



**MAYOR & COUNCIL
THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE,
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 23, 2024**



The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Peapack & Gladstone was held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 in person and began at 7:02p.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, Rodger Thomas, Esq.

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

Walter Terry, 25 Blair Drive, referred to his letter that he sent to the Council dated January 13, 2024 addressing concern by several of his neighbors on Highland Avenue and Blair Drive about recent large activities at Blairsden. He stated they would like to have a meeting with the Council and they would all like the opportunity to express their concerns and how to resolve what is going on there.

Roger Thomas, Esq. filling in for John Bruder stated that he did have a chance to read over the material that Mr. Terry provided the Council. Mr. Terry said it was a very comprehensive letter and he has outlined the concerns and this matter is in the jurisdiction of the Zoning Department and not the Council and it has been handed over to the Zoning Officer. Mr. Thomas stated that if Mr. Terry has suggestions about things that can be done in the future that may affect Ordinances or special uses that would be a different issue, but events in the past are to be dealt with by the Zoning Officer.

Mayor Corigliano stated that the mechanism to meet with the entire council is just what you just did. You presented your issue at a public Council Meeting. Mayor Corigliano stated that pursuant to the Sunshine Laws, which are a set of laws in New Jersey that look to provide transparency, he explained that this means that the Council cannot meet with residents informally. The Sunshine Laws preclude the Council from meeting outside noticed meetings as a body. A few Council members are permitted to meet with residents, but not the whole body.

Mayor Corigliano stated that we are acutely aware of what has been happening at Blairsden. Missteps did occur there and we acknowledge that. We are looking to our Zoning Officer to guide us in addressing these events such that it does not occur again. Further, if there are any future, large events at Blairsden, they would require special permitting. It will also need to be made clear to the owner that alternate means of egress and ingress need to be established other than Blair Drive. He told Mr. Terry to take solace that it is an issue that we are aware of and we have put it in the hands of our Borough Administrator, Nancy Bretzger and Zoning Officer Sarah Jane Noll. He said Peapack and Gladstone is a law and order town and we do expect the laws to be followed. He also acknowledged that Blairsden is a very unique home that is of interest to many locals, and the owner want to share the property through fund raisers.



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Council President Sweeney mentioned that if a Special Use Permit is received, one of the requirements under the Ordinance is that any property owner within 200 feet of the subjected property be notified. It would then be heard at a public Council meeting unless it was for a variance in which case it would be referred to the Land Use Board

Steven Sands then addressed the Council. He is the Artistic Director of Music in the Somerset Hills; a resident of Basking Ridge and he stated the Council should be in receipt of a letter sent from Music in the Somerset Hills and several residents of Highland Avenue dated December 20th. This letter was a thank you letter granting them the privilege to host their Great Gatsby Gala at the Blairsden Mansion on October 7, 2023. Mr. Sands said they took great pains and steps that the traffic flow worked very well going up through Matheny. Matheny was wonderful to allow them to use their access. There were members of Highland Avenue who were stationed at each end of Blair Drive to make sure it wasn't used during the Gala. The Gala was a huge success.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Corigliano withheld his Mayor's comments from the reorganization meeting until Councilwomen Sueta could be present. He thanked all for allowing him the opportunity in serving as Mayor.

He thanked all who make the Borough the great place it is. From our employees, with a special call out to our Borough Administrator, Nancy Bretzger, Police Chief Steven Ferrante, and our Director of Public Works, Brad Fagan to our dedicated volunteers, particularly our amazing Fire Company as well as our First Aid Squad and our residents who volunteer in our various committees and commissions including our own CERT team. These are the folks who make the Borough the great place it is to live. He addressed the Council members. He said it is you who set the tone for all this and your dedication in taking on this role and the extraordinary work you do is appreciative and should be acknowledged. Peapack & Gladstone has learned to do more with less and these folks sitting up here are examples of this. He thanked all of them.

He then addressed the new Council members with a few call outs. These call outs are also friendly reminders to the existing members. What he is about to mention are the hallmarks of good municipal government and mainstays of how he wishes for his administration as Mayor to be judged by.

"As elected men and women and Mayor, it is up to us not only to write the laws but to ensure their enforcement. It is us who set policy and set the direction in which this town operates. To this end, we are often and unjustly at times held to a higher standard. It is up to us to set the example of being an exemplary citizen, being a bigger person, and having empathy where appropriate. Please always keep this in mind when dealing with our residents, visitors and friends. It was once said to me that being on a Borough Council is akin to being a second-class citizen. While this phrasing, to me, is a bit extreme, there are cases where you do lose some privileges that our constituents themselves are able to enjoy. Examples being if we need an application to work on our house, we need to go to another town. If you receive a summons that requires a court appearance, you cannot go to our court. There are a few other things like this. It is just the territory that comes with the job. These rules are in place for a very good reason.

