

MINUTES

BOROUGH OF RARITAN
REGULAR MEETING

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2024-02-034

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Police, Administration, Public Works
2. Attorney Client
Tillman Street, Premier Development, Brielle Capital

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Armahizer, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-02-034.

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.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Boulevard: Mr. Foohey announced that the fifth annual town-wide yard-sale will take place on Saturday, May 4, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and registration will begin March 1, 2024, at the library. Mr. Foohey stated that he believes the town needs to keep EDC, along with adding an active chamber of commerce. Mayor Carra agreed that the EDC and a Chamber of Commerce should be working together, and he has spoken with Chris Edwards from Somerset County Business Partnership, who stated that since Raritan does not have a Chamber of Commerce, County can supplement the support they may need. Mr. Foohey also suggested a town planner, to which Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan stated he currently holds that title.

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

OLD BUSINESS

1. Replacement of Borough Street Signs (AA)
Councilman Armahizer stated that DPW Director Vince LoMedico has obtained various quotes and options to replace the underperforming street signs in Raritan, which will be presented at the DPW Committee meeting on February 15, 2024. When everything is solidified amongst the Committee, Councilman Armahizer will provide Council with the final update, including finalized price estimate, visual display options and a timeline of execution. A brief conversation ensued amongst Mayor, Council and Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin regarding colors, cost, replacement approach and an investigation on what signs need to be replaced, which will be discussed further when the Committee has everything finalized for presentation to Council.
2. Holiday Snowflake Decorations (DT)
Council President Tozzi reported that since the Council approved the purchase of the 20 Holiday snowflake decorations to be purchased in February, the 30 percent discount was applied, taking the total from \$15,000 to \$9,179.
3. Bridge Bench Plaque Replacements (EC)
Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin reported that the damaged plaques on the Nevius Street Bridge benches have been replaced and he asked for Council approval to give the old plaques back to the families, Mayor and Council unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Grant Writing Company (DT)
Council President Tozzi stated that research was completed to find a grant writing company and he is taking initiative tonight to hire them via Resolution No. 2024-02-036, which will greatly aid in the Borough pursuing more grant opportunities. Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin explained

that this company will locate the grant, help write the grant and facilitate the whole process, adding that Council will still have to approve the grants.

2. Main Street Tree Trimming (DT)

Council President Tozzi stated that he gathered quotes for trimming the trees along Somerset Street, to save money, DPW Director/Assistant Administrator LoMedico looked into borrowing the boom truck from Somerville to have Raritan's DPW trim the trees not near wires. Councilman Armahizer confirmed that County does not trim these trees and Mayor Carra confirmed borrowing the boom truck is part of a shared agreement with Somerville. Council President Tozzi stated that he would keep Council informed of how many trees are near wires and need to be outsourced.

3. 9 West Structural Approval (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated that he is requesting a motion for approval of an invoice from the architects for a needed structural investigation on the roof for 9 West Somerset.

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to approve the Payment of Structural Investigation Invoice.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Fritzinger, Council moved to Approve Payment of Structural Investigation Invoice.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

4. Street Signs – Decorative Wall (AA)

Councilman Armahizer shared his idea of preserving the old street signs in town to create a decorative wall/memorial mural to honor the Borough's history when the signs get replaced. Councilman Armahizer would like to ask the Historic and Cultural Committee if they would be interested in taking this project on since they have experience with the development of murals and memorials throughout Raritan.

5. Street Signs – Free Public Auction (AA)

Councilman Armahizer stated that since the decision to replace street signs was announced, many residents have inquired about getting their old street signs as souvenirs, he suggested that any signs not used in the decorative wall be given back to the residents for free in a first-come first-serve basis. Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin confirmed this practice is allowed and Mayor Carra stated that there should be a consensus brought to the meeting in March.

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

None

ORDINANCES – SECOND READING & PUBLIC HEARING

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

Mayor Carra explained this Ordinance is to add two alternate members to the Board of Health, to help with their quorum issues.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Patente, Council moved to Open Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2024-01.

Recorded Vote

All in Favor

Motion Carried: 6-0

The Mayor opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak on Ordinance No. 2024-01.

Cathy DeBellis, 17 Doughty Street: Stated she would join the Board of Health if they needed her and asked when they meet.

Mayor Carra stated that they meet the second Wednesday, at 7 p.m. at Borough Hall.

Neither seeing nor hearing any additional member of the Public, Mayor Carra closed the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2024-01.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Adopt 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

Mayor Carra explained this Ordinance is to switch the voting Council seat to a liaison position, add a voting position for a full-fledged member of the public and add two more additional seats for the Historic and Cultural Committee, which results in nine members and four alternates.

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Agrawal, Council moved to Open Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2024-02.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Absent: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Bill Cunningham, 31 Glaser Avenue: Mr. Cunningham asked where and when HCC meets, to which Mayor Carra replied, third Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. in Borough Hall. Mr. Cunningham stated he would like to join HCC.

Jim Fidacaro, 812 Lynwood Street: Asked if the treasurer position of HCC needs to be in the Ordinance, Borough Attorney William Robertson stated that according to the HCC by-laws it does not need to be stated in an Ordinance, Mayor Carra stated titles can be decided amongst HCC.

Neither seeing nor hearing any additional member of the Public, Mayor Carra closed the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2024-02.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Adopt 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 explained this Ordinance is to add a new committee, the Redevelopment Advisory Committee, which will help to guide and review/investigate any potential redevelopment projects in the Borough and to advise/provide recommendations to Council and the Municipal Land Use Board. The Mayor explained this Committee is being created to make information more readily available to the public before plans reach the Planning Board. Councilman Patente confirmed that plans will be brought to Council before the Planning Board.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Open Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2024-03.

Recorded Vote

All in Favor
Motion Carried: 6-0

Neither seeing nor hearing any member of the Public, Mayor Carra closed the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2024-03.

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

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky, Patente
Nay: x
Absent: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS *without Consent of Council*

Mayor Carra announced the following appointments that do not require consent of Council:

Redevelopment Advisory Committee:

(9 Members)

Mayor – Nicolas Carra – 4 Year Term
Borough Administrator – Eric Colvin – 1 Year Term
Council Member – Council President Don Tozzi – 1 Year Term
Planning Board Member – Bill Cunningham – 1 Year Term
Planning Board Member – Chuck McMullin – 1 Year Term
Zoning Official – Lou Gara – 1 Year Term
Engineer/Planner – Joseph Brosnan – 1 Year Term
Resident – Adele Goetsch – 3 Year Term (exp. 2025)
Resident – Debra Thomas – 3 Year Term (exp. 2026)

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution Nos. 2024-02-035 through 2024-02-042)

Resolution No. 2024-02-035	Authorizing Tax Overpayment Refund
Resolution No. 2024-02-036	Authorizing Professional Services Contract – Bruno Associates, Inc.
Resolution No. 2024-02-037	Approving Change Order – Ben Shaffer Recreation, Inc.
Resolution No. 2024-02-038	Amending Contract – Brielle Capital
Resolution No. 2024-02-039	Authorizing Discharge of Mortgage – 12 Cardinal Way
Resolution No. 2024-02-040	Amending and Restating Resolution to Designate a Non- Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment
Resolution No. 2024-02-041	Authorizing Disposal of Surplus Equipment – DPW
Resolution No. 2024-02-042	Approving 2024 Tower/Wrecker Licenses

Mayor Carra pulled Resolution No. 2024-02-037 and Councilman Patente requested to pull Resolution No. 2024-02-40.

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-02-035 through Resolution No. 2024-02-042, Excluding Resolution No. 2024-02-037, and Resolution No. 2024-02-040 – Consent Agenda

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky, Patente
Nay: x
Absent: x
Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Councilman Patente asked for more clarification on what was changed for Resolution No. 2024-02-040 - Amending and Restating Resolution to Designate a Non-Condensation Area in Need of Redevelopment. Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan stated the changes made were to clearly specify if the area in need of redevelopment is condemnation or non-condemnation. A brief conversation ensued amongst Mayor, Council, Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan and Borough Attorney William Robertson about whether it be wiser to have eminent domain/condemnation or remain ambiguous.

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-02-040 - Amending and Restating Resolution to Designate a Non-Condensation Area in Need of Redevelopment.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Agrawal, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-02-040 – Amending and Restating Resolution to Designate a Non-Condensation Area in Need of Redevelopment.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky

Nay: Patente

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-1

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2024-02-043

Approving Bill List

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-02-043 – Approving Bill List.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

1. NJ Transit – January-June 2024 Parking Lot Lease – \$27,500.00
2. DiFrancesco, Bateman – Various Legal Services – \$23,578.33
3. Fundpality, LLC. – Lien Redemption Resolution No. 2024-01-031 – \$38,347.49

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to approve the certification of funds together.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve the Certification of Funds – 2024 Parking Lot Lease, Various Legal Services and Lien Redemption Resolution No. 2024-01-031.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, Fritzingler, Melitsky, Patente
Nay: x
Absent: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente read the Municipal Court report for January, which totaled in 163 cases and \$16,208.00 in fees collected, with \$7,575.00 going to the Borough.

The Councilman read the Vital Statistics report for January, which consisted of one marriage and 157 death certificates. He had nothing to report on the Board of Health since they have not met yet and are set to do so later this month.

Councilman Fritzingler – Councilman Fritzingler read the Building Department report for January 17, 2024, through February 2, 2024, which consisted of 53 permits being issued, totaling in \$93,562.

For DWP, the Councilman reported that they moved their equipment to high ground ahead of the flooding and that garbage pickup was not affected, he added that all routine maintenance has been performed. He reminded everyone to reach out to DPW at 908-725-1715 to report potholes.

