



BOROUGH OF LEONIA

COUNCIL- Regular Meeting
~ Minutes ~

Trina Lindsey, Borough Clerk

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

July 10, 2023

7:30 pm

Leonias Senior Center

A Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Leonias was held in person at the Leonias Senior Center at 305 Beechwood Place, Leonias, NJ, and virtually via GoToMeeting on July 10, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Mayor Zeigler.

Those present were led in the Flag Salute by Council President Grandelis.

A moment of silence was observed for longtime Planning Board Member Vince Petti.

Mayor Zeigler read the following statement: "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 Reorganization Meeting, are posted on the public bulletin board in Borough Hall and on the Borough website, published in the Record within the first 10 days of the New Year, and copies are sent to the Star-Ledger. This meeting was noticed through the July 16, 2023 Sunshine Notice sent to the Record, Star-Ledger, and posted on the public bulletin board in Borough Hall and on the Borough website."

PRESENT: Mayor Judah Zeigler, Council President Grandelis, Councilwoman Maureen Davis, Councilman Pasquale Fusco, Councilman Christoph Hesterbrink, Councilwoman Joanne Terrell and Councilman William Ziegler

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Dan Legana for Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie
Borough Administrator Andrea Wardrop
Borough Clerk Trina Lindsey
Borough Engineer Drew Di Sessa
Deputy Borough Clerk Jonathan Mandel

Public Comment

Alice Kim, Paula Khan, and Erin Young, 525 Nordhoff Drive, 320 Harold Avenue, and 34 Hawthorne Terrace respectively spoke to the Mayor and Council about an upcoming event they are planning. All three are members of a youth organization called the Seoulful Hearts

Organization and wish to invite the Mayor and Council to be special guest speakers for their upcoming event

Mitchel Thompson, 340 Highwood Avenue, and Nora Pine, 136 Vreeland Avenue, came before the Mayor and Council to request that Monkey Bars be installed in Wood Park.

Mayor Zeigler inquired as to whether Seoulful Hearts is a registered non-profit organization. The members explained that they are not a non-profit organization but a group officially sanctioned by Leonia High School. All funds raised from the sale of food during the event will be donated to UNICEF.

Mayor Zeigler explained that the parks are managed by the Leonia Recreation Commission and will forward the information provided to its Chair to deliberate upon.

The record will reflect that no further comments were entered into the chat window accessible through GoToMeeting nor via the United States Postal Service or Email.

Appointments

RES. 2023-159 2023 Swim Club Season – New Appointments

[2023-159 Authorize New Hires Swim Club Salaries.pdf](#)

Motion by Council President Grandelis, second by Councilwoman Davis, that Resolution #2023-159 be approved.

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

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

RES. 2023-160 Appointment of DPW Laborer/Collector

[2023-160 Appoint DPW Laborer Collector.pdf](#)

Motion by Councilman Fusco, second by Councilwoman Terrell, that Resolution #2023-160 be approved.

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

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Council President Grandelis, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and all members present voting in favor, that the Minutes of April 17, 2023 Work Session Meeting were approved.

Motion by Councilman Fusco, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and all members present voting in favor, with Council President Grandelis abstaining, that the Minutes of May 1, 2023 Regular Meeting were approved.

Reports

Council President Grandelis

Fire Department

The Fire Committee was unable to meet in June, their next meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2023.

The Fire Department responded to 26 alarms.

Finance & Human Resources Committee

The Committee expressed their gratitude to Chief Financial Officer Abbasi. The Capital Budget shall be discussed tomorrow during their meeting.

Recreation

Council President Grandelis spoke about the various events that the Recreation Commission has hosted and will host in the future.

EMS

58 incidents required EMS response in the month of May.

Board of Health

Met on June 21, 2023 with the next meeting scheduled for September 20, 2023, being held publicly in the Leonia Senior Center.

Council President Grandelis spoke as to the various projects and items being worked upon by the Leonia Board of Health.

