

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
July 25, 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 Ince	P
Councilman Benoit	EXCUSED	Councilman McCormack	P
Councilwoman Blumenstock	P	Council President Lazarow	P

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

Steve Greet, Jim Meehan, Tony Gencarelli, John Buonocore and Karen Musialowicz of RVSA were present. Mr. Greet introduced the members of RVSA. The RVSA explained the budget and other related matters regarding the RVSA. There was brief discussion regarding sewer connection fees. Mr. Greet mentioned developer's fees. Mr. DelConte mentioned that students from Garwood have toured the plant.

Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim, Esq mentioned the ordinance for electronic submission of Planning/Zoning Board applications. Mr. Jardim commented on fines reported prepared by his office. Mayor Todisco mentioned Laws & License Committee will review the fees. Ms. Ariemma suggested the ordinance go to the Planning Board prior to introduction. All agreed to send ordinance to the Planning Board prior to introduction.

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

Mayor Todisco's Report:

Summer Storms - In light of the recent storms we've been having, I wanted to start out by saying thank you to all the first responders here in Garwood, particularly our Police and Fire Departments for all their efforts to mitigate the storms' effects. Also, our Office of Emergency Management Director Ken Capobianco posts frequent alerts on Facebook, so I thank him for his work and encourage all residents to follow the Garwood Office of Emergency Management page on Facebook. Our Police Department has really done a tremendous job expanding the use of Nixle alerts, which sends text messages and emails to those who sign up. You can sign up online or by phone. It's really helpful for storms and emergencies, but also community alerts.

Paving - To the best of my knowledge, the paving of the 300 blocks of Third Avenue and Hickory Avenue are still scheduled to begin with milling on July 26 and paving on July 29th. The subcontractor for the gas company is tentatively set to pave the 200 block of Spruce Avenue next week. Our engineer, Mike Disko, and I have been in communication with the gas company as we are trying to negotiate for the most curb to curb paving possible on the north side of town given their project this year.

Paperboard - I continue to be in regular contact with the owner of the Paperboard property and have a few items to report. A structural engineer went through the historic Aeolian castle portion of the remaining building and has deemed it structurally sound. It will remain and be incorporated into the new construction as planned. The sidewalks, which were damaged by the collapse three weeks ago have been repaired. The owner has sent the environmental report from the LSRP to Harbor Consultants for review. They are still looking at a timeline where the remaining debris will be removed and the site will be level by the end of August.

Planning Board - Last night, the Planning Board continued to hear the application of 345 South Avenue where the owner was seeking to convert the second and third floors of his building from office to residential use, which also would need a parking variance. The residential use would include four 1-bedroom apartments at 576 square feet each. Originally, two 499 square feet 1-bedroom and two 917 square foot 1-bedroom with a den units were proposed, but the Board gave feedback expressing concern about the dens and the unevenness of the unit size at the previous meeting. Therefore, the applicant made changes to the layout in line with Board feedback. After many questions and much discussion, the Board voted 7 to 1 in favor of the application with some conditions. The lease will state and parking spaces will be marked to dedicate one space per unit for a total of four tenant only spaces. The owner and/or his first floor tenant, JeniFit, will make a map of available on street and municipal parking available for clients of the business. A new fence will be required in the rear and side of the property and illumination specifications will need to be submitted on the updated plans. While the majority of the Board expressed some concern about the amount of existing parking, we recognized that a parking variance was granted years ago and the current occupants have been dealing with the shortage of parking already by having clients use street and

municipal parking lots. Also, most other businesses located near South Avenue and Center Street do not have their own parking, so we sought to be equitable as well as understanding of the fact that we want our businesses to thrive and do not want to see buildings like 345 South sit underutilized.

Welcome New Businesses - I had the honor of attending the grand openings of [Clearsmile Orthodontics](#) at 506 North Avenue and [Schuster Family Orthodontics LLC](#) at 300 South Avenue this past Saturday. I am so proud of the diversity of businesses we have here and I am very happy to welcome these professional small businesses to our community. I wish them and all our new businesses much success.

Mayor's Breakfast - I will be hosting my next Breakfast with the Mayor event on Saturday, August 10th here at Borough Hall from 10am to noon. I asked former Mayors to join me, so I am pleased to announce that George Casabona (1962-1964), Dennis McCarthy (2003-2010), and Patricia Quattrocchi (2011-2014) will be on hand at the breakfast. Unfortunately, former Mayor Charles Lombardo will be away on vacation in Ireland otherwise he would have attended. All residents are welcome to stop in at any time during this two-hour window to ask questions, to express their thoughts, or just to say hello, and of course, for a bite to eat.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Councilman Benoit: EXCUSED

Councilwoman Blumenstock: I just wanted to give the council and residents an update on street sweeping. So sweeping officially began last week on the 16th. Ahead of that we put out the schedule on the Garwood website, Nixle and the Garwood Facebook page as well as various other Garwood Facebook pages and individual Facebook pages. We understand that may not hit everyone right away, and our DPW is understanding of that. They for the time being are just doing their best to go around any cars parked on the street. Ultimately, the schedule for next year will be in the service booklet that is mailed out to each household in December and, at that time, we certainly hope for full compliance in the coming year. In the meantime, the Streets and Roads committee wants to be as proactive as possible and will be meeting in the beginning of August to discuss not only the efficiency of the current schedule but also the possibility of doing a direct mailing of the street sweeping calendar for the rest of sweeping season, which includes all of August, September and October. I have been in constant communication with our Superintendent and Foreman about this, so that we can ultimately evaluate any tweaks that need to be made as well as evaluate compliance.

