



**MAYOR & COUNCIL  
THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE,  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 13, 2024**

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The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Peapack & Gladstone was held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 in person 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 2024 Meeting Dates was published in the Courier News and Bernardsville News on December 14, 2023 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 Murphy, Councilman Quartello, Councilman Silva, Councilwoman Sueta, Council President Sweeney, Councilwoman Weible and Mayor Corigliano Also present were: Nancy A. Bretzger, Borough Clerk/Administrator, Steven Warner, Esq., Borough Attorney.

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

No one from the public came forward.

**OLD BUSINESS - None**

**NEW BUSINESS -None**

**MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION/APPROVALS**

- Special Use Permit Application for Far Hills Country Day School's Casino Night to be held at Blairsden on April 20, 2024

Georgia Zaiser, Head of Far Hills Country Day School came forward and stated the school will be using the proceeds from the Casino Night for a variety of projects to support the students. She stated the event should have anywhere from 150 to 190 guests and 10 school personnel. They are hoping to strengthen the community, encourage donors and recognize future volunteer leaders within the community. This is serving as their primary fundraiser for 2024. She said that all the documents have been filed with the Borough and she is hoping for a very elegant evening for all who attend.

Council President John Sweeny asked for some additional information such as the hours, parking, any additional outside lighting, music, etc.

Ms. Zaiser stated they will have valet parking and has spoken to some neighbors and have worked an entry way through Matheny to avoid bothering the neighbors. She said there should not be any extra lighting and they will be having a Frank Sinatra singer who will be singing in an internal room at Blairsden. The hours will be 6:00PM to 10:00PM.



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Councilwoman Sueta asked about the wavering of the fee. She stated that Peapack Gladstone will be incurring some experiences with inspections.

It was agreed they will take the escrow fee and if not used, it will be refunded.

Councilman Sergio asked if there will be any security at the event.

Ms. Zaiser stated they have security on staff, former Chief Valentine from Bernardsville and former Chief Skinner from Peapack & Gladstone.

Mayor Corigliano then I opened the meeting up to questions from residents.

Motion made by John Sweeney and seconded by Jill Weible to open up the meeting to the public for comment on the Special Use Application, roll call taken; said motion passed.

Ruth Williams, 29 Highlands Avenue wanted to know where did the number of 150 to 190 quests come from?

Ms. Zaiser said it comes from the population of the school and other events they have had, they tend to get that number of people.

Ruth Williams asked how many save the date cards were mailed out?

Ms. Zaiser stated approximately 290. She said they usually get 50% attendance.

Ms. Williams stated she is asking the question because the Council has the right to impose conditions and it would seem logical that there would be some margin for error in 50% attendance and she feels there should be a cap on the number of people who attend. She said the Mansion in May was extremely successful and a lot more attended than expected.

Ms. Williams asked if there is a number that they would turn away quests?

Ms. Zaiser said they have never had more than 175. There is a cost to attend so some people decide not to participate and we are having it in the Spring and people are busier in the Spring; we usually shoot for 150 and that has been historic for the last 10 years we have been having events.

Ms. Williams asked where will the cars be parked?



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A representative from the School stated some cars will be parked on site. There is an area at the top of Blairsden that is flat and accessible by drive and that is where the valet parking will take place.

Erin Frigerio, 26 Blair Drive stated that one of the things she has noticed with the events they have had up there is not necessarily the event itself but the steps leading up to the event to get ready for the event and this can last anywhere from 3 to 6 days. She wanted to know how that will be handled and what type of impact will that have on Blair and Highland.

Anthony Melillo, Managing Partner of Melillo Equities, LLC owner of Blairsden, indirectly, stated there will be a truck for rentals such as tables and chairs, a truck with portable toilets, a truck for food and catering, maybe more. Matheny has been gracious in allowing us to use their entrance. It shouldn't be an impact to Blair.

Ms. Zaiser stated the set up will be on Friday, the day before.

Ms. Frigerio wanted to know if there are more than 195 people, is it up to the residents to report this? She feels in the past there has not been clear procedures for this.

Borough Attorney Warner stated the residents are free to report to the Clerk but there was no cap before and now there is a voluntary cap of 195. He also suggested that possibly the applicant could use a mechanism to accurately report to the Borough that they did not exceed that number.

Ms. Frigerio wanted to know what assurance do the residents have that these larger events will be permitted?

Mayor Corigliano advised he would answer this question later in the meeting.

Walter Terry, 25 Blair Drive stated that you know how many invitations you are sending out so why not cut the limit at 180. He also mentioned he did attend Far Hills Country Day school back in the day. He is all for this. He just wants to make sure there are controls over what is going on.

Council President Sweeney stated he is happy moving the application with the cap of 195 and the resolution needs to contain the hours for the event.

Councilman Quartello asked if the 195 would include the total guests not including staff.

Ms. Zaisa said if the staff is included in the cap of 195 it will fully impact the benefit of the event. She said we are a school and trying to do right by our application and she



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wants to be respectful of the residents but we would like to have 195 guests and not include the staff of the professionals

Councilman Quartello stated that is what he wanted to confirm.

There was discussion on modifying the resolution.

Council President Sweeney made a motion to modify the Resolution No. R-55-24 to include another Whereas stating hours are from 6PM to 9PM and 195 guest cap, seconded by Councilwoman Murphy, roll call; said motion passed.

Mayor Corigliano made the following comment: this Borough is very concerned about the misuse of properties for commercial purposes. Blairsden is indeed a gem and an asset to our town. It is not a typical home. People have a great interest in seeing this property and they greatly appreciate the owners sharing it. It is a fun place to be at. The Borough recognizes that. The Borough's Master Plan even has a historic preservation element with wording about the use of historical properties. The Borough also recognizes that unfortunately Blairsden's access is extremely compromised and it is in a residential neighborhood. The Borough also respects the privacy of the neighbors living in that neighborhood. He said two events occurred there last year and there was not a special use permit issued for either one. No one seemed to have a problem with those two benefits. In hindsight a special use permit should have been issued. It has been many years since a special use permit has been asked of the Borough and perhaps it fell between the cracks accidentally. However, there was another event up at the Mansion, a movie shoot. This created great worry amongst the neighbors. He received many phone calls. A special use permit should have absolutely been issued for that event with careful consideration of this Board. The Borough has learned from this. The Borough has since met with Mr. Melillo who agreed going forward a special use permit application will be applied for any event going on at Blairsden that wishes to use. In addition, since it is in a residential zone, the Borough will not permit, unless there is some unusual circumstance, any commercial endeavor up there, it is not zoned for that. The Borough does like seeing the property being used especially when it is benefiting others as in the case with the Far Hills Country Day School. The Borough will consider special use permit applications with regard to nonprofit, philanthropic type events. And to make it crystal clear the Borough is not looking for special use permit application from Mr. Melillo or Melillo Equities or the Blairsden's owners for events that are unique to their family. If they wish to have a 20-person private dinner for their family that is their right and entitlement just like you all have the same right in your own homes. If they should wish to have a private family wedding, I don't think we would look for a special use permit for that either. That is the Borough's position on Blairsden. Out of all this came a new Special Use Permit Application that was jointly developed by our Zoning Officer and our Administrator and this new application is what Far Hills Country Day



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School has submitted. We will be monitoring this to make sure the interest of our residents as well as the interest of the property are properly represented.

- Raffle License Application No. 01-2024 for Far Hills Country Day School for a Casino Night to be held at Blairsden on April 20, 2024

Nancy Bretzger stated that the application has been completed correctly and they have paid the fees to the state. The Council gave their consent.

- Facilities Usage Application from SCLSNJ’s Peapack & Gladstone Library for use of the gymnasium on April 27, 2024 from 1-4PM for Star Lab: A Planetarium Experience

No comments. Council gave consent.

- Facilities Usage Application from Bernardsville PBA Pack 150 for use of the Scout Cabin on March 3, 2024 from 2-6PM for Bridging Ceremony

No comments. Council gave consent.

