

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
WORK SESSION Minutes**

April 7, 2025

7:30 PM

The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, have been satisfied by the inclusion of the date, time and place of this meeting in the annual schedule of meetings of this Governing Body. Such schedule of meetings is posted at Borough Hall, on the Borough website and was published in the Record and Star Ledger and was filed in the office of the Borough Clerk.

Mayor Bernstein invited all in attendance to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Mayor Bernstein, Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Absent: None

Also Present: Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator
Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney
Nick Chelius, Borough Engineer

Ordinances (Introduction):

ORDINANCE 1159-25 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Ms. Falkenstern noted that after discussion with the Borough Attorney the word Council in the proposed ordinance was changed to Governing Body. She explained that the change allows the Mayor to break any tie that might occur. If it says Council and there is a tie there would be no way to break the tie.

Council President Slowikowski made a motion to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1159-25 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on April 28, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jiang.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

Absent: None

Ordinance Public Hearing (Adoption):

ORDINANCE 1156-25 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 166 VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC OF THE DEMAREST BOROUGH CODE

Mayor Bernstein stated that he wanted to offer some information before the public hearing was open. He stated that he spoke to the residents of Academy Lane and had received a letter from Counsel from Holy Angels requesting an effective date of July 1 to allow the school time to make changes to be in compliance. He therefore asked if the Council would consider the change in effective date.

The consensus of the Council was to make the suggested change in effective date.

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Collins a motion to open the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 1156-25. The motion was approved by all present by a voice vote.

Mr. Visconi, Counsel for Academy Lane

Mr. Visconi stated that the administration and the parents still have concerns and looks forward to meeting with the Academy Lane residents in hopes that the ordinance will not be necessary, but he appreciates the delay in effective date to allow time for those discussions.

Mr. Daniello

Mr. Daniello's children attend the Academy. He stated that he appreciates the delay but is concerned about next year. He asked what issue is being solved by the proposed ordinance. He believes it could be dangerous for the students to park at other spots because it may necessitate crossing a busy road, especially during late afternoon or evening hours and believes that is more important than the "inconvenience" of the Academy Lane residents. He further believes that making a left out of the parking lot is dangerous and that there is speeding on Anderson Ave. Mayor Bernstein asked if his experience would suggest that there should be a right turn only provision onto Anderson Ave. if it is dangerous. Mr. Daniello said he was not, but he believes it is a dangerous road.

Mayor Bernstein noted that the restriction is only from 8:00 am – Noon so it would not be in effect when the sun was down.

Mr. Daniello stated that the students would park in the morning and would not move their cars in between school and after school activities.

Mayor Bernstein noted that there are similar restrictions near other schools.

Tia Barancik

Ms. Barancik is the President of the Academy Homeowners Association. She detailed what she feels is inappropriate and disrespectful behavior of the students on Academy Lane including smoking, drinking and defecation in the area. She also described what she feels are dangerous traffic conditions in the area. She stated that years ago the school informed the Association that street parking would be temporary. Additionally,

she believes parking on Academy Lane is causing the girls to walk through the trees and cause damage to the trees that are the property of the Association.

There being no other members of the public wishing to speak a motion was made by Councilmember Collins and seconded by Councilmember Marks to close the meeting to the public. The motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Councilmember Collins made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1156-25 with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

Abstain: Councilmember Jiang

Mayor Bernstein asked Mr. Visconi to reach out to him directly if there are any questions or issues that still need to be discussed.

ORDINANCE 1157-25 AN ORDINANCE TO REGULATE LITTER CONTROL

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Collins a motion to open the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 1157-25. The motion was approved by all present by a voice vote.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak a motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to close the meeting to the public. The motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Councilmember Fox made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1157-25 with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

Work Session Discussion Items:

Engineer’s Report

Nick Chelius reviewed the monthly Engineer’s Report, highlighting the status of road and drainage projects and the Corrective Action Plan for the Compost Site. Additionally he described emergency work being performed on the Deerhill Bridge.

Shade Tree Commission 2024 Report

Ms. Cetta reviewed the 2024 activities of the Commission including tree planting, deer protection and fertilization of those trees and mitigation plans for new construction. She spoke of the work Mr. Slaman has done evaluating trees and removals performed. She noted that Mr. Ng, Ms. Neville and herself attended a conference to keep their education current, and they submitted an application to keep the Borough’s Tree City USA designation, and they are working with Orange and Rockland on tree trimming. She said their goal for this year is to work with the Borough Administrator to streamline tree trimming services. She described a plan to revitalize the plantings at the cemetery, and they are working with the schools to hopefully plant at the schools. They are attempting to identify landmark trees in the Borough. She requested that the Mayor appoint more members to the Commission. She thanked the commission members for their work.

Mayor Bernstein asked if she had a written report to provide. Ms. Cetta said she would work on that and provide it to Ms. Falkenstern.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Bernstein asked if any member would like to have any resolution removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately. (*none*)

Mayor Bernstein asked if any member would like to abstain from voting on any resolution on the consent agenda. (*none*)

Consent Agenda:

- Resolution No. 073-25 Appointment to BCC Advisory Board
- Resolution No. 074-25 Appointment of the Municipal Housing Liaison
- Resolution No. 075-25 Appointment of Administrative Agent
- Resolution No. 076-25 Authorizing Hire of DPW Laborer
- Resolution No. 077-25 Authorizing Soil Moving Permit – 41 Orchard
- Resolution No. 078-25 Authorizing Engineering Service – Deer Hill Repair
- Resolution No. 079-25 Authorizing Engineering Service – Flood Prevention Ordinance
- Resolution No. 080-25 Accepting Donation
- Resolution No. 081-25 Authorizing Mediation Agreement
- Resolution No. 082-25 Payment of Bills
- Resolution No. 083-25 Authorizing LESO 1033 Program
- Resolution No. 084-25 Cancelling Sale of Fire Equipment

Council President Slowikowski made a motion to approve the consent agenda.
Councilmember Collins seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss
Nays: None

Mayor Bernstein reported that the new Joint Planning Board had their first meeting, joined by newly appointed member Tim Woods who formerly served on the Zoning Board. He was elected as the Chair of the new Joint Board. He noted that he received a resignation from Blake Chroman from the Board, so he is appointing Todd Adelman, another former Zoning Board member. While the Zoning Board finished their work, he resigned from the Zoning Board since the last item on that board is an application that he has abstained from due to a conflict. Ms. Falkenstern clarified that Mr. Adelman is filling the unexpired term of Mr. Chroman to end 12/31/26. Mayor Bernstein thanked all of these members for their service.

Meeting Open to the Public

Councilmember Collins made a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski and approved by all present on a roll call vote.

Fay Sloan

Ms. Sloan asked the Borough to consider measures to curb speeding on Woodland Rd. from Hardenburgh to Madison. Mayor Bernstein noted that they will pass the observation on the Police Department.

Karen Brodsky

Ms. Brodsky asked about construction near Stewart St. and Madison Ave. that she believes is dangerous and has been going on for a long time. Ms. Falkenstern informed her that it is a project being done by Veolia, but she will ask the Police Department to visit the site and see if anything can be done to increase safety at the intersection.

Linda Cetta

Ms. Cetta asked if anything can be done to increase bus service to NYC. Mayor Bernstein answered that he will bring the question to the local Mayors at their next meeting.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak a motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to close the meeting to the public. The motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Closed Session Resolution 2025-003

***WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 provides for a Public Body to go into a Closed Session during a Public Meeting; and*

***WHEREAS**, the Governing Body of the Borough of Demarest has deemed it necessary to go into closed session to discuss matters which are exempted from the public.*

***NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Borough of Demarest that the Governing Body shall go into closed session on April 7, 2025, for the following reasons as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12:*

- 1. Contract Negotiations*
- 2. Litigation Update*
- 3. Public Safety*

Mayor Bernstein noted that while he does not think the Council will be taking any action when they return to open session, they reserve the right to do so.

Council member Fox made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-003 to convene an Executive Session. Councilmember Collins seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

The Council returned to open session at 10:11 pm and Councilmember Collins made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jiang and approved by all on a voice vote; the meeting was therefore adjourned at 10:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern, RMC
Borough Clerk