

This Regular Meeting of the Borough of Raritan Governing Body was called to order by Mayor Zachary Bray utilizing the Zoom virtual platform, as a result of the COVID-19 health pandemic, on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 6p.m.

The Mayor announced this Regular Meeting was called pursuant to applicable portions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice was communicated to *The Courier news*, *The Star Ledger*, and *The Breeze* on February 18, 2021, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and on the Borough website.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council President Carra, Councilman Giraldi, Councilwoman Harris, Councilwoman Melitsky, Councilman Orozco, Councilman Patente
Also Present: Mayor Bray, Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Borough Attorney Robertson, Borough Engineer Schreck

Absent: None

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Orozco

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2021-02-045

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Police, Public Works, Administration
2. Attorney Client
Improvement Authority License Agreement
3. Contract Negotiations
Food Bank

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Reconvene in Regular Session.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Orozco Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain:

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Council exited Executive Session and resumed Regular Session at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS

1. The Learning Gate

The Learning Tree presentation was given by Chris Blount. Mr. Blount explained to Mayor, Council, and members of the public that the Learning Tree is in the process of applying for a grant through Somerset County and part of the application process requires that the proposal be presented to the public. Mr. Blount discussed what the funding will be used for and asked if there were any questions.

After Mr. Blount concluded his presentation Mayor Bray asked if there were any members of the public wishing to speak on the matter

Hearing none, Mayor Bray opened the floor to LaGrange Street L.L.C.

2. LaGrange Street, L.L.C.

La Grange Street, L.L.C's presentation was given by James Stahl and Lea Sura. Mr. Stahl said the purpose of the presentation is to request the vacation a certain portion of Reimer Street so that two additional units could be built.

Mayor Bray asked if any member of Council had any questions comments or concerns.

Councilman Patente asked about the size of the property in question as well as how many units both with and without the vacation.

Ms. Sura said there are 16 units, 4 buildings with 4 units per building.

Mr. Stahl said he believes the vacation of the street would allow for 2 additional units and said copies of the concept plan would be sent over the Mayor and Council for review.

Councilman Orozco asked for clarification on unit numbers to which Ms. Sura responded there are currently 14 units and if the vacation is granted, it would bring the total number of units to 16.

Borough Engineer Schrek said the need for the vacation is due to a potential encroachment upon Reimer Street. He said the addition of 2 more units would cause an increase of density in that area and cautioned the Borough take a closer look at the plan before proceeding further.

After a discussion ensued, it was agreed upon to revisit the topic at the following Regular Governing Body Meeting that will be held on March 23 2021.

MINUTES

1. January 26, 2021
2. February 9, 2021

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to Approve the Minutes for January 26, 2021 Regular Session.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve the Minutes for February 9, 2021 Regular Session.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

OLD BUISNESS

None

NEW BUISNESS

1. Engineer's Report

To: Mayor and Council

From: Stanley J. Schrek, PE,AIA,PP,CME,LEED AP
Borough Engineer

Subject: Engineer's Report for Council Agenda-Workshop Meeting of February 23, 2021.

Date: February 22, 2021

NJTPA/NJDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

NV5 is continuing to work on the Preliminary Design Drawings for the Thompson/Anderson pedestrian routes from the NJ Transit Station to the Riverfront. Project coordination between, NV5, VCEA and NJDOT will continue throughout this process.

Orlando Drive/Somerset County Transfer

The county has requested extensive files/information/date pertaining to all recent work and improvements to Orlando Drive. All requested documentation has been submitted. Follow up documents have been requested and have been submitted. Additionally, we are preparing a

preliminary design for a new DPW building to be located at the county yard in Hillsborough.
UPDATE: Awaiting approval of new location.

2019 CDBG – Canal Street Sidewalk Improvements

The grant is related to the installation of ADA ramps and sidewalk at the intersections of Loomis and Doughty Streets. The Bid Opening was held November 19th. Of 10 bids received, Your Way Construction of Irvington, is the lowest responsible bidder with a total base bid of \$46,743.06. Project on hold for winter.

2020 CDBG

The subgrant agreement has been completed and returned to Somerset County for execution. The \$77,442 grant will be utilized for sanitary sewer investigation and repairs. Proceeding with design/specs.

2021 NJDOT – Meehan and Helene

The Borough has been awarded both Priority 1 and Priority 2 grants for 2021 totaling \$750,000. We will be proceeding with survey and design subject to revisions to the capital ordinance adding \$100,000 for the anticipated Borough's share.

Columbus Avenue

The project is complete

Bell Avenue

We are soliciting quotes for the installation of access manholes on the box culvert crossing Bell Avenue.