Councilwoman Davis

Police Department

Please see the June 2023 Police Committee Report

[June 2023 Police Committee Report](#)

Councilman Fusco

Department of Public Works

Please see attached the Department of Public Works Monthly Report for June 2023

[June 2023 Department of Public Works Report](#)

Building Department

Please see attached the June 2023 Construction Permit Activity Report and the Cash Receipts Audit Report

[June 2023 Construction Permit Activity Report](#)

[June 2023 Cash Receipts Audit Report](#)

Planning Board

The Planning Board had a limited hearing, overhearing an application for a new use of 3 Christie Heights. One application was approved, authorizing a small congregation to meet in two offices at 135 Fort Lee Road.

The Board accepted the affordable housing overlay zone that the Council submitted for their review. It will be sent back to the Mayor and Council with their recommendations.

Councilman Ziegler wished to know if the church moving into 135 Fort Lee Road would cause the landowner to pay less taxes due to having a tax-exempt tenant. Mayor Zeigler responded that he was unaware but that the Planning Board Attorney Dan Steinhagen could be asked for this knowledge.

Councilman Hesterbrink

Historical Preservation Commission

The Historical Preservation Commission did not meet in June.

Library

Year over year circulation is steady but the use of computers has almost doubled.

The library is moving over from Verizon to a new provider, allowing additional savings.

Councilwoman Terrell

Board of Education

The Board of Education had two meetings in June.

Councilwoman Terrell congratulated the Seniors who have graduated.

Laws and Ordinances Committee

Two ordinances have been included in tonight's agenda.

The one outstanding item for codification is currently sitting with the Planning Board, relating to signs.

Councilman Ziegler

Environmental Commission

There is no report for the Environmental Commission.

Shade Tree Commission

There is no report for the Shade Tree Commission.

Facilities Committee

The New Municipal Building Project continues to be under budget and on time. A thorough inventory of stored furniture was conducted and is currently being stored for free through the Clerk of the Work's CBRE.

The sonar testing done on the northwest wall had limited effectiveness, further study shall be conducted.

It is being looked at to conduct milling and paving at the library lot at the same time as the municipal lot.

Spirited discussions have been held about potential tech equipment change orders.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Zeigler has met with and had discussions with Assemblywoman Ellen Park about topics such as traffic and state health benefits increases. Assemblywoman Park looks forward to attending future Leonia events.

Borough Administrator's Report

Please see attached the Borough Administrators Report for June 2023

[Borough Administrator Report – June 2023](#)

Borough Attorney's Report

Dan Legana presented the Borough Attorney's report in place of Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie.

Councilman Ziegler questioned the pricing noticed in the Leaf Composting Facility, getting confirmation that it is 20% higher.

Borough Engineer's Report

The Broad Avenue Section 10 project has been completed and the Recreation Center Roofing project is 99% complete.

The Borough Stormwater Report was submitted to the DEP, and a grant was also received from them for preparing a stormwater infrastructure map.

Councilwoman Ziegler inquired as to whether a more refined proposal for Wood Terrace can be expected, to which the Borough Engineer confirmed such.

Councilman Hesterbrink asked if the stormwater infrastructure map would need to be created or updated from an older one, with Borough Engineer Di Sessa confirming that it would need to be created.

Councilwoman Davis wished to know if the mapping included testing of the water, which it was confirmed that it would not.

Introduction of Ordinances

Ordinance 2023-11 Salary Ordinance

[ORD. 2023-11 Salary Ordinance 2023.pdf](#)

The Borough Clerk read the title of the ordinance into the record:

“AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SALARIES, WAGES AND/OR COMPENSATION AND TO ESTABLISH SALARY & WAGE RANGES OF CERTAIN OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES AND PUBLIC SERVANTS OF THE BOROUGH OF LEONIA, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2023.”

Borough Administrator Wardrop explained the purpose of the ordinance.

Motion by Council President Grandelis, Second by Councilwoman Davis that ordinance 2023-11 be introduced and passed on first reading, and setting July 24, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard for second reading and adoption.

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

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

Ordinance 2023-12 Revised Leaf blowers

[ORD. 2023-12 Leaf Blowers Section Revised.pdf](#)

The Borough Clerk read the title of the ordinance into the record:

“AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF LEONIA BY CREATING A NEW CHAPTER 262 ENTITLED “TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT”

ESTABLISHING RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT AND TO PROVIDE FOR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF INTERNAL COMBUSTION LEAF BLOWERS”

Attorney Legana explained the purpose of the ordinance, in creating a new section for the previously adopted noise ordinance relating to gas-powered leaf blowers.

Motion by Councilwoman Davis, Second by Councilwoman Terrell that ordinance 2023-12 be introduced and passed on first reading, and setting July 24, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard for second reading and adoption.

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

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

Non-Consent Resolutions

RES. 2023-141 Authorize GZA Remediation Reporting – Ambulance Building
[2023-141 GZA Environmental Ambulance Bldg PH 1 Reporting.pdf](#)

Motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Council President Grandelis, that Resolution #2023-141 be removed from the table.

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

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

Councilman Ziegler explained the reasoning behind the tabling of the resolution, stating that an opportunity for the Mayor and Council to ask questions of a GZA representative was also desired.

Mayor Zeigler questioned why the initial amount was \$4,000 higher than the updated proposal. The various items as part of the proposal were discussed as well.

GZA Representative Morelli explained that the \$4,000 that was part of the quote was dropped out of courtesy.

Motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilwoman Davis, that Resolution #2023-141 be approved.

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

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

Consent Resolutions

RES. 2023-161 Authorize NJDOT Municipal Aid Grant Application – Station Parkway
[2023-161 Authorize NJDOT Municipal Aid Grant – Station Parkway.pdf](#)

RES. 2023-162 Authorize Application to Bergen County Open Space Grant
[2023-162 Authorize Bergen County Open Space Grant Contract.pdf](#)

RES. 2023-163 Authorize Aware of Lease for Leaf Composting Facility
[2023-163 Authorize Lease for Leaf Composting Facility.pdf](#)

RES. 2023-164 Authorize Award of Lease for Billboard
[2023-164 Authorize Lease for Billboard.pdf](#)

RES. 2023-165 Amend 2023 Municipal Budget – Chapter 159 Grant – New Jersey Career Accelerator Internship Grant
[2023-165 Chapter 159 Resolution – NJ Career Accelerator Internship Grant.pdf](#)

RES. 2023-166 Amend 2023 Municipal Budget – Chapter 159 Grant – New Jersey Stormwater Assistance Grant
[2023-166 Chapter 159 Resolution – Stormwater Resources Assistance Grant.pdf](#)

~~**RES. 2023-167 Authorize Cleaning Services Contract**~~
~~[2023-167 Award Cleaning Services Contract.pdf](#)~~

Motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilman Fusco, that the Consent Agenda be approved.

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

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

RES. 2023-167 Authorize Cleaning Services Contract
[2023-167 Award Cleaning Services Contract.pdf](#)

Pulled by Council President Grandelis for further discussion.

Motion by Council President Grandelis, second by Councilman Fusco, that Resolution #2023-167 be approved

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

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

Unfinished Business

Traffic Conditions – Mayor Zeigler

Mayor Zeigler opened the discussion by explaining that he believes the never-ending flow of traffic when the Cross Bronx Expressway is backed up is beginning to impact housing values and has various other far-reaching impacts. What concerns the mayor the most is that the Borough of Leonia seems to be truly on its own, with the State and County expressing either disinterest or disapproval when the borough takes action. The items to be brought forward to discuss are all items the Mayor and Chief of Police deliberated on that could assist in alleviating traffic issues and the creation of an actionable plan.

Auxiliary Police Force

Mayor Zeigler stated his approval of the idea of an Auxiliary Police Officer that could take the place of an officer for more mundane tasks, allowing the full-time officers to be free to respond to real calls and manage and control traffic.

Police Chief Tamagny gave a history as to auxiliary police forces, and as to why they are a function of OEM despite being assigned to the Police Department. After a discussion with the OEM Coordinator at the Bergen County Prosecutors Office, Chief Tamagny discovered that Bergen County has not run an Auxiliary Officer program since 2020 due to lack of interest. Most Police Departments have transitioned over to SLEO I Officers, also known as a Special Law Enforcement Officer Class I. A SLEO I Officer is unarmed but holds full arrest powers and can issue summonses. Chief Tamagny provided further information as to the differences between SLEO I, SLEO II, and SLEO III. SLEO I's can be a volunteer position and are fully trained by Bergen County.

Police Chief Tamagny provided various benefits to SLEO I Officers, such as allowing them extra duty traffic details. Further information was given as to the benefits of SLEO I's compared to an auxiliary police force, such as the ability to issue summons due to their training.

Mayor Zeigler stated that while there will be startup costs attached to the SLEO I officers due to training and background checks, their ability to issue summons as a volunteer position could lead to a revenue-positive stream. In times of great need for traffic, these individuals could also be placed in key locations.

Chief Tamagny explained that currently there is a SLEO I officer in the department, but as he is unarmed, they do not allow him to perform traffic stops for his safety. These officers being placed in the key locations, as the mayor alluded to, would however allow full-time officers to attend to more pressing matters. As the Borough of Leonia already has a SLEO program, the requirements for it are already set.

Councilman Ziegler noted his approval and interest in pursuing a SLEO I volunteer program.

Mayor Zeigler noted that none of the options to be discussed tonight are end-all solutions but can go a long way in lightening the issues caused by traffic.

Councilwoman Davis explained that a benefit of a SLEO I program is that in the past the Leonia Police have been approached by young individuals interested in such volunteer programs to gain experience as they proceed through an education in law enforcement. Chief

Tamagny stated that to the point of Councilwoman Davis, Auxiliary Police Forces traditionally have been individuals either retired or not pursuing a further career in law enforcement while a SLEO I position is often seen as a stepping stone. Many of the current law enforcement officers within the Leonia Police Department have served as SLEO I officers.

Chief Tamagny expressed that the Leonia Police Department shares many of the same frustration's residents hold over the traffic issues. Chief Tamagny commended his officers for their service in the face of such conditions.

Councilwoman Davis stated that the issue has two main parts, firstly how can traffic be prevented from coming to Leonia in great numbers and then controlled. Secondly, how can residents be protected with the number of officers that Leonia has and enforcement be maintained with officers taking traffic control roles? Councilwoman Davis stated that putting together a combination of the multiple ideas to be brought forward tonight can bring some relief. The budgetary constraints that have been faced were also mentioned by the Councilwoman.

Mayor Zeigler asked that Chief Tamagny come forward at the July 24, 2023 Work Session with a list of qualifications and requirements of SLEO I Officers.

Portable Speed Bumps

Chief Tamagny explained the differences between speed bumps and speed humps, explaining that speed bumps are not allowed in the roadway. Speed humps are allowed only on roadways with less than 3,000 vehicles daily. The Borough of Leonia would not be allowed to use speed bumps but could use speed humps.

Chief Tamagny spoke of how Cliffside Park uses portable speed humps and some of their issues. For example, once a speed hump is placed in a street, traffic often moves onto the next road. Along with this, they are less portable than would be imagined and would not easily be moved every week. They must also be watched and proactively maintained as they wear down quickly.

Mayor Zeigler explained his opinion is that two or three-speed humps should be bought and tested, being used to help mitigate speeding down side streets.

It was asked that the Police Chief and DPW Superintendent speak together and come back to the Mayor and Council with a proposal along with their findings.

Ft. Lee Road Traffic Calming

Mayor Zeigler spoke as to the various traffic calming methods already been tested, with the County arguing with the Borough as to their right to impose measures such as the placement of cones. Chief Tamagny explained that Fort Lee Road is the only county road within the Borough of Leonia.