This Council has a very proud history of bipartisanship which I fully expect to continue this year and, in the years, to come. Early on in my serving, there were a few times that I have seen the council split on



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party lines but we have always worked out our differences by way of the Democratic system first set in place by the founders of this great county. I believe we are all moderate and reasonable people and have much talent that will benefit the residents of our community. We will face hard decisions that will come before us in the future and we shall deal with them in a reasonable and rationale matter. Let us be the ones to set a good example for our neighboring governments and those governments above ours.

As you have heard me say many times before: Change happens on Main Street. Perhaps this is truer now than ever before. The Borough of Peapack and Gladstone is a neighborhood of law and order. Not only is this the case on the street where the law is the most visibly enforced but it is also the case in this room and in the work that we all do. While no one but perhaps our attorney, knows the letter of all the laws that govern our residents, it is up to us, this Council, to understand the laws when issues relate to them as presented.

Mayor Corigliano stated it is very important to be prepared for meetings, the Agenda is locked down on the Friday afternoon before a meeting to give our Council members time to prepare. To Julie and Sergio, if there is something on the Agenda that you do not understand, you have 6 or 7 other people to contact in advance of the meeting for help and guidance. Please use us all as your resources. He recalled when he joined the Borough Council, many meetings going to 11PM or even after. He recalled hours of mindless explanations because certain Council members did not review the materials. After a full day at work no one does their best at 11PM so let's be prepared and be an efficient Council.

The Borough and our Administration look to comply with both the Open Public Meetings Act and the Open Public Records Act, collectively the Sunshine Laws as best as we can. To the Council members, may I remind you that more than 3 of us discussing Borough business outside of a scheduled and posted meeting is in violation of these laws. This goes for emails as well. If anyone should send an email out even if it is just for informational purposes to the entire Council, you should never be in the habit of replying all but simply responding to the sender. At times we will be dealing with issues in Executive Session. This is an echo of Attorney Bruder's admonition to us that executive session matters are of the most extreme confidentiality and what is said in executive session needs to always stay there. A slip of something accidentally can be damaging and put the Borough in a tough and possibly litigious position.

In Peapack and Gladstone we have a proud history of Council members taking on certain tasks. Our Borough Administrator, Nancy Bretzger must know of all activities taking place on behalf of the Borough. Please copy Nancy on anything involving your involvement with any of committees or assignments. In many cases you will find that Nancy can add a valuable nugget that you may have missed. As Mayor, I ask you to respect this not only as my request but it is simply the right thing to do. Generally, it is the Administrator, Mayor, Council President or Police Chief who should be speaking publicly for example in the event of an emergency on behalf of the town. In some cases, Council members may as well. Most importantly, the town must present a unified and consistent message. If faced with being asked for a comment understand that a few simple well-intentioned but misspoken words in the heat of the moment could put the Borough in a libelous position. This has happened locally and I do not wish to see it occur here. If you are ever unsure, please keep in mind the phrase, 'No comment' or 'I do not know.' Under no circumstances are any of our employees or volunteers to speak publicly on behalf of our organization as a whole. As we go forward, I would ask that you please keep all of these items in mind. I look forward to doing great work with all of you as a team to create one of this town's best and most productive Councils ever. The privilege to serve with each and every one of you is mine."



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This concluded Mayor Corigliano remarks.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilman Quartello stated at the end of last year they had proposed to add Overlook Avenue to the existing weight limit ordinance but were holding it to the new year. He would like to address this now.

Mayor Corigliano stated that Councilman Quartello should hand this over to Councilman Silva who is now the Road Committees Chair. Councilman Silva should work with the new Borough Attorney to get the existing ordinance modified.

NEW BUSINESS -None

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION/APPROVALS

● Facilities Usage Application from Knights of Columbus for use of the Gym on January 27, 2024 from 4:00PM to 5:30PM and February 10, 2024 from 2:00PM to 3:30PM for a Free Throw Contest.

Council concurs to approve except Council President Sweeney abstained as he is a member of the applicant.

● Facility Usage Somerset Hills Ball Club (formerly Somerset Hills Little League) for use of the Borough's ball fields from March 25-November 1, 2024, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays from 5:30-8pm. Scheduling will be done through Recreation.

Council concurs to approve. Fees are to be waived.

Councilwoman Murphy thanked DPW for hanging the Centennial quilt that was donated by Bernice Coop. Her grandfather was John Bodine the first Mayor of Peapack & Gladstone. She was delighted to see it hanging. She is very thankful for the effort that went into the project.

The quilt was presented at the First Centennial celebration in Philadelphia in 1876 and it was made by the wife of our first Mayor John Bodine, Carrie.

