

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES**

May 23, 2019

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 Ince	P
Councilman Benoit	P	Councilman McCormack	P
Councilwoman Blumenstock	P	Council President Lazarow	P

Also present Borough Administrator/Municipal Clerk Christina M. Ariemma, Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim, Esq., Auditor Warren Korecky and CFO Sandy Bruns.

Presentation was made by Mayor Todisco concerning gun violence proclamation.

Debt Service presentation on the purchase of a fire truck took place. Mr. Korecky shared a schedule showing the payments with interest. Mr. Korecky explained the matter. The council commented on the matter.

There were no comments or input from the public.

Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim – **No Report**

Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma asked for consideration to the code for Planning Board applications and related documents that they be required to be submitted electronically to the clerk in addition to the Planning Board secretary, for the purpose of ease in OPRA compliance. All agreed and Mr. Jardim was directed to prepare and ordinance.

Mayor Todisco's Report:

South Avenue Redevelopment Town Hall - On May 14th, representatives of Russo Development including general counsel, LSRP, and project manager gave the public an update on their project. They are finishing up the removal of contaminated soil portion of the cleanup. Expect to begin construction of the parking garage at the rear of the property near the train tracks this fall. They are anticipating construction to be complete and for it to be rented by late spring 2021.

Mayor's Breakfast - Thank you to Superintendent of Schools Dr. Quigley and BOE President Christine Guerriero for joining me at my quarterly Mayor's breakfast this past Saturday.

Garwood Mayor's Wellness Campaign - The next walk will be on June 22nd at 10am at Unami Park. Thank you to principal Mrs. Emmons for being our guest walker at the last one on May 11th.

Open House - It was great to attend the open house of the Garwood First Aid Squad this past Sunday and congratulations again to the squad on their 80th birthday! It was impressive to see the volunteer GFAS working alongside the volunteer Garwood Fire Department to train on how to rescue someone trapped in the backseat of a vehicle after an accident. This type of partnership is appreciated and I was glad to witness this training.

PSEG - On May 13th, the government representative reached out to me along with other mayors in the surrounding towns that would be affected by installation of new 69kV power lines to let us know they are looking into an alternative plan to go along with the railroad tracks. This may alleviate the need for these lines to be run through Garwood at all. I will continue to keep the public informed.

Planning Board - The Planning Board had another long meeting full of many questions and much discussion on Wednesday night. The application for a subdivision at 604-608 Willow Avenue received Board approval. These vacant lots will now be developed into two, two-family homes. The applicant took much of the Board's feedback to improve the application, such as having the driveways at grade level rather than below grade. The applicant at 345 South Avenue is seeking to turn current second and third floor office space into two 1-bedroom apartments on each floor. Residential units are permitted in this zone. The Board provided feedback and the applicant will re-notice and return to the Board at a later date. Lastly, the Board began to hear the application for a Lidl grocery store to move into the vacant Pathmark site. This would take up a little more than half of the old store and leave about 22,000 square feet to be rented still. Feedback given thus far included enlarging some handicapped parking spaces and considering a monument sign instead of the existing very tall sign. I asked for them to consider including "Garwood" on the sign as it is located at an entrance to town. This was similar to how a mayor before me asked the same of ShopRite. Even though Lidl does not own the property, they said they would take my request for parking spaces to be allocated to the municipality for commuters back to the owner. It would be great if we could secure more commuter parking.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Councilman Benoit: No Report

Councilwoman Blumenstock I first want to also thank the First Aid Squad for hosting their open house last weekend and give thanks to the Fire Department for also attending and working with the squad. My whole family had a great time. It was great to not only see the vehicles and the rescue demonstrations but I think it was a great event to reach out to the community and support engagement with our residents.

In line with that was the historical committee's rededication of the rock at the Rec Complex that honors Garwood's veterans including our former Mayor Casabona. It was a beautiful service and hearing the Mayor Casabona and his family was very touching.

We've had a lot of different events going on in the past few months, with even a few additions to the regular yearly scheduled events and it just gives me a great feeling about Garwood to see all of these committees, departments and volunteers really going above and beyond. I think the beauty of this small town is that we can have all of these fun events and all of our residents get a chance to come together for really positive experiences. I look forward to even more of these events where we continue to engage the whole community.

Councilman Graham thanked the Garwood First Aid Squad and the Garwood Fire Department. He commented on the rock dedication ceremony.

Councilman Ince commented next Police Committee meeting will be held in June.

Councilman McCormack commented on the Planning Board. He thanked the members of the Fire Department. On March 15th the Garwood fire department held its annual memorial service for its past Fire fighter's members and for the past ladies Auxiliary Members. As an Elected councilman and now fire commissioner from my 2nd term this just goes to show me how dedicated we in Garwood are to each other. Sitting there and listening to the names called and hearing a bell ring for each passing Member is a true dedication to the members of the Garwood fire department. I would like to thank Father Dominic from St Anne's for saying a prayer for the service and our Mayor for a speech that touched all in attendance.

Council President Lazarow commented on the Memorial Service and the Garwood First Aid Squad/Garwood Fire Department event.

Board of Chosen Freeholders Liaison Report: NONE

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.

Chris Spear, 210 Chestnut Court read a statement: Good evening mayor and members of the Town Council. My purpose for being here this evening is to ask each of you to stand up for Garwood and your neighbors at The Pointe. Pointe residents and businesses endured a terrible, invasive 6 months when Westfield approved an ice rink directly on the property line with Garwood with absolutely no consideration for Garwood's residents or local businesses. You and I both know they would never have gotten away with this if the rink were located in a Westfield neighborhood. Pointe residents have been particularly affected by the rink, which is located 50' from our property – both our home values and peace of mind have suffered.

The rink operator has requested approval to return next season, even though he supposedly lost hundreds of thousands of dollars. His proposal does not include written documentation of the impact of noise or traffic on the neighborhood he is destroying, nor any business plan demonstrating a path to profitability. What it does include is the addition of daytime hours, music during all open skating, and a concession stand, which is bound to further harm local business while drawing vermin and adding trash to a site that already resembles a trailer park.

On behalf of all Pointe residents, I am requesting that each of you personally contact the mayor of Westfield and Town Council members before their June 4 Town Council meeting to express your concern and request that they not renew the ice rink. How can elected officials approve a project without doing their due diligence? How can they approve a project that has no possibility of ever being profitable at its current location? How can they approve a project with absolutely no regard or respect for their nearest neighbor, Garwood?

Those of you who know us know that we are actively engaged in the Garwood community, the small town with a big heart that we are proud to call home. We support the community in any way we can – and now we are asking for your support. Thank you.

Alex Williams, 502 Maple Court expressed opposition to the rink. He suggested council collectively express opposition to the rink.

Steve Barcan, 518 Maple Court explained that he OPRA requested the contract from Westfield. He commented at length on the documents received. He asked council to collectively oppose this matter.

Tom Peddas, 101 Chestnut Court expressed opposition to the rink returning.

Robert Schlaire, 430 Spruce Avenue commented on MLK Day and a fund raiser he participated in last night.

Resident Keat, 120 Winslow Place commented on the water company project.

Motion was made by Council President Lazarow, seconded by Councilwoman Blumenstock to close public comments session. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:07 p.m., a motion was made by Council President Lazarow, and seconded by Councilwoman Blumenstock to adjourn the workshop session. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood