

# ***DRAFT MINUTES***

*These are the Draft Minutes of the North Plainfield Borough Council  
Agenda Conference held on Monday, 26 September 2022.*

*Every attempt has been made to make these as comprehensive  
and conclusive as possible. However, as it is a draft document, it is  
not to be construed as a formal depiction of the official conduct of business and is  
subject to revision up to and following the Council's actual approval of same. If  
changes are necessary, revised minutes will be posted to the website.*

**MINUTES** of the Agenda Conference of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **September 26, 2022** at 7:44 p.m. at the North Plainfield Council Chambers, 263 Somerset Street, North Plainfield, New Jersey.

## **PRESENT:**

Council Members: Aimee Corzo  
Suzette Given  
Steven McIntyre  
Everett Merrill, Council Vice President (absent/excused)  
Keiona R. Miller  
Wendy Schaefer  
Frank "Skip" Stabile, Council President

Also Present: Lawrence La Ronde, Mayor  
David E. Hollod, P.E., Business Administrator  
Eric M. Bernstein, Esq., Borough Attorney  
Phil George, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney  
Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk  
Michele Garry, CMR, Deputy Borough Clerk

Council President Stabile read the following Notice of Compliance:

"This meeting is being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Adequate notice of this meeting was provided by transmitting notice to the official newspapers of the Borough, The Courier News, WKMB Radio, WJLP-TV, the Alternative Press and also to the Star Ledger on December 15, 2021 and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and the Memorial Library reserved for such purpose."

The Flag Salute was led by Council President Stabile followed by a moment of silence for the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Frank J. Festa, Jr. Scotch Plains, NJ, commented on communications regarding beneficiary sale of property regarding the Jacot estate.

James Kelk, Scotch Plains, Grand Sanitation Supervisor, spoke on details regarding garbage pickup and the firm's offering of discounts to customers placing their garbage at the curb, saying that they were able to offer a safer service with less potential property damage.

Rita Salley, 146 Norwood Avenue, North Plainfield, discussed receiving violation notices for parking a van on her property. She contested that her van should not be considered a commercial vehicle, and that it only bore commercial plates because of registration by its prior owner who had sold it to her. She asked for a waiver of the appropriate ordinance, saying that there were other vans in town with commercial signage that had not been cited. President Stabile commented briefly on the history of the ordinance, offering that it could be re-evaluated. The speaker offered to have the plates changed to non-commercial private plates if that would help. The Mayor advised that more than fifty (50) summonses had been issued around town for this sort of violation. Mr. George said that he would check it out, while the Mayor suggested looking into the size and weight of the van. Ms. Salley commented on the size of her driveway, and that it should be adequate for parking the van legally. The Mayor rejoined that he would look into it further.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Garbage Collection** – S.M. (Mssrs. Testa and Capobianco to be present) Councilman McIntyre said that his discussions with residents revealed that their Number One complaint in North Plainfield was garbage collection. Although the local ordinance requires collection of garbage from the side or rear of the house, some residents are putting their cans at the curb in search of discounts from the trash haulers. The Councilman asked if the garbage companies should be fined; but, it is not up to individual haulers. Should garbage collection be taken over by our DPW or put out to bid?

Mr. Capobianco suggested that the attorney might do a rewrite on the ordinance. He continued that due to the recent passage of an ordinance, he and others could now write violations regarding trash cans at the curb. The notice of violation would go to homeowners. On recycling Fridays, he commented, the town is a mess. Although he sent out letters regarding the problem, no responses were forthcoming. Mr. McIntyre termed it a compliance matter, while Mr. Testa suggested that the ordinance needed to be more specific. The Council President opined that curbside garbage and recycling create mayhem for on-street parking. Mr. George advised that state statutes set hours but not specific days for collection. Mr. Testa reported on surveying other towns around Somerset County, and it was mostly smaller towns that provide garbage collection on their own. To accomplish municipal trash collection by North Plainfield, at least two new \$300,000.00 garbage trucks would be needed for starters. Actually acquiring a truck would come with a two-year wait due to current supply chain problems. Six new employees would need to be added to get collections up and running. At least \$1.3-million would be required to bring these services on line, which does not include tipping fees to get rid of the trash. Anticipating nineteen thousand (19,000) tons a year, the dollar amount goes up to \$2.6-million. It would not represent a cost saving for homeowners.

Mr. Capobianco cautioned that bringing garbage collection in-house could represent a heavy lift, Mr. McIntyre asked what sort of ordinance changes would be appropriate. The Council President said that it might also include street cleaning while Mr. Capobianco rejoined that any new ordinance continue to specify backyard or side-of-house pickup. Mr. Testa conveyed his doubts that going out to bid would

save money. Responding to Mr. McIntyre, Mr. George confirmed that our collection hours are set. Mr. Capobianco suggest Monday through Saturday from 6:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Ms. Miller advised that the current ordinance be analyzed to determine if change was really appropriate with an eye on current complaints. Mr. Stabile suggested registering the various haulers at no cost. Ms. Corzo asked if the registration stipulation could be part of an updated ordinance, and Mr. George agreed. She also favored a bidding process.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Abandoned Telecommunications Lines/Cables** – S.M. Mr. McIntyre asked Mr. George to investigate the problem and if the cable companies could be required to follow the same installation practices as the electric suppliers. Ms. Schaefer replied that it might not always be possible and Ms. Corzo commented that it might not be a one-size-fits-all approach. Mr. George replied that he would look into it, especially if there were anything required by the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), cable and electrical codes, or if private space regulations came into play. The Council President said that the topic would remain on the Council’s agenda for continued discussion. Mr. George concluded by agreeing to look at the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) to determine if it had any provisions dealing with abandoned wires or cables.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS:**

Mr. McIntyre reported on attending a film-ready workshop featuring four key steps to get the town certified as a media-friendly location. There needs to be a welcoming ordinance in place, with provisions for fire permits, police permits, especially if there is a car chase scene, or the FAA if drone shots were involved. Up to twenty-five (25) Photos could be submitted.

Ms. Schaefer asked if the workshop applied to commercials or movies, and Mr. McIntyre assured that it was appropriate to both media – across the board, also including independent productions.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Miller, seconded by Ms. Corzo and on voice vote carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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Borough Clerk

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Council President