

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
Municipal Building
Demarest, NJ
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
October 23, 2023**

This regular meeting was called to order at 7:38 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 LaPira, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Jiang

Absent: Councilmember Hamilton

Also Present: Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney
Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator
Peter Suh, Acting CFO
Anthony Dimitriadis, Police Chief
John McLoughlin, Fire Chief
Tom Zuppa, Labor Counsel

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

Ordinances – Introduction

Ordinance No. 1127-23 Amending chapter 163 - Trees

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Marks to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1127-23 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on November 27, 2023.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Hamilton

Consent Agenda:

Mayor Bernstein asks if any council member would like to remove any resolutions from the consent agenda for a separate vote or abstain from any resolutions.

Councilmember Fox states that she will abstain from Resolution No. 141-23.

Consent Agenda:

Resolution No. 137-23	Appointing Interim Superintendent of Public Works
Resolution No. 138-23	Approving Payment of HOA from AH Trust
Resolution No. 139-23	Soil Moving – 3 Forest
Resolution No. 140-23	Authorizing Business License Refund
Resolution No. 141-23	Adopting Personnel Manual
Resolution No. 143-23	Bills List

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski made a motion to approve the consent agenda (with the abstention so noted). The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jiang

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

Abstain: on Reso. No. 141-23 Councilmember Fox

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Hamilton

Discussion:

Mayor Bernstein noted that Councilmember LaPira asked for a discussion about the budget for holiday lights. Councilmember LaPira advised the Council that the recreation commission has discovered that the lights on the tree need to be replaced and they have solicited quotes. The best price they received is approximately \$4000, but that service is required in subsequent years as the company will not leave the lights up after the season. They were not able to find a company that will do that due to the damage that can be done off season. The Council discussed the budget and the options and the additional needs of the holiday display including needing a menorah and nativity scene due to damage. It was decided that the recreation committee should authorize the \$4000 expenditure for this year as \$5000 was budgeted for holiday lights. The Borough will continue to explore options for replacing the menorah and nativity scene including soliciting donations.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Bernstein expressed his thanks to the community for their sensitivity following the terror attack in Israel. He stated that some may have misinterpreted his Friday email that he was concerned about the messaging of signs on private property. He clarified that he was reminded the public that they should not touch any sign on private property regardless of the message and that signs of any message are not permitted on public property. He then welcomed Peter Suh who began this week as the full-time CFO and

wished him luck. Lastly, he noted that we have approved a shared service agreement for a DPW Superintendent that will save the Borough a considerable amount of money.

Council Committee Reports

Police, Fire, and Public Events

Councilmember Jiang thanked the Police for their increased presence around the Borough, particularly at the schools in the weeks following the terror attack in the Middle East.

Ambulance and Recreation

Councilmember LaPira announced the upcoming events for the recreation committee and invited the Mayor to be a judge at the Halloween costume contest.

Management, Administrative & Communication Committee

Councilmember Marks reported that the Borough's email database has up to 700 addresses. He reported that following some electrical issues the new sign is now being fabricated. He is also reviewing phone issues and exploring solutions for the phones at Borough Hall. Lastly he reported that DAA is in need of volunteers for indoor soccer.

Finance & Insurance Committee

Council President Slowikowski welcomed Peter Suh to his new position and noted that the finance office is now fully staffed. She reported that the CFO is beginning to look at the 2024 budget and will begin working with departments heads in the coming weeks.

DPW, Public Buildings, Public Utilities & Recycling Committee

No Report

Real Estate & Ordinance Committee

Councilmember Fox thanked the Council for introducing the updated Tree Ordinance this evening that will establish correctly the Shade Tree Trust. She noted that the committee is now working on the noise ordinance. She asked the Council for some feedback and suggestions and will work with the Borough Attorney to incorporate their suggestions.

Reports of Borough Officials

Borough Administrator

Ms. Falkenstern reported that the Borough has engaged Neglia Engineering to perform engineering and design services for an updated traffic signal at the corner of Piermont and Hardenburgh so residents will notice engineers over the next few weeks conducting traffic counts and surveys in the area. She discussed the damaged holiday decorations and stated that the Borough has reached out to local religious institutions but is looking for donations.

Borough Attorney

No report.

Borough Treasurer

Mr. Suh reported that the Borough did well on its Best Practices Inventory and as such will receive 100% State funding. He noted that taxes are due November 1 and that he is working with the electric company on streetlights that are out, and residents should report outages they see to him.

Police Chief

Chief Dimitriadis reported the following:

Additional coverage on 10/13 parents thank the officers present and were grateful we visible during drop off, lunch, and pick up times at each school

Dept. has added patrols and presence in and around our schools from that day on.

Praise our Det. Bureau and officers on duty who recovered a missing / endangered 14 year-old resident in Cliffside Park and transported to obtain medical attention

Also P.O. Owens who responded mutual aid to assist N.M.P.D. with two suspects who fled from a scene. He and another officer apprehended the one then discovered and apprehended the second hiding under a Haworth resident's porch.

The Demarest Police Department logged a total of 547 calls for service and Administrative activities from last council meeting 09/26/23 to 10/22/23

Some of these calls for service include:

Fraud – 1

Theft – 3,

Burglary – 1 (Bellair Estates)

Verbal Dispute - 4, one being a road rage incident

Motor Vehicle Crashes – 9

Medical Calls for service – 12

Fire Chief

Chief McLoughlin reported that Fire Prevention presentations at the schools had gone well and that the department has responded to 310 calls year to date.

Ambulance

Roberta Hoag reported that they had two new members and that they achieved 2nd place in safe driving. Additionally, they had no missed calls. Mayor Bernstein asked if they could report, in the future, the number of calls they responded to. She stated that they have responded to approximately 275 calls, and she will report the actual numbers at future meetings.

Councilmember Marks made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Fox, to open the meeting to the public. The motion was approved by all present.

Lynn Paulison
15 Lois

Ms. Paulison asked how the holiday decorations were damaged. The BA explained that it was due to their age, weather exposure and wear and tear. She then remarked that she hopes the Council will not consider allowing noise until midnight as her neighbors are disrespectful. Lastly, she commented that she does not believe that people are following the sign ordinance, and she feels the borough is "littered" with signs, especially commercial signs and she would like to see more enforcement.

Roberta Hoag
28 Blanch

Ms. Hoag suggests we put our solicitation for donations out to the public.

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

Closed Session Resolution 2023-013

A motion was offered by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to adjourn to closed session for a litigation update.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Hamilton

It was noted that no action will be taken when the Council returns to open session.

The Council returned to open session and there being no more business before the Council, Council President Slowikowski made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks and approved by all. The meeting was therefore adjourned at 10:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern
In the absence of the Borough Clerk