



**MAYOR & COUNCIL  
THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE,  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 24, 2023**

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The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Peapack & Gladstone was held on Tuesday, October 24, 2023 in person and virtually via GoTo Meeting and began at 7:00p.m.

Mayor Corigliano called the meeting to order. Borough Clerk Nancy Bretzger read the Sunshine Notice "Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Adequate notice of 2023 Meeting Dates was published in the Courier News and Bernardsville News on December 8, 2022 and posted at the Municipal Complex and the Borough Library. Action may be taken."

Mayor Corigliano led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call indicated the following present: Councilwoman Dietrich, Councilwoman Murphy, Council President Sweeney, Councilman Lemma, Councilwoman Weible and Mayor Corigliano

Absent: Councilman Quartello

Also present were: Mr. John Bruder, Esq., Borough Attorney, Nancy A. Bretzger, Borough Clerk/Administrator

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

Valerie Palowski, 61 Main Street thanked the Council for the work done on keeping the road safe and keeping the speeding down. She realizes that whether there is a permanent sign or temporary sign becomes an issue because we have a shared responsibility with the County. She suggested lettering on the roadway with the speed limit, similar to places in Bernardsville. She mentioned the poor visibility at CocoLuxe and the Post Office while trying to cross the road from the parking lot is not very good. She suggested some type of sign or lighting.

Council President Sweeney stated he will make sure Councilman Quartello is informed about this. He said he doesn't think it would be too expensive. He doesn't think it would be any more than putting in a cross walk. Councilman Lemma agreed as well. He said when he went by there today, there was an illegal truck parked and you cannot see anyone until they walk into the street.

No other public came forward.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mayor Corigliano revisited the simulcasting on GoTo Meetings. He brought up the last situation where the meeting was advertised as available virtually, however the meeting code did not work and therefore the meeting could not be held.

Council agreed they do like the 2-way simulcasting but not the fact that if there is a technical problem the entire meeting needs to be cancelled.

It was agreed to discontinue the use of virtual sessions for Council meetings while maintaining the simulcasting on YouTube. The council remains open to other options in the future that might be better. It will be published that the virtual meetings will be cancelled for the remainder of this year.



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**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Committee and Commission Rationalization Project**

Mayor Corigliano stated that he, along with John Sweeney, Amy Dietrich, and Nancy Bretzger acting as an ad hoc committee are looking to streamline the Committees and Commissions in the Borough like what other towns have recently done. This will help to eliminate redundant committees and commissions, make them more efficient and make better use of the volunteer resources.

The first group this committee looked at was the idea of converting Commissions to Committees. This would eliminate commissioners having to complete financial disclosure statements. The idea of this is not to take away any functionality of the group. They will continue to do what they have been doing.

The two up for suggestions would be Historic Preservation Commission and Recreation Commission. These two would become Committees.

The second group is Committees and or Commissions to disband or combine. The first recommendation is the Farmland Preservation and Agricultural Advisory Committee would be disbanded and be combined with the Open Space Advisory Committee to become the new Open Space and Agricultural Advisory Committee.

It was suggested to disband the Shade Tree Commission. The responsibilities and rights of this Commission can easily be managed by the Environmental Commission. The Shade Tree Commission was formed over 20 years ago and the reason for its creation no longer serves the Borough.

It was suggested to restructure the Library Advisory Board by removing "Board" and change to an advisory committee so it will become the Library Advisory Committee.

Further, these committee would like to recommend to the Council that the following be added to the Ordinance: "Any nominee selected as a Commissioner, Chair, or Vice-Chair shall serve in that position for not more than two consecutive years." The committee felt it a good idea to try and get some different leadership and different ideas in these committees and commissions.

If these changes are affected before the end of the year, there would be a mandatory commission and committee overview meeting to be held this December to review the requirements, rules and new ordinance changes.

