

DRAFT MINUTES

These are the Draft Minutes of the Agenda Conference meeting of North Plainfield Borough Council held on Monday, 15 August 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, **August 15, 2022** at 7:40 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
Keiona R. Miller
Wendy Schaefer
Frank "Skip" Stabile, Council President

Also Present: Lawrence La Ronde, Mayor
David E. Hollod, P.E., Business Administrator
Phil George, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney
Brian Hak, 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."

PUBLIC COMMENT

Anthony Jimenez, 162 Norwood Avenue, offered his thanks to the Police Department and all involved in containing the July 24th party.

Michelle Baskerville, 170 Norwood Avenue, saying that she had been in contact with the Mayor regarding the same event, offered her thanks to the Police Dept. and all involved for breaking up the party. She commented on lots of parties with large numbers of people and drugs. This particular one was allegedly organized by a North Plainfielder who works as an East Orange police detective, and the gatherings have escalated. Admission is charged and liquor is being sold. The gatherings are promoted on-line by social media, more than one hundred partiers congregate with cars parked up and down the street, some vehicles bearing New York plates. She called for an end to such get-togethers before a bullet passes through her home. She concluded that after three years in North Plainfield, she is uncomfortable and ready to move.

The Council President rejoined that pop-up parties such as this one would be discussed tonight, and Police Chief Parenti advised on the importance of formal complaints being filed, adding that callers should ask for a supervisor when calling police headquarters.

The Chief emphasized that pop-up parties needed to be recognized as entirely different from family gatherings. Mayor La Ronde added that there are appropriate steps to observe when reporting on and seeking relief from pop-up parties in the neighborhood. Firstly, a call to the police non-emergency number, 908 769-2937 is appropriate. A police officer must be dispatched to a problem pop-up party, and a complaint filed through the Municipal Court.

Ms. Baskerville was concerned about a medicine container winding up on her lawn, and the Chief suggested she call the Registrar to have a Somerset County health officer investigate. He concluded that one of our local police could be sent to collect it.

The Mayor reminded that such pop-up parties had been repeatedly shut down in North Plainfield before they could turn into major disruptive events, and that it was key for neighbors to notify police of any such gathering.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Concealed Carry Ordinance** – (L.L.R.) The Mayor said that the proposed ordinance was meant to provide protection after the most recent Supreme Court ruling.

Chief Parenti reported that the Schools Superintendent was concerned that the head of security for the schools could carry a concealed weapon. The Mayor replied that the ordinance would ban weapons from the schools and the municipal building, while the Chief rejoined that only sworn law enforcement personnel would be able to carry.

2. **Discussion of “Pop-Up” Parties – Enforcement and Regulation** – (L.L.R.) The Mayor reminded of the two months’ discussion that took place on the subject, and the Chief reminded that social media had been actively involved in promoting the events as early as two years ago. Four or five pop-ups had been prevented in town due to police vigilance. One of our police detectives bought a ticket to a pop-up and was able to infiltrate the event before it got out of control.

The Council President asked if the Borough has adequate legislation on the books to deal with enforcement regarding pop-up parties; and, Mr. George replied that although other towns' ordinances were very complex, we have a modernized enforceable noise ordinance as well as the entire body of state laws relative to alcoholic beverage control. North Plainfield receives regular updates from the State Police, and that in itself has helped control pop-ups here.

Mr. Merrill offered his thanks to the Police Chief, saying that intel had certainly provided police with the required information that was needed. The Chief reminded of the Borough's shared services agreement with the City of Plainfield. If a court case is required, the town is fully prepared. Mr. George added that indictable offenses were appropriate when enforcing ABC Title 33. Illegal alcohol sales can ratchet-up offenses to a fourth degree crime that could bring jail time. The Chief confirmed that if the pop-up was organized by an East Orange police officer, it could be considered the maintenance of a nuisance and the officer could lose his job. The variety of offenses could be indictable.

Mr. McIntyre applauded the Chief's efforts, who added that with local police infiltration, \$1,100.00 in receipts as well as alcoholic beverages were collected. The Chief continued, saying that citizens needed to be vigilant, as they could play an important role in deterring such activities by reporting not only such events but preparations for them such as delivery of porta-johns or a bandstand. The Mayor commented on a permitting process for gatherings of greater than fifty individuals. Formalizing it would give the Police and Fire Departments the chance to evaluate the relative safety of such gatherings.

