



**MAYOR & COUNCIL
THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE,
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 5, 2024**



The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Peapack & Gladstone was held on Tuesday, March 5, 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

● **Trails**

Councilwoman Murphy stated that the Environmental and Shade Tree Committee met and they would like to do a few projects. Councilwoman Murphy mentioned that over the last couple of years the Council had set aside some money for trails. There is a town easement between the top of Highland Avenue down to Lake Road in Far Hills. It used to be a road and it is now dilapidated, but you can see some markers. She has walked it with Brad Fagen and she said it would be easy to create a trail that would connect the top of Highland Avenue to nearly Lake Road where there is an existing path that enters to Natirar Path. A loop path could be created around Natirar, down Main street all the way through town and over to Highland Avenue. One request from the committee was to get a simple survey done. They inquired with Bill Ryden and the cost to do a simple stake out survey would not be that much at approximately \$3800. DPW could then do the work as DPW has the equipment and it could be done all in-house. If the trail is a success we could possibly put a few parking spaces at the top of Highland Avenue. She said they would like to get the survey done so they can open it as a trail for the Borough.

A second request is to update the trail map in town. There used to be a trail committee who worked on the maps but they have been lost. It would be good to have an active trail map so that DPW is aware of the trails. The map can be utilized for grants, applications, etc. The Environmental Shade Tree Committee has taken on this project.

Consensus from the Council to move forward with getting the survey done.

● **Tennis Courts**

Councilman Quartello stated that it was discussed last year to make some repairs to the tennis courts. One consideration, is Apgar the right area for the Tennis Courts? After assessing the courts, the repairs



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are extensive and would the work would be costly to starting from scratch. He wanted to get thoughts from the Council if they would like them relocated and if so where.

Discussion ensued and the bottom line is no matter where the courts are they will need to be maintained on a regular basis because standing water damages them.

Mayor Corigliano feels that consideration should be given to an alternate location and possibly make them tennis/pickle ball courts. He wants to see if they can be fitted on the municipal field. There doesn't seem to be significant drainage issues there. He understands the tennis courts do need to be rebuilt. They are beyond being patched and getting them in the right location is important.

There are a lot of perks to having them at the municipal complex. More residents can walk to them, the parking will be better and they could be another activity for summer recreation participants.

Consensus from the Council to move forward with pursuing other locations for the tennis courts. It was suggested that Dan Dolan, be brought into the loop as the Recreation Director and get his input.

OLD BUSINESS- None

NEW BUSINESS

●Somerset Hills Public Safety Committee Anti-Crime Initiative

Mayor Corigliano stated that he has been meeting every two weeks with the Mayors and most of the Police Chiefs in the surrounding five towns to discuss crimes that have been occurring. The six towns: Bridgewater, Bedminster, Far Hills, Peapack & Gladstone, Bernardsville and Bernards Township have gotten together and have formed a Safety Task Force to make their thoughts known and have a voice in higher government that they will not tolerate what is occurring. He said Peapack and Gladstone has not been impacted as much as some of the other surrounding towns particularly those right off of Highways I-287 and I-78. Most of the crime has been car theft and house break ins. About 40% of the car theft is due to people not locking their cars. He said the Police Chiefs are in concurrence that the main reason this is a problem is because of Bail Reform and the fact that they are not incarnating those who steals cars. They arrest them and then they get released on orders coming from the Prosecutor's Office which in turn is coming down from the State Attorney General's office. Congressman Kean held a meeting on this and wants to see what federal help could be forthcoming. The Mayors are bannng together to try some initiatives. Summit, Westfield and Berkley Heights came up with an initiative and are trying it out. They passed a local ordinance to allow charges locally by their police to this type of theft. This creative solution may be challenged as being in conflict with State law, so they will see how it progresses. All six of the Mayors would like to implement such a safety Ordinance and then be able to use this as leverage with the State. He would like for this Council to consider passing an ordinance outlawing this type of activity and allowing local prosecuting by the local courts. He did speak to Judge Howes and she was intrigued by it and thinks it could have some potential.

Mayor Corigliano said it is more important to us to pass something like this to show unity. It is a solidarity as well as a potential tool of enforcement.

It was agreed that Chief Ferrante will review the proposed ordinance and provide feedback



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● **SaraKay Lot**

Councilman Quartello spoke with Sarah Jane on the future of this property and he wanted to see if there is consensus among the Council to explore selling a portion of that parcel of land. The plan would be to keep the corner where the park bench is as open space and the lot next to that could be sold as a buildable lot. If there is consensus, he would have Ed Kerwin figure out the value of the lot and then look into the process. He was thinking the proceeds could go into the Park House renovation.

There was some discussion amongst the Council.

Mayor Corigliano stated he would like to see the one buildable lot created and the remainder as open space, put on our ROSI. He does see the value of locking in one parcel. He does not want to see the lot be committed to affordable housing in a future round.

Councilman Quartello will work with Sarah Jane and Ed Kerwin on this initiative.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION/APPROVALS

Councilwoman Murphy and Councilman Silva attended a ZOOM meeting regarding the proposed curb at Willow and Main with the County. The County has no issue with such an improvement however they are not going to pay for it or design it but gave us the thumbs up to move forward. Nancy sent an email to the County saying that we want to move forward. The Borough would take the burden for design and for cost of construction. The County sent a Shared Service Agreement for review by Mr. Warner. She also met with Bill Ryden to get his thoughts and he was good with the idea and said it might even be feasible down the road to gain a parking space. Mr. Ryden also did not see any issues with drainage. He feels it will be a relatively straight forward project. She mentioned having some lighting and he suggested getting through the planning of this and then go back to the County and see if there is anything such as business improvement grants that they could use to improve the pavement and lighting, etc. Mr. Warner will be reviewing the shared service agreement and Mr. Ryden will get back to us with pricing for the survey and the design.

Mayor Corigliano stated when he had his meeting with Matheny, Mr. Kent had mentioned if any of the Council members would like a tour he would be more than happy to host Councilmembers for a tour.

The Mayor received a phone call from Ruth Melillo, representing the Historical Society of Somerset Hills. They have been working with an architect who is an expert on Beaux Arts architecture and they would like to host an event at Blairsden for a lecture and look at the home. The event would be limited to 40 people. He advised Mrs. Melillo to submit a Special Use Permit which she has done and will be presented to the Council at the next meeting. She will also be preparing the 200ft list to go to the neighbors.



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MINUTES

Council President Sweeney made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2024 and the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2024; seconded by Councilwoman Weible; roll call taken, said motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. R-59-24 RESOLUTION TO REFUND MONEY DUE TO OVERPAYMENT OF TAXES

RESOLUTION NO. R-60-24 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF A 2025 FORD POLICE INTERCEPTOR UTILITY (K8A) AWD

RESOLUTION NO. R-61-24 RESOLUTION FOR GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE FISCAL GRANT CYCLE 2024-2025-FORM1B (SHMAYSC)

RESOLUTION NO. R-62-24 RESOLUTION ADVISING THE SOMERSET COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATION IN THE UPDATE OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

RESOLUTION NO. R-63-24 RESOLUTION TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS) WILDLIFE SERVICES (WS) FOR CANADA GOOSE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

RESOLUTION NO. R-64-24 AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE A BRIDGE EASEMENT AND TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE AND THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF COUNTY BRIDGE NO. D1302 POTTERSVILLE ROAD OVER PEAPACK BROOK

RESOLUTION NO. R-65-24 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE AND THE BERNARDSVILLE FIRE COMPANY #1 & FIRST AID SQUAD, THE UNION HOOK & LADDER COMPANY #1 OF BEDMINSTER-FAR HILLS, THE LIBERTY CORNER FIRE COMPANY, AND POTTERSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

RESOLUTION NO. R-66-24 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TEMPORARY EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS

RESOLUTION NO. R-67-24 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF A 2024 FORD MAVERICK FOR THE CONSTRUCTION/ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENTS

RESOLUTION NO. R-68-24 RESOLUTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT FOR PURCHASE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION EASEMENT BETWEEN JOHN SMITH AND SARAH SMITH, AS SELLERS, AND PEAPACK GLADSTONE BOROUGH, AS BUYER, WHEREIN THE BOROUGH DESIGNATES THE SOMERSET COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD AS THE GRANTEE ON THE DEED OF EASEMENT

It was decided to vote on the Resolutions R-59-24 to R-62-24 and R-64-24 to R-68-24 as a consent agenda and pull Resolution R-63-24 for discussion. Council President Sweeney made a motion to approve the consent agenda for Resolutions R-59-24 to R-62-24 and R-64-24 to R-68-24, seconded by Councilman Quartello; roll call taken, said motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. R-63-24 RESOLUTION TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS) WILDLIFE SERVICES (WS) FOR CANADA GOOSE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Motion made Council President Sweeney to approve, seconded by Councilman Quartello