I do though just want to hit on a few things that I've heard from residents. The schedule for sweeping was created by the Department of Public Works itself. They took into account their current daily schedules and how best to integrate a regular sweeping schedule back into their day. They needed to examine even things such as how vacation times or sick days may play into their ability to have a regularly scheduled sweeper. So the breakdown of the schedule reflects that. In the past, the DPW used signs to let residents know if the sweeper was to be there the following day. However, when looking at the efficiency of that, they concluded that it was far too time-consuming to put up and take down that many signs for such huge areas of Garwood on such a regular basis and I had to agree. It keeps an employee away from other duties for too long, especially at the peak of sweeping time, in the summer, when you may have employees on vacation. Though it will take a few months for everyone to get into the practice of knowing when their street is set to be swept, I think as direct mailers hit and as more people hear about it from their neighbors or online, that it will eventually become routine, just as garbage pickup is.

Also, I know you may have seen the sweeper out on a day that wasn't on the schedule. This is actually because of the diligence of the DPW. Because this was the first time out sweeping in a long time, they actually took a little more time than normal to clean, to make sure they got out those months of dirt and grime and go back over some areas few extra times. And so it took a little longer this first time to take care of the scheduled areas. But thanks to the DPW for doing that and I thank them for working with our committee over the next few weeks to ensure that sweeping is done in the best, most efficient way for our residents.

On another note, the Green Team's plastic bag recycling challenge has begun. Over the next six months, we are asking Garwood residents and businesses to bring all clean, dry grocery bags, and plastic liners to the following drop-off locations: Borough Hall, the Garwood Library, Lincoln School and King's Supermarket here in Garwood. The plastic will be collected by the Green Team and dropped at a local participating retailer where it will be shipped to TREX who recycles it to use in their composite decking. Should we collect 500lbs of plastic by January, TREX will donate a park bench to Garwood. It's a win-win for the environment and for Garwood! So please tell your neighbors and start gathering your grocery bags, bread wrappers, Ziplocs and dry cleaning bags.

Councilman Graham commented on Resolution 19-234 concerning the fire alarm panel. He explained the proposal and other related matters.

Councilman Ince: As many of you may be aware, we are again experiencing a rat infestation problem in particular areas of town. Unfortunately, the heavy rains we have had thus far this year coupled with flooding issues have exacerbated this problem forcing these pests out of their habitat. This has especially been true in the usual areas of concern, including properties in the area of Spruce, Myrtle, and Oak Streets. As the

liaison to the Board of Health, I have been in frequent contact with the Health Officer at the Westfield Regional Health Department, of which Garwood is a member along with other nearby towns. The Health Department has been very responsive by sending out inspectors to the properties who have called about rat complaints and targeting other properties in the vicinity as well. As a Borough, we have been on top of this issue by having the brook sprayed and having a preventative pest control provider bait the brook annually. The brook was sprayed recently to kill the vegetation after having to reschedule this treatment on more than one occasion due to inclement weather. The inspector along with the pest control provider will be walking the brook next week and addressing any rodent problem observed by baiting. The Laws and License Committee will be looking at an ordinance to see how best to strengthen the Borough's ability to enforce the extermination of rats on private property, which comes at the recommendation of the Health Department. Currently the Borough does not have the authority to force a private property owner to hire an exterminator to address rat infestation. Also, it is important to keep in mind that the Health Department does not provide pest control services on private property.

I would like to remind anyone who notices rodent activity to report it to the Health Department either by calling Borough Hall or calling the Westfield Regional Health Dept. directly.

Councilman McCormack commented on the fact that the Borough cannot make residents hire an exterminator

Councilman McCormack Yes, Thank you Mayor. Tonight I would like to talk about tow topics that are strongly rooted in my beliefs. The first is that are elected officials of Garwood to do what we are elected to do. We are all here because we were elected to come together as a single body and move Garwood forward as a single community. We are to stand together and make well informed decisions for Garwood not for Republicans or Democrats but for our community and its residents. I felt strongly in my recent votes and decisions because I sit here knowing I did the right thing for my town and my neighbors while leaving the idea of two different sides at the door. Now let me move to my next comment. I'm sure with this I may rattle a few of you in the room but I feel that it is a Very important topic. Tonight we gather in this chamber feeling secure because of the efforts of our Law Enforcement agencies. I however feel our Law Enforcement are being held hostage in the job they swore on Oath to uphold. I bring this up because of the local news coverage I'm sure most have seen recently of the cops in NYC. These officers were mocked, spat at, had water amongst other objects thrown at them. The officers were doing what they swore an Oath to the community they would do, protect them. Instead they are mocked and insulted by the citizens they swore to protect. .Lately in our larger cities we see a blind eye turned by the Mayors and Governor's towards those that put their live on the line every day for each and every one of us. I ask you all, how any of us as parents, husbands and wives feel we are being protected in the way we should? This is a big question in today's world where liberal's beliefs tell us everyone is entitled to express themselves regardless of the consequences or circumstance. What we seem to forget is that in that expression we need to remain law abiding citizens with respect not just for one another but for the rule of the law and those individuals that put their live on the line to uphold it. So to be clear on why I bring this important topic up tonight.... My son-in-law is an NYPD officer. I watched as his brothers in blue were assaulted by those they were protecting. I sat there hoping I never see him in that situation. I sit here now looking at all of you saying, let us not gloss over this topic or take it too lightly. We are a beautiful town with beautiful citizens let us be aware and not let this awful fate come to our small beautiful peaceful corner of this great county. Thank you

Council President Lazarow No Report

Board of Chosen Freeholders Liaison Report: **No Report**

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.

NONE.

A motion was made by Councilman Graham, second by Council President Lazarow to close public comment. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:57 p.m., a motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, second by Council President Lazarow to adjourn the workshop session. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood