

MINUTES

BOROUGH OF RARITAN
REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024
6:30 P.M. – EXECUTIVE SESSION
7:00 P.M – REGULAR SESSION

This Regular Meeting of the Governing Body was called to order by Mayor Carra in the Meeting Room of the Raritan Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, NJ 08869 at 6:31 p.m. Tuesday, January 16, 2024.

Mayor Carra announced the Regular Meeting was called pursuant to applicable portions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate Notice of this Regular Meeting was posted in Borough Hall, on the Borough website and communicated to *The Courier News*, *The Star Ledger* and *The Breeze* on January 3, 2024.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council President Tozzi, Councilman Agrawal, Councilman Armahizer, Councilman Fritzingler, Councilwoman Melitsky, Councilman Patente
Also Present: Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Borough Attorney William Robertson and Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan
Absent: x

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Agrawal

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2024-01-020

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Police, Administration, Public Works
2. Attorney Client
Rules of Order, Tillman Street

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-01-020.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Council convened in Executive Session at 6:34 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNMENT

Council moved to Reconvene in Regular Session unanimously.

Council exited Executive Session, and resumed Regular Session at 7:00 p.m.

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 Carra opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak.

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

OLD BUSINESS

1. 9 West Somerset Street (NC)

Mayor Carra stated that a Special Council Meeting was held at 9 West Somerset Street on Tuesday, January 8, 2024, and the requested plans were sent over, along with an estimated cost (\$275,000.00) for the needed extension of the building. Mayor Carra asked Council if they had any comments on the plans and noted that he was looking for some kind of action.

Councilman Patente said he does not support the extension because the estimated price is more than he expected.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve 9 West Somerset Street Plans.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

2. Elizabeth Avenue Basketball Court (NC)

Mayor Carra stated that at the end of last year the Borough agreed to repave the Elizabeth Avenue basketball court, adding that Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan had stated that American Water would be doing work there and they are looking into paving it. Mayor Carra stated that he spoke with DPW Director, Vince LoMedico, who said the paving should be done by late spring.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Fire Department Fundraiser (NC)

Mayor Carra stated that Fire Chief Brian Kredatus approached him about a Raritan Borough Fire Company fundraiser in September involving use of the Washington School Park, which may require an ordinance allowing an entry fee to be charged. Mayor Carra assigned this task to the Public Safety Committee, he suggested that Commissioner Melitsky and Council President Tozzi speak with Chief Kredatus and Borough Attorney Robertson on the matter.

A member of the Fire Department stated that Borough Attorney Robertson may also be looking into a one-day license agreement with the ABC to allow a food truck to serve alcoholic beverages at the event, he is also speaking to the Borough's insurance provider.

2. Treaty of Raritan (AA)

Councilman Armahizer stated that the Knox Porter, a joint resolution, also known as the Treaty of Raritan, was signed by President Warren G. Harding on July 2, 1921, on the estate of Senator Joseph S. Frelinghuysen Sr., located in Raritan near the Somerville Circle. Councilman Armahizer stated that he was able to locate the three-page, signed resolution in the legislative archives in Washington D.C., adding that he would like to retrieve replicas to be displayed in the new historic museum at the Anderson Street Firehouse, as well as at the new municipal building. The Councilman shared that he would also like the Governing Body to take a trip to Washington D.C. to see the original signed resolution. A brief conversation ensued amongst Council, which resulted in Councilman Armahizer agreed to obtain a cost quote and Councilman Patente sharing the idea with the Historic and Cultural Committee.

3. Planning Board Appointment (NC)

Mayor Carra stated that he bumped up Tony LoPresti from First Alternate to an open Class IV seat for the Planning Board and John Murphy will be moved up to First Alternate, adding that this does not require Council approval and he was just announcing the change.

4. Community Development Block Grant Appointments (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated that each year the County needs two representatives in the Borough for the CDBG process, one appointed by the Mayor and the other appointed by Council. Borough Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin asked for a motion by Council to appoint Borough Assistant Administrator/DPW Director Vince LoMedico to CDBG.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Patente, Council moved to Appoint Borough Assistant Administrator/DPW Director Vince LoMedico to CDBG.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Mayor Carra appointed Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin to CDBG.

