



**MAYOR & COUNCIL  
THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE  
BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 10, 2020**

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The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Peapack & Gladstone was held on Monday, August 10, 2020 electronically via the GOTO Meeting Conferencing Service and began at 7:08 p.m.

Mayor Skinner called the meeting to order. Borough Clerk Nancy A. Bretzger read the Sunshine Notice "Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Adequate notice of the Meeting Date was published in the Courier News and Bernardsville News on August 8, 2020, the Borough Website and posted at the Municipal Complex and the Borough Library. Action will not be taken."

Mayor Skinner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call indicated the following present: Mayor Skinner, Councilman Caminiti, Council President Corigliano, Councilwoman Dietrich, Councilwoman Murphy, Councilman Smith, Councilman Sweeney

Absent: (none)

Also present were: Randy Bahr, Interim Administrator; John Bruder, Esq., Borough Attorney; John Szabo, Borough Planner; Susan Rubright, Land Use Board Chairwoman; and Nancy A. Bretzger, Borough Clerk

Mayor Skinner gave an update on Tropical Storm Isaias. He noted that as per JCP&L's website there were still five customers out of 1,164 in Peapack and Gladstone without power. The police responded to over 30 storm related calls including wires and poles down, trees on vehicles, and unpassable roads. The Fire Department ran eight storm related calls including a cellar pump out, setting up a generator for a resident on a medical device when the battery ran out, two CO alarms, and a mutual aid request for a reported structure fire which they ended up not having to go to. The Rescue Squad did not have any calls. OEM was coordinating this and giving updates to JCP&L and providing generators and pumps. OEM is in the process of doing storm damage assessment to give to the County for FEMA reimbursement if there's a disaster declared. Public Works was kept busy keeping roads clear and open. Mayor Skinner noted that JCP&L was getting blasted by Mayors from around the State but they did have over 800,000 customers without power. He is talking with their regional representative about the Borough's issues and the next time we get a storm he wants to see that things are handled better by the power company. He gave a big shout out to all the response agencies for a phenomenal job and was thankful that no one was hurt.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – 5 MINUTES PER PERSON – NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Mayor Skinner asked if any member of the Public wishes to speak about non-agenda items. No one came forward.

**DISCUSSION**

Affordable Housing – Council President Corigliano explained that this meeting is a follow-up to the combined meeting Council and Land Use Board had on July 29<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting, a presentation was provided by Melillo Equities with respect to an arrangement that the Affordable Housing Committee made with them to satisfy the remainder of our open, affordable housing requirements. The Committee believes very strongly that this is the absolute best settlement for our Borough, with the least impact and the most benefit. Council President Corigliano noted that Mr. Szabo, the Borough Planner is on the call and he has



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been an integral part of all of this. He said that everyone has the roadmap he has developed and we're on track with that. He asked for any questions or concerns so that they can be discussed as a whole.

Borough Clerk Bretzger went through the roll to determine who had comments or questions.

Councilman Caminiti had no questions.

Councilwoman Dietrich stated that it was brought to her attention that there were a few historic structures on Lackawanna and wanted to know how they would be handled. She gave examples of a rental house at the corner of Main and Lackawanna that was built in 1825 and that Dominick's used to be a one-room school house. She continued that these are parts of the character of town that shouldn't be dismissed. Also, the plan that was shared didn't acknowledge that there are residents living on Lackawanna and she asked if the displacement of residents could be addressed. Council President Corigliano said that there is a difference between old structures and those that are historical or protected and to his knowledge none of the structures that Melillo Equities is planning to remove are protected. He continued that if a structure did have some value maybe Historic Preservation or another interested party could facilitate moving a building offsite or Melillo Equities could revise their plans and work around it. Mr. Szabo responded to Councilwoman Dietrich's concern about the displacement of residents by stating that even without this plan there is nothing to prevent redevelopment of these properties. He said that there is no relocation component required and what the Borough is doing is creating an opportunity to provide for affordable housing.

Councilwoman Murphy asked if we know how many residents could be displaced by this. Council discussed. Mr. Bruder asked Mr. Szabo if relocation is a requirement imposed on developer and Mr. Szabo responded that it's not because these are not considered deed restricted affordable housing units. Councilwoman Murphy asked about the egress between the houses on Main Street between Liberty Park and whether it was one way and for emergency purposes only. Council discussed. Councilwoman Murphy stated that she had some major issues at first with this plan with 100,000 square feet and so forth but she thinks in general this plan has many positives and that we're relatively lucky to do brown versus green development.

Councilman Smith said that for several years now he's heard about the discussions with the Judge and Special Master and he asked for a characterization of these talks. Council President Corigliano described the meetings. Councilman Smith said that he is skeptical about the plans for the two buildings on the west side and whether they're compliant with the various riparian buffers and the floodway requirements. He also asked what the possibility is of having a river walk as the brook is very beautiful and it would be great if residents could walk from Liberty Park to the Gladstone train station. Council President Corigliano responded that Mr. Melillo took the floodway into account when coming up with a footprint for the buildings. He also responded that both a river walk and a courtyard are details that are being written into an agreement that John Szabo is working on and that Lackawanna Avenue will be substantially improved as part of this development, with sidewalks, trees, and lighting. Mr. Szabo said that at this point in the process it's very hard to get detailed engineering drawings and everything has been conceptual so far, but we've had the same concern and has expressed it. He continued that ultimately Melillo Equities will have to make whatever adjustments required by the NJDEP in order to get their permits. Mr. Szabo said that Melillo Equities has represented to the Borough that this is a feasible plan and he's going to rely on that



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because he doesn't think that Mr. Melillo would be investing so much in the project if he didn't think it was viable.

