FOR PROPER COMPACTION USING SLURRY CEMENT. WHEN WET IT HARDENS. **NJ AMERICAN WATER:** CURRENTLY WORKING ON CENTER STREET. LONG TERM PROJECT. **NJDOT DESIGN:** CURRENTLY DESIGNING MA PROJECT – SPRUCE AVENUE (EAST OF OAK STREET), THIRD AVENUE (WALNUT STREET TO CEDAR STREET), HICKORY AVENUE (CENTER STREET TO EAST STREET) GRANT \$220,000. **OPTIONS/ALTERNATES:** GBC VS CONCRETE CURB, TRAFFIC SIGN REPLACEMENTS, TELEVISION INSPECTION OF SANITARY SEWERS, ECHELON PAVING. **FIREHOUSE ROOF:** WILL BEGIN DESIGN WORK PRIOR TO FUNDING AVAILABILITY WILL COORDINATE ACCESS TO ROOF

Borough Attorney Robert Renaud - ***NO REPORT***

Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma - ***NO REPORT***

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Lombardo:

I am in the process of coordinating a Town Hall meeting with Mr. Chris Minks of Russo Redevelopment that will be held in Lincoln School. The Purpose of the meeting is to inform the public regarding their environmental concerns and have questions answered about Russo One. Mr. Minks will bring his

professional staff with him as well as available documentation. I had scheduled a meeting to be held on Wednesday May 30, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. at Lincoln School.

Most importantly, this spreading of fear and paranoia in the town has got to stop. It is one thing to have environmental questions and concerns and yet another to create doomsday scenarios, needlessly scaring everyone, including children. Those working on the redevelopment projects are trained to do their jobs and will not put you at risk. Let me assure you that I am concerned as well, but I have faith in the people doing the work as they have more regulations and guidelines to adhere to than you can image. They are also monitored every step of the way. I have been urging you to ask your questions and express your concerns at the many public meetings that have been held regarding redevelopment. There are more meetings to be had in the very near future.

Having lived in Garwood a long time, I have seen a lot of demolition and construction: Beckley Perforating Company became the North Avenue Plaza -- demolition of a strip mall, previously factories, became ShopRite of Garwood -- The demolition of Diamond Expansion Bolt and Thomas & Betts became the Pointe and the Mews. All this was accomplished without the outrage that I see today. In fact, Diamond Expansion Bolt was literally in the front yard of Lincoln School and no one spread fear into the hearts of the residents. It was all taken care of according to rules and regulations and no one got sick. The residents trusted the process that they would be protected and they should now, too.

The people from Russo Development have gone out of their way to accommodate our questions and concerns and will continue to do so to put our fears to rest. Please attend these meetings and ask your questions at the right place, to the right people, and at the right time. Relying on what is heard on the street corner, in social media and on the playground is not going to get accurate information. You need to go to the source for that. Even those of us here on the dais and on the Planning Board can only go by what we are told and shown by redevelopment officials. Even we have to go to the source to get accuracy and truth.

We also have to keep in mind that this refers to all redevelopment in Garwood, as people are becoming concerned that there is deconstruction activity at the Paperboard facility on North Avenue. Be assured that the same rules and regulations apply there, too. Everything being done is within environmental guidelines and no one is being put at risk. No one here would allow that to happen. We all live here, some of us within shouting distance of the paperboard facility.

Just think about all the work going around us in adjoining towns. Those residents face the same situations that we have here, even on a much larger scale. Do you see their residents up in arms about demolition issues? No, because they trust their governing body to keep them safe and informed as progress develops. I again urge you to go to the source for your answers. Attend Planning Board meeting and Town Hall meetings when these redevelopment officials are present and ask your questions to them. They will give you the accurate answers you deserve, rather than your relying on hearsay or creating your own doomsday scenario. There are a lot of "what ifs" in this world. Living in Garwood during redevelopment is not one of them.

Finally, at the last Planning Board meeting the Council Resolution No. 18-052 --Amendment to South Ave Transit Oriented Redevelopment Plan. The Board has no further comments on the Ordinance and supports its adoption. In other business, the Planning Board did not reach a consensus on the fence ordinance and tabled the discussion. In the spirit of shared services, the Union County Shade Tree Bureau are in the process of removing the large tree at Hartman Park at no cost to the borough. The savings to the borough is approximately \$ 6,000.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Council President Blumenstock - The Green set to work doing a little spring clean-up around town. We weeded and planted flowers at Kennedy Plaza, getting it ready for the DPW to mulch. We also did some weeding and trimming over at Georgiana Memorial Park over at 4th and Walnut. Through some extra hard work, we even discovered that the brick path by the flag poles goes all the way around and behind what was currently visible. By detangling a lot of overgrown ivy, we were able to bring that path back to life. A big thank you to all that donated flowers and gift cards. This coming Saturday the Green Team will be assisting in a project that the EFG is doing in conjunction with Lincoln School. A rock garden is being created by the students who are decorating the rocks in art class. The intent is that each year the kindergarten class will add their painted rocks to the garden. The Green Team's beautification committee is glad to help out.

Also, you'll see on the consent agenda three resolutions pertaining to the Green Team. Ms. Ariemma already sent them around so you could take a look. The first one simply re-establishes the Green Team; it has to be passed each year as we try to get certified by Sustainable Jersey. The animal companion pledge has one change in it from the version you saw. The rules of animal humane law enforcement have changed. The NJSPCA no longer enforces and animal abuse or neglect. The county prosecutor's office and local police departments now take that on. Chief Wright has assigned Officer Eriksen that position and

as soon as the county finalizes their training program, he will take part and get up and running as our humane enforcement officer. The other resolution, on wildlife hasn't changed from the one you were sent. That's all for me. Mayor. Mayor Lombardo commented.

Councilwoman Cuccaro - With the Demolition of Russo 1 fully underway and in full view of the public eye it has now become a real concern to many citizens in our town. While we have been reassured by Russo Developers that Demo will be done professionally with the utmost of care, the public has brought to our attention some legitimate concerns in regards to the safety of their children. One cannot argue with their concerns when they see Russo construction in full P.P.E. gear, ventilator masks, & asbestos jump suits. All while their kids wear shorts & t-shirts as they walk below not 20 feet away, common sense would tell you there is something wrong here. While it is no secret that I was the only councilwoman who voted against this project, I realize the project will move forward but I suggest we proceed in a more informative, safe, and responsible direction. I have a few proposals of how we can better reassure the public of their safety;

1. how it will be monitored and overseen by the EPA.
2. Ask Russo developers to delay Demo until Lincoln school is on summer recess June 20th. To ensure the safety of children from both airborne pollutants and possible falling debris while walking to and from school.
3. Ask the EPA to monitor the air quality at Lincoln School while school is in session.
4. In addition I propose letters be drafted to not only the parents of Lincoln School children but the entire town listing a timeline of demo, measures that will be taken to monitor airborne pollutants, along with times and dates to avoid the area.
5. Asbestos Warning signs should also be made visible to the public along fence line.

In addition as public officials it is our duty to keep the Public Informed and Safe and I believe it is shameful to suggest to our citizens that it is their own fault for not being informed as many on Council and Planning Board have. It is our duty to answer questions and go above and beyond to keep the public informed.

Thank You

Councilman Lazarow – commented on statements made concerning development on South Avenue.

Councilman McCormack – read a report concerning junior fire fighter program. Also commented on children's baseball.

Councilman Sarno – commented he supports the amending of the Junior Firefighter Program. Mr. Renaud was directed to amend the firefighter ordinance to include Clark, Westfield and Kenilworth. Councilman Sarno commented on the environmental matter concerning the construction of the South Avenue project. Councilman Sarno commented on the fence ordinance matter. Councilman McCormack commented on Planning Board members.

Councilwoman Todisco – 1. Attended last Union County Freeholder meeting, Mayor Al Smith of Scotch Plains spoke about how he signed the Sandy Hook Promise pledge and became a promise leader. This organization was formed by family members of victims of the violence at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. He encouraged others to join the effort to prevent gun-related deaths. At the last Board of Education meeting, Garwood resident and former BOE President Adele Lewis spoke about how she is a promise leader. She also sent a letter to the Westfield Leader about this a few weeks back, which prompted me to sign the pledge online. This program has documented results and takes a 4-prong approach through building a national base through education, organizing at the community level through the work of promise leaders, developing and delivering mental health and wellness programs, and advocating for state and national policies. I would like to encourage others to check out sandyhookpromise.org.

2. I would like to follow up with the Council about capital purchases for this year, which was discussed in detail at the Special Budget meeting back in March. Our Finance Committee recently met and discussed this as we still unanimous in our recommendation to the Council. Since the Special Budget meeting, some of the estimates have changed, but before you worry, they went down, not up. We have also discussed an additional request, which was made by the Fire Department. These details are outlined in the paper I distributed to all of us up here.

While we applied for \$50,000 from Union County for records management, we were awarded \$40,000, so that's the amount we need to raise in order to match this Infrastructure grant. The HVAC work to be done here at Borough Hall was originally estimated at \$35,000, but a new co-op estimate totals \$20,000 instead. With that in mind, the Finance Committee agreed to fund \$16,000 for the replacement of a 25-year old compressor unit for filling air bottles quicker and more efficiently for the Fire Department. It's also important to note that Garwood saves \$3,375 when these items are bonded together rather than separately.

The Finance Committee made this unanimous decision after carefully considering each of the requests and determining they are needed and not just wanted items. Anyone who spends time in here can tell we need

our HVAC system fixed, the firehouse roof is in desperate need of repair and can no longer simply be patched as Council President Jen Blumenstock has reported for some time now, the DPW is in need of a new dump truck and the mason dump reflects a compromise to reduce the cost while still replacing a 20-year old vehicle, a records management upgrade is necessary as out storage unit is filled to the prim and in this day and age we need records digitized for preservation and for greater accessibility for residents, and finally, the Police Department's top priority is replacing the supervisor's vehicle which has over 80,000 miles and is 6 years old.

The Council will need four affirmative votes in order to pass a capital bond ordinance, so I want to make sure the majority of us are comfortable with this plan, so we can then direct Ms. Ariemma to have this ordinance drawn up. Also commented on the construction matters and the fence ordinance.

Discussion regarding Capital items followed. Councilman McCormack commented on the compressor matter for the Fire Department. Councilwoman Cuccaro commented.

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 three minutes.

Andrew Wiecek, 524 Fourth Avenue commented on the redevelopment and the construction fear.

Al Del Conte, 545 Locust Avenue commented on the fence ordinance. He commented on volunteers. He also commented on comments made by council.

Greg Ruggiero, 420 Pine Avenue commented on the construction and demolition on South Avenue site.

Sheila Moreira, 519 Center Street commented on the construction matters.

Greg Ruggiero, 420 Pine Avenue further commented on construction matters.

Michelle Wiecek, 524 Fourth Avenue mentioned information is online.

Peter Collara, 500 West Street commented on the construction issues.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue commented on comments made. Mr. Renaud commented.

Zuzanna Crawford, 415 Willow Avenue commented on comments made on communications.

Andrew Wiecek, 524 Fourth Avenue commented on comments made and the construction issues.

Councilwoman Todisco commented on statements made.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Council President Blumenstock, Second by Councilman Lazarow to adjourn
Time: 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood