

This Regular Meeting of the Borough of Raritan Governing Body was called to order by Mayor Zachary Bray in the Meeting Room of the Raritan Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, NJ 08869 at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 26, 2021.

The Councilman 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 October 22, 2021, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building, on the Borough website and made available in the Office of the Borough Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Bray, Council President Carra, Councilman Giraldi, Councilman Ifan, Councilwoman Melitsky, Councilman Orozco, Councilman Patente
Also Present: Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Borough Assistant Administrator/Assistant CFO Cook-Vitale, Borough Attorney Robertson, Borough Engineer Schrek
Absent: None

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Ifan

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2021-10-167

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Administration, Police
2. Attorney Client
Recreation Ordinance, Hidden Pond, Alpine Way

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2021-10-167.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Council convened in Executive Session at 6:32 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNMENT

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

Recorded Vote

All in Favor

Motion Carried: 6-0

Council exited Executive Session and resumed Regular Session at 7:05 p.m.

PRESENTATION

1. Planning Projects Status Update – Angela Knowles

Borough Engineer Schrek stated that this presentation has to do with an on-going discussion about shared parking. He stated that he doesn't believe there is a need for any additional parking downtown at this time. He also explained that the NJ Traffic Planning Board gave us a grant that Angela Knowles is exploring.

Mayor Bray opened Public Comment for any member of the Public wishing to ask Mr. Lehrer any questions about his PIOLT Program Presentation.

Tom Brown, 18 Elmer Street: Mr. Brown a

OLD BUSINESS

1. Property Tax Reward Program (JI)

Councilman Ifan said that Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin and himself attended a PTRP meeting on October 14th which provided them with great information on the program. He believes that if implemented this program would benefit residents and businesses alike and he would like to see this program adopted later in the consent agenda as Resolution No. 2021-10-168. Mayor Bray then asked for calcification on what adopting this Resolution would entail, to which Councilman Ifan and Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated it would provide them support to take the next step and research more about how the program would work here in Raritan.

2. Tree Planting & Ceremony (ZB)

Mayor Bray reported that the tree planting ceremony at Frelinghuysen Park for Raritan Resident Malathi Kanche on Saturday, October 30th, 2021 has been moved from 12pm to 11am at the request of the Raritan Resident's Family.

3. Drop Box Vinyl Wrap (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated that he has been in contact with a vinyl wrap company, who have provided three samples. The first is John Basilone themed and the second is American Flag themed and it would be up to Council to choose which design. This vinyl wrap would be going on the gray drop box located in the back of Borough Hall near the parking lot.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Engineer Report

Borough Engineer Schrek delivered information in regard to a grant in place for the improvements being done on Anderson and Thompson Street and he stated he wants it to be public, but it may have to be virtual with new COVID mandates coming out. An exchange took place between Sergio Seijas and Engineer Schrek.

2. Charging Station (JI)

Councilman Ifan said Borough Engineer Schrek touched lightly on this process earlier.

Borough Engineer Schrek went on to say a model Ordinance will be looked at next meeting to see how it can be adopted for Raritan. Councilman Patente asked who pays for the electric charging stations and Borough Engineer Schrek stated this has to be looked into.

3. **Unused Baseball Fields at Washington School (PG)**
Councilman Giraldi reported that there are seven unused baseball fields at Washington School and it is a lot of upkeep and expenses for our DPW. He suggests taking two of the unused ball fields and make them into a multipurpose grass field, for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc. Borough Engineer Schrek added that combining two baseball fields may result in uneven ground due to different grades. Mayor Bray stated that he agrees that an assessment of the fields should be done by a contractor and a decision made to repurpose some of the unused baseball fields. Councilman Orozco also added that a grass field would be easier to maintain than a baseball field with sand. A brief conversation ensued between Mayor, Council & Borough Engineer Schrek. Borough Engineer Schrek will draw up a repurpose plan to be reviewed.
4. **Christmas Decorations – Main Street (MP)**
Councilman Patente said we lost the Christmas decorations in storm Ida and need to buy new ones but the EDC has a temporary proposal for the town to use their grant money to have professionals wrap (29) light-polls in garland and wrap (34) trees in 3-week-battery powered Christmas lights. Councilman Patente believes the EDC's decorations will last the Holiday Season and therefore we would not need to purchase new Christmas decorations this year. Mayor Bray added that he would like to at least see new Holiday Banners bought for this year.