**MINUTES**

Councilwoman Murphy made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2024, Executive Session Meeting Minutes of January 23, 2024 and the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 23, 2024; seconded by Councilwoman Weible; roll call taken, said motion passed; Council President abstained on the Executive Session minutes from January 15, 2024.

**ORDINANCES**

**INTRODUCTION OF 2024 COLA ORDINANCE 1136-2024** *ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)*

Motion and second to introduce the ordinance made by Councilwoman Murphy and Council President Sweeney; roll call taken, said motion passed.

2024 COLA Ordinance 1136-2024 is introduced and shall be published in summary in the Bernardsville News and the public hearing for this ordinance will be on March 26, 2024 at 7:00PM or shortly thereafter.

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE 1137-2024** *ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER VII, TITLED “TRAFFIC” OF THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES SUBSECTION 7-15, TITLED “VEHICLES OVER DESIGNATED WEIGHT EXCLUDED FROM CERTAIN STREETS”*



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Motion and second by Councilman Quartello and Councilwoman Murphy; roll call taken, said motion passed.

Ordinance 1137-24 is introduced and shall be published in summary in the Bernardsville News and the public hearing for this ordinance will be on March 26, 2024 at 7:00PM or shortly thereafter.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. R-43-24** RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DISTRACTED DRIVING FOR APRIL NATIONAL MOBILIZATION FEBRUARY 4 – FEBRUARY 17, 2024

**RESOLUTION NO. R-44-24** RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION ON BEHALF OF THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE TO THE GARDEN CLUB OF SOMERSET HILLS GRANT PROGRAM FOR TOWN BEAUTIFICATION

**RESOLUTION NO. R-45-24** RESOLUTION FOR MAYORAL APPOINTMENT FOR THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

**RESOLUTION NO. R-46-24** RESOLUTION FOR AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT BIDS FOR COLLECTION OF SOLID AND BULK WASTE

**RESOLUTION NO. R-47-24** RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF SURPLUS PERSONAL PROPERTY NO LONGER NEEDED FOR PUBLIC USE ON AN ONLINE AUCTION WEBSITE

**RESOLUTION NO. R-48-24** AUTHORIZATION APPROVING FINAL LIST OF VOLUNTEER MEMBERS OF THE PEAPACK & GLADSTONE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE PEAPACK & GLADSTONE FIRST AID AND RESCUE SQUAD WHO QUALIFY FOR CONTRIBUTIONS UNDER THE BOROUGH LOSAP PROGRAM IN THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE, COUNTY OF SOMERSET

**RESOLUTION NO. R-49-24** RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT TO REASSESSMENT SERVICES, LLC TO PERFORM PROFESSIONAL APPRAISAL INSPECTIONS AND RELATED SERVICES IN CONNECTION WITH THE 2024 BOROUGH WIDE REASSESSMENT PROGRAM

**RESOLUTION NO. R-50-24** RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LOGAN WEIMER TO BE ACCEPTED AS A MEMBER OF THE PEAPACK & GLADSTONE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

**RESOLUTION NO. R-51-24** RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING WILLIAM ALLEN TO BE ACCEPTED AS A MEMBER OF THE PEAPACK & GLADSTONE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

**RESOLUTION NO. R-52-24** RESOLUTION ACCEPTING SUJIN BECKERMAN'S RESIGNATION FROM THE OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**RESOLUTION NO. R-53-24** RESOLUTION TO REFUND MONEY DUE TO OVERPAYMENT OF TAXES

**RESOLUTION NO. R-54-24** AUTHORIZING TEMPORARY EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS

Consent Agenda vote for Resolutions R-43-24 through R-54-24 and R-56-24 Motion and second by Council President Sweeney and Councilwoman Weible; roll call taken, said motion passed.

**RESOLUTION NO. R-55-24** RESOLUTION TO APPROVE/DENY A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR FAR HILLS COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL TO HOLD A "CASINO NIGHT" AT BLAIRSDEN, 30 BLAIR DRIVE, PEAPACK, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY - Voted on earlier in the meeting

**RESOLUTION NO. R-56-24** APPROVING AN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION SOCIAL AFFAIRS PERMIT FROM FAR HILLS COUNTY DAY SCHOOL FOR A FUNDRAISING CASINO NIGHT ON APRIL 20, 2024



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**BILLS LIST**

**RESOLUTION NO. R-57-24** *Approval of Bills as signed and listed on the Bill Payment List Total Amount:*  
**\$381,455.17**

Councilwoman Murphy questioned the term “Blanket” on the Bill’s List.

Nancy Bretzger explained that it is a new procedure we are doing. We do a “Blanket” purchase order and then pull the funds from that certain purchase order for recurring purchases of the same service or item.

Motion made by Councilman Quartello, seconded by Council President Sweeney to approve the Bills List; roll call taken, said motion passed.

**COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilman Silva, Roads Chairman thanked the DPW for their quick turnaround with the snow clean up today. He stated that Brad Fagen, Director of DPW reported to him that Holland Road water main passed all the tests and the fire hydrants are active. Custom hookup on the new service will be over the next two months weather permitting.

Administrator Nancy Bretzger reported that the Library Renovation Bid is out and will be accepting bids on Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>.

She stated that she is working on the bid for Solid Waste because the current contract is up at the end of June. She is hoping to have that out by the end of the month.

She stated that she attended a reorganization meeting with Statewide Insurance Company in which they were also celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> year in existence and she stated that we have been with them for all of those 30 years. We did receive a plaque from them. We also received an award for Consistence Commitment and Implementation of Best Safety Practices for 2023. This is more geared towards DPW.

Borough Attorney Steven Warner thanked the Council and the Borough for the opportunity to serve the Borough as its attorney.

Mayor Corigliano spoke on three items.

The first item: Energize New Jersey. This is an initiative for the electric public utilities in New Jersey who are looking to get permission from the BPU to make massive improvements in the electrical infrastructure in New Jersey. From our own experience, the infrastructure in our town could use improvement. The utilities are looking for Borough support in the form of a letter to the BPU. Because it is a public utility, this is an expensive endeavor and it is going to cause a very modest increase in the electric grids. Due to the frequent power outages in certain parts of our town he does believe in this program and it is time to upgrade our infrastructure. He would like Council’s consent to send a letter to BPU in support of Energize New Jersey.



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Councilwoman Murphy asked if they will be installing underground wiring?

Mayor Corigliano stated underground wiring would not be included but things like power lines, power poles, replacement of fuses with circuit breakers would be. So, if a line trips, it resets automatically rather than sending a crew out. They want to bolster the existing infrastructure.

Council was reluctant to support their initiative as it involved a rate increased.

Item 2. He had a productive meeting with Bill Kent, CEO of Matheny last Friday. The meeting was a follow up on Mr. Kent's presentation to the Council and the public last spring. He let the Mayor know about their progress, a new location, group homes and he will be sending a written report to us around the end of April early May. They are planning on having Miles for Matheny on their own campus this year in Peapack.

Item 3. Last Monday he had a meeting with the Mayors and Police Chiefs of the five Somerset Hills towns. The purpose of the meeting was driven by the increasing rate of automobile theft that have been occurring in some of our towns. Fortunately, Peapack has not seen an increase in this type of theft. The biggest increases were in Bridgewater and Bernards which are off of mayor highways. It was discussed with the Police Chiefs, and the message that came from the Chiefs is they are being hamstrung in their efforts to pursue because of Bail Reform and the lack of prosecution. It was decided that the Mayors will form a Somerset Hills Safety Task Force in which Mayor Corigliano will be a part of. They will be looking for ways to synergize their efforts to ensure this crime in the towns does not increase but rather decreases. They were presented with a very interesting idea where Summit passed an Ordinance that allows the town to enforce prosecution of car thefts. It remains to be seen how this will progress. He reminds residents to simply keep your cars locked. Do not leave the keys in them. He said four of the stolen cars in Bernards had keys in them.

**Public Comments on Agenda items only.**

No comments

With no further business, Councilwoman Murphy made a motion to go into Executive Session; seconded by Councilman Quartello; roll call taken, said motion passed.

