

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
Municipal Building
Demarest, NJ
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 26, 2023**

This regular meeting was called to order at 7:33 at the above time and place.

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

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

Absent: Councilmember Fox, Councilmember LaPira,

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

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

Mayor Bernstein then issued the following Proclamation:

PROCLAMATION CELEBRATING KAANJ'S CHUSEOK FESTIVAL

WHEREAS it is the intention of the Mayor and Council of Borough of Demarest to focus attention on noteworthy occasions and organizations contributing to our community; and

WHEREAS The Korean-American Association of New Jersey (KAANJ), founded in 1975 to celebrate and support the Korean-American residents of New Jersey, announced its 22nd Annual Chuseok Festival, celebrating Korean Thanksgiving; and

WHEREAS KAANJ aims to make the event scheduled for September 30 and to be held Overpeck County Park "Amphitheater" in Ridgefield Park, the biggest in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Demarest wish to support this celebration and recognize the Korean-American members of the Community; and

WHEREAS the Mayor and Council aim to promote such celebrations in order to foster diversity and cultural awareness among all its residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Brian Bernstein, Mayor of the Borough of Demarest, on behalf of the entire Governing Body, do hereby recognize the KAANJ's Chuseok celebration and wish them a successful event.

Mayor Bernstein announced the following appointment to the Shade Tree Commission
Norman Ng Regular Member, filling unexpired term expiring 12/31/25

Ordinances – Introduction

Ordinance No. 1124-23

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND MODIFYING PART II: GENERAL LEGISLATION OF THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST BOROUGH CODE

A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1124-23 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on October 10, 2023.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Fox, Councilmember LaPira,

Ordinances – Adoption - Public Hearing

Ordinance No. 1126-23

ORDINANCE AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 166. VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC

A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to open the public hearing on Ordinance # 1126-23

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Fox, Councilmember LaPira,

There being no public wishing to speak on the ordinance, a motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to close the

Public Hearing on this ordinance and that it be adopted with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Fox, Councilmember LaPira,

Consent Agenda

Mayor Bernstein reviewed the items on the consent agenda and accepted questions from the public. Residents Dick Schooler and Mike Clark asked for clarification on the shared service agreement for the services of their Superintendent. Mayor Bernstein explained that shared service would both ensure the efficient operation of the DPW and a significant cost savings to the Borough. Mike Clark asked if the County was involved in the traffic light work at the County intersection. Mayor Bernstein answered that the Borough is working with the County and that the Borough is only responsible for the initial engineering and design and the County would be responsible for the new equipment, labor and installation.

Consent Agenda:

Resolution No. 128-23	Shared Service Agreement with Oradell
Resolution No. 129-23	Approving Retirement Agreement – Shields
Resolution No. 130-23	Approving Retirement Agreement – Tomasi
Resolution No. 131-23	Correcting Salary Resolution
Resolution No. 132-23	Authorizing Neglia Group – Traffic Light Upgrade
Resolution No. 133-23	Bills List

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to approve the consent agenda.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Fox, Councilmember LaPira

Council Committee Reports

Police, Fire, and Public Events (Jiang)

Councilmember Jiang announced that the Fire and Police Chiefs would be reporting on some events of last week in their reports. He added that Luther Lee Emerson School has received recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School. Additionally, Northern valley Demarest has been recognized as the Best School District in NJ>

Ambulance and Recreation (LaPira)

No report in Councilmeber LaPira's absence

Management, Administrative & Communication Committee (Marks)

Councilmember Marks reported that the Borough's email database now has 627 emails up from 44 in February so many people are receiving the Mayor's weekly email along with any emergency information that needs to go out. He is awaiting an installation date for the new electronic sign and the new website will be being worked on for a kickoff in the coming months.

Finance & Insurance Committee (Slowikowski)

No report

DPW, Public Buildings, Public Utilities & Recycling Committee (Hamilton)

Councilmember Hamilton reported that DPW is preparing the grounds for Demarest Day and is prepping for leaf season.

Real Estate & Ordinance Committee (Fox)

No report in Councilmember Fox's absence.

Reports of Borough Officials

Borough Administrator

Ms. Falkenstern reported that there is a flu clinic open to all residents over the age of five on 10/2 and to sign up residents should contact Lee Campbell, BOH secretary. She thanked the residents for their patience with the phone system that was knocked out by a lightning strike earlier this month and that additional issues are popping up as a result of that strike. Repairs are continuing.

Borough Attorney

No Report

Borough Treasurer

No Report

Police Chief

Chief Dimitriadis reported on a water rescue that occurred earlier in the week. He thanked his staff and the EMS and Fire Departments who also took part in the rescue. He added that the investigation into the cause and whether it took place on private property was ongoing.

Fire Chief

Chief McLoughlin reported more details on the water rescue and thanked the entire team. The victim sustained only minor injuries due to the quick action of the rescue team.

Mayor Bernstein noted that a new light has been added to the park near the gazebo to add visible at evening events.

Ambulance
No Report

Minutes for approval:

September 11, 2023 Work Session Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to approve the minutes.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Fox, Councilmember LaPira,

Meeting Open to the Public

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

Mr. Mike Clark
150 Donnybrook

Mr. Clark asked about the plan for the bank building. Mayor Bernstein explained that uses of the bank building were being explored as they discovered, contrary to advice given to the former council, that there may be more broad public purposes that are available for the building. He then asked about the Affordable Housing project at the property adjacent to the bank building. Mayor Bernstein reported that there is progress from the developer on the project and it has been approved for 17 affordable units. Mr. Clark asked for clarification on the crossing guard provider and the open space grant. He was informed that the grant requested was for turf on the skin field to help maintenance and drainage. The terms of the crossing guard provider were explained by Chief Dimitriadis and Mayor Bernstein. Lastly Mr. Clark asked the status of Ms. Crosman the Borough Clerk. Ms. Falkenstern answered that Ms. Crosman is currently on leave and is retiring at the end of the year and that there are no outstanding employment issues with the Clerk.

Mr. Huang
23 Prescott St.

Mr. Huang expressed concern and asked questions about the bamboo ordinance introduced earlier. Ms. Rosendahl encouraged Mr. Huang to review the requirements since his property does contain bamboo and that he will have 90 to cure any infraction. She confirmed that she had provided this information to his attorney in response to a letter she received from him. Mr. Huang asked why the DPW no longer picked up bamboo like it does other branches. It was explained that the DPW does not have equipment capable of “chipping” bamboo and that the current equipment risks damage from bamboo.

Mr. Clark returned to ask another question. Mr. Clark said he was disturbed by a comment made at a previous meeting concerning the promotion of a police officer. It was said at that meeting that only two members of the three-member committee were consulted. Mayor Bernstein answered that the comment had already been addressed by Councilmember Jiang. Councilmember Jiang added that he misspoke and had apologized both privately and publicly to Councilmember Hamilton for his mistake.

There being no other member of the public wishing to speak, the meeting was closed to the public.

Councilmember Marks made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Jiang, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by all, and the meeting was therefore adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern
Borough Administrator