LaGrange Street Redevelopment

The property/project owner has formally requested the vacation of Reimer Street and will be presenting the request to the Mayor and Council.

Block 81

VCEA has reviewed work required to winterize both Second Avenue and Third Street which includes asphalt repairs along the existing curb. Contractor is working with the Project Engineer to finalize construction drawings related to the pedestrian walkway from Second Avenue to NJ Transit. The owner has requested a bond reduction. We will make a recommendation for a percentage reduction once inspections are completed.

LabCorp

Sitework is progressing.

J&J

Sitework is progressing.

The Learning Center
Final CO issued

Raritan Johnson Associates
Site work is substantially complete.

After Borough Engineer Schrek concluded his report, Mayor Bray asked if patchwork on Columbus Avenue would be completed once the weather begins to improve.

Borough Engineer Schrek said the patchwork would be completed.

2. New Fire Department Members Conner Roseland & Juan Correa (PO)
Councilman Orozco said the Borough Fire Department has two new volunteers who he identified as Conner Roseland and Juan Correa. He said they will be sworn in at some point in the upcoming week.

Mayor Bray extended his appreciation to the new volunteers.

3. Snow Ordinance & Off Street Parking (ZB)
Mayor Bray said he would like to look at the current Snow Removal Ordinance and suggested there may be a need to amend it. The Mayor also asked for some clarity regarding who is responsible for clearing the corner ramps on the sidewalks and in particular the ADA sidewalk ramps. Mayor Bray also discussed the problem of Off Street Parking specifically at the Borough Municipal Building, he said there have been a number of cars parked in the parking lot for an extended period of time and suggested looking into getting signage put up.

Borough Engineer Schrek said with the requirements for ADA, the Borough is responsible for the sidewalks where the ramps are located.

Mayor Bray said there is also a problem with residents not shoveling their own property. He said he would like to sit down with Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Construction Official Lou Gara, and Property Maintenance Officer Brian Blute to discuss potential amendments to the Snow Ordinance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution No. 2021-02-046 Authorizing Disposal of Surplus Equipment

Resolution No. 2021-02-047 Approving Certain Budget Transfer

Resolution No. 2021-02-048 Approving Liquor License Transfer -
Michael's Inn

Mayor Bray asked if anyone would like to pull any Resolution on the Consent Agenda to discuss separately.

Borough Attorney Robertson said in reference to Resolution 2021-02-048, he would like to recuse himself from any and all discussions on the matter.

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to approve Resolutions 2021-02-046 Through 2021-02-148.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Before moving on, Mayor Bray said two additional resolutions are being added.

Resolution 2021-02-050 Approving Retirement Request for Craig Monda

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, Council moved to approve Resolution 2021-02-050.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Resolution 2021-02-051 Authorize the Hiring of a Probationary Patrol Officer and Advertising to Recruit

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, Council moved to approve Resolution 2021-02-051.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2021-02-049

Approving Bill List

Mayor Bray asked if any members of the Council had any questions. Neither seeing nor hearing any member of Council, Mayor Bray asked for a motion to approve the bill.

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Council President Carra, Council moved to approve Resolution No. 2021-02-049.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

1. Professional Services Pedestrian Improvements (TAP Grant) \$75,429.16

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to approve Purchase Order No. 1

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

2. Legal Fees Special Disciplinary Hearing \$6, 168.63

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, Council moved to approve Purchase Order No. 2

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

3. Cleaning & Sanitizing Various Borough Locations \$22,000.00

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to approve Purchase Order No. 3

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

Council President Carra – Council President Carra said the Planning Board meeting was cancelled due to lack of new business and the Board of Health meeting was also cancelled. He said the next BOH meeting will be held on March 10. The Council President also said a meeting will be held with the Finance Committee however no date has been set yet.

Councilman Giraldi – Councilman Giraldi said he had nothing new to report.

Councilwoman Harris – Councilwoman Harris said she met with the Environmental Commission at their February 18 meeting and discussed a certification process the Commission is working on. The Councilwoman said the EC has a few events coming up and there will be more information on those events in the coming weeks. Councilwoman Harris said the next meeting for the Environmental Commission will be held on March 18 at 7p.m.

