

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, April 13, 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 April 6, 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

Councilwoman Melitsky

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2021-04-072

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Administration, Recreation
2. Attorney Client
Joint License Agreement

On a motion by Council President Carra , seconded by Councilman Patente, 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 6:25 p.m.

PRESENTATION

1. Downtown Sustainable Economic Development Plan

The Presentation was given by Adam Tecza. Mr. Tecza provided an update on the Downtown Sustainable Economic Development Plan and discussed several different possibilities for future development of the Borough. His presentation included topics such as the waterfront property near the Nevius Street Bridge, Development of Somerset Street and the potential for community space. Mr. Tecza also discussed the potential for diverse and transit-oriented neighborhoods which included discussions about the Raritan Train Station. He said there will be a meeting with the Planning Board on April 28 where they will be going over implementation strategies as well as discussions of regulatory approaches. Mr. Tecza said draft Ordinances will be coming in June and funding for the project ends on June 30.

Mayor Bray thanked Mr. Tecza and opened the discussion to members of the Planning Board as well as the Governing Body.

Councilman Patente inquired about possible deed restrictions for multi-family units.

Mr. Tecza said there is a review being done that will identify different approaches that can be taken. He said the first option they will be looking at is accessory dwelling units which he said would be the most likely to provide the highest opportunity to require an owner occupier to be present in the multi-family unit. Mr. Tecza said they will also be looking at strong design standards.

Borough Engineer Schrek said he would like to commend Mr. Tecza and his team for their work on this project.

OLD BUISNESS

1. Recreational Cannabis (NC)

Council President Carra opened the floor to Borough Attorney Robertson.

Borough Attorney Robertson said the state cannabis legislation allows Municipalities to enact an Ordinance governing the number of cannabis establishments by location, number, and hours of operation or an outright ban. He said an Ordinance must be in place by August 21 2021 otherwise, cannabis establishments will be permitted in any area of the Borough. Borough Attorney Robertson said the legislation also permits Municipalities to impose a transfer tax on the sale of cannabis.

Council President Carra said he would like to get Council's opinion on this matter.

Councilman Giraldi said he is not in favor of recreational cannabis establishments being allowed to operate within the Borough.

Councilman Orozco said he is in favor of allowing recreational cannabis establishments to operate within the Borough.

Councilwoman Harris said she supports starting off with allowing the sale of cannabis for medicinal use and eventually revisiting recreational sales. The Councilwoman said she supports any tax revenue for the Borough.

Councilwoman Melitsky said at this time, she supports the sale of cannabis for medicinal use only.

Councilman Patente said at this time, he supports the sale of cannabis for medicinal use only.

Council President Carra said he supports the retail sale of cannabis for recreational use however believes it best to initially allow the sale for medicinal use only and revisit the recreational aspect once the industry is more developed.

Mayor Bray said he supports drafting an Ordinance that would prohibit the cultivation and manufacturing of cannabis. Regarding retail sales, he said he would support limiting the area in which these establishments could operate.

It was agreed upon to revisit this discussion at the next meeting.

2. Borough Hall (ZB)

Mayor Bray asked for the opinion of Council regarding Borough Hall being opened back up to the Public.

Councilman Orozco asked to hear from Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin said Borough Hall is prepared to open back up to the Public but can remain appointment only if Council would prefer.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed upon by Mayor and Council that Borough Hall would open back up to the Public on Monday, April 19.

Mayor Bray asked for the opinion of Council regarding the potential of returning to in person meetings.

A discussion ensued after which it was decided upon that the meetings remain virtual for the time being. A brief discussion was also held regarding the time of the meetings and it was decided upon to continue the discussion at a later time.

NEW BUISNESS

1. Appointing New Members – Recreation Committee

Mayor Bray said the appointments to the Recreation Committee will be done with consent of Council. He said the new appointments are Laura Christie, Josh James, and Sharon Schwar.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to Approve Members of the Recreation Committee.

Recorded Vote:

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

2. Grass Collection (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin said grass collection will be done on garbage collection day. He said the grass clippings should be placed in a can or bag alongside the trash and public works will collect it.

3. Ribbon Awareness Campaign (ZB)

Mayor Bray read a description of Ribbon Awareness Campaign and said it is being organized by a resident of the Borough. The Mayor said May is mental health awareness month and an annual Ribbon Awareness Campaign will be held on May 1 and May 2. He said ribbons will be placed on trees throughout the Borough to help bring awareness to the stigma surrounding Mental Illness.

4. Juneteenth (PO)

Councilman Orozco said he would like to request Juneteenth be put on the Borough Calendar in years to come. He said he is willing to assist in the project and wanted to make sure that Council agreed the holiday should be recognized.

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to

ORDINANCES-INTRODUCTION

Ordinance No. 2021-04

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan,
County of Somerset, State of New Jersey
Establishing A Cap Bank

The Cap Bank Ordinance listed above for Introduction will be considered for Adoption after a Public Hearing that is scheduled to take place at a Regular Meeting of the Governing Body in the Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, New Jersey, on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6 p.m. or at a time and place to which the Regular Meeting shall be adjourned.

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2021-04

Recorded Vote:

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

RESOLUTION AMENDING 2021 TEMPORARY BUDGET

Resolution no. 2021-04-073

Amending Resolution No. 2021-01-013

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to Amend Resolution no. 2021-01-013.

Recorded Vote:

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

INTRODUCTION OF 2021 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Resolution No. 2021-04-074

Introduction of 2021 Municipal Budget

A Public Hearing on the 2021 Municipal Budget will be held during a Regular Meeting of the Governing Body in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, New Jersey, on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6 p.m. or at a time and place to which the Regular Meeting shall be adjourned.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to Introduce Resolution No. 2021-04-074.

Recorded Vote:

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

ORDINANCE – SECOND READING & PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance No. 2021-02

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan,
County of Somerset, State of New Jersey
Amending One Purpose of Bond Ordinance
No. 2018-10

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

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

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Adopt Ordinance No. 2021-02

Recorded Vote:

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution Nos. 2021-04-075 – 2021-04-082)

Resolution No. 2021-04-075	Authorizing the Execution of an Agreement with Bridge Walk, LLC
Resolution No. 2021-03-076	Authorizing the Execution of an Agreement with for a Certified Recycling Professional (CRP)
Resolution No. 2021-04-077	Authorizing the Execution of a Shared Service Agreement
Resolution No. 2021-04-078	Authorizing Submission of the 2021-2022 BRMA Application with Somerset County
Resolution No. 2021-04-079	Authorizing the Hire of Part-Time Recreation Assistant
Resolution No. 2021-04-080	Authorizing the Disposal of Certain Unused Equipment
Resolution No. 2021-04-081	Authorizing Self-Examination of 2021 Municipal Budget
Resolution No. 2021-04-082	Refunding Tax Overpayment

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

Councilman Orozco asked that Resolution No. 2021-04-079 be pulled from the Consent Agenda to be voted on separately.

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, Council moved to Approve Resolution 2021-04-079.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: Giraldi, Harris, Orozco

Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

1. 2019-2020 State Tax Appeal Settlement - \$191,444.70 – B116.01 Lot 11.01

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. Bell Avenue Box Culvert - \$16,800.00

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilman Orozco, 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. Sanitation Reimbursement - \$15,000.00 – Bridge Walk, L.L.C.

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

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: Harris
Motion Carried: 5-0

COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

Council President Carra – Council President Carra said the Board of Health will hold their meeting on March 14 at 7pm. He said the Planning Board held a meeting for a minor subdivision

off Route 28 and they will hold their regular meeting on April 28 at 6:30pm. Council President Carra said for Finance, the budget was introduced and there will be another flat tax rate for 2021.

Councilman Giraldi – Councilman Giraldi said the Basilone Parade Committee will be meeting on April 21 at 7pm at the Library.

Councilwoman Harris – Councilwoman Harris said the Environmental Commission will be meeting on April 15 at 7pm. She said the EC applied for a grant to install rain gardens. The Councilwoman said the EC is also working on getting electric vehicle charging stations and she has reached out to Borough Engineer Schrek to discuss potential locations for them. She also said the EC is looking into starting a community garden.

