

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
Municipal Building
Demarest, NJ
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 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 Fox, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Jiang

Also Present: Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney
Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator
Jason Gangi, Public Works Manager
Carl O'Brien, Borough Engineer

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

Mayor Bernstein then made the following statement concerning the recent terrorist attack in the Middle East:

Good evening. I would like to take a moment to speak about the recent terrorist attacks in Israel. Last evening, I attended with council members Andrea, David, Dan, Mary and Daryl, a vigil in Closter in support of Israel. I want to thank Mayor Glidden and the Closter Council for organizing last night's vigil.

Tonight, I speak to you with a heavy heart because of the recent terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas on Israel and its people, which have caused the loss of innocent lives, almost 1000 civilians, and immeasurable pain and suffering among Israelis, leaving families shattered in Israel.

We, as a community, our nation and the world must unequivocally condemn the appalling terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel and the people of Israel.

Let it be known by all who hear or read my message, that we stand in unwavering solidarity with Israel and the people of Israel against acts of terrorism. We extend our sympathies and condolences for the innocent lives lost in these murderous terrorist attacks. Hamas, a terrorist organization and the governing power in the Gaza strip, does not recognize Israel's right to exist as a state and has spoken about driving all Jews from the region. In this attack, Hamas intentionally killed

children, the elderly, and families, the most vulnerable and defenseless individuals in any society, terrorizing and killing them in their homes. 260 young adults, mostly high school and college age kids, attending a Music Festival Saturday morning were intentionally killed by Hamas without warning. And, at least 100 innocent civilians have been kidnapped and taken hostage by Hamas with threats to kill them, too. All of these victims were targeted, killed or kidnapped because they are Jewish. The Israeli victims were not armed soldiers killed in combat; no; they were unarmed children, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and grandparents – families like yours and mine! Hamas intentionally and deliberately massacred hundreds of innocent Israeli citizens in cowardly acts of terrorism, which can be defined as the use of violence against innocent civilians in the pursuit of some political or ideological goal and must be universally condemned.

We cannot confuse Hamas with all Palestinians! Hamas has put their own people living in Gaza in danger by its reprehensible actions. I look forward to the day that Israelis and Palestinians live in peace without interference by terrorists.

As a community and as a civilized people, however, we have a responsibility to foster empathy, sympathy and support for Israel and its people for what has happened. Our thoughts, condolences and prayers go out to our brothers and sisters in Israel and all those affected by the senseless acts of terrorism carried out by Hamas against Israel and its people. Also, please pray for the prompt and safe return of the hostages taken by Hamas.

Please rise and join me in a moment of silence in memory of the innocent victims murdered in Israel.

Ordinance Public Hearing (Adoption):
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 Marks and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to open the public hearing on Ordinance # 1124-23

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Ray Cywinski
256 County Rd.

Mr. Cywinski asked for clarification about the buffer zone and the protection of other trees and enforcement of mechanisms to stop the spread. He was provided the clarification after a discussion of the buffer zone is that the intent is to keep all bamboo on the person's property who has the bamboo and to not allow spread to any adjoining property, be it public or private.

Mr. Cywinski further stated that as a CTE he sees trees in the park that need to be maintained and/or removed. He offered to assist or guide the shade tree committee if needed. The Borough will inspect the trees he referenced.

There being no other members of the public wishing to be heard, the Mayor asked for a motion 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.

The motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Hamilton.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Work Session Discussion Items:

Tree Maintenance in Public Parks

The Council further discussed the condition of the trees at the Duck Pond, Administration and DPW will work with the Shade Tree Commission to identify dead and dying trees and make decisions on which need to be removed. Additionally, the Mayor asked Councilmember Fox to clarify some provisions of the proposed amendment of the Shade Tree Ordinance with respect to fines vs. violations and how payments would be dealt with in relation to the trust. Councilmember Fox will follow up with the auditor and the Mayor to clarify these items.

Engineering Report

Mr. O'Brien reviewed the items on the latest engineering report supplied by Colliers Engineering.

Consent Agenda:

Resolution No. 134-23	Approving Casual Labor – Leaf Season
Resolution No. 135-23	Approving Payment #2 – American Asphalt
Resolution No. 136-23	Bills List

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

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Jiang
Nays: None
Absent: None

Council President Slowikowski offered a motion to open the meeting to the public. Councilmember Hamilton seconded and all approved.

Ray Cywinski
256 County Rd.

Mr. Cywinski further stated that as a CTE he sees trees in the park that need to be maintained and/or removed. He offered to assist or guide the shade tree committee if needed. The Borough will inspect the trees he referenced.

Closed Session Resolution 2023-012

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to approve Resolution 2023-012 allowing the Council to adjourn to closed session to discuss potential litigation.

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Jiang
Nays: None
Absent: None

The Council returned to open session and Councilmember Hamilton made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski and approved by all.

The meeting was therefore adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern
Borough Administrator