Mayor Zeigler explained that as proven by the results of his OPRA request to Bergen County, it seems the portion of Fort Lee Road going through Leonia is the only road they seem interested in asserting its authority over.

Chief Tamagny spoke as to the various experimental attempts made by the Borough of Leonia thus far and the conversations had with the Police Committee. Chief Tamagny noted

that after these conversations, he spoke with the assistant county engineer who was open to the suggestions made by the Borough of Leonia and would consider them. There was very little response from the County until the Chief received an email in January stating there was no interest.

Mayor Zeigler stated it is obvious that the Borough of Leonia has the authority to take action in cases of emergency, with an ordinance in place that authorizes the mayor to close roads for 48 hours in such a case. Chief Tamagny elaborated further as to the current steps being taken by the Police Department.

Waze Road Closure Reporting

Mayor Zeigler noted that both he and the Police Department were able to secure an account for Waze to set the closure of roads within the app. However, there are requirements that the roads be closed or else another user could report that the road is open.

Mayor Zeigler raised the idea of having block captains who after being notified of road closures would place a K-rail on their street to close their road physically to allow it to be closed on Waze.

Chief Tamagny stated he could further look into acquiring more community accounts for the Borough of Leonia.

Councilwoman Terrell inquired as to whether a K-rail would be placed on both sides of the street. Mayor Zeigler responded that the K-rail would be placed on one side of the street.

Councilwoman Terrell asked if the SLEO I officers would also be present at the end of the street. Mayor Zeigler stated that it is still to be determined.

Mayor Zeigler provided further explanation as to his idea and the potential use of SLEO I Officers to assist with it.

On a question from Councilwoman Davis, Chief Tamagny confirmed that the SLEO I Officers would be allowed to issue tickets for those violating the road closure by going around the sign.

Chief Tamagny reiterated that they try to prevent SLEO I's from performing traffic stops for their safety but they can stop a vehicle and wait to approach a vehicle until another officer arrives.

Council President Grandelis brought up the idea of street markings and other visual deterrents to prevent speeding. Chief Tamagny introduced additional ideas that were discussed previously to add to this point.

Council President Grandelis questioned the plausibility of increasing fines to further penalize and prevent speeding. Chief Tamagny responded that most of the moving violations are set by state statute. Further discussion was held as to fines.

Councilman Ziegler raised the point that continued cooperation and communication with Fort Lee and Englewood is necessary. It was noted that often their traffic control methods cause back-ups in Leonia. Councilman Ziegler noted that any action done must be done in concert with the other municipalities to not cause further issues.

Councilwoman Terrell asked if it would be plausible to close the road for town events. Chief Tamagny responded that Fort Lee Road is typically kept open for town events.

Councilwoman Davis brought up the idea of lowering the speed limit on side streets to 15 mph but stated that it would most likely be ineffective.

Councilman Ziegler noted the unpredictability of traffic and asked if there was a particular time that was observed for traffic to be particularly bad. Chief Tamagny responded that it can happen at any time and often it can come in waves. Chief Tamagny further spoke as to the resource issues faced by the Leonia Police Department.

Councilwoman Terrell put forward the idea of having some roads temporarily turned into a one-way street. Chief Tamagny stated that he would have to perform more research into the matter but could be a possibility to be debated.

Councilwoman Davis reiterated the unpredictability of the traffic and stated that weather should also be considered in traffic management as a potential cause of it. Chief Tamagny responded that weather is a factor that is being considered for traffic.

Chief Tamagny offered to residents the possibility of reaching out to him for suggestions.

New Business

Discussion Regarding July/August and Nov/December Mayor and Council Meetings – Louis Grandelis

Council President Grandelis raised the possibility of having a single Mayor and Council meeting in the months of July, August, November, and December.

Mayor Zeigler asked that the schedule stay as it is and if a meeting isn't required that it be cancelled.

Public Comment

Lydia Maurice, 392 Grand Avenue, inquired as to an earlier comment made about affordable housing.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Mandel,
