

# ***DRAFT MINUTES***

*These are the Draft Minutes of the Agenda Conference of the Borough Council of North Plainfield, New Jersey held on Monday, 14 December 2015.*

*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 Governing Body'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, **December 14, 2015** at 7:33 p.m. at the North Plainfield Council Chambers, 263 Somerset Street, North Plainfield, New Jersey.

**PRESENT:**

Council Members:   Everett Merrill  
                               Keiona R. Miller  
                               Frank Righetti  
                               Wendy Schaefer  
                               Douglas M. Singleterry  
                               Frank "Skip" Stabile  
                               Lawrence La Ronde, Council President

Also Present:         Michael Giordano, Jr., Mayor  
                               David E. Hollod, Business Administrator  
                               Eric Bernstein, Esq., Borough Attorney  
                               Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Ms. Miller.

Council President La Ronde requested a moment of silence for the men and women serving in our Armed Forces.

The Council President read the following Notice of Compliance:

"This is an Agenda Meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield, scheduled by resolution of the Council adopted on December 8, 2014. Adequate notice of this meeting was given pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.* by transmitting said notice to the *Courier News*, *The Star-Ledger* and *WKMB* Radio on December 10, 2014, by publication of the announcement in the *Courier News* of December 12, 2014 and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and Memorial Library reserved for such purpose."

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Stop/Yield Signs** – D.E.H. Announcing that the Council is in possession of the proposed draft ordinances, Mr. Hollod advised of a possible January introduction. Advising that uncontrolled intersections remain a safety concern, he stressed the importance of notifying residents of the changes.
2. **Downtown Rehabilitation Study** – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod explained that this report is an outgrowth of the Master Plan calling for the rehabilitation of the downtown area. He further noted that the Planning Board had designated the old Villa Maria site in need of rehabilitation. Responding to Mr. Singleterry, Mr. Hollod explained that redevelopment is a higher order with possible tax advantages while rehabilitation is a planning designation.
3. **Animal Control Ordinance** – W.W.S. Ms. Schaefer proposed an amendment to the animal control ordinance which would exempt trap, neuter, and return (TNR) cat colonies. Advising that there are approximately 2,200 to 3,600 free roaming cats in North Plainfield, Ms. Schaefer noted that there are rescue groups which will trap the cats, spay or neuter them, provide them with rabies and distemper shots and tip their ears to designate them as part of the TNR colony. In order to qualify for grant monies, the town must support TNR colonies, she explained. All council members offered their support of Ms. Schaefer moving forward with the ordinance.
4. **Vacant/Abandoned Property Registry** – W.W.S. Ms. Schaefer then proposed the creation of an abandoned properties registration ordinance. Each registration would include a fee and supplemental fees would increase annually, she explained. Mr. La Ronde noted that commercial and residential properties would be included. Responding to Mr. Merrill's inquiry, Mr. Bernstein advised that the ordinance and administration would ultimately determine enforcement guidelines. All council members wished to move forward with the ordinance.
5. **2016 Council Meeting Calendar** – L.L.R. Mr. La Ronde explained that this resolution sets the Council's meeting schedule for 2016.
6. **Authorizing Extended Opening Hours for Certain Plenary Retail Consumption Licensees** – L.L.R. Mr. La Ronde explained that this allows for extended New Year's Day hours for The Bridge, International Club and Sports Bar and Top Shelf. Their opening hours would be extended from 2:00 a.m. until 3:00 a.m. with the last hour being alcohol-free.
7. **Grotto Engineering, 2016 Professional Engineering Services Proposal** – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod explained that this resolution allows for Grotto Engineering to provide certain specified engineering services for the calendar year 2016.
8. **Wilson Avenue Road Improvements, Cifelli & Son Request for Final Payment and Change Order** – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod advised that this resolution allows for the execution of Change Order Request No. 1 as well as final payment.

9. **Authorizing Firehouse Floor Final Payment** – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod explained that this resolution authorizes the close out of the project and the issuance of final payment to Palma Inc.

10. **Treatment Works Approval Permit Application by the Borough for the Grove Street Pump Station and Sanitary Sewer Improvements Project** – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod advised that this resolution authorizes a treatment works approval permit application by the Borough for the Grove Street Pump Station and Sanitary Sewer Improvements Project.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Energy Aggregation** – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod introduced Laurie Weigand-Jackson who explained details of her company, Utility Advantage’s technical support for community choice on electricity. North Plainfield residents would remain conventional PSE&G customers with the same bill coming from a third-party supplier, and customers could opt-out at any time. A request for proposals will be distributed in the first week of January with the choice being made at the end of January 2015. Customers would particularly reap best benefits with their summer bills, and it is hoped that customers would save a minimum of 5% on their bills. Residents would be notified via a written notice and a Board of Public Utilities opt-out form. Agreements with the new supplier would run for 12, 18 or 24 months. The Mayor rejoined that the proposal would be due on January 27<sup>th</sup> and Mr. Hollod added that there would be no commitment until the Mayor signed off on it.

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

Mr. La Ronde reported on the success of the Santa Comes to Town program, specifically the fabulous Washington Park singers.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Merrill, seconded by Mr. Righetti and carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

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Borough Clerk

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Council President