

MINUTES of the Agenda Conference of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **April 10, 2023** at 7:37 p.m. via Zoom.

PRESENT:

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

Also Present: Lawrence La Ronde, Mayor
David E. Hollod, Business Administrator
Brian Hak, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney
Michele Irby-Garry, CMR, Acting 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 December 12, 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 Mr. Merrill followed by a moment of silence for the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Francine Gargano, 57 Willow Avenue, North Plainfield, voiced her concerns with the lack of detour signs to assist motorists with road closures in the area of Mountain Avenue while the PSE&G crews were working. Mr. Hollod offered to pass the information along to the Chief of Police. Ms. Corzo interjected that it was New Jersey American Water working in that area, not PSE&G.

Melissa Gordon, 2381 Whittier Avenue, Scotch Plains, NJ, brought forth her concerns with her daughter’s daycare in the Borough, specifically that they cannot lock the individual rooms within the building should an active shooter incident occur. Explaining that the uniform construction code may prohibit locks on doors as a fire safety measure, Council President Stabile suggested she ask the Director of the daycare to contact the Fire and Police Chiefs to look into the matter.

Luis Espin, 69 Belmont Avenue, North Plainfield, reported that individuals sell churros, sliced fruit, meringue, gelatin and rice pudding in front of the laundromat located at 350 Somerset Street and the grocery store located at 100 Somerset Street. The Council President advised that the Health and Police Departments would be notified to ensure that the individuals obtain the proper permits or licenses to do so.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Amendment to Council Rules of Order – F.S.S.** Council President Stabile explained the amendment, advising that any council member that signs up for a seminar or meeting and does not cancel their registration should they be unable to attend, will have to reimburse the cost to the Borough.

2. **Update on Food Pantry – S.G. and E.M.** Ms. Given and Mr. Merrill introduced Jennifer McGovern and Aimee Leary to provide an update on the Food Pantry. Ms. McGovern explained that she and Ms. Leary took over running the Food Pantry in January for Jessica Nichols. It is now run out of the former caretaker's house on Vermeule Place. Donations have been received by various organizations including fraternities, schools, the Watchung Elks Lodge and the Girl Scouts. Ms. Leary detailed the new self-shopper format which allows individuals to select from canned and prepackaged goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, milk and eggs, as well as chicken and meat.

Steve Katz, Executive Director of the Food Bank Network of Somerset County, commended Ms. McGovern and Ms. Leary for their efforts to date. North Plainfield is the most active municipality in terms of support. The emergency SNAP benefits put in place during the pandemic were stopped in February which has brought in approximately two hundred new clients in each of the last two months. He announced a new home delivery program set to begin this year for homebound individuals. A mobile pop-up food pantry will begin next month. Responding to Councilman Merrill, Mr. Katz explained that due to the rising costs of food they made the difficult decision to restrict clients' visits to two times per month. Additional sources of donated food were found and a new procurement strategy included buying in bulk from national wholesalers has been implemented, he concluded. Suggestions were made to reach out to the Senior Citizens Club, the Police and Fire Departments, and the schools to increase awareness of the Food Pantry. Ms. McGovern added that the Girl Scouts would plant a community vegetable garden for the Food Pantry.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS:

Ms. Given reported that the traffic subcommittee has already met twice to discuss traffic safety measures.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President