

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
September 9, 2024  
7:30 PM**

Mayor Bernstein called the meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm and invited those assembled to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present:

Mayor Bernstein, Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Reiss

Absent: Councilmember Marks

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

**ORDINANCE (INTRODUCTION): (none)**

**ORDINANCE PUBLIC HEARING (ADOPTION): (none)**

**RESOLUTION NO. 153-24 AUTHORIZING REDEVELOPMENT DESIGNATION UPON RECOMMENDATION FROM THE BOROUGH PLANNING BOARD**

A motion was made by Councilmember Jiang and seconded by Councilmember Fox

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Marks

**Work Session Discussion Items:**

Engineer's Report

Mr. Chelius reviewed the engineer's report, including updates on Capital Projects. He noted that Madison Ave paving is complete as is the paving of roads within the Riverside Cooperative project, with the exception of Pine Terrace. The paving of Pine Terrace was pushed due to the drainage project and will be completed later in the fall. The next paving will be Stewart and Stelfox which are awaiting DOT approval and will likely be completed in Spring 2025.

Mayor Bernstein asked for an update on the Compost Site and Mr. Chelius discussed the frustration with Green Acres tree replacement requirements.

**Consent Agenda**

No member asked for any resolutions to be removed from the consent agenda or stated they would like to abstain from any items on the consent agenda.

**Consent Agenda:**

Resolution No. 146-24	Soil Moving – 22 Northwood Ave.
Resolution No. 147-24	Release of Escrow
Resolution No. 148-24	Soil Moving – 31 Wellwood Rd.
Resolution No. 149-24	Authorizing Capital Purchase – Police Car
Resolution No. 150-24	Approving SSA with Bergen County-Snow Plowing/Salting
Resolution No. 151-24	Hiring Casual Labor
Resolution No. 152-24	Approving SSA with NVRHS BOE – School Security
Resolution No. 154-24	Payment of Bills

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox to approve the consent agenda in full. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Collins.

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

**Minutes for Approval**

August 26, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski.

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

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Collins to open the meeting to the public. The motion was approved by all members present.

**Jean Nonemacher**

Ms. Nonemacher asked if the Borough could add visual representations of the approved townhomes being built at 95 County Rd to the website. Ms. Falkenstern advised that she would look into what the Borough had that could be added to the website.

**John McLoughlin, Chief of the Demarest Fire Department**

Chief McLoughlin advised the council that some of his members would be honored at an awards dinner of the 200 Club on 10/9 in recognition of a water rescue performed in 2023. The Council expressed their congratulations and thanks.

**Patricia Barrow**

Ms. Barrow asked for more information on the redevelopment designation approved earlier in the meeting and expressed her displeasure with the Council’s decision. Ms. Barrow believes that redevelopment will hurt the taxpayers. Mayor Bernstein explained in detail the advantages to the Borough of being able to negotiate with any property owner and expressed his optimism that the designation will spur an update to older downtown commercial properties without effecting services to other residents or the school. Ms. Barrow does not agree and does not believe that the Borough has provided enough information to the public. Mayor Bernstein

detailed all the communications and the previously public hearing and notices that made the residents aware of the redevelopment discussions and designation.

**Mr. Robert Garcia**

Mr. Garcia thanked the Mayor for highlighting the redevelopment designation in his communications to the residents and stated that due to this communication he knew that he could attend tonight's meeting and ask questions. Mr. Garcia then asked Mayor Bernstein if he could identify any negatives to such a designation or of a resulting PILOT agreement. Mayor Bernstein stated that if a developer was contemplating a large increase in residential housing in a community that could have an impact on school enrollment, a PILOT agreement would not guarantee that the school would receive enough taxes to cover such an influx. Since Demarest has a small downtown and a large apartment complex is not contemplated, he does not believe that will be an issue in Demarest, however school impacts would be taken into account in any financial negotiation that the Borough engages in related to a PILOT.

There being no other members of the public wishing to speak, the meeting was closed.

**Closed Session Resolution No. 2024-006 (Action may be taken upon return to open session)**

Pending Litigation & Potential Litigation Update

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Collins to approve convening into closed session.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Marks

The Council returned to open session at 9:04 pm and took action of the following:

**RESOLUTION NO. 155-24 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BOROUGH ATTORNEY ACTION TO CEASE USE OF BOROUGH OWNED PROPERTY**

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Collins to approve the resolution.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Marks

**RESOLUTION NO. 156-24 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT OF A TAX APPEAL AT 16 DUCK POND RD.**

*(The title of the resolution was read by, and roll call was called for by the Acting Borough Clerk, noting that Mayor Bernstein had abstained from any discussion or involvement with this resolution)*

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to approve the resolution.

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

There being no more business before the Council, a motion was made by Council President Slowikowski, seconded by Councilmember Collins and approved by all to adjourn at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Falkenstern  
Acting Borough Clerk