

Mayor and Council Regular Meeting – November 23, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of North Caldwell was held on Tuesday, November 23, 2021. The meeting began at 6:31pm at Borough Hall and was held simultaneously via tele/video-conference.

Mayor Alessi called the meeting to order announcing that notice was provided in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 231, P.L. 1975. He provided a statement regarding the conduct of the teleconference which would allow members of the public to participate and be heard during public comment.

Roll Call indicated the following:

Present: Mayor Joseph H. Alessi, Council President Francis Astorino, Councilman Matthew Atlas, Councilman Anthony Floria-Callori, Councilman Robert Kessler, Councilman Arthur Rees, Councilman Kenneth Tilton.

Also present were: Kevin O’Sullivan, Borough Administrator; Mark Semeraro, Borough Counsel; Rich Mondelli, Chief Financial Officer; Mark Deuer, Police Chief; and Tami Michelotti, Borough Clerk.

Mayor Alessi asked Councilman Kessler to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor’s Report

Mayor Alessi provided a COVID update and encouraged the public to obtain vaccinations and boosters. He announced the dedication of a portion of Mountain Avenue as Mayor Matarazzo Way in honor of both former mayors. He welcomed all new residents to attend the virtual Newcomers’ Night event the following evening. Mayor Alessi wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Hanukkah.

Citizens to be Heard

Bernard Albanese – 5 Four Seasons Drive

Mr. Albanese presented safety and traffic issues experienced by the Four Seasons community. He described the speeding on White Rock Road and parking on Hilltop Drive up to Sagamore Drive which restricts the line of sight for drivers exiting Four Seasons’ lot. He requested an ordinance to prevent parking on Hilltop Drive on both sides of the street up to the intersection with Sagamore Drive which would correspond with the Planning Board approval of the development. Mr. O’Sullivan explained the Borough’s plans to dedicate the roads of the Hilltop development and adopt a “no parking” ordinance upon completion of the Pulte development.

Jane Selzer – 41 Four Seasons Drive

Ms. Selzer further described vehicular traffic safety issues caused by attendees at the Verona fields on White Rock Road. She requested permanent “no parking” signs on White Rock Road to alleviate fire response hazards and line of sight issues. Mr. O’Sullivan noted that he has requested that Verona limit parking on White Rock Road and would follow up with the request. He explained the process that the Borough has to assume control of the Hilltop development roads.

Rabbi Shmuly Sputz –385 Willard Road, Paramus

Rabbi Sputz stated that he represents the Chabad of the Caldwelles and requested to display a menorah at the intersection of Mountain Avenue and Smull Avenue. Mr. Semeraro stated that displays on Borough property would be discussed in Executive Session as there was no policy for such requests. Rabbi Sputz described a field use permit application to hold a Hanukkah lighting event in town. Mr. Semeraro stated that the request would be considered by the Recreation Department as are all field use requests.

Approval of Minutes

Councilman Floria-Callori moved to accept the minutes from the following meetings (without release of Executive Session minutes), seconded by Council President Astorino:

- Conference Meeting and Executive Session Minutes – October 12, 2021
- Regular Meeting and Executive Session Minutes – October 26, 2021

Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes.

Committee Reports

Legal and Ordinance

Councilman Atlas introduced Ordinance O-21-2021 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 99 “Vehicles and Traffic”, §99-4 and §99-10 of the Code of the Borough of North Caldwell Concerning Prohibited Parking Hours and Stop Intersections. Councilman Atlas noted that the amendment would update an outdated reference to a block and lot and a stop sign would be added on Hilltop Drive at Arbor Road. Mr. Semeraro added that the proposed ordinance is compliant with MUTCD. Councilman Atlas noted that the public hearing would be held on December 21, 2021 at 6:30pm. The motion was seconded by Councilman Tilton. Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes.

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Resolution R-217-2021 A Resolution Approving Street Name for Development Site at 68 Grandview Avenue Also Known as Block 1903, Lot 2 was read. Motion was made by Councilman Atlas, seconded by Councilman Kessler. Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes.

Resolution R-218-2021 A Resolution Authorizing the Withdrawal of Application to NJDEP for Green Acres Funding for the Acquisition and Preservation of Walkers' Property aka Block 606, Lot 1 in the Borough of North Caldwell was read. Councilman Kessler noted that the resolution would not allow for development of the property but would withdraw a grant and loan request to avoid restrictions on that property and other Borough owned properties. Motion was made by Councilman Atlas, seconded by Councilman Rees. Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes.

Personnel and Technology

Committee Updates - Councilman Floria-Callori stated that an initial meeting was held with VCOMM regarding cellular infrastructure improvements. He added that a standalone Technology Budget would be implemented in 2022.

