

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
APRIL 4, 2024 - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Ring read the following announcement:

Notice of Meeting

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT OF NEW JERSEY, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS PROVIDED ON DECEMBER 21, 2023, WITH WRITTEN NOTICE AND ELECTRONIC NOTICE PROVIDED TO THE COURIER NEWS AND THE BREEZE POSTING ON THE WEBSITE AND THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND FILING WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

On call of the roll, the following Council members were present:

Councilman Michael Kirsh
Councilman Allen Kurdyla
Councilman Howard V. Norgalis
Councilman Filipe Pedroso (Absent)
Council President Timothy Ring

Also Present: Michael Pappas, Township Administrator
Christopher Corsini, Township Attorney
Grace Njuguna, Township Clerk

Councilman Kirsh led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

MARCH 21, 2024- REGULAR SESSION

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the March 21, 2024, regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

MARCH 21, 2024- CLOSED SESSIONS

The March 21, 2024, closed session minutes were passed around for Council approval & signature.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh:

- Complimented the clerk's office for their hard work and involvement in ensuring that the March 25th filing deadline for the County Committee Petitions was met.

- On March 26th, the Zoning Board held a meeting where they discussed the second part of a possible three-part proposal for a self-storage facility on Route 22 near Vosseller. Councilman Kirsh added that Gary La Spisa has resigned from the Zoning Board, and that Council will address his replacement later in the agenda. Gary served on the Zoning Board for four years and was previously a member of the Recreation Board.
- On April 2nd, the Planning Board held a meeting where they discussed an interesting case regarding the construction of a barn at Hidden River Farms, which is a 35-acre site located on Meadow Road and accessible from the North Branch of the Raritan River. The Planning Board also discussed the redevelopment of the Ethicon site and acknowledged the need for it, which is step two of the six-step process that was outlined in the previous week's meeting. Additionally, the upcoming Master Plan public session will be addressed by Administrator Pappas later tonight.
- Last night, our volunteer appreciation event took place. Councilman Kirsh acknowledged the Office of Constituent Relations for managing the attendance of all the volunteers who were there. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, some attendees were unable to make it, but the event was still a success.
- Councilman Kirsh acknowledged the posthumous promotion of New York Police Officer Jonathan Diller to detective, murdered in the line of duty. He emphasized the importance of supporting law enforcement officers through our thoughts, prayers, and appreciation every day. Such gestures demonstrate our gratitude for their sacrifices in protecting our communities.
- On April 8th, Bridgewater will experience a solar eclipse with a 91% magnitude. If you plan on watching it, ensure that you do so safely.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Councilman Kurdyla reported that yesterday was the kickoff meeting for the Community Block Grant Committee that he is a part of with Somerset County. It seems that the formal award meeting will take place in May, with presentations for services.
- Councilman Kurdyla shared his thoughts on Volunteer Appreciation Day expressing his full support and celebration for the volunteers in Bridgewater Township. However, he was unable to attend this event, as he was working with the New Jersey State Fireman's Association in Monmouth County for a field exam activity.

- Attended a funeral for a volunteer fireman for a surrounding town who died while on duty. The family deeply appreciated the support shown by volunteer firemen from neighboring municipalities. Such events remind us of the risks volunteers take to keep us safe.

Councilman Norgalis: (*verbatim*)

- Attended the monthly meeting of the Municipal Alliance. The organization has been rebranded by the state and is now called the Bridgewater-Raritan Alliance for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. It is a longer title but more descriptive of their mission. The organization is preparing a five-year plan as required by the state of NJ. They expect to receive additional funding from the state opioid settlement.
- Aly Gust is a confidential secretary in the Clerk's office. Aly's cousin Alaina Gust attends Bridgewater-Raritan High School. She was crowned the winner of the high school's annual Sing-Off in support of the Kimberly A. Nelson Foundation, which in turn supports music and theater for BRHS students through grants and scholarships. Great job Alaina.
- Attended the Volunteer Recognition celebration set up by the administration to honor the dozens and dozens of volunteers who labor on behalf of the township on the various boards and commissions to continue to make this a great place to live. The recognition was held at the Senior Center and the cost of the activity was completely covered by sponsors including Colliers Engineering, Savo Schalk law firm, Phoenix Advisors, Oller & Breslin Attorneys, and CGAJ Law Firm
- The courier News reported that a Lithium-ion battery was to blame for a Bridgewater apartment fire in the Finderne section. While a lithium battery was indeed at the fire scene the scientific and insurance testing is still underway to determine positively that that was the cause of the fire. Evidentially the charger was not connected to the battery during the end-of-fire overhaul.
- At the last council meeting it was reported that the \$4M check from the federal government for Camp Cromwell support was "in the mail". The delivery path of that check has been diverted through the Dept of Transportation and will probably take a few more weeks before it gets here, according to Congressman Kean's staff. Don't lose hope we will still get it.

- Happy post-Easter for our Christian friends who celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Our Muslim friends continue in their celebration of the Holy Month of Ramadan. The lighting of the Crescent Moon display at the township municipal building courtyard, postponed from last month has been tentatively rescheduled for next week toward the close of Ramadan on Tuesday at 5 pm.
- For those homes served by American Water Company hydrant flushing will continue for a short time and discolored water and even a slight reduction of pressure might occur for a short period of time. Run the water and the discoloration will go away.

Council President Ring:

- Attended the volunteer recognition event last night. President Ring commended and acknowledged the Office of Constituent Relations staff for organizing the event.
- President Ring advised that a Master Plan Workshop Meeting will take place on April 11th. A public notice will be issued for this upcoming event. The reason for this is that there is a possibility of a quorum of Township Council members, Zoning Board members, and Planning Board members attending the event. The notice will advertise a combined meeting; however, this meeting will not be a traditional one where we vote on resolutions or give reports. The purpose of this meeting is to gather feedback from the public regarding the Master Plan.

Mayor's Reports

Michael Pappas, Township Administrator reported on behalf of Mayor Moench

- On April 11th, there will be a presentation of the Master Plan in the Courtroom and the adjoining conference room. The Master Plan is a comprehensive plan that has been in development since last summer under the direction of former Planner Scarlett Doyle. A group appointed by Mayor Moench, including himself, President Ring, members of the Zoning Board and Planning Board, and other staff members have worked on the draft, which has gone through several iterations. The plan will continue to be improved through public input received through an online questionnaire that was made available for public input at the end of last year. The workshop is scheduled for April 11th, but for those that cannot attend, the online questionnaire will be reopened on the website for a few days. This will allow residents to participate remotely.

On April 12th, Administration will take the next step in the planning process, which is the preparation of a final draft by our Township Planner. After that, there will be at least one official public hearing by the Planning Board on the final draft. The timeframe for this depends on the amount of input we receive next Wednesday. More information will be reported at a later time.

Proclamation CASA SHAW- Pinwheels for Prevention

Timothy Ring, Council President read the following proclamation:

2024 National Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation

WHEREAS, children are our nation’s most vulnerable members as well as our nation’s most valuable resources, helping to shape the future of Bridgewater; and

WHEREAS, positive childhood experiences –like loving caregivers and safe, stable, and nurturing relationships–can help mitigate trauma and the negative impact of adverse childhood experiences to promote the social, emotional, and developmental well-being of children; and

WHEREAS, childhood trauma can have long-term psychological, emotional, and physical effects throughout an individual’s lifetime and impact future generations of their family; and

WHEREAS, children who live in families with access to concrete economic and social supports are less likely to experience abuse and neglect; and

WHEREAS, prevention is possible because of the partnerships created between families, advocates, child welfare professionals, education, health, community, and faith-based organizations, businesses, law enforcement agencies, and local, state, and national governments; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the need to prioritize kids and invest in more prevention initiatives like home visiting and family-strengthening policies, economic supports, and community-based child abuse prevention programs at the national, state, and local levels; and

WHEREAS, CASA SHAW (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties) works tirelessly to provide well-trained, trauma-informed volunteers to serve as advocates in court for children living in

foster care, committed to ensuring that every child has a safe and permanent home; and,

WHEREAS, the Bridgewater Women’s Club, an organization with a storied tradition of advocating for vulnerable populations, will be placing pinwheels in the Municipal Courtyard to raise awareness for National Child Abuse Prevention Month and the mission of CASA SHAW;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Matthew C Moench, alongside the Bridgewater Council, do hereby proclaim April as NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH in the Township of Bridgewater and urge all citizens to recognize this month by learning about the work of CASA SHAW, volunteering with community-based child abuse prevention programs, and building a narrative of hope for children throughout our community.

Members of CASA SHAW were present to receive the proclamation.

**Public
Comment**

Members of the public wishing to address the Council on any matter will be allowed two minutes to speak unless there are unusual circumstances.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.

Froso Fredlund, 224 Foothill Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Ms. Fredlund expressed frustration with a buffer zone mismanagement issue that is causing issues on her property. President Ring advised Ms. Fredlund that this is an administration issue of which Council has no jurisdiction and as such, Administrator Pappas' office will investigate her concerns and get back to her timely.

Cathy Franco, 766 Weemac Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Ms. Franco expressed concerns regarding the property redevelopment at 136 Foothill Road and questioned what the plans were for this site. She also addressed various resolutions related to road improvement projects noting the improvement to these roads are all being contracted to the same firm which our Township Engineer is employed by. Ms. Franco further complained that the Council agenda was not posted on social media or the township website.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the public comment portion was closed.

President Ring addressed Ms. Franco’s comment regarding road improvement projects noting the improvement to these roads are not being contracted to the same firm as is evidenced on the resolution titles.

Resolutions

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE PLANNING BOARD OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER TO UNDERTAKE A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF BLOCK 349, LOT 2 (A PORTION OF WHICH CONTAINS MUNICIPAL YARD WASTE COLLECTION SITE) PURSUANT TO THE NEW JERSEY LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, ET SEQ.) FOR CLASSIFICATION AS AN “AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT” AND DIRECTING THE TOWNSHIP’S REDEVELOPMENT PLANNER TO PREPARE A STUDY INVESTIGATING WHETHER BLOCK 349, LOT 2 ALSO KNOWN 136 FOOTHILL ROAD CONSTITUTES AN “AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT”

Township Administrator Pappas stated this resolution will direct the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation and public hearing of Block 349, Lot 2, also Known 136 Foothill Road, to determine whether it is an area in need of development. Upon the completion of the preliminary investigation and public hearing, the Planning Board shall provide recommendations to the Township Council as to its investigation of said properties.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-04-04-114](#) is appended to the official minutes.

PROJECT RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING/SURVEYING/ INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE 2024-1 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF ACORN DRIVE, JAMESTOWN ROAD, LILAC COURT, YORKSTOWN ROAD, HOLLENDER STREET, AND KIMS COURT TO MORGAN ENGINEERING, LLC/MORGAN MUNICIPAL SERVICES, LLC, 130 CENTRAL AVENUE, ISLAND HEIGHTS, NJ 08732, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$186,200.00, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2024 CAPITAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT BOND

PROJECT RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING/SURVEYING/INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE 2024-2 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF ANDOVER AVENUE, BERWICK DRIVE, MORRIS STREET (OFF NORTH AVENUE), NORTH AVENUE, ROANOKE ROAD, ERIN COURT, ETHEL COURT, AND MOOREHOUSE COURT TO REMINGTON & VERNICK ENGINEERS, 429 ROUTE 79, SUITE 21, MORGANVILLE, NJ 07751, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$136,420.00, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2024 CAPITAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT BOND

PROJECT RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING/SURVEYING/INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE 2024-3 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF CANDLEWICK LANE, LOVE ROAD, AND JUNIPER LANE (CANDLEWICK LANE TO END) TO REMINGTON & VERNICK ENGINEERS, 429 ROUTE 79, SUITE 21, MORGANVILLE, NJ 07751, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$130,880.00, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2024 CAPITAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT BOND

PROJECT RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING/SURVEYING/INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE 2024-4 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF BARBARA DRIVE, CATALPA DRIVE, LAKEVIEW DRIVE, LONG ROAD, STAR VIEW WAY, STELLA DRIVE (ROUTE 202/206 TO STAR VIEW WAY), BLUESTONE LANE, CARNOUSTIE DRIVE AND TURNBERRY COURT TO COLLIERS ENGINEERING & DESIGN (DBA MASER CONSULTING) 53 FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 110, HAMPTON, NJ 08827, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$234,550.00, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2024 CAPITAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT BOND

PROJECT RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING/SURVEYING/INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE 2024-5 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF LAWTON ROAD, LAWTON PLACE, SOMERSET AVENUE, BIRCH HILL DRIVE, BITTERSWEET TERRACE, MOUNTAIN TOP ROAD (CRIM ROAD TO ROSE COURT) AND THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP SENIOR CENTER PARKING LOT TO COLLIERS ENGINEERING & DESIGN (DBA MASER CONSULTING) 53 FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 110, HAMPTON, NJ 08827, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$198,850.00, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2024 CAPITAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT BOND

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye

Councilman Pedroso	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-04-04-115 thru #24-04-04-119](#) is appended to the official minutes.

APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT - REGULAR MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES: JOHN GAYESKI, REGULAR MEMBER, JEFFREY SICAT, ALTERNATE #1, JOHN KULAK, ALTERNATE #2, CLAUDIO VESCIO, ALTERNATE #3, CHRIS GABBETT, ALTERNATE #4

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-04-04-120](#) is appended to the official minutes.

Closed Session

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Bridgewater Township Council that this body will now hold a closed meeting to discuss contract negotiations and litigation.

When and if the matters discussed become public record, this will be made known to the public at that time.

The public is excluded from said meeting and further notice thereof is dispensed with all in accordance with Sections 8 and 4a of the Open Public Meetings Act.

On the motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the Council convened in a closed session at approximately 8:15 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#24-04-04-121](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Timothy Ring
Council President