

COMMISSIONERS CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES
RIDGEFIELD PARK
February 22, 2024
7:00 PM

Commissioner MacNeill announced that this meeting is being held in accordance with the “Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10 4-6 et seq.” notice of which was sent to the Record, and the Star Ledger on December 29, 2023 and was posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and the Village Website.

This agenda is listed as a courtesy and attempt to inform the public of actions being considered by the Village Board of Commissioners. There may be additions and deletions prior to the Board taking final action. Any action may be taken at any meeting, which includes all Caucus and Regular sessions. The Commissioners reserve the right to conduct and/or attend any meetings presently scheduled for the rest of 2024 by a combination of electronic and/or in-person means. Meetings are open to the public.

ROLL CALL

Those present were Commissioners Gerken, MacNeill, Olson, Portorreal and Mayor Anlian (7:10 p.m.) in the chair.

Also, present: Chris Chapman, Village Attorney; Edward Monroe, DPW Superintendent; Joe Rella, Chief of Police and Tara O’Grady, Village Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Gerken, seconded by Commissioner Olson to approve the minutes of the Commissioners Caucus and Closed Session Meetings of February 8, 2024.

On roll call, Commissioners Gerken, MacNeill, and Olson voted “YEA”.

Abstain: Commissioner Portorreal

Absent: Mayor Anlian

HEARING OF CITIZENS

Doris Paez, resident, stated when the creek overflows on Bergen Turnpike, the Police Department usually puts up barricades. When the water recedes, the town should try to come and clean the debris left behind.

Ms. Paez advised she walks about 6 miles a day throughout the Village and it is unbelievable on the amount of garbage/litter. She suggested more garbage cans be placed on streets and stated Union City and North Bergen are spotless.

Also, cars are exiting the IGA parking lot onto Main Street – perhaps an arrow should be painted on the parking lot.

Ms. Paez asked if the Village can do anything about the newspapers that are delivered. They are left on sidewalks and when they get wet, they turn to mush.

Commissioner MacNeill advised that there is nothing that can be done – based on 1st Amendment rights.

Ms. Paez advised 545 Ridgefield Avenue hasn’t had a sidewalk in 4-5 years. She is concerned someone will get hurt.

Edison Street is uneven, the blacktop is raised - Supt. Monroe will send a crew to look at it.

Ms. Paez asked if anything can be done about the train noise. Mayor Anlian stated it is Federal law for trains to blow their horns at crosswalks.

Ms. Paez asked if anything can be done about the motorized bicycles on the sidewalks.

Chief Rella advised they can’t be on the street unless they are licensed.

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Lisette Palacios, resident, stated she called the Federal Railroad Administration and was told an exemption can be obtained by the Village. An assessment would need to be done as part of the “Quiet Zone Establishment Process”.

Ms. Palacios advised parked cars on Ridgefield Avenue are constantly being hit. Some vehicles are getting hit even though they park halfway onto the sidewalk. The street is too narrow to be a 2-way street. Heavy trucks are going through and sidewalks are getting cracked. Also, the speeding is out of control.

Mayor Anlian advised the Village Engineer can take a look at the street and conduct a traffic study.

Supt. Monroe advised Ridgefield Avenue is a County road.

Bob Frieber, resident, asked if anything has been done regarding the factory noise yet.

Ms. Palacios added that the noise was out of control on Friday. She played a recording of the noise from the factory. She also stated that the neighborhood children aren’t sleeping at night.

Commissioner MacNeill suggested that the neighbors, factory owners and the County come in for a meeting.

Chief Rella stated a small fine could be imposed if they are not in compliance but that won’t stop the issue.

Mayor Anlian stated the Village will set up a meeting.

Chris Santana, member of the Ridgefield Park Fire Department, stated the double parking at the School of Excellence is an accident waiting to happen. There should be more traffic control.

Also, vehicles are parking in fire zones and at yellow curbs around the schools during dismissal time. Emergency services response times are delayed due to this problem.

Mayor Anlian advised he will speak with Chief Rella.

CORRESPONDENCE

02-04 NJLM – Weekly Round-Up - Informational

02-05 NJDEP Weekly Update - Informational

02-06 Derek Sands, County of Bergen – Annual State of the County Address - Informational

02-07 Jeffrey Surenian – Resolution Opposing A4 Fair Housing Act – Resolution to be prepared for the February 27th meeting.

02-08 NJDEP Weekly Update - Informational

02-09 NJLM Weekly Round-Up - Informational

02-10 NJDEP Weekly Update – Duplicate of Correspondence No. 02-08 - Informational

02-11 State of New Jersey, Dept. of Environmental Protection – FY2024 Annual Fee Report and Assessment of Fees - Informational

02-12 Robert Esposito, County of Bergen – Community Development - Informational

02-13 Derek Sands, County of Bergen – 2024 Open Space Trust Fund Applications - Informational

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REPORTS

Commissioner Gerken advised he received a letter from the lawyer of 130-132 4th Street asking if the Village had a hearing on the rent control issue.

On March 9th, the Key Club will be doing a clean-up of the Nature Preserve.

A decision needs to be made on the rain-date of the 4th of July fireworks.

The lowest bidder for the Overpeck Island Reduction and Pool Parking Lot came in at \$637,000.00

A few more items are needed for the Fellowship Park Improvement Application.

Commissioner Gerken will ask Boswell Engineering for a project plan for the Webster Street parking lot and will also ask them about raising the water table at the Nature Preserve.

Commissioner Portorreal advised she received a sample renovation survey from Northern NJ Community Foundation for Veterans Park.

An email was received about enforcing the “no dog parks”. Chief Rella will keep an eye on it.

Contracts are needed for Charlie, Gina and Angel’s Café for the pool.

The Rescue Squad reached out regarding the compensation that is received from the Turnpike Authority for the Ambulance Corps. and Fire Department for calls responded to on the Turnpike.

Commissioner Olson stated the floor section of the VFW is going to the woodworker tomorrow.

Dates should be set soon for on-street dining or 10-minute parking.

The first round of Sustainable Jersey certification is this month.

The Summer Recreation program will be extended until September 4th. There are currently 3 candidates that can work it.

A resolution for the DOT mural has been prepared and will be on the February 27th agenda.

This Saturday, there will be a workshop for students at the Civic Center to teach them Jazz. A concert will follow at 6:30 p.m.

Commissioner Olson met the Selection Committee of the mural. Approximately 20 ideas have been submitted. Steve Quinn will draft a drawing.

Commissioner MacNeill asked the Commissioners to work on their budget sheets and give them to Michael Liantonio.

Superintendent Monroe advised Ramadan is March 10th – April 9th and inquired if the display will be put up in front of the Municipal Building again.

Attorney Chapman advised the RFQ for Veterans Park has been drafted for their review.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mayor Anlian, seconded by Commissioner Gerken to adjourn.

On roll call, Commissioners Gerken, MacNeill, Olson, Portorreal and Mayor Anlian voted “YEA”.

Mayor Anlian adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

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/s/William G. Gerken
Commissioner

/s/Adam A. MacNeill
Commissioner

/s/Mark C. Olson
Commissioner

/s/ Wanda C. Portorreal
Commissioner

/s/ John H. Anlian
Mayor

/s/Tara O'Grady
Village Clerk

Approved on March 7, 2024