

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
August 8, 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	P	Councilman McCormack	P
Councilwoman Blumenstock	P	Council President Lazarow	P

Also present Borough Clerk/Stenographer Kathleen J. Wierzbinski and Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim, Esq.

Borough Administrator/Clerk Christina M. Ariemma was excused.

Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim mentioned the importance of Resolution 19-248 on tonight's consent agenda concerning the Borough of Garwood's Spending Plan.

Mayor Todisco's Report:

Utility Work - As I'm sure you have noticed by now, the north side is busy undergoing work by both the water and gas utility companies as they make improvements to their main lines. This poses a traffic challenge, but our Garwood Police Department has taken a proactive approach by utilizing the trailer for the past month or so indicating upcoming road work and to plan ahead as well as nearly daily Nixle alerts to notify of street closures. Please sign up by going to Nixle.com to be sure you are receiving their updates.

NJ Transit - NJ Transit has replaced the bus shelter near the intersection of South Avenue and Center Street along with making some improvements to our train station, including painting, cleaning, and performing minor repairs. I am continuing to push NJ Transit for more--from rides, the return of the few one-seat rides we had, adding another ticket machine to the westbound side of the station, to replacing the North Avenue bus shelter near Oak Street.

PSE&G Update - Yesterday, I received the following update from our representative at PSEG about the potential 69kV power line project. Essentially, the possibility of going along Conrail rather than through residential streets is still under review and we will likely not have a final answer until October.

"Good Afternoon-

I wanted to let you know that our evaluation of the viability of the railroad route as an alternative route has proven to be a substantial undertaking and is still ongoing. As part of our due diligence, we continue with our analysis and engineering design. Some examples of what we have been working on include:

- Validation of integrity of the existing structures
- Evaluation of the finding of the constructability walk through
- Review of existing easements
- Continued dialogue with third parties
- Finalizing preliminary design to support estimating
- Assessment of interference with other facilities

Unfortunately, at this point we cannot provide a firm date for a final decision, but think that October is a more realistic timeframe."

Mayor's Breakfast - I will be hosting my next Breakfast with the Mayor event this Saturday, August 10th here at Borough Hall from 10am to noon. 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. Bagels, fruit salad, muffins, coffee, and juice will be served. 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: Two issues to address tonight. The first one is that the Garwood Police Department is asking for and recommending that we amend LO 21-11 (6).

Basically this involves a property on South Avenue where they need a section made into no parking by the entrance and exit to the parking lot because it creates a hazard.

Laws & License is 3-0 in favor of amending this ordinance.

The second issue and bigger one is in regards to Garwood's lack of a pest ordinance.

Most if not all municipalities in the state have a pest infestation ordinance, specifically an ordinance for public health and safety that prevents property owners from having conditions on their properties in which pests will breed and become an infestation. When we talk about pests, we are talking about mosquitos, larvae, pupae, rodents and vermin. Most municipalities allow the board of health to deal with these issues and allow for penalties.

The reason for this type of ordinance is because pests are the carriers for numerous diseases, and therefore they could and should be considered significant health issues.

Our health department has reached out to council in regards to some homes having a rat infestation and they have asked us to address the lack of an ordinance so they can properly address the issue.

The thing I need to make clear is that this is more than just rats. It's all pests. When L & L was discussing this, one of the things we talked about was if a property here in Garwood had a standing body of water that becomes a breeding ground for mosquitos, there would be no way for the borough to keep that from becoming a health hazard. An honestly with things like West Nile on the rise we need to make sure our board of health has what they need to ensure our residents safety.

So L & L is recommending that Garwood ass a pest infestation ordinance to Chapter 99 of our code. Chapter 99 is our Health and Sanitation chapter. We've drafted a proposed ordinance which has been distributed to council for review.

As part of the ordinance, it does give the board of health the ability to make residents get an exterminator if the situation warrants it.

I want to say that no member of L & L agreed to that lightly. It was a discussion and something that we struggled with. Exterminators cost money and sometimes they can be expensive. If it's on your property you have to deal with it, and termites are serious, and you're going to get a licensed exterminator. You don't want it to spread to other parts of your house or God forbid your neighbor's house. So we didn't see it as being any different with other pests. Instead of damage to the house though, these other pests can spread diseases and they can cause damage in other ways.

Also when we spoke with our board of health, we were given a list of several exterminators in the area and what the rates are. I believe the lowest was \$95.00 and there was one that was \$250.00 but guarantees rodent free for 60 days. So while it's expensive, it's not unreasonably so.

So again, while we struggled with the idea of forcing residents to pay for an exterminator we felt it was something that had to be done. Also if the infestation isn't dealt with in a timely manner and swift manner, the situation could become worse.

Lastly in addition to writing the new ordinance we also are proposing an amendment to a current ordinance. The penalty ordinance in Chapter 99, located at §99-41, for any violation of the health and sanitation chapter, it's punishable by up to 90 days in jail, or a \$1,000 fine, or 90 days community service. No member of L & L liked the idea of a Garwood resident facing the possibility of jail time for a violation of the health and sanitation code, so we rewrote the penalty to be strictly monetary. Specifically a fine of no less than \$50.00 and no more than \$2,000, and it's at the discretion of the court.

The other thing too is when speaking about whether or not it was fair to force folks to get an exterminator, I liked the idea that if a fine is to be issued, it's done by a judge and not the health department. It gives a resident proper due process. They are able to go in front of a neutral arbitrator essentially and please their case as to why they don't think they need or should get an exterminator or be fined for it.

At this point and time L & L unanimously recommends implementing the pest ordinance and revising the penalty ordinance.

Councilwoman Blumenstock: I'm happy to report that the Green Team is off to a great start in the Trex plastic recycling challenge. The boxes have been filling up at a fast and we had over 40 lbs of plastic collected in the first week alone. Please continue to drop off your bags and wrappers at Borough Hall, the Library, Lincoln School and Kings.

Also, I just want to let everyone know, that together with our administrator, I am looking into getting Garwood an electronics recycling day. Currently, the only real way we can recycle our old computers and laptops and keyboards is to bring them to one of the recycling days that the county has, which is of course a great resource. However, in an effort to bring more convenience to Garwood residents, we are in talks with a company that would provide a collection day here in Garwood, and even provide Garwood with a portion of the monetary proceeds, which is always good. So as we get further into the planning of that, I will bring you more details, but we are looking into the possibility of doing it one Saturday in October. Stay tuned!

Councilman Graham: reported on poison ivy by the Recreation Center. Councilwoman Blumenstock responded that it is being addressed

Councilman Ince: I want to take a moment to address the mass shootings which have occurred in our country – from Columbine, to Sandy Hook Elementary School, to Las Vegas, to the California Garlic Festival, to this past weekend in Dayton, Ohio and El Paso, Texas – and all those others – the list is too long to mention here. We have become numb to mass shootings which are occurring with increasing regularity, on almost a weekly basis. It is long overdue for a grass roots effort to put an end to these tragedies. However, this will take a consensus among all our people, all political parties, and all our states. In the past we have overcome external threats: a civil war, two world wars, and more recently 9/11 and the threat of terrorism. The key to overcoming these threats is we must present a united front. These mass shooting represent a kind of domestic terrorism which threatens the way we conduct our daily lives. As a nation and a people, we need to feel safe when we go to school, go to work, go to a concert – or go to Walmart!

Enough of prayers and candle lit vigils for the dead and wounded – how many times are we going to lower our flag for the many victims? When I was a youngster the evening news provided a daily body count of those soldiers and Marines killed in Vietnam – is that what we have come to?

I would suggest the following be implemented immediately:

- No military style weapons should be available for public sale – to include online sales.
- Similarly, no high capacity magazines should be available for public sale.
- Gun laws must be uniform in all 50 states – case in point – the shooter at the CA garlic festival could not purchase a military style weapon in CA so he proceeded to go to Nevada where the firearms purchasing laws are more lax bought his weapon of choice then went back to CA and went on a rampage.
- Gun buyers must be 21 or above and submit to a comprehensive background check prior to purchase.
- A 14-day waiting period should be part of any firearms purchase.

It is time to put our technology to good use and proactively monitor internet sites which spew hatred and prejudice feeding unstable minds to act out against innocent people. If we have the capability to monitor our enemies, we certainly have the ability to monitor this cancer from within.

This is not an attack on the 2nd Amendment and our right to bear arms – it is a call for sensible gun reform. Should you have any doubt listen for a moment to this brief list of mass shootings in just the past few years and the weapons used in those shootings:

Aurora:	MP-5
Orlando:	MCX (AR-15 style)
Parkland:	AR-15
Las Vegas:	AR-15
Sandy Hook:	XM-15
El Paso:	AK-47
Dayton:	223-caliber weapon with a 100-round drum magazine

Do you see a common thread here?

Thank you ...

Councilman McCormack: talked about the rat issue in the borough.

Council President Lazarow: I would like to encourage the mayor and council to supports the ALJ boosters to support our Garwood athletes attending Clark High School. To take a full page ad it costs about 25 dollars per person, so I hope you will join me in this worthy cause.

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.

Mr. Pritchard, 410 Spruce Avenue spoke about mass shootings and sang a song.

Paul Tarantino, 520 Beech Avenue expressed concerns over a dumpster in the street. He also mentioned the Water Co. didn't replace curbing after completion of work. He stated post office mailbox is leaning and needs to be addressed.

Mr. Castro, 219 Gallows Hill Road mentioned issues with potholes and neglected stop signs.

Hugh Sinclair, 228 Second Avenue expressed concern over the rat infestation. He mentioned he was curious if NJ transit treated the railroad tracks for rats.

Krystal Zawoysky, 208 Myrtle Avenue mentioned utility companies paving after work is completed.

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

Mr. Jardim responded to Mr. Tarantino concerning the dumpster issue.

Mayor Todisco responded she will check into the Water Company issue and also contact Cranford Post Office concerning the mailbox.

Mayor Todisco spoke about Gallows Hill Rd. stating this street is technically Cranford. She stated she would reach out for Cranford and suggested the resident do the same.

Mayor Todisco referred the neglected stop signs issue to the Streets and Roads Committee.

Mayor Todisco will check with New Jersey Transit concerning treating of the railroad tracks.

Mayor Todisco responded to the utility companies paving curb to curb and talked about lowering the moratorium from 5 to 3 years.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:30 p.m., a motion was made by Councilman Benoit, second by Council President Lazarow to adjourn the workshop session. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood