

MINUTES of the Agenda Conference of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **December 12, 2022** at 7:40 p.m. at 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
Keiona R. Miller
Wendy Schaefer
Frank “Skip” Stabile, Council President

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

Immediately prior to this evening’s Agenda Conference, scouts from North Plainfield Boy Scout Troop 235 participated in an informal question-and-answer session regarding local municipal government with Borough Council, Mayor La Ronde and Administration.

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 scouts from the North Plainfield Boy Scout Troop 235 followed by a moment of silence for the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Mark Kruszczyński, 48 Willow Avenue, asked about the gameplan for the Villa Maria property, and the Mayor replied that the property is still held by Somerset County. The local recreation director has a full list of what will be practical for the site reliant on the budget, as a portion will be dedicated to public recreation. Mayor La Ronde continued that a deal needs to be struck regarding Affordable Housing on the site. It will be up to lawyers representing the Borough and the county. The process has been on-going for twenty (20) years. Weekly meetings continue. The Council President interjected that the site now looks like a park. It is currently being leased by the Borough.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Boy Scout Troop 235 – F.S.S. & L.L.R.** The scouts and their troop leader discussed the Trex plastic film challenge which is a current Eagle Scout project in town. Peter Meyer explained that they are currently challenged to collect plastics, and were seeking the support of the Borough and its governing body. They further suggested enlisting the Department of Public Works to make weekly collections of recyclable plastics, adding that they would also approach the School Board. Ms. Schaefer agreed that the scouts' project is well-timed, and the Mayor asked that details be made available to his office. Council President Stabile interjected with his enthusiasm for the project, assuring that it was a worthy future trend that would yield positive results.

The Council President requested a brief recess at 7:49 p.m.

Meeting reconvened with all present at 7:59 p.m.

2. **2023 Meeting Calendar for the Governing Body – F.S.S.** Discussions ensued regarding the Council's calendar for 2023, especially the planned January 2, 2023 Re-Organizational meeting. Mr. George noted that an afternoon meeting at 12:00 Noon would be more practical than an evening or morning meeting. Council members were in agreement.

3. **Extended Hour Request by ABC Licensee for New Year's Day – F.S.S.** The Council President noted that the Clerk had studied the local ordinances on alcoholic beverages and discovered that 2023 was unique in that New Year's Day falls on a Sunday, and that sales and service were prohibited after 2:00 a.m. An extension requested by The Bridge Tavern would not be allowed, even for non-alcoholic sales. The doors to the establishment would have to shut at 2:00 a.m. Council President Stabile confirmed that the law takes the decision out of the Council's hands. The Mayor replied that the corresponding resolution would be pulled.

4. **Engaging Grotto Engineering for Stormwater Reporting, DPW Management & Zoning Officer Services, Engineering Services including Delacy Avenue Road Reconstruction for the Year 2023 – D.E.H.** Mr. Hollod said that there were four (4) proposals from Grotto Engineering, and that they were attuned to DEP mandates. He added that Mr. Testa has a range of duties in connection with the proposal that will be most productive. He has a track record for picking necessary projects in town that receive state approval and support. Ms. Schaefer asked if Grotto could be cancelled at any time, and Mr. Hollod replied in the affirmative, saying that there would be no penalty. Mott MacDonald will help with sewer repairs supported in part by a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant from Somerset County.

5. **Awarding Bid for On-Call Emergency Services – D.E.H.** Mr. Hollod explained that the Bid for these services goes out every two years. Messercola is the low bidder and has a favorable history with the town regarding such services. They own the specialized equipment needed for emergencies such as Tropical Storm Ida. Mr. Merrill agreed and the Council President assured that Messercola had been top-flight during the storm.

6. **Authorizing Application of a LEAP Implementation Grant for Joint Purchase of Fire Service Ladder Truck – D.E.H.** Mr. Hollod explained that the joint \$2-million purchase had been negotiated with Watchung Borough. \$500,000 (Five Hundred Thousand Dollars) is being requested for the engine, which will be housed in North Plainfield. Replying to Mr. Merrill, Mr. Hollod added that Watchung would have the support of paid North Plainfield firefighters for the engine when it goes out as part of mutual aid. Answering Ms. Schaefer, Mr. Hollod added that trading in the old engine could be part of the deal.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS:

Councilman Merrill reminded that the holiday decorating contest would be swinging into action, and that volunteers would be going out to judge.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President