Ms. Schaefer described features of the noise ordinance, that it could be invoked if a resident is being disturbed in their home. The Chief agreed that safety and quality of life were at stake. Ms. Miller asked about fines that could be imposed locally, and Mr. George replied that he would have to parse it out, since state statutes set the limits.

The Council President asked if parties had obscured house numbers where events were held, as this could be in violation of conventions for fire and police protection. Ms. Corzo asked about first amendment considerations, and the attorney agreed that this was an issue, emphasizing that it could become a matter of "time, place and manner vs. content." The Chief advised that there were limitations on what permits could require while the Mayor added that permits should carry details such as the anticipated size of the gathering as a matter of public safety.

3. Solid Waste Collection Enforcement Ordinance – (L.L.R.) The Mayor advised that more employees would have the authority to issue summonses regarding trash cans.

4. Resolution Engaging Grotto Engineering Assoc. to Provide Professional Services for the 2022-2023 Capital Road Improvement Program – (D.E.H.) Mr. Hollod explained that this program was being supported by a Capital Bond Ordinance.

5. Resolution Engaging Grotto Engineering Assoc. to Provide Professional Services as Necessary for the 2023-2024 Emergency On-Call Repair Contract – (D.E.H.) This is the enabling resolution for services from Grotto to cover emergencies in the 2023-2024 year.

6. Resolution Engaging Grotto Engineering Assoc. to Provide Professional Services as Necessary for Sidewalk Replacement and Borough Tree Removal – (D.E.H.) As stated, this authorizes on-going needs to maintain and repair sidewalks that had become heaved or damaged by borough trees' root structure.

7. Resolution Awarding Bid for 2022 Capital Road Improvement Program to Top Line Construction Corp. – (D.E.H.) The bid request on the program drew a robust response. Mr. Hollod assured that the Borough was satisfied with the performance of Top Line on prior projects in town. Replying to Ms. Corzo, Mr. Hollod assured that the vendor was prepared to start immediately.

8. Resolution Authorizing Final Payment, Change Order and Release of Retainage to Your Way Construction, Inc. for the Glenside Place Sanitary Sewer Project – (D.E.H.) Mr. Hollod explained \$100,000.00 funding that would come from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). This is a closeout.

9. Resolution Rejecting the Sole Bid of A-Tech Concrete Co. for the Vermeule Community Center Courtyard Project – (D.E.H.) Mr. Hollod explained that this is the patio planned for the rear of the Community Center, and it is federally funded. A-Tech was the only bid received, and it came in at twice the allocated amount. It is being re-advertised in hopes of receiving a bid that is within limits.

10. Resolution Supporting the Application of Cloud Nine Dispensary, LLC for a Class 5 Retail Sale Cannabis License – (P.G.) Mr. George explained that Cloud Nine has applied to operate at 527 Route 22 westbound in an authorized B-3 business zone. Their CRC filing is complete with the state. The attorney concluded that the Council was free to adopt tonight's resolution.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS:

Ms. Corzo discussed the planned October 1st Hispanic Parade and Festival coordinated by the Mayor's Special Events Committee. Hispanic Heritage Month runs from September 15th through October 15th. Overall theme is "Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation."

The parade will run from Borough Hall to the Community Center from 10:00 a.m. till 11:00 a.m. It will feature bands, vendors and other attractions. Entry forms are available for the parade and response is good from volunteers. The festival will run from 11:00 a.m. till 3:00 p.m. Party planners have volunteered, and Mayor La Ronde has put in lots of effort to assure its success. President Stabile added his encouragement, and Ms. Corzo expressed special thanks to the Mayor, who encouraged prayer for good weather to accompany the School Board's Fall Festival.

Mr. McIntyre commented on materials forwarded by the Clerk's Office regarding the upcoming renewal of the contract with Comcast. Mr. George replied that the process is mostly regulated by the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), which is *pro forma*.

Ms. Schaefer noted that many cable installations are done with wires left dangling and Mr. McIntyre agreed. Mr. George interjected that Council had been sent the long form of the contract, and seeing to the loose cables might be a BPU issue. Mr. McIntyre asked if the Borough could pass a local resolution requesting cable cleanup, and Mr. George cautioned that it might not be possible as they are heavily regulated. The Council President suggested that it might be a worthwhile topic for future discussion.

Ms. Given recalled how well received the recent National Night Out observance had been with a good turnout.

She then mentioned a recent Aristacare giveaway in Plainfield, and the possibility of bringing one to North Plainfield.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President