The Councilman reported Historic and Cultural Committee met on January 17, 2024, where various members were sworn in by Mayor Carra, their treasurer's report showed an approximate \$1,200 remaining to be returned to the Borough and a temporary budget of \$1,000. HCC is looking into projects for the year and their next meeting is February 21, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at Borough Hall.

Council President Tozzi – Council President Tozzi read the Property Maintenance report for January, which totaled in 28 inspections, 29 violations and eight fines totaling in \$800.

The Councilman reported that Recreation has been trying to combat the low turnout of baseball registrations, at the next Council Meeting he should have an update on the pools and news about a new recreation activity. Recreation is holding a Valentines Day craft event on Saturday, February 10, 2024, at Borough Hall from 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Downtown Raritan Development will be meeting with the Economic Development Committee to join together to make Raritan a better place, the Councilman will report on meeting times and dates next month.

Councilman Armahizer – Councilman Armahizer stated that the Environmental Commission met on January 18, 2024, their second Clean Communities Program Community Cleanup event is scheduled for April 27, 2024, all residents are encouraged to help volunteer in the initiative. The Councilman added that the Environmental Commission is working to update their bylaws to increase community engagement, their next meeting is February 16, 2024, at the Municipal Building.

Councilman Agrawal – Councilman Agrawal announced that the Finance Committee is meeting February 9 to review the 2024 budget and that CFO, Paige Elster, will be providing an update at the February 20, 2024, Council meeting with introduction tentative for March 19, 2024, and adoption tentative for April 16, 2024.

The Councilman stated that the School Board is going through the strategic planning initiative, their first meeting is tonight, February 2, 2024, and the district encourages everyone to take part in the next two sessions, February 29, 2024, and March 6, 2024, located at the Middle School at 7 p.m. To sign up for the School Board e-newsletter, please visit www.BRSD.org. The winners of the Governor's Award

for JFK's Teacher of the Year and Educational Service Professional of the Year were recognized, Angela Randazzo and Holly Gibson respectively, he announced.

Councilman Agrawal had nothing to report for the Library Board.

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky reported that the Fire Department responded to 18 calls in January, members are still needed, for more information please visit www.raritanfire.com or stop by the Firehouse Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m.

The Office of Emergency Management reported that the CERT team is looking for new members, if interested please reach out to OEM Coordinator, Detective Ben Griffin the Councilwoman stated.

Councilwoman Melitsky announced that Officer Kathleen Sausa has been promoted to Detective.

Mayor Carra – Mayor Carra reminded the public that starting February 14, 2024, the library is joining the Main Library Alliance, which grants access to more than three-million items at 50 different libraries around New Jersey, in addition to what the library already offers.

Mayor Carra publicly recognized and thanked Mr. Thomas Brown for his heroic act of helping their elderly neighbor who fell and broke her hip during the last cold snap. He reported that she is responding well to treatment and would like to have a proclamation written up for Mr. Brown.

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.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Boulevard: Stated that the Main Library Alliance will allow residents to access an astronomical amount of material once it is up and running, adding that the library staff is being trained on it currently.

Jim Fidacaro, 812 Lynwood Street: Inquired about the status of the recreation survey that went out several months ago. It needs to be compiled and will be distributed at the next Council meeting Mayor Carra responded.

Bill Cunningham, 31 Glaser Avenue: Asked if the Main Library Alliance will affect the current access to the Raritan Library, Mayor Carra stated not at all. Mr. Cunningham shared his opinion that the previous owners of the Stop & Shop lot have not been good partners and he noted that area seems to be set up as a warehouse and he would like to know what materials are being housed there, in case it is hazardous, adding that perhaps more aggressive fines need to be issued. Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated he would reach out to Zoning Official Lou Gara, Mayor Carra suggested Borough Attorney William Robertson speak with Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin as well.

Cathy DeBellis, 17 Doughty Street: Inquired if Raritan Recreation offers soccer, Council President Tozzi stated that Recreation Director, Andy Sibilia, and himself will be discussing merging with a soccer association and he will report back next meeting. Mrs. DeBellis voiced her concerns with the state of the street signs and believes it is very risky and a necessity to replace them as Councilman Armahizer suggested. She also inquired about the County Road signs being replaced.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Boulevard: Stated that street signs used to be replaced on an as-needed-basis, he suggested that a survey be done on which ones are in need of replacement.

Jim Fidacaro, 812 Lynwood Street: Shared his opinion that he has always been impressed by Somerville's street and building signs, adding that he believes they utilized a grant. Mayor Carra stated Raritan has looked into utilizing the same TAP grant and he will provide an update on the status.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Carra entertained for a motion to Adjourn the Regular Meeting.

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

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion Passed: 6-0

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

Approved:

Eric M. Colvin
Borough Clerk/Administrator

Date: _____