

DRAFT MINUTES

*These are the Draft Minutes of the North Plainfield Borough Council
Agenda Conference held on Monday, 14 November 2022.*

*Every attempt has been made to make these as comprehensive
and conclusive as possible. However, as it is a draft document, it is
not to be construed as a formal depiction of the official conduct of business and is
subject to revision up to and following the Council's actual approval of same. If
changes are necessary, revised minutes will be posted to the website.*

MINUTES of the Agenda Conference of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **November 14, 2022** at 7:42 p.m. at North Plainfield Council Chambers, 263 Somerset Street, North Plainfield, New Jersey.

PRESENT:

Council Members: Aimee Corzo
Suzette Given
Steven McIntyre
Everett Merrill, Council Vice President
Keiona R. Miller
Wendy Schaefer
Frank "Skip" Stabile, Council President

Also Present: Lawrence La Ronde, Mayor
David E. Hollod, P.E., Business Administrator
Brian Hak, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney
Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk

Council President Stabile read the following Notice of Compliance:

"This meeting is being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Adequate notice of this meeting was provided by transmitting notice to the official newspapers of the Borough, The Courier News, WKMB Radio, WJLP-TV, the Alternative Press and also to the Star Ledger on October 20, 2022 and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and the Memorial Library reserved for such purpose."

The Flag Salute was led by Council Vice President Merrill followed by a moment of silence for the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one appeared.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Somerset County Business Partnership** – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod introduced Mr. Chris Edwards from the Partnership. Mr. Hollod agreed that the Borough had been a long-standing member going back to its inception on March 13, 2020, the beginning of the pandemic. Mr. Edwards expressed the Partnership's gratitude for the support, saying that Mayor Giordano had been very active. Mr. Edwards explained that the partnership had begun as a mentorship program at North Plainfield High School where students would shadow professionals via Zoom. It has become a Chamber of Commerce promoting Somerset County.

The county had lost 51% of the tourist dollar during the pandemic. Mr. Edwards displayed the Sip&See Passport, a printed promotional brochure. Recognizing downsizing at larger companies, the Partnership attempts to play offense to combat out-migration, and showcases each town in Somerset County. He noted that North Plainfield was unique in the diversity of its population which has become a strong selling point. Mr. Merrill cited the increasing popularity of the Patriots baseball team since their affiliation with the New York Yankees. He added that transit-oriented development associated with the Raritan Valley Line has been significant.

Mr. Edwards added that further strength has been gathered by the merger of non-profits and the chamber. Replying to Ms. Given, Mr. Edwards said that the Passport brochures were available at popular craft breweries, and Mayor La Ronde asked about fliers available through the webpage and Facebook page. Mr. Edwards explained that getting the word out is of the highest priority, and there is an increasing outreach to the Spanish-speaking community. The Council President confirmed that Mr. Hollod had been very helpful with that.

2. **Resolution to Award Bid and Execute an Agreement with Rich Tree Service** – (D.E.H.) Mr. Hollod commented that the agreement is typically awarded every two years. Ms. Schaefer noted the importance of continued tree maintenance to prevent the danger of fallen trees to homes, automobiles and power lines and heaving sidewalks. She referenced three divots on Willow Avenue, and the need for attention to damage brought on by the trees.

3. **Extended Hour Request for ABC Licensee for Thanksgiving (Nov. 24-25)** – (F.S.S.) The Council President said that extended hours on Thanksgiving Weekend could open the door to Pandora's Box, and Mr. Merrill opined that there was a history with the requesting establishment's patrons being responsible for anti-social activities. Ms. Miller confirmed that businesses were trying to recoup from financial damage brought on by the pandemic. The Mayor advised that the International Club had opened a restaurant in the old Italian American Club kitchen as a move to enhance revenue. Ms. Corzo expressed her reservations about the allowance of the requested extended Thanksgiving hours.

4. **Salary of the Borough Council President and Council Members** – (D.E.H.) The Council President said that the time had come to recognize the many hours put in by elected officials with a salary. Even members of the public are recognizing that remuneration is in order for the level of service provided by elected officials. Mr. Stabile added that North Plainfield is the largest community in the state where elected officials are not compensated. To effect the change, an ordinance will be needed. Council Vice President Merrill asked if the monies would be paid via direct deposit, and Mr. Hollod interjected that he would encourage it.

5. **Borough Website Domain Name** – (S.M.) Mr. McIntyre offered a brief history of the current website name. With its initial ".org," suffix, it was ranked with mostly non-profits. The current www.northplainfield-nj.gov, while now appropriate to municipalities, he said, is cumbersome. He suggested the possibility of www.northplainfield.gov, since there are so few other North Plainfield's

nationwide, and none has apparently taken the domain name. Further, he suggested that Borough e-mail addresses also be rolled over from “@npmail.org” to “@northplainfield.gov” for consistency. The Mayor assured that he would take up the suggestions with Mr. Asprocolas.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS:

Ms. Schaefer questioned the budget transfer resolution on tonight’s regular meeting agenda and the impact of medical expenses. The Mayor replied that the transfer was responsible and in line with this category of expenses.

Mr. Merrill commented on the loss of a long-time Board of Education member in the recently held General Election, saying that Mr. Allen’s significant expertise would surely be missed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Miller, seconded by Ms. Given and on voice vote carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President