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Discussion

Councilwoman Murphy stated that the geese have been a challenge to the Borough and we have tried many deterrents over the years. Whether it has been the geese police with the dogs, lights, spreading organic compounds on the property, devices in the water we have had little to no luck over time, yet this invasive population continues to increase. Last year, Councilwoman Murphy reached out to the USDA to discuss our concerns and challenges. USDA said there is basically nothing you can do in your current situation except for removing the geese population permanently and that means humane euthanasia of the geese that are currently in the park. Councilwoman Murphy spoke at length about other options and she assured her there were no other options. The way this would happen is later in the spring they would addle the eggs, and then during molting, they would round up the geese and humanely euthanize them.

USDA has experience with these types of scenarios and they highly encourage doing this procedure to remove the geese. They said if we maintain our current deterrents, the geese population should not come back or at least not for a long time. She said for her as a veterinarian it is a challenging situation. She tells her clients all the time that she is thankful to have euthanasia, it is a very useful tool in a lot of situations. She said there is also the balance between safety and health. There is geese feces all over the Park. Residents and children are always using the park and the feces presents a health safety threat. The reality is our park is way too small to support the amount of geese we have. The water is contaminated with their feces and the current conditions is not a healthy situation for the animals as well. We have a professional telling us this is what we need to do if we want to get rid of the geese. We need to make sure that is what we want we to do.

Councilman Quartello asked are we sure that if we do this, the geese will not come back.

Councilwoman Murphy stated that USDA told her that if we keep up on our deterrents that we have had in place they should never come back or maybe a few come back in 10 years. Councilwoman Murphy reiterated that we need to be very diligent with our deterrents.

Borough Clerk/Administrator Nancy Bretzger stated that we would still have the spray applied, have the lights working, etc. She feels they have used every deterrent and they would continue using them.

Councilwoman Sueta asked what their life span is and have we halted their reproduction?

Councilwoman Murphy stated that the spaying or neutering of a goose is a pretty uncommon procedure. Most reproductive control is pretty much egg control. Councilwoman Sueta said that he was not looking to spay or neuter them, he was wondering if the egg addling was resulting in the population not increasing.

She said they have tried the egg addling and have not been successful. There is a very short window of time that this works. We have hired companies to come in and it gets very challenging on where to find the eggs. Sometimes the nests are visible but a lot of times they are not. Councilwoman Murphy said since she has been on the board, they have been addling eggs and the population has only grown. The Geese do not have any predators so the population just keeps growing.



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Clerk/Administrator Bretzger took roll call for Resolution R-63-24, said motion passed with Councilwoman Sueta voting no.

BILLS LIST

RESOLUTION NO. R-69-24 *Approval of Bills as signed and listed on the Bill Payment List Total Amount: \$1,551,720.47* Councilman Quartello made a motion to approve the Bills List, seconded by Councilman Silva, roll call taken, said motion passed unanimously.

Mayor's Executive Summary

The Mayor will get the stats from the towns that have created their own ordinance as it relates to the Somerset Hills Public Safety Committee Anti-Crime Initiative.

Councilwoman Murphy will be working with Bill Ryden on the survey for the possible new trail.

Councilman Quartello will be looking into the tennis courts and getting back to the Council with potential new sites while coordinating with Dan Dolan.

Borough Attorney Mr. Warner will examine the proposed Ordinance.

Councilman Quartello will coordinate with Sarah Jane and Ed Kerwin regarding the SaraKay lot analysis.

Public Comments on Agenda items only.

John Kappler, 25 Holland Avenue, Chair for the Environmental Commission and Shade Tree Committee applauded them for possibly looking into a new location for the tennis courts. He said the Environmental Commission has pushed very hard for them to not be located in Komline strictly from the point that we did not think they would get much use and as was said they are hidden. He was happy to hear that.

Rick Brooten, 3 Willow Avenue said that his family that will be mostly affected by what you are talking about tonight with the SaraKay lot he would like to meet with Councilman Quartello separately. Councilman Quartello agreed.

With no further business, Council President Sweeney made a motion to adjourn at 8:10pm, seconded by Councilwoman Weible, roll call taken; said motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Bretzger, Borough Clerk