

The Minutes of the Workshop Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **December 13, 2021** at **7:00 p.m.**

THIS MEETING IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE "OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT" AS ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY E-MAILING THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS TO THE WESTFIELD LEADER, THE UNION COUNTY LOCAL SOURCE, THE STAR LEDGER, AND TAP INTO CRANFORD, BY POSTING SUCH ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE ON A BULLETIN BOARD IN THE TOWN HALL RESERVED FOR SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE FILING OF SAID NOTICE WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK OF CRANFORD. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

Present: Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty
Deputy Mayor Brian Andrews*
Commissioner Jason Gareis
Commissioner Thomas H. Hannen, Jr.
Commissioner Mary O'Connor

Absent: None

*Deputy Mayor Andrews arrived to Room 108 at 7:02 p.m.

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Township Administrator Jamie Cryan, Construction Code Official Frank Genova and Township Clerk Patricia Donahue were present.

Public Comments

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Ms. Rita LaBrutto, 104 Arlington Road, inquired about the Official Meeting resolution pertaining to the Township Committee's 2022 Official Meeting Schedule, including whether the proposed 6 p.m. Workshop Meetings would move into Closed Session shortly after the Meeting start. Mayor Miller Prunty responded that there would not be a loss of "public comments". Ms. LaBrutto asked an additional question about the proposed 2022 Township Committee Meeting Schedule. She then stated that development in Cranford was occurring and too much discussion regarding development was occurring in Closed Session. She stated that there was a lack of transparency with the Township Committee. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that there was nothing in the proposed schedule which limited "public comments".

Ms. Barbara Krause, 20 Pittsfield Street, inquired whether someone could look into the pile of debris which came from the stream behind her home. Mayor Miller Prunty and Commissioner Hannen responded that members of the Department of Public Works had worked on this matter two (2) weeks ago. Ms. Krause then inquired when the most recent inspection of the Detention Basin at Brookside Place had occurred. Commissioner Hannen responded that the Department of Public Works superintendent had visited the Detention Basin at Brookside Place approximately four (4) weeks ago. Ms. Krause requested that during the upcoming Budget review process, consideration be given to allocate resources for the Detention Basin at Brookside Place.

Dr. Krause, 20 Pittsfield Street, spoke about the trash thrown by people into the Brook and whether such actions could be fined.

Ms. LaBrutto spoke about the recent North Avenue Gateway Redevelopment Area meeting and noted that she was unable to attend it. She spoke about the use of Lot One (1).

Hearing no comments, Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comments portion of the meeting

750 Walnut Avenue Redevelopment Plan

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper requested that proposed Resolution No 2021-439 (pertaining to the designation of Hartz Mountain Industries, Inc. as the Redeveloper for 750 Walnut Avenue)

be removed from the following evening's Official Meeting Agenda. Commissioner Hannen inquired if there had been further feedback from Hartz Mountain Industries, Inc. Mr. Cooper responded that there were no updates. Commissioner Hannen then stated that he would like to include an amendment to Ordinance No. 2021-18 regarding market-rate units. Mr. Cooper stated that the Township was under Court Order to adopt the ordinance by December 5th and that the Township had received an extension. Commissioner Hannen requested that the words be added to the Ordinance. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that wording could be added to the Redevelopment Agreement. Commissioner O'Connor stated she wanted specific and clear language that there would be a cap on the units and referenced a situation when a developer "got" another floor and another twenty (20) units. Mr. Cooper responded that there was no "wobble room" in the current situation. In regards to the referenced situation by Commissioner O'Connor, Mr. Cooper stated that the Township Committee had changed the associated Redevelopment Plan. Mr. Cooper stated that an amendment could be considered in the New Year by the Township but the Township had a Court schedule that had to be complied with. Commissioner-elect Black inquired about the Planning Board memo pertaining to Ordinance No. 2021-18 and the 750 Walnut Avenue Redevelopment Plan, specifically the bicycle parking requirements, the signage specifications and the Traffic Reduction Plan. Discussion ensued.

Union County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Administrator Cryan spoke about the Union County Hazard Mitigation Plan as well as FEMA and Union County's roles with the Plan. Mr. Cryan stated that Emergency Management Coordinator Matt Lubin worked with Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann, former Zoning Officer Jason Bottcher and the Construction Code Office to develop this Plan.

2022 Township Committee Meeting Schedule

Referencing the proposed 2022 Township Committee Meeting Schedule, Commissioner Hannen stated that a 6 p.m. start time for Township Committee Meetings was too early and elaborated about the role the Monday night Township Committee Meetings played for members of the public. He recommended that the Township Committee keep the Workshop Meetings. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the proposed Meeting Schedule was not meant to diminish conversation and stated that the proposed schedule was not a real departure from what the Township Committee does. Discussion ensued regarding the start time of the 2022 Township Committee Meetings and the number of Combined Meetings during 2021 versus the proposed number of Combined Meetings in 2022.

Committee consensus was reached to have Combined Workshop Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. and Monday night Workshop Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Further discussion ensued. Township Attorney Ryan Cooper recommended that the Township Committee consider only the January 2022 Township Committee Meeting Schedule at the following evening's Official Meeting and that the full 2022 Township Committee Meeting schedule resolution be pulled from the Official Meeting Agenda (Resolution No. 2022-440).

Township By-laws

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper spoke about proposed changes to the Township By-laws. The Commissioners discussed specific By-law sections, including Sections 2.3, 2.4, 3.5 and 4.1. Commissioner comments included that Mayoral comments had not previously been presented at the beginning of Official Meetings as was customary this year (Commissioner O'Connor,) the practice of having Commissioner comments at the end of the Official Meeting (Deputy Mayor Andrews,) including department reports at the beginning of the Meeting (Commissioner-elect Black,) member-of-the-public comments (Commissioners Hannen and O'Connor,) as well as whether a citizen should be allowed to address the Township Committee more than once. Discussion ensued.

Rahway River Mayors Council Annual Contribution

Mayor Miller Prunty spoke about the annual contribution of \$20,000 due to the Rahway River Mayors Council. She noted that the some of the contribution in previous years was utilized to underwrite lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Rahway River Mayors Council was now considering reallocating their funds with a portion to go towards

work with a firm like Mott MacDonald. She stated that she would provide more information about this matter in January 2022.

2022 Volunteer Appointments

Mayor Miller Prunty provided an update on the 2022 Volunteer Appointments process and noted that thus far, over one hundred (100) residents had applied for volunteer positions.

Review Official Meeting Agenda

Commissioner Hannen requested that the following resolutions be moved to a Roll Call Vote: Resolution No. 2021-424, pertaining to the 2022 Holiday Schedule; Resolution No. 2021-431, pertaining to 2021 Vacation Carryover Requests and Resolution No. 2021-440, pertaining to the January 2022 Township Committee Meeting Schedule.

The Mayor provided a brief overview of the Official Meeting Agenda resolutions.

Public Comments

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Ms. Rita LaBrutto, 104 Arlington Road, inquired and provided comments about 1) a 750 Walnut Avenue Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) inclusion, 2) the Township By-laws and residents' comments; 3) Agenda changes which often occur up until Workshop Monday evenings and 4) proposed Resolution No. 2021-434 pertaining to the 2021 Union County Preservation Open Space Grant.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comments portion of the meeting

Closed Session

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Deputy Mayor Andrews and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

Resolution No. 2021-98.33

BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee will go into closed session to discuss the following, the minutes of which will be released at some time in the future at the discretion of the Township Committee:

Legal

- Legal Update
- Elm Street Area Drainage Improvements Project
- Township By-laws

Personnel

- Collective Bargaining Negotiations Update
- Building
- 2022 Reorganization
- 2022 Volunteer Appointments

Contractual

- 2022 Professional Services

Minute review

- Closed Session Minutes of October 25th, October 26th and November 9, 2021

Recorded Vote:

Aye: Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Andrews, Commissioners Gareis, Hannen & O'Connor

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

On motion of Deputy Mayor Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Garies and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 11:13 p.m.

On motion of Deputy Mayor Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Gareis and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 11:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 13, 2021

Patricia Donahue
Township Clerk