Councilman Quartello made a motion to go back to Regular business, seconded by Councilwoman Murphy; roll call taken, said motion passes.

**Public Comment was reopened.**

Mark Engelbretson, 35 Main Street, Peapack wanted it known that Blairsden is a jewel and we need to do everything in this community to make sure it does survive and continues on. With that being said he wanted to address the comment made about Mr. Melillo having the right to have a family event, which he agrees with but access to the Blairsden is through a community access point. He feels a comment should be made about being respectful to your community. Blair Drive is very narrow; access is





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extremely tight so if you had 50 family members coming back and forth for a family dinner, it can cause problems.

Mayor Corigliano agreed that the road is privately owned and it is our understanding Mr. Melillo has an easement over Blair Drive which makes it between him and those who can use it. The Borough has no enforcement over a private road. If Mr. Melillo were to abuse the privilege, the residents will most likely have a problem and they will act upon it.

Mr. Engelbretson wanted to know that if it did come down to noncompliance how will it be enforced, what are the options to the community members?

Mr. Warner stated that within Ordinance 5-11 Special Use permits it does have violation and penalty provisions and rescission provisions within the Ordinance but dealing with enforcement besides residents notifying the Borough, it could be the police, building or construction depending who is tasked with the obligation but more often or not it will be reported by residents. Regarding police activity if there is anything that constitutes a nuisance or a disruption, or a public safety issue then that can be reported and that can be addressed by the Borough police or other authorities.

Mayor Corigliano stated from a Borough's standpoint, if someone violates something that is not permitted whether by ordinance or special use there are two options. If the violation is something within the ordinance, the residents simply call the police for a situation such as they are blocking the road or my driveway, the other option is if there is a violation of a provision within the special use permit, for example we have approved 195 people and 300 people show up, that would be a zoning violation and our Zoning Officer would handle this.

Mr. Engelbretson said but in terms of building a good process, we need to make sure that if someone is not going to be a good neighbor and not follow the letter of a permit, there has to be some kind of mechanism that can make immediate repercussions for the purpose of the community you are trying to protect.

Councilwoman Murphy stated if there is misuse of the permit and a resident identifies it at the time as stated call the police and it will be addressed. There will be a determination at that time if the misuse would be enough to break up the party. She said most importantly subsequent reevaluation of a special use permit. If there continues to be misuse of these types of permits the Council can then get involved and reevaluate if they want to continue giving out these types of permits.

Mr. Engelbretson said that he appreciates this conversation and he thinks this is what the community wants to hear and that would be a clear and concise plan of action.

Mayor Corigliano mentioned the filming activity and that was a commercial activity and Mr. Melillo has been informed that a commercial use is not permitted.



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Ruth Williams 29 Highland Avenue asked if the Borough Council could reevaluate the special use permit ordinance in its totality. She feels there are a few defects in the ordinance that lend themselves to abuse. Most important of those is that the applicant does not have to provide any public notice unless the event is going to go on for more than 10 days. She said the film event that caused all the chaos that began at 4:30 in the morning went on for 9 days. The other issue is the penalties currently they are on a discretionary basis and she feels they should be on an escalating basis so that they increase with each time there is a violation from the same applicant. The other defect is it allows the Council to approve an event for up to 9 months with a renewal of another 9 months. She said that is clearly a violation of the jurisdiction of the Land Use Board. She said Far Hills has a Special Use Permit ordinance and theirs was designed for the VNA twice a year event that last for 2 weeks. This ordinance was enacted to help out Natirar and we understand that but this is not very helpful in what we want to achieve as a community. She emphasized that she feels the Council should revisit the ordinance.

Mayor Corigliano stated that we want to do what is right for our town and we are balancing a number of things but we do not want it to be a nuisance, either way we can assure you that Mansion I not turn into a commercial venture.

Motion made by Councilwoman Murphy; seconded by Sergio Silva to go back into Executive Session. Roll call taken; said motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:48 after Executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Nancy Bretzger, Borough Clerk