Councilman Sweeney said that he didn't have any questions because he's been on the Affordable Housing Sub-Committee but he does have some comments to make. He noted that he came back on Council about two years ago and the affordable housing plan was a done deal until holes developed in their plan. He commented that we complain about the obligation and the amount of units but, if you familiarize yourself with the Mt. Laurel history, this was an effort by the courts to desegregate New Jersey. He said that the location of this project is great, he thinks the repurposing of existing properties is a plus, but this works out to a 45% set aside market rate versus affordable units which he doesn't think exists anywhere else in the State. He stated that he believes that Mr. Melillo has been very responsive to all involved.

Mayor Skinner said that he has lived in town for 50 years and has seen much change over the years with developments going up in corn fields. He thinks that this will change the area but we're getting the best deal we can, with the affordable housing spread out through town.

Councilwoman Murphy said that she agrees with what Mayor Skinner said about spreading the affordable housing throughout town and that it is one of the best aspects of this project. She said that hopefully those who move into the development will feel a part of the community, not separated.

Council President Corigliano said that he has been doing this since he was appointed four years ago. He explained the steps taken to get to where the Borough is today. He noted that there is a long history of affordable housing that started in the 70s and none of us like it because it's being pushed on us and it invalidates our own zoning laws. He continued that he's been on the phone with residents every day for the last week and a half explaining the project and answering questions. One resident said to him that we're beholden to Melillo and he said that this is not at all true, it's just that Melillo is in a unique spot of owning sufficient property in town to provide the Borough with a viable solution. He pointed out several positive aspects of the project. As a review, Council President Corigliano said there is still much to do. Mr. Szabo is working on the agreement with Melillo and on the ordinance. Mr. Szabo has already done two documents that have been sent to Council, the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and the Master Plan Modification. Council will be looking at the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, the ordinance, and the agreement with Melillo that memorializes the various things he has promised as part of the development. Council President Corigliano noted that there is a monetary issue that is being worked out with Fair Share that he and the Borough Attorney, Roger Thomas, will have a call about tomorrow. Council President Corigliano said that we're on track and that he hopes that we're in the courtroom on September 11<sup>th</sup> at a Fairness and Compliance hearing.

LUB Chairwoman Rubright said that she has no comments and thanked everyone for their input. She stated that the Land Use Board has a meeting next week.

Mr. Szabo said that the plan has evolved in a way that is really beneficial to the community. He said that the Borough is looking at 17 affordable units housed in existing structures and integrated in a way that will be least intrusive. He said that if we didn't have the opportunity to do this, the Borough would have to zone for 113 residential units to get the same 17 units, assuming a 15% set aside. He restated what Councilman Sweeney said about the set aside being extraordinary. He said that he wanted to reassure the town that the settlement agreement is paramount in preserving the 104 settlement number.



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Council President Corigliano addressed Councilwoman Dietrich's question about the one home that may be historical. He said that he will be happy to put the Historical Preservation Commission in touch with Mr. Melillo. He also noted that we're on a fast track and there will be much asked of Council so to be prepared.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – 5 MINUTES PER PERSON – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Mayor Skinner asked if any member of the Public wishes to speak about agenda items.

Anne Van den Bergh – Highland Ave., Peapack – Ms. Van den Bergh asked what the number of people involved in the development is and the possible impact on schools and fire and rescue. Mr. Szabo responded that, in terms of the Mt. Laurel mandate, the impact on schools is not a consideration as the whole purpose is to integrate low to moderate income people. Mr. Szabo continued that there will be some impact but he said much effort was made in minimizing the Borough's exposure to obligation. Council discussed. Ms. Van den Bergh concluded by asking if we at least know what we're facing.

Steve Kinsey – 8 Mosle Rd., Gladstone – Mr. Kinsey reiterated the question raised about the road providing the egress out to Main Street and whether it will be gated from the primary development and only used in emergencies. Council President Corigliano confirmed that was the plan. Mr. Kinsey continued by explaining why he is concerned about this and that the developer may want this to become an additional road that can be used going into and out of the development. Council discussed.

Fran Tosti – 41 Old Chester Rd., Gladstone – Ms. Tosti said that her concern stills remain the scope of the project and she thinks that what we have to give Melillo in order to meet our requirements is a lot. She said that the other affordable housing developments are very much in tune with the town architecture. She continued that because Melillo properties are so well maintained, rents may be prohibitive and that a pizza place or an ice cream store may not move in, and she wonders what other properties have to offer to the Borough. She noted that the LUB members have much impact on what goes on in town and she doesn't vote for them and asked Council to make sure that they work with LUB to make sure that we get something appropriate for our town. Council President Corigliano said that her concerns are the same concerns that every single person on the call has, and that the Borough Planner and LUB will rigorously review the site plan, when presented, to make sure that the development works. He acknowledged that it will be different, but they all want these developments to fit in as best as possible.

There being no other matters to be addressed by the Governing Body at this time, a motion was made by Councilman Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Caminiti, that this meeting be adjourned at 8:18 p.m. This motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy A. Bretzger, Borough Clerk