

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
September 26, 2019**

Start Time: 7:02 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	EXCUSED		
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 Scott Salmon, Esq.

Borough Attorney Scott Salmon commented that the bids being awarded tonight are in order.

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

Mayor Todisco's Report was read by Council President Lazarow:

Road & Utility Project Updates - I am pleased to report that since our last meeting, the 200 block of Spruce Avenue was paved by the gas company as part of our negotiation with them. Also, I am even happier that they paved through the intersection connecting it with the newly paved 100 block as well as through the East Street intersection. Bids for the New Street project were taken today. Once the bids are reviewed and we award the contract, a schedule will be determined. On another note, the utility work on the north side of town is ongoing. The water company is working to complete their work by the end of October. We were notified that the gas company plans to return to working on the north side during the first week in November. I want to thank our engineer, Police Chief, and DPW Superintendent for their diligence working with the utility companies to facilitate cooperation of the work schedule between them as well as traffic flow, despite challenges.

Mayor's Wellness Campaign - The Mayor's Wellness Campaign 3K walks have returned after taking a break for the summer. The walk last Saturday at the Recreation Complex was very well attended and we even had more than ten 8th grade students participate after some encouragement from their science teacher. The next walk will be on Saturday, October 26th at the Recreation Complex.

FoodStock Challenge - We are underway with our Foodstock Challenge with Fanwood to see who can collect the most non-perishable food items and other goods, like paper and hygiene products. I want to thank the many residents who have really stepped up with this challenge to encourage widespread participation in our community. This food drive is ongoing through Halloween and you may drop off food here at Borough Hall or at the Garwood Library. For more information, you can visit foodstocknj.org for the complete list of acceptable goods and more.

Planning Board - Last night, the Planning Board met and discussed a few items on the agenda. First, after hearing from our affordable housing attorney, Bob Renaud, and planner, Jill Hartmann, the Planning Board voted to recommend the Council adopted the revised Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, which is part of the requirements for our judgement of compliance. The judgement of compliance means Garwood has met its court mandated requirements and is protected from builders' remedy lawsuits through 2025 as a result.

Also, after lengthy discussion regarding an application for a variance to permit an addition on the home at 502 Spruce Avenue, the applicant amended their application to remove the existing screened in porch facing West Street and build up from the side of the house. The house is already located beyond the side yard setback, so a variance was required and it was granted.

Lastly, the Lidl application to occupy 28,000 square feet or about half of the old Pathmark property, which began in May, was continued with testimony by their engineer, architect, traffic expert, and representative of Lidl. The application will be carried to the next meeting on October 23rd. The October 9th meeting of the Planning Board was canceled due to it being Yom Kippur.

Councilman McCormack commented on Mayor Todisco's report concerning the Planning Board

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Councilman Benoit: Discussed recommendations from Laws & Licenses concerning the changes to the code. All agreed to defer the matter to the next meeting.

Councilwoman Blumenstock mentioned the sewer fee portion of the recommendation. She asked if there is a rush on that matter. It was realized there is not a rush.

Councilwoman Blumenstock: September Sloppy Joe Bingo was held on September 18th and a big thank you to the department for letting us use their firehouse. The night was a big success with over 50 residents of all ages joining us for bingo games with prizes provided by members of the Council. We had what is typically called the North Jersey Sloppy Joe provided by Al's Deli and a big thank you to our administrator Christina Ariemma for providing the Classic Sloppy Joes. They were a huge hit and I can tell you they were absolutely delicious. Also, a big thanks to Ms. Ariemma for calling numbers along with Pat DiFabio who always provides some great jokes to add to the evening. And aside from having fun, we were able to make over \$300 in proceeds which have gone to the Senior Club and will help offset their expenses for lunches and bus trips. So thank you to all who came out that night.

The Green Team was out decorating Garwood for the fall season. Thanks to members Erin Cruz and Rosa Collura for heading this up and getting us ready for fall. You can see the decorations here at Borough Hall in front of the electronic sign and at JFK Plaza across from Garwood Lanes. The Green Team will also be participating in this year's PTA Trick or Trunk on October 26th so stop by to see us and get some candy of course. On October 5th, we will begin work on the rain garden at the Rec Complex. This project is the result of a \$2000 grant the Green Team received from Sustainable Jersey, which we were able to apply for after becoming certified by the organization. The rain garden, which we are anticipating being completed on October 12th will hopefully help alleviate some of the flooding that can make its way onto the baseball field, as well as the large amount of sand, dirt and mulch that makes its way currently into the storm sewer in that area. Once completed, we would love to have the whole council as well as our helpers from Rahway River Watershed, Rutgers University as well as the County who is donating their toolshed, to the site for a visitation so we'll keep you updated on that. That's all for my report.

Councilman Graham: No Report

Councilman Ince: Commented school is open. He urged residents to be careful driving during school opening in the morning and also in the afternoon when school lets out.

Councilman McCormack: Yes thank you, tonight I would like to share with everyone that on Saturday September 14th Mayor & Myself drove to Wildwood for the Firefighter's Convention in support of our Volunteers. As we enter the Convention! I must tell all what a Wow factor it was to see Garwood's New Platform Ladder Truck out in front on Display. Yes this is the reason why we took time to stand with our Department, something that we all on Council were in favor of approving to give our Volunteers the equipment needed to fight fires in today's world. Back to the Convention!! one point I took on was how our Fire department looks forward to spending a long weekend together to have just plain simple time with each other, just ad we do on our planes vacations, so I personally took notice to this, and came to my conclusion that we in Garwood are very fortunate to have the members we do on department. So before I close I would like to add something that was said to Me and later repeated to our Mayor & that is this coming from 2 members who have attended this Convention for over 30 years. They told us how Thankful the department is for this New Truck, but also said this is the first time A Mayor or Councilman attend this Convention! This hit home for Me and probably something I will not forget. We both are looking forward to next year.

Council President Lazarow: Along with Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock, I attended the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition Public Meeting last week held at the Cranford Community Center. Chairman of the Coalition, Bruce Bergen updated us on two bills that are currently being considered by the NJ state legislature. Bill S3659 would be a bill arguing to reduce Raritan Valley Line fares by 10% until one seat rides are restored. Bill S3574 is a bill that was introduced and is currently in committee for review that requires NJ transit to conduct a feasibility study on providing rail service on the Raritan Valley Line that offers full-time direct rail service to New York City. NJ Transit would be required to prepare and submit a report detailing the findings of the study within six months of enactment. We also were updated by Nat Bottigheimer, of the Regional Plan Association on the major economic impact of not building a new rail tunnel to connect New Jersey to New York City to allow the over 100 year old aging Hudson Tunnel to be shut down and renovated before the distinct possibility of it having to be closed due to its age or another devastating storm. I have talked about this issue on the dias many times and I will continue to put pressure to move these two bills in the NJ Legislature forward on the short term. On the long term we need to pressure our representatives and the White House to provide adequate funding for building a new tunnel that would be paramount to keeping places like Garwood attractive not only to those who commute to the city, but to maintain and increase our property values. I encourage all Garwood residents to do the same.

Last night I attended the Libraries of Union County Consortium (LUCC) reception, held at the Cranford Community Center. It was a great night to honor and celebrate the great work that our librarians do for all the towns in Union County as well as the amazing services and programs that our library provides. I am proud to have served as the Liaison for the Garwood Library Board for the last three years. They are a dedicated and thoughtful group of individuals who care passionately about the vitality and future of the

Garwood Library. We are also extremely lucky to have Maryanne Duffy, our Library Director leading the charge in creating innovative programs and constantly open to creating a library we can all be proud of. As an avid reader, I know how my public library where I grew up was a safe haven for me and it continues to be a place I thoroughly enjoy visiting to find new books.

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.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue commented on the Library Board matters.

A motion was made by Councilman Graham, second by Councilwoman Blumenstock to close public comment. All in favor.

Council President Lazarow responded to Mr. Paterson's questions regarding a grant applied for the library

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:23 p.m., a motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, second by Councilman Benoit to adjourn the workshop session. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood