

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE
BOROUGH OF SADDLE RIVER
HELD JANUARY 21, 2013**

PRESENT: Mayor Raia, Council President Mastriano, Council Members: Boardman, Kurpis, Mutter, Toomey, Walenczyk, Borough Clerk Macari, Administrator Cuccia, Attorney Russell Huntington

ABSENT:

PRESIDING: Mayor Raia called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.; Borough Clerk Macari read the following statement:

PUBLIC NOTICE: "Notice of this meeting in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act Chapter 231 of the laws of 1975, has been given by posting a notice of the scheduled dates of all regular meetings of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Saddle River on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and in the office of the Borough Clerk and by emailing a notice thereof to the Ridgewood Newspapers and The Record on December 20, 2012, the Borough website and also via E-Notify.

NOTIFICATION OF FIRE EXITS

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AWARDS AND CEREMONIES

WORK SESSION:

Mayor Raia stated that, due to the large crowd, the Work Session would be held in the auditorium.

MAYOR RAI A

Mayor Raia stated that Anthony Ceccon will be appointed to the Parks and Recreation Commission and this will be part of the Consent Agenda. He further stated that he is appreciative that residents are willing and ready to sit on Borough Boards and Commissions.

ADMINISTRATOR CUCCIA:

Public Safety Committee: Administrator Cuccia stated that he would like to schedule a Public Safety Committee Meeting for budgetary purposes and a date would be coordinated with members.

Finance Committee: Administrator Cuccia stated that the budget is in the process of being drafted for presentation to the Finance Committee tentatively scheduled for the first week in February.

Engineering Update: Administrator Cuccia asked Borough Engineer Spence to provide an engineering update on projects currently underway throughout the Borough which include the following:

- The Lower Cross Road Bridge repair should be completed by May 2013
- The Saddle River Channel Clearing Project has resumed should be completed in the next two weeks
- The Saddle River Grand town home development will be ongoing into 2014; CO's have started to be issued
- The Saddle River Museum stabilization project will commence shortly and will take approximately two months

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Council President Mastriano stated that she attended the Wandell Board of Education Meeting where two new members were sworn in, Rosemarie Arnold and Jennifer Connolly. A safety assessment was conducted at Wandell School by Safe Havens International; some policy changes will be implemented.

MUNICIPAL CLERK:

BOROUGH ATTORNEY:

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE(S): There were none.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE(S): There were none.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Resolution # 29-13 Offered Council Member Walenczyk
Seconded by Council Member Kurpis
Roll Call Vote: AYES, Unanimous

RESOLUTIONS

All matters listed hereunder are considered routine in nature and will be enacted in one motion. Any Council Member may request that an item be removed for separate consideration. Considering approval of minutes, a yes vote will indicate a vote in favor of approval of the minutes of each meeting at which the Council Member was present and abstention with respect to the minutes of meetings at which such Council Member was not present.

**Resolution Offered by Council President Mastriano
Seconded by Council Member Boardman**

Explanation of Consent Agenda Items

At this time, Administrator Cuccia briefly explained the resolutions on the Consent Agenda.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

Roll Call Vote: AYES, Unanimous

A. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of 12/17/12 and Reorganization Meeting of 1/1/13

B. Resolutions:

- R# 30-13** **Soil movement Blk 1701 Lot 41.01 Nora Kurtz**
- R# 31-13** **Soil movement Blk 2101 Lot 32 Baljit Dail**
- R# 32-13** **Appointment to Landmarks Commission Jack LaViano**
- R# 33-13** **Appointment of Communications Officer Christopher Rupert
from p/t to full time**
- R# 34-13** **Mutual Aid Plan preparedness against natural emergencies**
- R# 35-13** **Resignation acceptance of Kevin Azevedo, communications officer**
- R# 36-13** **Authorization to participate in West Bergen Mental Healthcare**
- R# 37-13** **Approval to submit a grant application and execute a grant
contract with NJ Department of Transportation for the Downtown
Streetscape at E. Allendale Road**
- R# 38-13** **Appointment to Board of Parks and Recreation Commission
Anthony Ceccon**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board of Health: Council Member Mutter gave the report for December 2012.

Const. & Zoning Enforcement. Council Member Boardman gave the report for December 2012.

Environmental Committee: There was no report at this time.

Fire Report: There was no report at this time

Police Report: Council Member Mutter gave the report for December 2012.

Finance Report: Council Member Walencyk gave the report for December 2012.

Landmarks Committee: There was no report at this time..

Public Works: Council President Mastriano gave the report for December 2012.

Parks and Recreation: There was no report at this time.

Planning Board: Council President Walencyk gave the report for January 2013.

Zoning Board: Council Member Toomey gave the report for December 2012

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ANY MATTERS OTHER THAN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
RENOVATION:** No one wished to be heard

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Mayor Raia addressed the protocol for this portion of the meeting, which will address the Municipal Building Renovation Plan.

Amy Fisher, 27 Westerly Road, Saddle River stated that she is opposed to the renovation as it is too large and too cost prohibitive. She further stated that she wants to insure that the bucolic nature in Saddle River remains intact. She encouraged the Mayor and Council to respect the people they were elected to serve.

Bernie Hopp, 21 Oak Road, Saddle River stated that he was in agreement with Ms. Fishers comments.

Mitch Kaufman 7 Beechwood Drive, Saddle River stated that he is opposition to the current plan and asked how much it would cost to make the current Municipal Building ADA compliant.

Sabrie Solomon, 176 Chestnut Ridge Road, Saddle River stated that he approved progress but does not approve this project. He distributed reading material on this matter to the Mayor and Council at this time and gave a brief overview.

Roger Pollack, 18 Ackerman Road, Saddle River stated that many of those in attendance don't understand why a new town hall is necessary. He is not in favor of shared services, stated that there is a discrepancy in the cost projections quoted as well as the utilization of the funds generated from the Saddle River Grand to offset this project. He further stated that he is in favor of bringing the building up to ADA standards, which would cost only thousands, not millions. He cautioned the Mayor and Council to listen to the residents as the majority are not in favor of this project and suggested that it be put to a referendum.

Dan Schiavello, 24 Cameron Road stated that he disagrees that this project will be tax neutral. He further stated that it will increase traffic in the Borough and does not feel that 11 full time employees need to occupy 9000 sq. feet. He further stated that he feels that the Fire Department is in need of funds to make some improvements and this should be considered; he is in favor of the decision to implement overnight duty for several firefighters during the week but questioned why this is not intact on the weekends as well. He stated that it was his understanding that it would cost \$55,000 to have fire fighters cover overnight duty on the weekends and the Fire Department was told there was no money in the budget; if this is the case he questioned where the funds to build a new Municipal Building are going to be generated from. He told the Mayor and Council that they are not communicating effectively as it relates to the building renovation issue.

Edward Holiat, 85 East Saddle River Road asked where the employees are going and also asked if this project will be executed regardless of the public's opinion. Mayor Raia stated that this will be the Council's decision. Mr. Holiat suggested that perhaps some Borough employees could be moved to different facilities rather than build a new Municipal Building.

Gino De La Cruz, 15 Spruce Road stated that he feels that the Mayor and Council should insure that any modifications made to the Municipal Building are consistent with the Borough's Master Plan.

Mike Levin, 3 Fox Hedge Road stated that the Ad Hoc Committee approved the original plan presented by the architects and it was then presented to the Mayor and Council for approval. He further cited several reasons why he did not think this plan was acceptable and he is not in favor of it.

Corrine Kerner, 229 West Saddle River Road stated that she has done a lot of research on this project and this expenditure. She further stated that \$3,500,000 is not a realistic number and does not include

many other costs that are mandatory should this project be executed. She encouraged the Mayor and Council to review the funds necessary for this project more accurately. She further stated that there are other projects in the Borough that also currently require funding and the Borough already operates in a deficit. She added that the Borough should reconfigure the existing space and make it ADA compliant.