5. Engineer Update (JB)

Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan stated that the monthly report is being paused for this meeting and will be presented next meeting after he meets with Councilman Agrawal. He added that good progress is being made with the site plan component of the new municipal building.

6. Committee Ordinances (NC)

Mayor Carra expressed that he wanted to explain the upcoming Ordinance introductions:

Mayor Carra stated that he wanted to amend the Historic and Cultural Committee ordinance that states the council person must be a voting member and make it state that volunteers can be voting members, he also wants to increase the number of members from seven to nine, since there has been an increase in interest.

Mayor Carra stated that the Board of Health has been struggling to make quorum and they have a few seat vacancies, some of the Board work in the medical field which makes attending the night meetings hard, the amendment to the Ordinance will allow for Alternate Member titles, therefore aiding in the Board being able to meet quorum.

Mayor Carra stated that the last ordinance introduction is for adding a new committee, the Redevelopment Advisory Committee, which will provide more information to the public on any redevelopment plans going forward before Council goes to vote.

Councilman Patente thanked Mayor Carra for explaining the Ordinance introductions and asked that there be a summary sentence for Ordinances on the agenda in the future.

7. Holiday Decorations (DT)

Council President Tozzi stated that light-up snowflakes are being purchased to be displayed on the PSE&G polls along Somerset Street and one six-foot snowflake for on top of the municipal building, adding that the total will be under \$15,000.00, including a 30 percent discount if ordered in February. Councilman Armahizer inquired where the lights would be purchased from and what the lifetime value of the lights are. Council President Tozzi answered by stating a state contract company and lifetime value of 12-14 years, and confirmed they would be up all winter.

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilman Fritzing, Council moved to Approve Purchasing of Holiday Decorations.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzing, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

8. Economic Development Committee (EC)

Borough Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin stated that he wanted to open this item up to Council and the public. Mayor Carra shared that he received notice that Carey Marago was stepping down from the Committee and as Chair and he asked if any members from EDC wanted to speak.

David Marder, 830 Old York Road: Stated that at the end of last year EDC received notification that there may be defunding for 2024 and it was determined that this topic would be broached at this Council meeting. Mr. Marder expressed the EDC's disappointment with how things were handled and is hoping that tonight they will get answers and guidance from Council, adding that if Council needs help with the new Redevelopment Committee, there are seven very eager community volunteers at the ready.

Mayor Carra read allowed the following Economic Development Committee Ordinance:
(Chapter 5. Boards, Committees and Commissions / Article V. Economic Development Committee)

§ 5-30. Duties.

The duties of the Economic Development Committee shall be as follows:

1. To study and analyze the various commercial and industrial organizations of the nation with a view toward ascertaining opportunities for the business, commercial and industrial expansion of the Borough.
2. To advertise the business, commercial and industrial advantages and opportunities of the Borough and the availability of land within the Borough for business, commercial and industrial use.
3. To solicit business, commercial and industrial organizations to purchase or lease in the Borough.
4. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Committee shall include consideration of the quality-of-life implications of any economic activity.
5. In any decision to encourage a particular economic activity, the Committee shall consider the extent to which that activity will provide employment opportunities and stable employment.
6. To recommend to the Borough Council and the Planning Board desirable and suitable areas within the Borough for the location of business, commerce and industry.
7. To recommend to the Borough Council and the Planning Board reasonable and desirable restrictions concerning business, commercial and industrial sites.
8. To encourage expansion of existing and potential business, commerce and industry to the best interest of the Borough.
9. To prepare and disseminate material and data advertising the advantages of the Borough to new business, commerce and industry.

The Mayor also read allowed the following section of **§ 5-27 Terms; compensation; officers:**

The Mayor shall choose, from among the members of the Economic Development Committee, a Chairman and such other officers as he/she may deem necessary. The Mayor, or his/her designee, shall be an ex officio member of the Committee.

Mayor Carra asked for any comments from the Council.

Council shared their thoughts and collectively, Councilman Patente, Councilman Armahizer and Councilman Agrawal agreed that EDC should remain a Committee and have their budget for 2024 evaluated along with refocusing their mission.

Council President Tozzi stated that his mission with the new Downtown Development Committee is to clean up the appearance of Raritan and ensure certain ordinances are being enforced. He invited the EDC to sit down with him to discuss their mission and process for events together, adding that he would love to have the two Committees intertwined or merged into one where they can all be working together, focused on downtown.

Councilman Fritzingler and Councilwoman Melitsky seconded Council President Tozzi's remarks, adding thanks for all the EDC has done and their eagerness to work together.

Mayor Carra stated that he would like to revise the current ordinance, removing the Mayor designating the leadership of the committee, he would like to see the Mayor stay as a non-voting member. A brief conversation ensued between Mayor and Council and Borough

Administrator/Clerk Colvin resulting in the Mayor stating he would like to have a meeting with the EDC.

John Murphy, 1008 Tysley Place: Voiced his opinion that the only duty the EDC has been following is “To prepare and disseminate material and data advertising the advantages of the Borough to new business, commerce and industry.” He also shared his opinion on how the EDC got off track and how he looks forward to communicating better, collaborating and streamlining their mission, by doing what is best for Raritan.

Mayor Carra expressed to the members of the EDC that he would like to hold a meeting with them as the next step.

David Marder, 830 Old York Road: Thanked Mayor and Council for their support and comments, adding that there is a lot of common ground. He expressed his eagerness to have the EDC meeting with the Mayor, where he is hoping better communication can be achieved going forward.

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

Ordinance No. 2024-01 An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Amending and Modifying Chapter 5, Article 1, Boards, Committees and Commissions of the Code of the Borough of Raritan

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2024-01.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Ordinance No. 2024-02 An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Amending Chapter 5, Article 4 of the Code of the Borough of Raritan

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2024-02.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Ordinance No. 2024-03

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Amending Chapter 5 to Add a New Article, Article 7, Entitled, Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Mayor Carra stated that this amendment encompasses the creation of a nine-member Redevelopment Committee, which would include two members of the governing body (Mayor and a councilperson), two Planning Board members, two members of the public and three professionals (Administrator, Engineering Official and Zoning Official).

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2024-03.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution Nos. 2024-01-021 through 2024-01-032)

Resolution No. 2024-01-021	Promotion to Position of Truck Driver
Resolution No. 2024-01-022	Appointing Part-Time, Building Subcode Official
Resolution No. 2024-01-023	Appointing 2024 Statewide Insurance Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner
Resolution No. 2024-01-024	Authorizing Shared Services Agreement for Fire Prevention Inspection Services
Resolution No. 2024-01-025	Appointing Risk Management Consultant
Resolution No. 2024-01-026	Authorizing Continued Operation – Valley Wellness
Resolution No. 2024-01-027	Authorizing Title and Position Change – Administrative Assistant & Accounts Payable Finance Clerk
Resolution No. 2024-01-028	Authorizing Title Change – Deputy Municipal Clerk & Assistant to the Borough Administrator
Resolution No. 2024-01-029	Authorizing Title Change – Deputy CFO & Tax Collector
Resolution No. 2024-01-030	Authorizing Title Change – Payroll/HR Coordinator & Finance Specialist
Resolution No. 2024-01-031	Authorizing Lien Redemption – Block 2, Lot 23
Resolution No. 2024-01-032	Authorizing Temporary Appropriation for 2024 Current Operating Municipal Budget

Councilwoman Melitsky asked to vote on Resolution No. 2024-01-023 - Appointing 2024 Statewide Insurance Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner separately due to conflict.

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-01-021 through Resolutions No. 2024-01-032, Excluding Resolution No. 2024-01-023.

Recorded Vote

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente reported the Court collected \$247,280.00 in 2022, with a total of \$109,000.00 to the Borough, explaining that the State takes a big chunk of the fines collected by Court. Councilman Patente reported that in 2023 Court collected \$238,908.00, with a total of \$113,000.00 to the Borough. The Councilman expressed that Raritan does well in collecting fines due to the vigilance of the department and that Court is doing a great job.

Councilman Fritzing – Councilman Fritzing read aloud the Building Department report for December 15, 2023 through January 1, 2024, which consisted of 22 permits being issued, with a dollar value of \$4,536 to the Borough. The Councilman read aloud the Building Department report for January 1, 2024 through January 15, 2024, which consisted of 14 permits being issued, with a dollar value of \$1,728 to the Borough. Councilman Fritzing expressed that our Public Works Director, Vince LoMedico, has been doing a great job and all the routine DPW items are being completed. Councilman Fritzing announced that Historic and Cultural will be meeting at Borough Hall on January 17, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., himself and Councilman Agrawal will be in attendance.

Council President Tozzi – Council President Tozzi announced that Recreation Baseball signups have started, Property Maintenance had 20 inspections, 16 violations and one fine issued for \$250 for last period.

Councilman Armahizer – Councilman Armahizer shared that the next Environmental Commission meeting will be Thursday, January 18, 2024, at the Municipal Building, adding that their next community cleanup event will be held in April.

Councilman Agrawal – Councilman Agrawal announced that on February 14, 2024, the Raritan Library will be joining the main Library Alliance, allowing residents access to more than 50 different libraries in New Jersey. Councilman Agrawal stated that the Finance Department is working on the 2024 appropriation and budgets, and he will be meeting monthly with Borough Clerk/Administrator Colvin, adding that the budget introduction is set for the March 19, 2024, Council Meeting and the adoption set for the April 16, 2024 Council Meeting.

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky voiced that she is looking forward to working with and learning from Councilman Agrawal. The Councilwoman stated that she has nothing to report at this time.

Mayor Carra – Mayor Carra stated that he would like to have the standing Committees meet monthly or quarterly, aiding in Council members liaison reports and full Governing Body discussions. The Mayor stated that he wanted to thank Police, Public Works, Fire, OEM Director Ben Griffin, and Assistant Administrator Vince LoMedico, for all their hard work with the onset of potential major flooding last Wednesday, adding that the best way for residents to get updates is to signup for Swift911. Mayor Carra thanked the Governor's intergovernmental affairs team, Robert Field and Becca McNeil, for their great communication, which has proved very helpful. The Mayor reminded everyone that the Regional Center Partnership meeting is tomorrow at 5 p.m., located at 20 Grove Street at the County Administration building in the engineer's conference room.

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 Carra opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak.

Michael Pepe, 810 Old York Road, Apt. 2: Mr. Pepe wished everyone a Happy New Year and congratulated Mayor Carra, Councilman Patente, Council President Tozzi and Councilman Agrawal, adding that he is looking forward to working with Councilman Agrawal on the Library Board and the Board of Education throughout the year. Mr. Pepe stated that one big item for the Board of Education is Strategic Planning, which takes place once or twice a decade and is being led by the New Jersey School Board Association and the meetings will be held at the BR Middle School at 7 p.m. starting Tuesday, February 6, 2024, Thursday, February 29, 2024 and Wednesday, March 6, 2024, adding that everyone is welcome to sign up to attend.

Mr. Pepe thanked Police and Public Works for keeping the kids and bus drivers safe during the bad weather, he thanked the facilities people who make sure the buildings aren't flooded and are ready to go for the students, adding a thank you to the longtime beloved JFK custodian, Mr. John Colletta, who received a sing-off into retirement at the end of 2023. Mr. Pepe expressed his thanks to Council for the resolution for the Environmental Program. Councilman Armahizer stated that he will get the Environmental Commission in touch with Mr. Pepe for further grant opportunities.

Mayor Carra confirmed with Mr. Pepe that the Board of Education still meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Tom Brown, 18 Elmer Street: Inquired if salary changes were accompanying the title changes listed on the Consent Agenda, and if so, where in the budget do they fall. Borough Clerk/Administrator Colvin confirmed that the salary updates are already worked into the budget. Mr. Brown commented that he believes the construction fund has been overflowing, adding he believes there should be approximately \$5 million in the budget this year, Borough Clerk/Administrator Colvin stated that there is a reserve year and those funds would be available in 2025 but that number is not accurate. A brief conversation ensued and Borough Clerk/Administrator Colvin invited Mr. Brown to make an appointment to discuss further with him.

Seeing and hearing no additional members of the public, the Mayor closed Public Comment.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Regular Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Alyssa Cornella
Deputy Clerk/Assistant to the Borough Administrator
Deputy Registrar/BOH Representative

Approved: _____

Eric M. Colvin
Borough Clerk/Administrator

Date: _____