

DRAFT MINUTES

*These are the Draft Minutes of the North Plainfield Borough Council
Agenda Conference held on Monday, 24 October 2022.*

*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 (virtual) held on Monday, **October 24, 2022** at 7:35 p.m. via Zoom.

PRESENT:

Council Members: Aimee Corzo (absent-excused)
Suzette Given
Steven McIntyre
Everett Merrill, Council Vice President
Keiona R. Miller (arrived 7:45 p.m.)
Wendy Schaefer
Frank "Skip" Stabile, Council President

Also Present: Lawrence La Ronde, Mayor
David E. Hollod, P.E., Business Administrator
Dominick DiYanni, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney
Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk
Michele Garry, CMR, Deputy Borough Clerk

Council President Stabile read the following Notice of Compliance:

"This meeting is being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Adequate notice of this meeting was provided by transmitting notice to the official newspapers of the Borough, The Courier News, WKMB Radio, WJLP-TV, the Alternative Press and also to the Star Ledger on October 20, 2022 and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and the Memorial Library reserved for such purpose."

The Flag Salute was led by Council Vice President Merrill followed by a moment of silence for the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

MAYORAL PROCLAMATION:

Mayor La Ronde read the Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2022 Proclamation as follows:

Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2022

WHEREAS, October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual campaign to increase awareness about the impact of breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month increases public knowledge about the importance of early detection of breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, while steady progress has been made in the fight against Breast Cancer, it is the most common cancer in women after skin cancers and the second leading cause of death; and

WHEREAS, one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime, and while there is currently no known cure for breast cancer, early diagnosis is critical to survival; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, more than 287,000 new cases of breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the American Cancer Society continues to advise women to get an annual mammogram screening once they reach age 40; and

WHEREAS, research indicates that death rates declined 40% between 1989 and 2016 due to the improvements in early detection, treatment and increased awareness; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 *RISE* campaign; *Rally In Screening Everyone* focuses on ensuring every woman has access to the breast cancer screenings she needs and the support she deserves; and

WHEREAS, researchers, scientists, and numerous nonprofit organizations, are dedicated to discovering a cure for breast cancer. During the month of October, we acknowledge the extraordinary commitment and effort invested in this cause; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the over three million Americans who are breast cancer survivors and who give us hope of a better future; and

WHEREAS, we stand by all who are fighting this cancer now and pray for those we have lost.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that I, Lawrence La Ronde, as Mayor of the Borough of North Plainfield, do hereby declare October, 2022 as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I ask our citizens to join in the fight against Breast Cancer by urging friends and family members to get regular screenings, and to remember that we all need to fight this together.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one appeared.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Annual Best Practices Inventory** – DE.H. Mr. Hollod described the annual survey

mandated by the State which qualifies the town for state aid. North Plainfield has met the threshold by a large margin. He thanked Mr. DeBlasio and Ms. Intravartolo for their efforts in reaching the goal. No further action is required by the Council as a whole. Mr. DeBlasio who was also present offered “hats off to administration” for achieving a high score of 36½ points. The Borough is doing things right, he assured, and it has been a job well done.

Mr. Hollod reminded that the Borough’s annual audit had come back with no comments, an obviously strong indicator, then thanked Mr. DeBlasio and Ms. Intravartolo for their attendance at tonight’s meeting.

2. Resolution Rejecting All Bids for Covid-19 Mitigation Projects – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod recalled that the projects were largely funded by Somerset County, and CTS Architects were engaged for the project design, including a new courtyard on the north side of the Community Center and upgraded toilet facilities. There was an invitation for bids a couple of months ago which attracted no bids. To hopefully attract successful bidders, the project was split in two – the courtyard and the toilet facilities. The resulting limited billing was “off the charts” according to Mr. Hollod, still too high. Pursuant to the attorney’s guidance, following the official rejection of bids, there will be further discussion with the various bidders in hopes of getting the project going. Mr. Stabile inquired after the inclusion of self-opening hospital doors at key entryways to the building, Mr. Hollod replied that they would look into it. It remains a possibility, since \$300,000.00 in federal funds are also due.

3. Closeout Resolution for West End Avenue Sanitary Sewer Replacement Project – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod explained that the project resulted in a change order reflecting a reduction in costs. It was modified to include cleaning and replacement of a major sewer line. Ms. Schaefer questioned a \$200,000.00 figure, and Mr. Hollod explained that they needed to regroup.

4. Resolution Engaging Mott MacDonald to Assist with NFIP Community Rating System Program – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod detailed recent history of the Community Rating System related to the National Flood Insurance Program. The Borough had become the highest in the county. Mott MacDonald will assist in refinements such as a warning system that could lower flood insurance premiums for residents.

5. Updating Marriage and Civil Union Fees – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod deferred to Mayor La Ronde who had helped to develop the new ordinance, and commented that they had looked into other municipalities’ customary fees for the services. The new fee structure will bring North Plainfield into line with the majority of towns that were surveyed. The same fees for weddings will be charged Monday through Sunday. He concluded that performing weddings is one of his favorite functions as Mayor of North Plainfield.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Abandoned Telecommunications Lines/Cables – S.M. Mr. McIntyre said there was no update on the topic for the time being, although he was interested in the status of the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) and how it was impacting the Borough. Mr. DiYanni confirmed that there had been little change in the law, and he asked Mr. Phoenix to confirm fees the Borough could charge for OPRA responses. The Clerk replied that if hard copies were required for a response, it remained at pennies a page. E-mailed documents are still free to requestors. However, he stated that requests needing digital responses, such as police videos or recorded minutes involving software remain at only 13 cents per CD or DVD which is the wholesale cost of the software. The logging process, he added, remains tedious and eats up valuable time in the Clerk’s Office. The OPRA law is an unfunded mandate that doesn’t permit the Borough to feed through costs of the time taken to create the new software which is unfair, since

police are often required to take their time to render the duplicate, and there is no accepted method to capture the expense of their time in the process.

In recognition of the early voting process, Mr. McIntyre said that lighting should be improved at the County's ballot box at the Community Center. The Mayor replied that he would reach out to Recreation.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS:

Ms. Schaefer observed that Hon. Bonnie Watson Coleman had a \$400,000.00 grant to clean up the Green Brook. Mr. Hollod confirmed it, adding that the Stony Brook was also involved, and that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were here for the next phase. The Mayor interjected that easements were involved, and Mr. Hollod replied that paperwork is in hand for the Villa Maria area, and is the responsibility of Somerset County.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Given, seconded by Mr. McIntyre and on voice vote carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President