MINUTES

Council President Sweeny made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes and the Regular Meeting Minutes from December 19, 2023, seconded by Councilman Quartello, roll call taken, said motion passed. Councilwoman Murphy, Councilwoman Sueta and Councilman Silva abstained due to being not present at the meeting.

Councilman Quartello made a motion to approve the Reorganization Meeting Minutes of January 2, 2024 and the Special Meeting Minutes January 15, 2024, seconded by Council President Sweeney, roll call taken, said motion passed. Councilwoman Sueta abstained. Council President Sweeney abstained from January 15th meeting.



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RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. R-31-24 RESOLUTION APPOINTING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONSULTANT FOR THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE DURING THE YEAR 2024- NJ CONSERVATION

RESOLUTION NO. R-32-24 RESOLUTION FOR MAYORAL APPOINTMENT FOR THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION NO. R-33-24 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN A JOINT APPLICATION ALONG WITH GLADSTONE CAPITAL PARTNERS, LLC (MELILLO EQUITIES) TO THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A FLOOD HAZARD AREA VERIFICATION AND WETLANDS LETTER OF INTERPRETATION RELATED TO THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE LACKAWANNA AVENUE TRACT

RESOLUTION NO. R-34-24 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT BETWEEN BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE AND THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET FOR RECYCLING PICK-UP-JANUARY 1, 2024 – DECEMBER 31, 2024

RESOLUTION NO. R-35- 24 RESOLUTION TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH BURGIS ASSOCIATES, INC. FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROFESSIONAL PLANNING SERVICES WITH RESPECT TO CONDUCTING A HIGHLANDS ASSESSMENT

RESOLUTION NO. R-36-24 RESOLUTION TO HIRE PART-TIME SEASONAL HELP FOR THE WINTER SEASON FOR RECREATION

RESOLUTION NO. R-37-24 RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL TO REDUCE SEWER BILL CHARGES FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2023 FOR BLOCK 23, LOT 16, ACCOUNT #650-0

RESOLUTION NO. R-38-24 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN A JOINT APPLICATION ALONG WITH ROBERT WOJTOWICZ (NATIRAR) TO THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A FLOOD HAZARD AREA VERIFICATION AND WETLANDS LETTER OF INTERPRETATION RELATED TO PRESENCE/ABSENCE & FHA VERIFICATION

RESOLUTION NO. R-39-24 RESOLUTION FOR AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT QUOTES FOR A FIRE TRUCK FOR THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Motion made by Councilwoman Murphy to adopt Resolutions 31-24 to 36-24, and Resolutions 38-24 to 39-24 seconded by Councilman Quartello, roll call taken, said motion adopted.

Resolution R-37-24, RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL TO REDUCE SEWER BILL CHARGES FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2023 FOR BLOCK 23, LOT 16, ACCOUNT #650-0 motion made by Council President Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Quartello

Discussion

Councilman Silva questioned if this is a proposal or a bill and how did they decide on \$155 a quarter? Clerk Nancy Bretzger explained that this is a business and they received their sewer bill which was double of what they normally would receive, they did find out there was a leak in one of the toilets, and did have it repaired and the invoice is what you see. Because they were able to show us that they repaired their problem it was then sent to Councilwoman Sueta and Councilwoman Weible for their review. It was decided that we would reduce it back to what their normal bill was for the last two years which was \$155 a quarter.

Roll call taken for Resolution R-37-24, said motion passed.



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BILLS LIST

RESOLUTION NO. R-40-24 *Approval of Bills as signed and listed on the Bill Payment List Total Amount: \$842,552.60*

Motion made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilwoman Weible to approve the Bills List, roll call taken, said motion passed.

COUNCIL REPORTS

POLICE COMMITTEE: Council President Sweeny stated he and Councilwoman Murphy met with Chief of Police Ferrante earlier this week to discuss the applicants to fill the vacancy of Matt Kelly. They now have 3 applicants. The Chief is going to narrow it down to a recommendation.

No other reports.

Mayor's Executive Summary

Councilman Silva is working on the modified weight limit for Overlook Avenue

Public Comments on Agenda items only.

No comments

Councilman Silva thanked the DPW, the Fire Department and the Police Department for all their hard work and dedication to Peapack Borough.

Councilwoman Sueta stated she would like to send out a thank you on behalf of the Council to Bernice Coop for donating the quilt. Councilwoman Murphy is taking care of this.

Mayor Corigliano stated that the Council will be going back into Executive Session and then resuming the public meeting thereafter

With no further business, motion made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilman Quartello to re-enter executive Session. Roll call taken, said motion passed.

After Executive Session:

Motion made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilman Quartello to come out of executive session and reentered regular meeting, roll call taken, said motion passed.



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Meeting adjourned the regular meeting at 8:13PM

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Bretzger

Nancy Bretzger, Borough Clerk