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky said she had the pleasure of working alongside Chief Nolte, Prosecutor Captain David Whipple, and the Somerset County Board of Health to organize and distribute COVID-19 vaccines to 100 Raritan Senior Citizens. Councilwoman Melitsky thanked Deputy Clerk Kurbanoglu for her assistance. For the Police Department, Councilwoman Melitsky said the department had a Zoom meeting with a local school. Thomas Fisher has been promoted to the rank of Captain and James Raniere has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. The Councilwoman thanked Councilwoman Harris for working so well together during the interview process. She said the Police Department is currently interviewing for Sergeant and Probationary Officer. For the Building Department, the Councilwoman said 14 certificates were issued, total construction cost was \$119,256,991.00 and \$225 in certificate fees were collected. For the Recreation Department she said the basketball clinic starts on May 3at Frelinghuysen Park and 7 children have been registered The Councilwoman said 10 children have signed for Summer Camp and there are 20 children registered for tee ball which will be starting this week.

Mayor Bray thanked Councilwoman Melitsky and everyone else that assisted in the vaccine clinic.

Councilman Orozco – Councilman Orozco said in March, the Fire Department went on 13 calls and year to date there are 35.

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente said the Historical Committee is continuing their work on the 100th Anniversary of the Knox-Porter Resolution and there will be a presentation in July at the Library. For the Economic Development Committee, the Councilman said they were unable to hold their meeting due to lack of a quorum but have asked the Councilman to highlight the new businesses that have come to the Borough. Councilman Patente read off a list of the new businesses.

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.

Carriann Youngman (13 Elmer St) – Ms. Youngman asked who the new Assistant to the Recreation Director is and said she was not aware that one had been appointed.

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin informed Ms. Youngman that the new Assistant to the Recreation Colucci

Marissa Marton-Sarao (254 Weiss Terrace)- Ms. Marton-Sarao wanted to thank everyone involved with the Raritan Food Pantry and said it has been extremely well planned and organized. She said she recently signed up to volunteer and wanted to commend everyone involved on a job well done. Ms. Marton-Sarao said she is impressed with what she has seen so far with the Recreation Director. She also said she feels community engagement was not considered when making the decision to move the DPW to a different location. She said she has sent her questions and concerns to Mayor and Council and has created a petition to keep the DPW building in the Borough which has received 185 signatures in one week. Ms. Marton-Sarao restated a few of the questions that she sent to Council and requested clarification.

Mayor Bray said the questions Ms. Marton-Sarao sent to Mayor and Council have been received and in conjunction with Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin and Borough Attorney Robertson, they will be answered to the best of their ability. Mayor Bray said an agreement was made two years ago regarding the location of the DPW building at which time public hearing and public comment were held.

Council President Carra said the DPW agreement was tied in with the Washington School Project and the land in Hillsborough was sold to the Borough for \$1.00. He explained that in return for the land, the Borough turned over the golf range as well as the land that DPW sits on to the County.

Borough Attorney Robertson explained that the joint licensing agreement between the Borough and the County permitted the County to use certain Borough property and the Borough was then given a parcel of land in Hillsborough that is owned by the Somerset County Improvement Authority.

Joe Kempe (114 Sherman Avenue)- Mr. Kempe it was agreed upon to place bike racks throughout the Borough and as of this date, they are still not in place. He asked if there has been any movement on the installation of the bike racks and said he wanted to bring it to the attention of Mayor and Council.

Mayor Bray said prior to COVID-19, the bike racks were supposed to be included as part of a TAP grant which included the Raritan Train Station down to the River front. He said the project has been delayed due to the pandemic and asked for Council's approval to acquire bike racks and have DPW install them.

Councilman Orozco said there is a bike rack that is not secured to the ground and asked that DPW bolt it into place.

Juan Alvarez (100 Valpeck Ave) - Mr. Alvarez asked for information regarding projects that were mentioned during the presentation given by Mr. Tecza.

Mayor Bray explained the history of the projects in question to which Mr. Alvarez thanked him for the clarification.

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.

REGULAR MEETING ADJOURNMENT

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

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion Passed: 6-0

Regular Meeting adjourned at 7:51pm

Ashley Kurbanoglu,
Deputy Clerk

Approved: _____