



Borough of Demarest Planning Board Regular Meeting MINUTES

January 8, 2025

7:30 PM

DEMAREST BOROUGH HALL

The Borough of Demarest Planning Board held a special meeting on WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. located at 118 Serpentine Road Demarest, NJ 07627.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Mr. Greco.

FLAG SALUTE

The Board was led in a salute to the flag by Mr. Greco.

SWEARING IN OF THE 2025 PLANNING BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Bernstein read the oath for Councilwoman Daryl Fox, Class III member of the Planning Board and she was sworn in for the term of 1/1/2025 – 12/31/2025.

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Brian Bernstein, Jodi Brenner, Councilwoman Daryl Fox, Fatemah Mamdani, Lynn Paulison, James Tabacchi, Mary Hamilton

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: Theodore Alevrontas

ALSO PRESENT: Michael Greco – Secretary, Douglas Bern – Attorney

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Greco called for a nomination of the Board Chair for the year of 2025.

Councilwoman Fox nominated Mr. Tabacchi for Chair of the Board, and the nomination was seconded by Mayor Bernstein.

Mr. Tabacchi spoke to the board about the difficulty for him taking on the role of chair of the board, but he would accept. He also stated that he is disappointed in the prior chair no longer being present.

Hearing no other nominations, on roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Yes	Ms. Brenner:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	Yes	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Mrs. Paulison:	Yes
Mr. Tabacchi:	Yes	Mrs. Hamilton:	Yes		

Motion passed

Chair Tabacchi took his place on the dais and took over the meeting.

Chair Tabacchi called for a nomination of the Board Chair for the year of 2025.

Mayor Bernstein nominated Ms. Brenner for Vice Chair of the Board, and the nomination was seconded by Councilwoman Fox.

Chair Tabacchi asked Ms. Brenner to explain her background.

Ms. Brenner explained that she has been on the board for a while, and is a licensed attorney, and has lived in the town for 14 years.

Hearing no other nominations, on roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Yes	Ms. Brenner:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	Yes	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Mrs. Paulison:	Yes
Chair Tabacchi:	Yes	Mrs. Hamilton:	Yes		

Motion passed

BOARD PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Greco explained that for the role of Board Engineer, the board received RFQs from Colliers and Neglia.

Councilwoman fox made a motion to appoint Nick Chelius of Colliers Engineering and Design for the role of Board Planner for the year of 2025. The motion was seconded by Mayor Berinstein.

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Yes	Vice Chair Brenner:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	Yes	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Mrs. Paulison:	Yes
Chair Tabacchi:	Yes	Mrs. Hamilton:	Yes		

Motion passed

Mayor Bernstein made a motion to appoint Darlene Green of Colliers Engineering and Design for the role of Board Planner for the year of 2025. The motion was seconded by Chair Tabacchi.

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Yes	Vice Chair Brenner:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	Yes	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Mrs. Paulison:	Yes
Chair Tabacchi:	Yes	Mrs. Hamilton:	Yes		

Motion passed

APPROVAL OF 2025 MEETING DATES

Chair Tabacchi confirmed that the board had reviewed the meeting dates.

Mayor Bernstein made a motion to adopt the 2025 Planning Board meeting schedule. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Fox.

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Yes	Vice Chair Brenner:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	Yes	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Mrs. Paulison:	Yes
Chair Tabacchi:	Yes	Mrs. Hamilton:	Yes		

Motion passed

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the December 19, 2024, special meeting minutes, by Councilwoman Fox and was seconded by Mayor Bernstein.

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Yes	Vice Chair Brenner:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	Yes	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Mrs. Paulison:	Yes
Chair Tabacchi:	Yes	Mrs. Hamilton:	Yes		

Motion passed

Councilwoman Fox questioned the content of the August 7th minutes, requesting that additional summary of the questions asked and the topics discussed be added to the minutes to provide more information.

Mayor Bernstein stated that the minutes as presented seem to satisfy the requirements of minutes. He stated that the transcript being available adds another layer, but that it is not necessary to reflect specific details in the minutes.

Chair Tabacchi asked if it would be reasonable to delay the approval to give the members a chance to review the tapes and confirm the accuracy of the minutes.

Vice Chair, Brenner asked if it would help to change some of the specifics.

The board discussed with Mr. Bern the requirements for minutes and what could be done to change the minutes.

The board requested that the secretary amend the August 7th minutes.

RESOLUTIONS

NEW/CONTINUING APPLICATIONS

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Councilwoman Fox asked the secretary to explain the status of the appointment of the board attorney.

Mr. Greco explained that the RFQ is still out for the board attorney and responses are scheduled for January 10, and after that they will be distributed to the board for discussion at the next meeting.

Councilwoman Fox requested that Mr. Bern explain the fair and open and non-fair and open appointments.

Mr. Bern explained fair and open and non-fair and open appointments. The board discussed the differences with Mr. Bern.

Councilwoman Fox explained that the ordinance committee is discussing the joint board ordinance and asked the board to send her any comments.

Chair Tabacchi asked about the timeline.

Councilwoman Fox stated that she is hoping to have it ready in 30 days.

Chair Tabacchi asked about convening both boards to discuss the ordinance.

Mayor Bernstein stated that it is not the function of the ordinance committee to convene the members, but that the joint board would most likely be made up of members from both boards as well as new members.

Chair Tabacchi asked who makes the decision to go to one board.

Mayor Bernstein stated that it is a council decision and then explained the process.

Chair Tabacchi asked about the process and the public involvement in the ordinance.

Mayor Bernstein explained the process of approving an ordinance.

Ms. Brenner asked if there are neighboring towns that have a joint board, and the mayor stated the numbers of towns and towns with joint boards.

Ms. Brenner stated that the two boards in town do not seem to coordinate with each other.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – CORRESPONDENCE

A motion was made to open the meeting to the public by Mayor Bernstein and seconded by Ms. Hamilton.

All in Favor – Motion Passed

With no public seeking to make comment a motion was made to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Fox and seconded by Chair Tabacchi.

All in Favor – Motion Passed

Ms. Paulison stated that she is resigning from the board, due to her disappointment in the prior board chair not being reappointed.

Chair Tabacchi asked her to give the process time to resolve.

Ms. Paulison stated that she does not wish to be a party to it and that she does not understand the decisions being made.

Chair Tabacchi stated he is resolved to have an open discussion and dialogue.

Mayor Bernstein stated that if Ms. Paulison had questions, she should have come and spoken with him. Ms. Paulison claimed the chair of the board did not know about the ordinance, and Mayor Bernstein explained that the chairs of the boards did know.

Councilwoman Fox stated that she believes that the conversation with the chair did not occur. Mayor Bernstein stated that the conversation did in fact happen.

Chair Tabacchi stated that there was a lack of communication.

Mayor Bernstein confirmed that Ms. Paulison is in fact resigning, and she confirmed that she is.

Ms. Hamilton expressed disappointment in the process.

Mayor Bernstein explained the process and why there were no appointments, and why the expired members are no longer on the board for the time being. Mayor Bernstein confirmed with Mr. Bern that there is no such thing as an interim appointment.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business presented, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by: Mayor Bernstein and seconded by Councilwoman Fox.

All in Favor – Motion Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Greco, Planning Board Secretary