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Approve EDC to Decorate Light-Polls & Trees on Somerset Street.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

5. **GOGov App (PO)**
Councilman Orozco stated that six months of hard work have gone into this app. Council approved the GOGov App and it connects everyone online, there was a slight hiccup with the Police Department regarding emergency services which has been removed from the app. Councilman Orozco said they then moved a step further, but it is currently offline, and residents are asking about it. A lot of hours have been spent working on the kinks for our residents to interact with the Borough via this app. It currently connects with our current Borough websites and emails are generated through the Borough's current email software. There seem to be some liability concerns that are stunting the release of the app. Councilman Orozco went on to state that cell-phones harbor the same liabilities as the app and posed the next step in the hands of Borough Attorney Robertson. Mayor Bray jumped in and asked who do the emails get generated to and who responds to them. Councilman Orozco stated that the emails get sent and responded to by the department heads, which he

tested with DPW. A brief discussion about Police involvement in the app proceeded, ending with Councilman Orozco stating that the Police component has been removed from the app. Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated that he reached out to the insurance company in regard to the liability issues, their concern is that the app will create a influx of complaints from the residents. He went on to say that our insurance company would like to see this type of app rolled out in other towns before we roll it out in Raritan Borough since we are a smaller town. A conversation between Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, councilman Orozco and Mayor Bray took place around having enough manpower to back up the app. Mayor Bray said he would like Borough Attorney Robertson to weigh in since the Borough's money has already gone into this app, so we need to make it useable. Borough Attorney Robertson relayed the concerns that Raritan Chief of Police had with the lack of information gathered from the app regarding police matter

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilman Ifan, Council moved to Approve the Trial of GOGov App for Property Maintenance.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

6. Cursing Ordinance Clarification (PO)

Councilman Orozco stated he wanted clarification on this Ordinance and Mayor Bray stated that he reached out to the former Mayor Liptak who informed him that the Cursing Ordinance was removed in 2011.

ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION

Ordinance No. 2021-13

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF RARITAN, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND THE ACQUISITION OF VARIOUS CAPITAL EQUIPMENT, APPROPRIATING \$342,000 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$324,900 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE A PORTION OF THE COSTS THEREOF, AUTHORIZED IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF RARITAN, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY.

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2021-13

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Ifan, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Ordinance No. 2021-14

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF RARITAN, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND APPROPRIATING \$58,900 THEREFOR FROM THE BOROUGH'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Council President Carra, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2021-14

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Ifan, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Ordinance No. 2021-15

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF RARITAN, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING CHAPTER 45 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RARITAN

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Table Ordinance No. 2021-15

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Ifan, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution Nos. 2021-10-168 – 2021-10-170)

Resolution No. 2021-10-168

Supporting Implementation of the Property Tax Reward Program

On a motion by Councilman Ifan, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2021-10-168

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Resolution No. 2021-10-169

Authorizing Redemption of Tax Sale Lien

Resolution No. 2021-10-170

Approving Insertion of Revenue – American

Rescue Plan

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Ifan, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2021-10-169 & Resolution No. 2021-10-170

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2021-10-171

Approving Bill List

On a motion by Councilman Ifan, seconded by Councilman Patente, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2021-09-171 – Bill List.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Giraldi, Ifan, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: Carra, Melitsky, Orozco

Motion Carried: 3-0

PURCHASE ORDER REQUESTS

1. Edmunds Software – Annual Renewal – \$8,355.36

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

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

2. Replacement of DPW Office Supplies & Equipment – \$6,343.34

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Ifan, Council moved to Approve Purchase Order No. 2.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Giraldi – Councilman Giraldi said he didn't have anything to report.

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky reported that last week she attended the John Basilone Parade Committee meeting and they are in a good shape financially, she added that the John Basilone Parade was phenomenal. Councilwoman Melitsky reported that last Saturday was our Trunk-or-Treat event and the costumes were amazing, she also mentioned that she was happy to be in attendance.

Council President Carra – Council President Carra said that he wouldn't receive the Municipal Court report for October until their next meeting. He reported that the Planning Board meeting is set for tomorrow at 6pm in Borough Hall. Council President Carra stated that at the recent Board of Health meeting the following statistics were shared: Somerset County is 90% vaccinated with at least one dose, schools outside of Raritan will start issuing the vaccine in children 12 years of age and older. He also said that as the BOH liaison, they asked him to have a discussion later about an Ordinance for Recreation volunteers

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente said that the Economic Development Committee had new trees planted in planters on main street, adding that DPW did a great job. He said that the EDC is working on their budget and their Raritan Christmas Market event, which they are using their second half of their grant money for, he added that there would be Christmas carolers, food, bands and a beer tent at the event set for December 11th, 2021. Councilman Patente reported that the Historical and Cultural Committee restored a corn sheller and a lamp from Washington School, which are in storage now. He also relayed that the Historical and Cultural Committee would like to see the restored lamp displayed/installed on the new Fire/Police building if approved. Councilman Patente encouraged everyone to join the HCC's new Facebook group called "Raritan Historical and Cultural Committee Group". He went on to report that there will be a presentation at the Raritan Library on November 9th, 2021 on Female Spies of WWII, and to please call the Library to register.

Councilman Ifan – Councilman Ifan reported that the Environmental Commission met last Thursday and talked about the spotted lantern flies and their egg masses, noting that more information on this topic can be found on the Environmental Commission Facebook page. Councilman Ifan also said that the meeting covered the topic of electric charging stations in length and the clean-up in town from the Basilone statue to the park.

Councilman Orozco – Councilman Orozco said the Board of Education is having their meeting currently. He also reported that the Raritan Fire Department had 85 documented calls in September and 24 documented calls in October, bringing their year-to-date total to 252 calls – adding that our Fire Department is definitely working hard. He also reported that the Raritan Fire Department visited Saint Ann’s School and JFK School last week for Fire Prevention Day. Anyone interested in joining fantastic organization like the Raritan Fire Department please visit www.raritanfire.com or stop by the Firehouse any Thursday night between 6:00 and 6:30, they are always looking to recruit.

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.

Arthur Cox, 11 US 202: Mr. Cox said after what he heard today, there is a quite a legal issue at hand. His family has owned 14 acres on Alpine way since 1939 and had it subdivided up into three lots. When he went to sell his portion that he had divided in half, there as an issue with Raritan Borough having any record of lot 1902 (where Sergio lives). Mr. Cox lives at 1901 and Spain 92 is located at 1903. There was no need on file from the Planning Board for lot/address 1902 and when the cul-de-sac was put in, it blocked 1902. Melanie was on the planning board – Mr. Cox attended a 2018 Planning Board meeting where he got permission to cut down trees and create a stone driveway. Mr. Cox then applied for a driveway opening permit, which he installed and received an address for. Mr. Cox says the Council should allow Sergio to move the curb 3 feet over to create a driveway opening like all the other driveways on Alpine. Mr. Cox said the deeds for lot 1903 and 1904 are probably not filed with the Borough and that might cause a legal issue. Mr. Cox mentioned that he has spent a fortune with his attorney to get the deed for 1902 all sorted out and that this whole driveway issue has been causing loads of aggravation.

Rob Holland, 44 2nd Street: Mr. Holland stated that he had a question about the upcoming Planning Board Meeting. Mr. Holland asked what time the meeting was supposed to take place. Council responded with 6:30pm but Mr. Holland said he, along with other residents, received a letter that stated the meeting would start at 7pm. Mr. Holland stated that although this would count as sufficient notice, he believes that they aren’t starting off the year on a good note. Mr. Holland stated that if there was an app, perhaps he would be able to check/confirm what time the meeting was set for. Mayor Bray stated that the hearing would start at 7 but the Planning Board could meet for 6:30 and discuss other things on the agenda before the hearing started. Mr. Holland went on to say that he hopes there is as much diligence put towards this variance as there will be towards moving a driveway a couple feet.

Lisa Snyder, 26 2nd Ave.: Mrs. Snyder stated she attended a meeting back in August or September about the speed of traffic on 2nd Street and 2nd Ave. Mrs. Snyder said that the speeding has increased since then, adding that she watched two cars come down from First Ave. and go right through the 4-way-stop at about 60mph the other night, with two other cars already at the stop blowing their horns. Mrs. Snyder said that something has to be done, she was told checking the speed there was an option. Mayor Bray said he and Council would “light a fire” under the Police to see this happen. Mrs. Snyder went on to say that the cars coming into Raritan from

Hillsborough also cause a speeding issue and she would like to see more ticketing to show the speeders that we will not tolerate the speeding. Mayor and Council agreed that the Police should do a speed study there with their equipment, which will monitor the speeding for a week.

Bill Cunningham, 31 Glacier Ave: Mr. Cunningham said that there is Borough Code that states no vehicles can park in the old Stop & Shop lot but there has been Anchor Trucks and an empty car carrier parking there. Mr. Cunningham reported that vehicles started parking in the Zeus parking lot and have now expanded over into the Stop & Shop lot. Mr. Cunningham requested that the property managers be contacted about this matter, Mayor Bray said he would reach out to the property owners about this issue. Mr. Cunningham went on to say that no one should be on property after 10:30 p.m.

Colleen Kempe, 114 Sherman: Mrs. Kempe asked if any other Holiday decorations were being considered instead of just Christmas decorations. Mayor Bray asked Councilman Patente to discuss this with the EDC. Councilman Patente said the EDC will put up Christmas decorations for the Christmas Fair but they were also looking into new banners. Councilman Patente also said that the EDC is looking for ideas for the newly planted trees, they did try the “Adopt A Tree” which didn’t really take off but it will be brought up in the next EDC meeting.

Mrs. Kempe inquired about the lack of bike racks, she said only one of the four bike racks are installed. Mayor Bray had a brief discussion with Borough Engineer Schrek about procreated money and the tap grant, Borough Engineer Schrek said the tap grant is delayed and that are hoping it should take place in the spring. Mrs. Kempe stated that the public wants the bike racks installed.

Mrs. Kempe stated that they have been waiting for swings at Frelinghuysen Park to be fixed/added for months. Mrs. Kempe then said she doesn’t believe more than two baseball fields from Washington School should be repurposed. Mrs. Kempe said that the baseball fields aren’t fully in use right now because their recreation director hasn’t run baseball in two years, she believes the kids should be out, running around, playing baseball. Mrs. Kempe said two years ago they had 5 baseball teams, with 83 kids and with the seven fields, no one had to share. Mrs. Kempe also said that other townships like Somerville and Bridgewater will reach out to Raritan Recreation to borrow their fields.

Mrs. Kempe stated that we cannot change anything about the upcoming election voting taking place at JFK, but she would like the Mayor to stop recommending the schools as a place to use for public voting as it’s a safety hazard. Mrs. Kempe stated that there are safety measures put in place for the school, but then are void when its voting day, with only one police officer on site. Mrs. Kempe added that not only is it unsafe, but with COVID also being a factor, the school is topsy-turbsie trying to accommodate the kids and the voters – taking up the gym as a voting aera, which is the current drop-off and pick-up zone for the kids. Councilman Orozco stated that Mrs. Kempe should bring this topic up in a Board of Education meeting, but Mayor Bray clarified that Mrs. Kempe is directing her request to himself. Mrs. Kempe also stated that it would then be unsafe for the kids to go to the playground since strangers would be walking that path with them.

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

REGULAR MEETING ADJOURNMENT

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

Recorded Vote:

All in Favor

Motion Passed: 6-0

Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Alyssa Cornella
Administrative Assistant
Office of the Borough Clerk

Approved: _____
Eric M. Colvin
Borough Clerk/Administrator

Date: _____