Paul Schulstad, 20 Eckert Farm Road stated that he feels that the public is entitled to a voice and it is incumbent upon the Mayor and Council to listen; he would like to see this issue go to a referendum. He further addressed the ADA compliancy issue as it relates to the Municipal Building and stated that it is inaccurate to say the building is 100% non-compliant.

Ron Yates, 6 Tanbark Trail stated that Montvale has included both Woodcliff Lake and Park Ridge in their court system and encouraged Saddle River to pursue this option as well.

Rev. Wesley Smith, Zion Lutheran Church stated he is asked often to offer a Benediction in the Borough at various events throughout the year. He further stated that the ADA compliancy issue is important as we should all look out for our neighbor and insure that all are afforded accessibility.

Bill Slayne, 57 East Allendale Road agreed with Rev. Smith and he feels that the trend in the Borough is becoming polarization. He encouraged the Mayor and Council to listen to the public.

Ron Gray, 3 Country Squire Rd. is concerned about the lack of transparency with this project; many questions have remained unanswered. The Mayor and Council as well as the Ad Hoc Committee have offered limited information as it relates to this project. He encouraged the Mayor and Council to abandon this project as it is not supported by the residents.

Al Levine, 8 Red Rock Trail stated that he is opposed to this plan and there should have been an independent study to analysis the ADA compliancy issue.

George Maloff, 16 Rock Ledge stated that the Municipal Building needs to be renovated, not rebuilt.

Edward Holiat stated that he does not want to continue to attend these meetings and asked if someone could make a motion to abandon this project.

Council President Mastriano stated that the Mayor and Council have not had an opportunity to hear this issue to date to make any decisions. She further stated that a committee of Council members to include Council member Walencyk, Toomey and she, would evaluate and thoroughly study this issue and be prepared next month for further review. Council Member Walencyk stated that he wants to insure that ample time is given to properly address this issue; the budget preparation is underway and is going to be time consuming over the next several weeks.

Mr. Holiat reiterated that everyone understands that it is imperative that the building is ADA compliant but still feels that employees could be relocated to other buildings to ease the current space shortage.

Mayor Raia stated that modified projects can tend to cost more in the end and he does not want that to be the case. He further stated that he intends to pursue what is in the best interest of all involved. He reiterated the paramount importance of addressing the ADA compliancy issue as well as the keeping the court in Saddle River.

Henry Gomez, 98 Chestnut Ridge Road asked about the timeline of the proposed project. Mayor Raia reiterated that the a small committee, comprised of three Council members, will evaluate all of the

possible alternatives regarding this project.

Council President Mastriano stated that, at the very least, a bond ordinance would have to be introduced and then adopted for this project to move forward. She further stated that the process will be carefully evaluated, kept fully transparent, and be a well thought out concise process.

Bernie Hopp asked Mayor Raia if he would be willing to inform all Borough residents in writing prior to any meetings related to this project and Mayor Raia stated that, once the committee has formulated a tentative plan, a letter will be sent to all residents.

Council Member Boardman stated that it may be prudent to work into the needs of the building, rather than drawing up multiple plans; identifying those aspects that must be modified and work from there.

Lisa Ahearn, 2 Alford Drive, Saddle River stated that she is opposed to the current plan and encouraged the Mayor and Council to take this issue to a referendum. Additionally, she stated that suggested being diligent in identifying those needs that are imperative within the Municipal Building and get the resident's opinions.

Kathy Walters, 118 Chestnut Ridge Road stated she feels that many of the questions that have been asked by the public throughout this process remain unanswered. Mayor Raia stated the professionals will be addressing these questions.

Kathy Napolitano, East Saddle River Road stated that there is insufficient information available on the website regarding this issue and she feels that all of the proposed building information should be posted for review by residents. Mayor Raia stated that all of the information to date that is able to be posted with the exception of drawings, plans, maps, etc. will be available within 10 days.

Tom Fox, 16 Woodfield Lane asked how much the Borough has spent thus far on architectural costs and Mayor Raia stated that he would have the finance committee research this. He further stated that he finds the Ad Committee for the building renovation somewhat suspect, with Borough employees as well as the Mayor's brother as members.