Council President Sweeney asked John Bruder if the other towns that have merged the Open Space with their Ag committees, does it function like our Land Use Board where certain things pertain to Land Use Board as opposed to the Planning Board?

Mr. Bruder stated that with respects to Zoning Boards, Planning Boards and Land Use Boards it is all statutorily defined. There would be some parameters with combining the boards. We will need to look closely at the parameters for each of the combined committees.

Councilwoman Murphy doesn't agree with disbanding the Shade Tree Commission. It must be its own commission under the Forestry Tree Act to get the benefits for the Commission, such as the liability





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coverage for volunteers for the tree work they do and grants that are available. She does not feel disbanding is a good choice because it would limit a lot of things they do via the environmental commission.

She feels limiting the terms to 2 years will not be productive. She feels 3 years gives a person time to learn what is expected of them. The Council concurred.

Council consensus is to have John Bruder see if it is feasible of having a combination of the Environmental and Shade Tree Commission. John Bruder will draft the changes based on the one piece of research he has to do for an Ordinance change to be introduced at the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

**MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION/APPROVALS**

- Somerset Hills Education Foundation

Facility Usage Somerset Hills Education Foundation for the use of Liberty Park on December 10, 2023 for a Holiday Pet Parade from 12-3pm. The application is asking for a waiver of fees. The council consensus was to accept the application with the waiver of fees.

- Municipal Best Practices

Nancy Bretzger explained that Best Practices is related to the State aid the Borough receives based on how the Borough scores relating to a State-defined list of Best Practices. There are certain ways municipalities should be doing things and that is known as Best Practices. Peapack & Gladstone is good at complying with best practices, therefore, we usually get the maximum amount available.

Mayor Corigliano explained that back in the 70's, utilities used to pay directly to the Borough a rent or tax on utilities lines that ran into town such as electric, cable, telephone, etc. The State took that away from all the municipalities in New Jersey and now they collect those taxes directly and give us back part of them in the form of an Energy Tax Receipt (ETR) grant. This year it was about \$252,000. The fact that we score well on the survey ensures that we get the maximum that we can possibly get. He said there is currently a movement by the Mayors of New Jersey in trying to get the State to give towns back the Energy Tax Receipts. Petitions and letters have been signed and sent, but it hasn't gone very far.

Councilwoman Murphy stated that it's a good reminder that we need to do better with electric vehicles in town.

Councilwoman Dietrich mentioned the New Jersey Cyber Securities and Communication Immigration Cell. She said it might be a way to protect meetings going forward. She also suggested if there are areas that we need to work on it might be a good opportunity to explore these and be good projects for the Borough to look into.

Nancy mentioned that the CFO is the one who answers the survey and they are looking forward to getting this document filed.



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**MINUTES**

Mayor Corigliano asked for a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 10, 2023 as well as the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 10, 2023 motion to approve both sets of minutes made by Councilman Lemma; seconded by Councilwoman Murphy roll call taken; said motion passed.

**PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCE 1128- 2023**

*AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER IV, ARTICLE VII, TITLED "WILDLIFE FEEDING" OF THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK AND GLADSTONE*

Council President Sweeney made motion to open the Ordinance up for public hearing; seconded by Councilwoman Murphy, roll call taken; said motion passes.

Sarah Rowland and her husband of 10 Tainer Street spoke on the feral cat issue that exists next to their house. Based on the research he did, feral cats bring about many unhealthy issues. He spoke on how the feral cats are affecting their own home areas. He is in favor of the Ordinance passing.

Councilwomen Weible stated they would like to implement a spaying and neutering program in the town. It is expensive but there are organizations that are less expensive and in addition of the ordinance something really needs to be done. Councilwoman Murphy agreed that the spaying and neutering programs will be very helpful to eliminate some of the kittens.

Mayor Corigliano explained how the ordinance originated and mentioned this is a first step toward addressing the issue through enforcement by the Zoning Officer.

Julie Sueta of 19 Tainer Street then spoke about the neighbor on Tainter who feeds the feral cats. She has spent a lot of money on these cats and has taken some into her home. Not being able to care for these animals would be heartbreaking. She is extremely dedicated to these cats and she said there are two sides to a story. While the Council can sympathize with this person, it has become a significant matter in our town as well as a community wide health hazard.

Council President Sweeney made a motion to close the public session; seconded by Councilwoman Dietrich, roll call taken; said motion passes.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 1128-23, made by Council President Sweeney, seconded by Councilwoman Murphy, roll call vote taken; said motion passes.

Mayor Corigliano stated that this Ordinance is now law and if anyone has an issue with feral cats or any other feral animal being fed it will require that a formal complaint be made. This can be done either on the Borough website or by letter or a phone call to the Zoning officer.





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**RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution R-196-23 was pulled from the list to address a question by one of the staff.

Mayor Corigliano asked for a vote on Resolutions 194-23 and 195-23 as a consent agenda vote, motioned by Councilman Lemma, seconded by Councilwoman Murphy, roll call taken; said motion passed.

**BILLS LIST**

**RESOLUTION NO. 197-23** *Approval of Bills as signed and listed on the Bill Payment List Total Amount: **\$749,117.83***

Motion made by Councilman Lemma, seconded by Councilwoman Dietrich, roll call vote take; said motion passed.

**COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilman Lemma reported on the police department. They are having a coat drive and are accepting coats until December 10<sup>th</sup>.

He stated that the rescue truck for the fire department will hopefully be ready in the next 30 days. They are making good progress on the fire engine specifications.

Councilwoman Murphy said the new tot lot is in with the new mulch and it looks good. Nancy Bretzger stated she is waiting to hear from Richard Dodds to see if the County wants to come out and do a formal opening since they funded it.

Councilwoman Murphy stated that there is Clean Communities grant funds that is used for garbage and recycling, cleaning up the towns. Currently there is a balance of about \$54,000 and in order to get future grants they would like to see you spend it. Jamie suggested the Borough replace all of the worn-out garage and recycling cans in town and replace them with new items similar to those installed in Liberty Park. The cost is estimated at \$48,000.

Councilman Lemma asked when the lighting in the park will be fixed? Nancy Bretzger stated she received the bill from Chester Lighting and the total is \$31,000. She is putting all of it together to submit to the insurance company. This includes the transformer as well as all of the low-voltage lights. Nancy Bretzger will speak with Brad Fagen, Director of DPW to see if there is a way to ground the circuit to prevent this damage from occurring again.



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Mayor's Executive Summary

- Councilwoman Murphy to advise Councilman Quartello about the suggestion regarding the main street crosswalk at Willow.
- John Bruder to draft the changes to the Ordinance on Committees and Commissions for a first reading to be done at the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Mayor and Council President Sweeney can assist.
- Mayor will meet with Nancy Bretzger on corrections to the Best Practices.


Public Comment – Agenda Items

John Kappler, 25 Holland Avenue, Chair of the Environmental and Shade Tree Commissions stated that they do have separate meetings with separate agendas within the same meeting as well as separate budgets. He stated back in 2012 he attended training to be compliant with the Forestry Tree Act which affords Shade Tree Commissions immunity for anything that happens related to trees. This immunity is granted as long as you are compliant within the Act. He said in 2012 the Council voted to have two separate commissions. This needed to be done to get grants. The Shade Tree Commission has received grants. He feels we will give up a lot in merging the two. He suggested wording could be changed in the ordinances such as the membership is the same so you are not appointing for two different commissions. Attorney Bruder questioned what immunity they might possibly provide.

Councilwoman Murphy stated that John Bruder will be looking into the two commissions to make sure none of the benefits will be lost by merging the two.

With no further business, motion made by Councilman Lemma; seconded by Councilwoman Dietrich to close the meeting at 8:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Nancy Bretzger, Borough Clerk