

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
Municipal Building
Demarest, NJ
Regular Meeting
March 27, 2023
7:30 PM**

This special work session meeting was called to order at 7:35 at the above time and place.

Mayor Bernstein invited all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Bernstein, Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Jiang

Also Present: Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney
Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator
Anthony Dimitriadis, Police Chief

Mayor Bernstein read the compliance statement as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231

Consent Agenda:

Resolution No. 55-23	Authorizing Soil Moving Permit – 116 Lake Rd.
Resolution No. 56-23	Authorizing Soil Moving Permit – 57 Prospect
Resolution No. 57-23	Appointment of Finance Assistant – Peter Suh
Resolution No. 58-23	Payment of Bills
Resolution No. 59-23	Accepting a Donation

Mayor Bernstein read the items on the consent the consent agenda.

The Mayor asked for a motion to accept the consent agenda (with any abstentions noted).

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the consent agenda.

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Jiang

Nays: None

Absent: None

Mayor Bernstein noted that he met some concerned citizens about the nuisance of increased noise from air traffic headed to Teterboro airport and asked if any Councilmember would like to volunteer to be the Borough's liaison to the TANAAC board. Council President volunteered and will attend the quarterly meetings of the group to represent Demarest and report back to the council.

Following a meeting with our trash collector the Borough will add paper collection in the few months that have a 5th Wednesday so that recycling paper doesn't collect on the off week those few months, beginning with this Wednesday March 29. Lastly, Mayor Bernstein noted that March is Woman's History month and he would like to acknowledge the often overlooked contributions of woman through our country's history.

Council Committee Reports

Police, Fire, and Public Events – Councilmember Jiang

Councilmember Jiang reported that the Nature Center is holding a bird watching event on April 23 at Wakelee field near the playground. Mayor Bernstein added that there is also a bee event at the duck pond on 5/13. Councilmember Jiang said he would plan to note that event in future reports. Councilmember Jiang also reported that the BOE is about 90% complete on the plans for the new expanded gym at the Middle School, and that the BOE will hold a public budget meeting at CRS on April 25.

Ambulance and Recreation -Councilmember LaPira

Councilmember LaPira reported that DAA will hold baseball/softball opening day on 4/22 and that planning is continuing for Recreation Summer Camp. Camp will begin 6/26 and be held for 6 weeks.

Management, Administrative & Communication Committee – Councilmember Marks

Councilmember Marks reported that he expects to have a final decision on the website provider soon with the new website ready by mid-summer-early fall. Fields are being prepared by DPW and with the help of the donation from Vikings Soccer that was approved tonight. The library will hold a meeting next month to present a new master plan.

Finance & Insurance Committee – Council President Slowikowski

Council President Slowikowski reported that meetings are continuing regarding the 2023 budget including a meeting that included the Finance Committee, CFO, Administrator, Finance Assistant and Auditor and that progress is being made. The next meeting of the finance committee will be April 10. When asked Council President Slowikowski stated she doesn't expect the budget to be introduced until May.

DPW, Public Buildings, Public Utilities & Recycling Committee -Councilmember Hamilton

Councilmember Hamilton noted that while the DPW is prepping the fields for the spring they are also adding mulch to the playground to ensure it is safe. She congratulated the Shade Tree Commission for all their hard work in achieving Tree City USA status. Lastly, she mentioned that we may qualify for more grants from the County if we designate it a senior center with signage.

Mayor Bernstein asked if it would have to be reserved for senior use exclusively and Councilmember Hamilton indicated it did not and she believes the seniors have been trying to reinvigorate the group so the sign might be a good place to start.

Real Estate & Ordinance Committee – Councilmember Fox

Councilmember Fox reported she is continuing to work with the Borough Attorney on the train station deed. The Borough Attorney added it has taken longer than expected to retrieve the deed from the County, but she expects to have it soon. Councilmember Fox added that she expects to have final versions for Council review of the tree ordinance and overnight parking ordinance soon. She also congratulated Allen Press for his long tenure on the Zoning Board and hoped the Mayor would be able to appoint a replacement soon. Councilmember Fox attended the Reorganization meeting of NV CDBG last week and will attend the allocation meeting upcoming this week and hopes that Demarest will have an allocation request for the next cycle.

Reports of Borough Officials

Borough Administrator

Ms. Falkenstern reported that the website had been updated with a spot marked “Sign up for email updates from the Borough” and encouraged those in attendance to sign up and spread the word with their friends and neighbors so that pertinent news and information can be shared with residents in a timely and cost-effective manner. She shared the website and phone number for complaints about airplane noise. She welcomed Peter Suh to the Borough. Lastly, she reported that the trash hauler, IWS, would be doing a few extra pickups of cardboard on the 5th Wednesday where no pickup was normally

Police Chief

Chief Dimitriadis reported the following:

Radar details continue to be conducted on roadways where we receive complaints of speeding such as Columbus, Hardenburgh Ave. & Knickerbocker Rd.

The Demarest Police Department logged a total of 652 calls for service and Administrative activities from 02/27/2023 to 03/26/2023

Some of these calls for service include:

Verbal dispute – 2

Domestic Violence – 1 arrest

Fraud – 2 reports of

Theft – 3 reports of, 1 being a Stolen Vehicle, and 1 for a Burglary to a residence

- We encourage residents to not leave key fobs in their vehicle. Remove all valuables from the interior and lock the doors.
- Witness to the burglary observed a male exit a dark colored SUV and bang on the front door prior to entering from the rear of the home. We ask residents to contact this agency immediately upon any suspicious or alarming activity.

MV Crashes – 8

Medical Calls for service – 8

Woodland Rd. traffic

A 2022 three-month sample. 19 radar details from approx. 0730-0830 resulted in an average of: 62 minutes, 8.5 pedestrians and 2 dogs, and 50 vehicles observed travelling on the roadway.

Fire Chief

Deputy Chief Carl Pavlik reported that the department has responded to 75 calls year to date and 22 in the last month and that the department has recently completed both CPR and bloodborne pathogens training.

The Borough Attorney had nothing to report.

The Borough Treasurer was not in attendance.

The Mayor stated that before he opened the meeting to the public, he wanted some feedback from Council concerning the speeding complaints on Woodland. He noted that he was advised that his idea of placing speed bumps to alleviate the problem was not desired by the neighbors and that despite several mitigation efforts of the police department the complaints persisted so he would like to council to weigh in on whether they are in favor of the complainants' request to close the street.

Council President Slowikowski commented that she thought the idea of speed bumps seemed like the best next step and she wondered why the idea met with resistance.

No one on the Council commented on the idea of road closure.

A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton and seconded by Council President Slowikowski and approved by all to open the meeting to the public.

Barbara Johnson
56 Woodland

Ms. Johnson explained that speeding is still a problem and that she would like a “No Left Turn” sign from Woodland to Madison.

Stacy Fandanis
48 Woodland

She expressed her frustration with what she sees as a continuing problem of speeding related to school pick up and drop off times during the day. She confirmed that she does not want speed bumps since no other road has to content with speed bumps. She would like the road closed during morning and afternoon rush hour related to school drop off and a “No Left Turn” designation at the end of Woodland. She again stated her frustration and her belief that “nothing has been done” despite her and her neighbors complaints.

Fay Sloan
62 Woodland

Both Mr. and Mrs. stated that they agree that speeding is an issue on the street, and they believe it to be dangerous

The Police Chief reiterated his comments from the last meeting spelling out the mitigation efforts that have been undertaken including an extensive study by Officer Foley, in response to the comments that nothing has been done.

Councilmember LaPira asked that the Borough reach out to the school to communicate with the parents about drop off patterns that may mitigate the issue.

Roberta Hoag
28 Blanch Ave.

Ms. Hoag asked if the gates that allow entrance to the school could be closed to discourage this area as a drop-off location.

Chief Dimitriadis stated that he did not believe the school wants to do that and he feels it is a safety issue as that location would be used for an exit from school grounds in a situation where the school needed to be evacuated.

Dimitri Fandanis
48 Woodland

Expressed his agreement that the situation of speeding is a problem and thanked the Mayor for opening the dialogue.

Seeing no other members of the public wishing to speak, the Mayor asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public. A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton and seconded by Councilmember Fox and approved by all to close the meeting to the public.

The mayor then stated that the Council would be adjourning to a closed session to discuss pending litigation and that no action would be taken.

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Marks to move to closed session.

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Jiang
Nays: None
Absent: None

The Mayor reopened the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton and seconded by Councilmember Fox and approved by all to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern
Borough Administrator in the absence of the Acting Borough Clerk