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky said on February 14 Raritan Police Officers were called to Castillo's Seafood Market on East Somerset Street where a 52-year-old Hillsborough man was found unconscious. She said the Police Officers were able to gain valuable time thanks to Megan Milota who happened to be at the restaurant when the incident occurred. Ms. Milota stepped in to perform CPR while waiting for Police and Paramedics to arrive. The man was stabilized prior to being taken to the hospital. Councilwoman Melitsky said the Raritan Borough Police Department would like to extend their gratitude and commend the bystander for her swift action. Councilwoman Melitsky said the Building Department conducted 78 inspections, issued 2 certificates and total construction cost was \$27,101.00. The Councilwoman also said there was \$25.00 collected in certificate fees. For Recreation, Councilwoman Melitsky announced there is a new Recreation Director, Ron Cefalone who will be working with the Borough to form a Recreation Committee that will consist of 7 members and 2 alternates, she asked that anyone interested in becoming a member submit a citizen's leadership form which can be found by using the link on the Borough Website. The Councilwoman said Mr. Cefalone has been in contact with a few individuals to discuss plans for a baseball program, repair work at Basilone Park is being analyzed and plans for summer camp is being discussed.

Councilman Orozco – Councilman Orozco said he had nothing new to report.

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente said he has been getting calls from residents and applicants and has noticed the public is being told about a new hire as the vote is being held. He said it is disappointing to applicants who did not get the job to find out this way and extended his apologies to those individuals. He said he would like to try to see if there is a better process that

can be followed. For the Councilman's Committee and Liaison Report he said the Economic Development Committee welcomed new member Sherry Strauss and said the committee is currently working on a new website that should be ready soon. For the Historical and Cultural Committee, the Councilman said there were some perspective alternates in attendance at the most recent committee meeting and Jim Fidacaro gave an introduction about the accomplishments of the Raritan Borough Historical and Cultural Committee. Councilman Patente said H&C Committee is seeking additional members and directed the public to the Borough Website if they are interested. The H&C Committee is also in the process of working on putting together a Knox-Porter Presentation as well as possible Civil War and Trolley Car Presentations.

Mayor Bray- Mayor Bray said the Library Board of Trustees met last week and provided an update on a project that is being worked on by a Boy Scout who is working on earning his Eagle Scout status. The Mayor explained the Boy Scout is creating small libraries that are modeled after the Raritan Public Library which will be used for "take a book, leave a book". Mayor Bray also provided an update on the latest COVID-19 numbers. He said the total number of cases in the Borough are 467, there have been 22 deaths and there have been 42 reported new cases in the last 2 weeks. Mayor Bray said he would like to reiterate Councilwoman Melitsky's comments regarding the incident that took place at Castillo's Seafood Market and provided a little more detail on the matter. He said Megan Milota, the citizen that stepped in to perform CPR is a resident of Maryland who happened to be in the area that day, Mayor Bray said he would like to thank Ms. Milota as well as Sgt. Holt, Officer Hirsch, and Officer Ragati for their services and said he would like the Borough to present the individuals involved with a Proclamation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

(In accordance with Section 29-1 of the Code of the Borough of Raritan, there shall be a five-minute limit per speaker)

Mayor Bray opened Public Comment for any member of the Public wishing to be heard.

Jim Foohey- Mr. Foohey said discussions are being held about having a town wide garage sale. He said he came up with the idea to hold the garage sale the first week of June and said everyone he spoke with seemed to agree. Mr. Foohey said there would be a mandatory mask policy in place as well as a disclaimer to residents that if anyone contracts COVID-19 at the garage sale, the Borough would not be liable.

Colleen Kempe (114 Sherman Avenue)- Ms. Kempe said she would like to thank Mayor and Council for bringing up the issue of snow removal and inquired as to when the sidewalk on Rt. 206 would be cleared. Ms. Kempe said she is glad the Borough has a new Recreation Director and inquired as to when and if a Committee was going to be formed.

Mayor Bray said the Borough is advertising for residents who would like to join the Recreation Committee and are currently awaiting responses from interested applicants.

Ms. Kempe said she has only seen the advertisement on the Borough website and asked if the Mayor would be appointing members as has historically been done.

Mayor Bray said he would like for the applicants to meet with himself, Borough Administrator Colvin, Recreation Director Ron Cefalone and Councilwoman Melitsky so that a screening process can be held to make sure that applicants are going to be contributing members of the Committee. The Mayor also ensured Ms. Kempe that all members chosen to serve on the Recreation Committee would be residents of the Borough and added he would like to have residents who served on the previous Recreation Committee submit applications.

Carriann Youngman (13 Elmer Street) – Ms. Youngman asked if Recreation and Events will be operating as one committee.

Mayor Bray asked if there were any other members of the Public wishing to be heard.

Neither seeing nor hearing any member of the Public, Mayor Bray closed Public Comment Session.

Council then motioned to re-enter Executive Session.

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky Council moved to Re-enter Executive Session

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Giraldi Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent:

Motion Carried: 6-0

REGULAR MEETING ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Council President Carra seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting.

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion Passed: 6-0

Regular Meeting adjourned at 7:58pm

Ashley Kurbanoglu,
Deputy Clerk

Approved: _____