



BOROUGH OF LEONIA

COUNCIL- Work Session
~ Minutes ~

Anne Dodd, Borough Clerk

312 Broad Avenue
Leonias, NJ 07605
<http://www.leonianj.gov/>

December 21, 2020

7:30 pm

Leonias Borough Hall - Virtually

A Work Session Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Leonias was held virtually via GoToMeeting in the Leonias Borough Hall at 312 Broad Avenue, Leonias, NJ on December 21, 2020. The meeting was called to order a 7:32 p.m. by Mayor Judah Zeigler.

Council President Fusco led those present in a salute to the flag.

Mayor Zeigler read the following statement into the record: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. The meeting dates for the year are confirmed at the Annual Meeting, are posted on the public bulletin board in Borough Hall, published in the Record within the first 10 days of the New Year, and copies are sent to the Star Ledger. Notice of this virtual meeting by the October 2, 2020 Sunshine Notice containing the time, date, and access information was sent to the Record, Star Ledger and has been posted at Borough Hall and on the Borough website."

PRESENT: Mayor Judah Zeigler and Councilmembers Pasquale Fusco, Maureen Davis, Bernadette Flaim, Louis Grandelis, Joanne Terrell and William Ziegler

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie
Borough Administrator Andrea Wardrop
Borough Clerk Anne Dodd

Public Comment

No one came forward.

Presentation

Barbara Davidson Retirement

Mayor Zeigler announced that Barbara Davidson, Recreation Superintendent, is retiring after having worked in the municipality for 43 years. He advised that she has served as the Recreation Superintendent since 1997 and worked at Leonias Middle School as a gym teacher prior to that. He commented that she is part of the bedrock of this community and noted that

she will always have a home here in Leonia. He presented Superintendent Davidson with an eternal flame plaque and read the following inscription into the record: "With sincere appreciation we hereby honor Recreation Superintendent Barbara H. Davidson for your many years of outstanding leadership, commitment, and infectious enthusiasm. Thank you for shaping so many lives and making a lasting impact that we will always cherish. Best wishes for a happy retirement!" He noted that there will be a bigger celebration planned at the time when one can be held.

Councilman Grandelis, Borough Administrator Wardrop, and Program Director Krakower expressed appreciation to Superintendent Davidson for her service and support and wished her well on her retirement.

Superintendent Davidson thanked the governing body for honoring her this evening, noting that Leonia has been her home. She thanked the residents of Leonia and Borough Administrator Wardrop. She recognized the Recreation Department staff and commented that they are going to continue to do wonderful work for the community.

Karp Strategies – Downtown Analysis & Recommended Actions

Rebecca Karp, Economic Development Consultant, provided an overview of the downtown analysis that her firm prepared which included looking at downtown businesses, reviewing a snapshot of consumer spending, and conducting a leakage analysis in order to assess opportunities for capturing money in Leonia that is leaving Leonia. She reviewed Leonia's economic development goals which included building on the existing strengths of downtown, fostering a vibrant downtown that attracts more visitors, maintaining existing neighborhood fabric and character, supporting the success and growth of downtown businesses, and engaging the community to develop a vision for a successful downtown. She identified the study area, provided an overview of downtown businesses, and walked through the leakage analysis.

Joseph Sutkowi of Karp Strategies discussed the recommended actions to address the gaps where Leonia residents are spending outside the Borough as well as outside a 10-minute drive from Fort Lee Road and Broad Avenue. These recommended actions included increasing downtown activity and attracting more business from residents and visitors, featuring a strong brand identity that takes advantage of the walkable streets and healthy mix of businesses, connecting the spatial gaps in the downtown in order to unify and elevate Leonia's historic fabric, and supporting communications structures for downtown businesses to ensure that they succeed.

There was discussion regarding ways to attract visitors from outside Leonia to the downtown, formation of a Chamber of Commerce, and ways in which the Borough can better support the current businesses in the downtown.

It was decided that this matter would be listed on the January Work Session to discuss in further detail.

Public Hearing

266 Grand Avenue - Appeal of Vacant Property Designation

Mayor Zeigler noted that Michael Good, representative for Kulite, is present this evening to speak on the appeal of the vacant property designation for 266 Grand Avenue.

Mr. Good explained that he was given little to no explanation as to the reason for this property being placed on the vacant property list. He noted that a landscaper cuts the grass twice per month and stated that pictures were provided to demonstrate that the property is being maintained.

Mayor Zeigler advised that he has frequently witnessed this property being overgrown. He commented that Kulite has been a tremendous partner to the Borough and requested that it be made a priority that this property is properly maintained.

Motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilwoman Terrel, to remove 266 Grand Avenue from the abandoned property list.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Fusco:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	aye
Councilwoman Flaim:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Councilwoman Davis, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and all members present voting in favor, that the Minutes of July 20, 2020 Work Session are approved.

Motion by Councilwoman Flaim, second by Council President Fusco, with Councilman Grandelis abstaining and all other members present voting in favor, that the Minutes of November 16, 2020 Work Session are approved.

Motion by Councilman Grandelis, second by Councilwoman Flaim, all members present voting in favor, that the Minutes of December 7, 2020 Closed Executive Session (not to be released) are hereby approved.

Appointment

RES. 2020-247 Confirm Appointment - Superintendent of Recreation

[2020-247 Confirm Appointment of Recreation Superintendent - Sean Krakower.pdf](#)

Mayor Zeigler noted that this resolution will confirm the amount that will be placed in the 2021 operating budget for this position.

Motion by Councilman Grandelis, second by Councilwoman Davis, that Resolution #2020-247 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Fusco:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	aye
Councilwoman Flaim:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

Consent Resolutions

- A. RES. 2020-248 Authorize Bill List
[2020-248 Authorize Bill List.pdf](#)
[2020-248 Backup.pdf](#)

- B. RES. 2020-249 Authorize Budget Transfers
[2020-249 Authorize Budget Transfers.pdf](#)
- C. RES. 2020-250 Adopt Procedure for Administration & Inspection of Federal Aid Highway Projects
[2020-250 Adopt Procedure for Administration & Inspection of Federal Aid Highway Projects.pdf](#)
- D. RES. 2020-251 Authorize Stipend - Deputy Registrar
[2020-251 Authorize Stipend - Deputy Registrar.pdf](#)

Motion by Council President Fusco, second by Councilwoman Davis, that the Consent Agenda be approved.

On a roll call, the vote on the Consent Agenda was recorded as follows:

Council President Fusco:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	aye
Councilwoman Flaim:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

Unfinished Business:

COVID-19 UPDATE – Mayor Zeigler

Mayor Zeigler reported that the COVID-19 virus is very active in the community, Bergen County, and State. The State has received its revised allocation of the vaccine which was reduced by 20%. He reviewed how the vaccine will be deployed and advised that Leonia has applied to be a satellite facility. He further advised that Englewood has expressed interest in joining with Leonia in administering the vaccine. Preparations are being made for receipt of vaccines which is anticipated to take place in late January or early February. He announced that volunteers will be needed to assist in administering the vaccine. He cautioned everyone to wear masks, social distance, keep gatherings to less than ten people, and only celebrate the holidays with immediate family. He advised the Leonia schools will remain virtual through January 11th.

Snow/Alternate Side Proposal - Councilwoman Terrell

Councilwoman Terrell explained that the Laws & Ordinances Committee has been tasked to devise a plan to address issues that arise when cars are parked on one or both sides of the street when it snows and a fire truck with outriggers deployed needs to gain access. She advised that the committee has devised a multi-phased plan to address this issue which involves amending the Alternate Street Parking Ordinance, adding streets identified by the Fire Department as posing access issues to the Snow Street Parking Schedule, and identifying individual streets that pose access issues after Phase 1 and 2 are implemented. She explained the proposed amendments to the Alternate Street Parking ordinance and noted that a signage inventory is currently being conducted by the Police Department. A signage changeover will take place when the Alternate Street Parking amendment goes into effect.

It was decided that this proposal will be listed for additional discussion at the January Work Session.

As much of this proposal is predicated on the need to accommodate the ladder truck with outriggers deployed, Mayor Zeigler requested data by month for the last three years to show

the frequency with which there is a need to deploy the outriggers. He expressed his belief that hundreds of homeowners are being inconvenienced unnecessarily. Councilman Grandelis is to request this data from the Fire Department leaders.

Councilwoman Davis noted that a sign inventory is currently being conducted in order to replace signs that have faded. Council President Fusco advised that he will get a date certain for when this inventory will be completed by the DPW. He further advised that he will work with the DPW on devising a plowing strategy.

Fire Call Issue - Councilman Grandelis

Councilman Grandelis advised that he will be having a discussion with incoming Fire Department leadership on the increase in second calls. He noted that retention of volunteers and manpower issues during the day are driving factors. The department will be looking at ways to attract daytime volunteers and retain current volunteers.

This matter will be placed on the February Work Session for further discussion.

Lead Pipe Investigatory Committee Update - Councilman Grandelis

Councilman Grandelis advised that he participated in a Zoom call with Suez on November 20th to discuss their efforts to reduce lead in drinking water. He noted that lead testing kits are available for free and expressed his opinion that these kits should be promoted on the Borough website. He stated that Suez has some records of lead lines on the customer side which he commented may be an opportunity to obtain additional information as to what may need to be abated by homeowners. Planned street repairs should be coordinated with Suez so that lead removal efforts can take place at the same time. Councilman Grandelis expressed his opinion that the Borough needs to ensure that Suez fulfills its responsibility to replace lead lines and advised that he will be setting up a meeting with Suez in 2021 in order to better understand the efforts that have been undertaken to date in Leonia.

An update on this matter will be scheduled for the March Work Session.

Councilwoman Davis expressed concern that Suez has not notified customers who have lead pipes on their property. Councilman Grandelis advised that he will add this issue for follow up when he meets with Suez.

New Business:

OPRA Discussion - Mayor Zeigler

Mayor Zeigler announced that this discussion will be pushed to the February Work Session.

Recreation Staffing/Budget Requirements - Mayor Zeigler

Mayor Zeigler explained that the Recreation Commission had a meeting on December 15th during which a resolution was passed to promote a candidate to the position of Program Director. As the governing body's role is to fund the budget for Recreation's operations, he expressed his opinion that the organizational chart should be looked at holistically to determine whether there is an opportunity for efficiency. He noted that a document was just received this evening explaining the responsibilities assigned to each position in this department and commented that the governing body needs time to review and digest this document. He questioned how the governing body would like to proceed with respect to

budgeting for this position in the context of the action that was taken at the Recreation Commission's last meeting.

Mr. Krakower provided the reasons that a decision as to funding for this position should be reached this evening.

After some discussion, it was the consensus of the majority of the governing body to defer this matter to the January Work Session in order to allow for further review and discussion.

Closed Session:

RES. 2020-252 Authorize Closed Session

BE IT RESOLVED in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Leonia entered into Closed Executive Session to discuss the following matters:

A. Personnel

1. Employment Contract – Borough Administrator - 2021

Minutes will be taken of the meeting and released to the public at the time that the matter is resolved. After Closed Executive Session, the Mayor and Council will reconvene to adjourn this meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Council, on a motion from Councilman Ziegler, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Executive Session at 10:07 p.m.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilwoman Flaim, and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Dodd, RMC
Municipal Clerk