Howard Drezdin, 27 Cameron Road stated that the State of New Jersey is in poor fiscal condition and asked how the Borough can consider spending \$3,500,000 on a Municipal Building. He also thanked Mayor Raia for his hard work during Hurricane Sandy.

Mr. Schulstad clarified the expenses already paid on this project which totaled \$75,000, based on his research.

He further stated that he feels the Borough should consider moving the court to Montvale and take the time to consider all of the options available.

Mayor Raia stated that before anything moves forward with this issue, it will be investigated to the fullest as he is committed to not making any mistakes.

CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC:

A motion to close the meeting to the public was offered by Council President Mastriano
Seconded by Council Member Toomey
Roll Call Vote: AYES, Unanimous

At this time, John Lignos, SNS Architects stated that most of the comments brought forth this evening

have been previously addressed. In summary, SNS Architects was retained to analyze the existing building, both the interior and exterior as well as public usage. A space occupancy report was prepared to evaluate this and it was determined that the existing building was deficient in several areas. The court, ADA compliancy, general accessibility and space shortages were all deficient. An addition was considered but deemed to be impractical.

Mayor Raia stated that he is unclear on how to effectively communicate all of this information to the public; he feels the same questions are being asked repeatedly. He wants to insure that all of the public involved have a total understanding of the this issue and at this point, he does not feel this is the case.

Council Member Kurpis stated that there will always be opposition if there is mistrust in the process. The Ad Hoc Committee and the architects must insure everyone understands the process to the fullest.

Mayor Raia stated that he feels the Council will have to disseminate all of the information in a public forum. He reiterated that he is of the opinion that adding on to the existing building will end up costing more in the end but perhaps that is the route that should be taken and deal with any consequences should they arise.

Mr. Lignos stated that the plan presented has addressed space issues, code compliance and accessibility compliance.

Borough Planner Richard Preiss stated that other municipalities are dealing with this issue and they are left having to decide whether to renovate or build new. He encouraged the public to not lose sight of the fact that this is a disruptive and large undertaking and one that should have the objective of satisfying a municipality's needs for many years to come. He further stated that it is everyone's objective to preserve the bucolic nature of Saddle River. He also encouraged the public to not just focus on the expansion of the Municipal Building for the 11 employees that work there but to realize that many Boards and Commissions meet there, the public is present daily and there is a court system held there.

Bruce Meisel, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee addressed the steps involved in this process, how the current plan was derived at and reiterated this in detail at this time.

Carroll Dowden, 13 Cameron Road stated that he feels that this proposal is a good one; he reiterated that it is a good time to embark on construction projects, with a 0% interest rate and competitive prices. He further stated that there are ways this plan could save money but these would significantly compromise the aesthetics. He further stated that it has been scaled down once and the current plan on the table would be an asset to the Borough.

Larry Raia, Ad Hoc Committee Member reminded the public that the major objective is compliancy and countless hours have been spent working and re-working plans and it is his hope that the public grasps this concept and does not act on any pre-conceived notions.

Nina Bernhardt, 34 Fox Hedge Road, Ad Hoc Committee Member stated that she concurs that the building needs more than a renovation.

Mayor Raia stated at this time, the Council must review all of the information and decide what avenue to pursue regarding this issue. He cautioned the Council to take their time, get everyone on board, communicate openly and arrive at a decision that the Borough will find acceptable.

Council President Mastriano thanked the Ad Hoc Committee for their diligent work throughout this

process . She further stated that the Mayor and Council has heard the public's comments regarding this issue and reminded the public that they are elected to serve the public and have not lost sight of this fact.

Mayor Raia also commended the Ad Hoc Committee's efforts as well as the Borough Planner and reminded the public that everyone takes pride in this community and it is now the responsibility of the community to act on what is best, not just for today but for the future.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the regular meeting of the Mayor and Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Elena Macari
Borough Clerk

F/Nwwp/f/min/M&C01-2013