Resolution R-219-2021 A Resolution Appointing Municipal Court Judge was read. Motion was made by Councilman Floria-Callori, seconded by Councilman Atlas. Councilman Floria-Callori noted that the vacancy occurred due to Judge O'Connor's retirement effective as of January 1, 2022. Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes. Mayor Alessi noted that Mayor Davis of Essex Fells is in agreement with the appointment for the shared court.

Resolution R-220-2021 A Resolution Authorizing the Implementation of a Borough Logo for Use by the Borough of North Caldwell was read. Motion was made by Councilman Floria-Callori, seconded by Councilman Kessler. Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes.

Finance

Council President Astorino stated that he had a strategic meeting with the auditors that day. Council President Astorino presented the Tax Collector's Report for October 2021.

The following resolutions were read by and moved by Council President Astorino as a Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilman Atlas:

- Resolution R-221-2021 A Resolution Approving the Payment of Bills
- Resolution R-222-2021 A Resolution Approving 2021 Budget Transfers

Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes.

Property Tax Revaluation Update

Borough Tax Assessor George Librizzi provided an update on the revaluation currently in progress, noting that approximately 60% of the town has been inspected. He stated that the assessment team is approaching the valuation phase and value letters should be mailed to residents in mid to late December. He stated that informal hearings would be available with a filing with the County Tax Board in January with new tax assessments becoming effective for May 1, 2022. The Council complimented the courteous and skilled revaluation team. He confirmed that the recent inflated home values do not impact the total tax levy of the town. He did not anticipate a significant shift in tax allocation for residents.

Public Safety

Councilman Tilton provided the Police Department Public Safety and Detective Bureau Reports for October 2021 during which there were 755 calls to Dispatch with 28 moving violations summonses. He reminded residents to lock their vehicle doors to prevent thefts and break-ins.

Councilman Tilton provided the Fire Department Public Safety Report for October 2021 during which there were 24 calls. He reminded residents to change the batteries in their smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Resolution R-223-2021 A Resolution Extending the Probationary Period of Officer Nick Moskalow was read. Motion was made by Councilman Tilton, seconded by Councilman Kessler. Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes.

Council President Astorino departed the meeting at 7:29pm.

Resolution R-224-2021 A Resolution Approving the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Fiscal Grant Cycle July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 was read. Motion was made by Councilman Tilton, seconded by Councilman Kessler. Said motion was carried with five affirmative votes.

Public Works

Councilman Rees provided the Construction Permit Activity Report for October 2021. He noted that 31 permits were issued for the month with a total year-to-date value of \$403,000.

Councilman Rees provided the Animal Control Report for October 2021 during which there were two (2) calls.

Councilman Rees summarized the Solid Waste Report for year-to-date 2021 during which 3,388 tons of solid waste were collected, including 670 tons recyclable materials.

Recreation

Councilman Kessler provided the Recreation Director's Report for November/December 2021. He thanked all coaches, participants and parents for a successful fall recreation season and congratulated the championship teams in football, field hockey, soccer and men's softball. Councilman Kessler noted the success of the Halloween Dance held outdoors at Caldwell University and the drive-thru trick-or-treat event. He announced the start of the recreation and travel basketball season, ski season, the upcoming Newcomers' Night event and the annual Joy, Peace and Goodwill holiday celebration on December 5th.

The following resolutions were read by and moved by Councilman Kessler as a Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilman Atlas:

- Resolution R-225-2021 A Resolution Authorizing the Increase in Pay for 1st and 2nd Grade Soccer Referees
- Resolution R-226-2021 A Resolution Authorizing an Increase in the Hours of Eileen Capstraw for the Remainder of 2021

Said motion was carried with five affirmative votes.

Executive Session

Resolution R-227-2021 A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor and Council of the Borough of North Caldwell to Hold a Closed Session Meeting for Certain Specified Purpose:

- A. Attorney-Client Privilege Communication: (1) Holiday Displays on Public Property;
- B. Contract Negotiations: (1) Essex Fells Water Supply, (2) Firemen's Field;
- C. Potential Contract Negotiations: (1) Shared Dispatch, (2) Marketing of Recyclables;
- D. Potential Litigation: (1) Hidden Ridge Performance Bond

was read. Motion was made by Councilman Atlas, seconded by Councilman Kessler. Said motion was carried with five affirmative votes.

The meeting was re-opened to Public at 8:44pm.

There being no other matters to be addressed by the Governing Body at this time, a motion was made by Councilman Atlas, seconded by the Council, that this meeting be adjourned at 8:44pm. Said motion was carried unanimously with six affirmative votes.

Respectfully submitted,



Tami Michelotti
Borough Clerk