

DRAFT MINUTES

*These are the Draft Minutes of the Agenda Conference
of the North Plainfield Borough Council held on Monday, 9 March 2020.*

*Every attempt has been made to make these as comprehensive
and conclusive as possible. However, as it is a draft document, it is
not to be construed as a formal depiction of the official conduct of business and is
subject to revision up to and following the Council's actual approval of same. If
changes are necessary, revised minutes will be posted to the website.*

MINUTES of the Agenda Conference of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **March 9, 2020** at 7:32 p.m. at the North Plainfield Council Chambers, 263 Somerset Street, North Plainfield, New Jersey.

PRESENT:

Council Members: Aimee Corzo
Lawrence La Ronde
Everett Merrill (absent – excused)
Keiona R. Miller
Wendy Schaefer
Douglas M. Singleterry
Frank “Skip” Stabile, Council President

Also Present: David Hollod, Business Administrator
Brian M. Hak, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney
Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk
Stephanie Sherwood, RMC, CMR, Deputy Clerk

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Mr. La Ronde.

Council President Stabile requested a moment of silence for the men and women serving in our Armed Forces.

The Council President read the following Notice of Compliance:

“This is an Agenda Meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield, scheduled by resolution of the Council adopted on November 18, 2019. Adequate notice of this meeting was given pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.* by transmitting said notice to the *Courier News*, *The Star-Ledger*, *The Alternative Press*, *WJLP-TV* and *WKMB* Radio on November 19, 2019, and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and Memorial Library reserved for such purpose.”

Mr. Hollod presented the following Mayoral Proclamation which was done at the request of Rutgers Medical School:

WHEREAS, Congress designated the third full week in March to be National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) in 1961 and since then this week has helped to raise national awareness of the dangers of potentially dangerous medicines, household products and chemicals, environmental contaminants, and other substances; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Poison Control Center, a division of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School provides 24/7 expert poisoning treatment advice, drug information, and prevention education at no cost through the Poison Help number at 1-800-222-1222, chat (www.njpies.org), or text 973-339-0712; and

WHEREAS, specialized medical professionals (doctors, pharmacists, and nurses) provide accessible, free, and confidential healthcare to all; and

WHEREAS, the poison center is instrumental in the surveillance and management of poisoning exposures across the state, including the use, misuse, and abuse of; medications, legal and illicit drugs, environmental contaminants, bioterrorism agents, and common household products and chemicals; and

WHEREAS, although most reported poison exposures involve children five (5) years old and younger; most poisoning deaths occur in adults aged 20 to 59; and

WHEREAS, overdose deaths from prescription opioids, over-the-counter medications, and illegal drugs remain at epidemic proportions for both New Jersey and the United States; and

WHEREAS, lead exposure and carbon monoxide poisoning remain major public health concerns; and

WHEREAS, vaping and e-cigarette devices pose a serious risk of nicotine poisoning, as well as serious potentially deadly vaping associated lung illnesses, also referred to as EVALI; and

WHEREAS, poison center experts encourage the public not to guess, wait for symptoms, or waste time looking up medical information online when potential poisoning exposures occur; and

WHEREAS, all residents should save the Poison Control Center's number, 1-800-222-1222, in their cell, home, and office phones because a fast response can make all the difference in preventing serious injury and saving lives;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Michael Giordano Jr., Mayor of the Borough of North Plainfield do hereby proclaim the week of March 15-21, 2020 as National Poison Prevention Week in New Jersey and encourage all citizens to pledge their commitment to ensuring the safety of themselves, their families, and their community.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Property Maintenance Report** – E.M. (Ken Capobianco, Code Enforcement Officer, to be present). Introducing himself, Mr. Capobianco advised that he is a retired police officer of thirty-one (31) years currently serving as the Director of the Office of Emergency Management for the Borough of Garwood. Hired as a part-time property maintenance officer for North Plainfield, he took over as full-time when Mark Tighe retired. Overseeing two part-time property maintenance officers that work twenty-five (25) hours per week, their tasks include rental certificate of occupancy inspections, municipal code compliance inspections, addressing property maintenance complaints, and registering vacant properties. Most notices of violations are abated within ten (10) to fourteen (14) days and we make every effort to work with those property owners that request an extension of time to correct the violation. When a property owner does not correct the violation or respond to the notice, a summons will be issued.

There are currently one hundred forty-seven (147) vacant properties in the Borough. Approximately ten (10) of these houses fall into the category of vacant and abandoned which makes it extremely difficult for us to locate the owners and ensure that they comply and take care of the property. Any Borough clean-up of a property results in a lien placed against that property. Houses that have been left vacant and abandoned become a public safety issue as they are prone to break-ins and squatters. In 2019 the Borough collected over \$160,000 from vacant property registration fees. We have sent over 1,200 Notice of Violation letters and conducted more than 400 Rental Certificate of Occupancy inspections. We rely on the police and fire departments and the department of public works to let us know when they observe violations. He expressed his concerns with the property at 31 Myrtle Avenue which is being used as a boarding house with at least eight (8) different non-related adults cohabitating.

Thanking Mr. Capobianco for an informative presentation, Council President Stabile advised that he had received answers to many questions he hadn't even considered. The Council President stressed the need for residents to maintain and care for their properties. Responding to Ms. Miller's concerns, Mr. Capobianco assured that they make every effort to work with those residents requesting assistance with the process. Expressing his gratitude to Mr. Capobianco for taking on a somewhat thankless job, Mr. Singletery inquired after any assistance the Council may offer. Addressing Mr. La Ronde's concerns, Mr. Capobianco advised that most illegal construction is discovered when they do their inspections. Responding to Ms. Schaefer's inquiry, Mr. Capobianco confirmed that they work with the tax assessor to ensure houses are properly assessed. Responding to Ms. Corzo, Mr. Capobianco assured that they do follow-up with those citizens that register property maintenance complaints.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS:

Advising that the Planning Board met on February 26, Ms. Corzo reported on their approval of a minor subdivision.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Miller, seconded by Ms. Schaefer and carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President