

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
WORK SESSION
MEETING Minutes
April 8, 2024
7:30 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm at the Demarest Borough Council Chambers.

Mayor Bernstein read the compliance statement and invited all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to suspend the regular order of business to consider an appeal of a denial of a film permit by the Borough Clerk.

The motion to suspend the regular order of business was made by Council President Slowikowski, seconded by Councilmember Marks and approved by all.

Resolution 087-24 Consideration of Appeal of a Film Permit for 287 County Rd.

Tom O'Connor, homeowner of 287 County Rd., came forward to explain his application and ask the Council to consider allowing weekend filming. Katherine Delaney of the production company further explained the project. Mr. O'Connor stated that he has held many film and commercial shoots at his home over the years and has never had a complaint. He described the parking plan that would utilize the parking lot at St. Joseph's Church, as he has done successfully in the past.

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Council President Slowikowski by to grant the appeal and issue the film permit.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Mayor Bernstein then asked to take another item up for discussion out of order. The Environmental Commission has a few items they would like to discuss, and Mayor

Bernstein asked Council President Slowikowski, the liaison to the EC to introduce the topic. Council President Slowikowski explained that there were three items that the EC wanted to address to the Council; a place for honeybees, a request for an EC Secretary among the Borough Staff and a proposal to endorse "No Mow May".

Jessica Wang, Chair of the EC came forward to discuss the first two. She stated that a past employee, Marti, often supported and helped the EC with clerical duties and grant applications. She stated that the volunteers on her committee do not have the resources to do this work and she is looking for assistance from the Borough employees. She further stated that she wanted the EC to achieve certain distinctions that require resolutions of the governing Body and filing of paperwork with the state. She continued that achieving this distinction would make the EC eligible for certain grants. Mayor Bernstein explained that the Borough employees will support her efforts and provide any information that she does not have to apply for grants and that she can work directly with the grant writers whose job it is to assist with these items. He asked that the Borough be copied on any correspondence with the grant writers. Additionally, he suggested that they use the time at their meetings to work on these projects. He suggested that the members of the Commission would be more familiar with what is needed and they should organize a list of any information that they need from the Borough and the Borough would provide any paperwork that is on file, but that it should be the responsibility of the Commission to assess these needs, compile the list and ultimately make application. Ms. Wang also stated that the commission would like to install a place in town for honeybees. The Mayor and Council expressed some concern about bees being close to Borough employees or residents using the park and suggested that the commission do some research and suggest an appropriate place to place the bees so that residents and employees are not in danger of being stung. A discussion ensued about past encumbrances and whether or not there was money set aside by previous administrations, as Ms. Wang believes, to fund the project. Ms. Falkenstern and Mr. Suh will look into whether those funds had been set aside. It was also suggested that ultimately the former compost site, when renovated, would be a good spot for the project. That would have to wait until the plan is ultimately approved by the DEP.

David Lerner, another member of the EC, then came forward to propose an initiative known as "No Mow May". He explained that it is a grassroots effort to allow and encourage residents not to mow their lawns in May to allow blooms in lawns to support spring pollinators. Mayor Bernstein asked if they had considered some of the negatives of such an effort. Mr. Lerner believes that the biggest negative would be the reaction of other neighbors and stated that having a sign on anyone's lawn who was participating would help that issue. The Council and Administrator expressed concern about non-participating neighbors' reactions. Mr. Lerner thinks it could start an important conversation. The Council thanked Mr. Lerner and applauded his efforts, but ultimately would like to do more research before considering fully adopting an initiative next year.

Ordinance (Introduction):

Ordinance No. 1135-2024 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 130 PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS, ARTICLE III OF THE DEMAREST BOROUGH CODE

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1135-24 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on April 30, 2024.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

ORDINANCE 1136 -2024 - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION-N.J.S. 40A:4-53 FOR THE REVALUATION OF REAL PROPERTY

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Fox to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1136-24 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on April 30, 2024.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

ORDINANCE 1137 -2024 - CALENDAR YEAR 2024 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Fox to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1137-24 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on April 30, 2024.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Ordinance Public Hearing (Adoption):

Ordinance No. 1130-2024 AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 27, ARTICLE II BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT, VARIANCE CHECKLIST

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Fox to a motion to open the public hearing on Ordinance # 1130-2024

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

There being no public wishing to speak, Councilmember Fox made 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. Councilmember Reiss seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Ordinance No. 1131-2024 AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 175 ZONING PROHIBITED USES

Mayor Bernstein announced that the public hearing will be postponed until the May 13, 2024 meeting to await planning board review.

Ordinance No. 1132-2024 AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 32 OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Fox to a motion to open the public hearing on Ordinance # 1132-2024

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

There being no public wishing to speak, Councilmember Fox made 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. Councilmember Reiss seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Ordinance No. 1133-2024 AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 176 RAFFLE AND BINGO LICENSES

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to open the public hearing on Ordinance # 1133-2024

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

There being no public wishing to speak, Councilmember Fox made 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. Council President Slowikowski seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Ordinance No. 1134-2024 AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 175 ZONING FEES AND ESCROW FOR VARIANCE AND CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATIONS

Mayor Bernstein announced that the public hearing will be postponed until the May 13, 2024 meeting to await planning board review.

Work Session Discussion Items:

Engineer’s Report

Nick Chelius reviewed the engineer’s report, highlighting the upcoming paving projects and close out with the DOT on previous paving projects.

Tree Inspections

The Council considered the need for an arborist to assess trees throughout the year. A proposal was received by Ray Slaman to conduct all tree assessments as requested by the Borough throughout the year for \$6,600.00 annually.

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins and seconded by Councilmember Fox to approve Mr. Slaman as the Borough Arborist for 2024 effective April 9, 2024 at a prorated rate of \$6,600.00 annually.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Speed Limit on Hardenburgh (County Road)

Mayor Bernstein announced that he would like to explore petitioning the County to lower the speed limit on Hardenburgh Ave. to 25 MPH. He noted that it is a big ask and the Borough will need the assistance of the Special Projects Engineer to collect data but given that the traffic from multiple schools goes through the area and the addition of the affordable housing units at 127 Hardenburgh he feels it is a worthwhile effort to explore.

Consent Agenda

- Resolution No. 084-24 Referring Redevelopment Study to the Borough Planning Board
- Resolution No. 085-24 Emergency Appropriation for Preparation of Tax Map
- Resolution No. 086-24 Authorizing Agreement with BC for Traffic Signal Upgrade
- Resolution No. 088-24 Bill List
- Resolution No. 089-24 Authorizing CA Services for Pine Terrace Drainage - Colliers

Councilmember Fox asked for clarification on two payments on Resolution 088-24 before a motion was offered to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Suh explained to payments to her satisfaction and Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

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

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Approval of Minutes:

March 11, 2024 Work Session

A motion was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to approve the minutes.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Councilmember Fox

Meeting Open to the Public

A motion was made by Councilmember Reiss, seconded by Councilmember Collins and approved by all to open the meeting to the public.

There being no member of the public wishing to speak, Councilmember Fox made a motion to close the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski and approved by all.

There being no further business before the Council, Councilmember Reiss made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Collins and approved by all.

The meeting was therefore adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern