

**BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
MARCH 21, 2023  
8:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council President Marc Pascual, Council members Thomas A. Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Rafael Marte, Ora Kornbluth, and Hernando Rivera

**ABSENT:** No one.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Borough Administrator Corey Gallo  
Borough Attorney John Schettino  
Deputy Borough Clerk Hilda Tavitian

Mayor Amatorio called the meeting to order at 8:15 p.m. with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act Statement, "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Meeting dates for the year are confirmed at the Annual Meeting. The Annual Notice is sent to the Record, Star Ledger, Twin Boro News, and Cablevision, placed on two Municipal Bulletin Boards and is on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk."

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilperson Deauna.

Mayor Amatorio thanked all for coming to the meeting on such an important night to replace one of the councilmembers who joined the Bergen County Board of Commissioners.

**AGENDA CHANGES**

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth to add the Council Nomination and Appointment to Presentations, the Garden Club request for tree and plaque at Cooper's Pond in memory of John Gorman and to reserve Cooper's Pond Fieldhouse on Sunday, April 9, 2023 from 5:00am-9:00am for Sunrise Service to Correspondence, Introduction of Ordinance – 23-2613 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 299 of the Code of the Borough of Bergenfield, Entitled "Vehicles and Traffic" to Ordinances, and Resolution 23-114 approving Raffle Application 1392 to the Consent Agenda, and Resolution 23-115 approving the Police Chief Contract to Resolutions, and Resolution 23-116 hiring of School Crossing Guards for School Year 2022-2023 and Resolution 23-118 appointing Safety Coordinator Alexandra Cacciatore to New Business. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion Council President Pascual, to approve minutes of the February 21, 2023 Regular Public Meeting and February 21, 2023 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released), March 7, 2023 Work Session Meeting and March 7, 2023 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released). Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS I**

Mayor Amatorio opens the meeting and invites the public for comments on agenda items only and asks if anyone present wishes to be heard. Please be advised there will be a limit of five (5) minutes per speaker.

Barry Doll, resident, stated at every meeting there are agenda items added at the last minute. He inquired if the items just read are on the agenda. He inquired if they were on the agenda when

published Friday night. Mr. Doll stated all the items on the agenda should be available to the public before the meeting and suggested having a deadline for the submission of agenda items and keeping to it.

Borough administrator Gallo's response was no, they were added on. Mr. Gallo stated it takes longer sometimes and with the separation of the time between the meetings, it creates a problem. They want to keep moving the agenda forward and the town forward. Mr. Gallo stated they try to get everything done by 3:00 pm Thursday so they can print by 12:00 pm Friday, but as much as they try there is always a last-minute push.

Mayor Amatorio stated something can happen Saturday, Sunday, or Monday prior to the meeting, and if it's not added to the meeting, they have to wait another two weeks. For instance, the correspondence for the appointment of the council replacement was received after Thursday and they needed to appoint someone right away.

Mary Sullivan, resident, requested clarification of Ordinance 23-2611. She inquired if this is for two-family rental properties.

Mr. Gallo stated the ordinance identifies all of the inspections. They are no longer called CO's. A CO inspection does not pertain to these inspections. CO's are only for new construction. The ordinance gives a breakdown of the different codes according to the state.

There being no one else who wishes to be heard, Mayor Amatorio closes Verbal Communications I.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### 1. Council Nomination and Appointment

Mayor Amatorio nominates Domingo Almonte to serve as Councilperson for term expiring 12/31/23.

Motion by Councilperson Rivera, seconded by Councilperson Deauna to appoint Domingo Almonte as Councilman.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
<i>Vacancy</i>		Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Councilman Domingo Almonte was sworn in by Mayor Amatorio.

Councilman Almonte stated as he takes the oath to serve as a Councilman of the great town of Bergenfield, it is an honor and privilege to stand in front of everyone. As he begins his journey in this new role, he thanked God for all his Blessings and Love, without him, he wouldn't be here today. Councilman Almonte thanked his wife, Grisel, for all her love and unconditional support on everything that he does as the head of their family and to his kids, Domily, Gabriel, David, and Sarah, their four columns. Also, he took a moment to thank the people who have worked hard before him: Former Mayor Carlos Aquavivas, who introduced him to politics in the town, Assemblyman Chris Tully, Mayor Arvin Amatorio, Councilmembers Hernando Rivera, Marc Pascual, Tommy Lodato, Buddy Deauna, and Ora Kornbluth and our new Bergen County Commissioner Rafael Marte. He thanked those who have placed their confidence in him. My Friends, Families, all my friends from the Bergenfield Dominoes Club, my brothers and sisters from church, Father Cesar Infante for all his words of encouragement and last but not least TODOS MIS HERMANOS DE LA HERMANDAD DE EMAUS, he was grateful for their support and promised to do their best to serve

them and the community with honesty, integrity, and dedication. He thought that serving the public was more than just a job; it's a calling. He stated to work for the good of the community and uphold the values that makes our country great, they have to be dedicated. He is excited by the opportunity to collaborate with Mayor Amatorio and members of the Council to improve the future of the community and to keep it moving forward. He stated as Councilman, he is committed to making sure that everyone's voice is heard and that all groups are represented. He believes that if they all work together, they can make a better future for themselves and for future generations. He thanked all and God bless all.

#### Council Comments I

Councilperson Lodato congratulated Councilman Almonte on his appointment. He welcomed him to the council and stated he looks forward to working with him, exchanging ideas, and moving Bergenfield forward together.

Councilperson Deauna congratulated Councilman Almonte and welcomed him. He will surely miss his friend Councilperson Marte. He praised Councilperson Marte on his work in Bergenfield and that he hopes he will continue the work at the County level.

Councilperson Kornbluth congratulated Councilman Almonte, he has shown how he has already served the community before he joined the council, including on the Dominoes Club. She also thanked Councilperson Marte on his new appointment and he will be missed on the council.

Councilperson Rivera stated this night is special because Councilman Almonte has been a mentor to him. Councilman Almonte has supported him for the last ten years and was happy to recommend him for appointment, because he is a community guy. God put him here in this moment, which is reflected in the whole community of Bergenfield. The Council represents the diversity of the town. He will represent the people on the council until December 31, 2023. Councilperson Rivera explained if he wants to run for a full term he will have to run in the primary election in June and the general election in November. This job is not easy, it has a lot of responsibility, and requires team work. He stated that team work is shown with our assemblyman and Commissioner Marte as well.

Council President Pascual stated, forgive me Commissioner Marte for saying this, but Councilperson Almonte is not just good looking but also funny. We went from Martes to Domingo. He's also a comedian which is what is needed on the council, some type of sense of relax and a smile. It's not all about serious talk. He congratulated Councilperson Almonte on his appointment. He stated they live parallel lives as they both serve the same parish community and both serve the church. He believed Bergenfield has a bright future, they didn't lose Marte, he stepped up and is still representing Bergenfield and he appreciates that. Bergenfield gained a new commissioner and a new councilman who is really involved in this town. Council President Pascual stated he is going to push him and they are going to win the November election because Councilperson Almonte is going to be his running mate. He thanked Bergenfield.

Mayor Amatorio congratulated Councilman Almonte for his service to the community and his church all throughout the years. He also congratulated Domingo's family, Grisel and the children, and thanked them in advance for lending Domingo so he can come home late from meetings and not being home on weekends for events that require his presence. He stated seeing the community of Bergenfield throwing their support behind him, he can see they are in good hands. Mayor Amatorio stated he didn't expect Councilperson Almonte would bring the entire Bergenfield tonight. He then thanked the audience for coming to the meeting tonight. He stated everyone here on the council will be a resource for him.

Father Cesar Infante gave his blessing for Councilman Almonte.

Motion by Councilperson Rivera, second by Council President Pascual for a five-minute recess. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

The meeting was recessed at 8:47 pm. The meeting resumed at 9:00 pm. R.C. All members present, no one is absent.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- A.) Nuñez/Shade Tree Committee      **RE:** Reservation of Cooper’s Pond Fieldhouse for Distribution of Seedlings/Friday, April 28, 2023/10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- B.) Eaches/Garden Club                **RE:** Request to Plant Tree and Place Plaque at Cooper’s Pond in memory of John Gorman
- C.) Glover/Garden Club                **RE:** Reservation of Cooper’s Pond Fieldhouse for Sunrise Service/Sunday, April 9, 2023/ 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Motion by Council President Pascual, second by Councilperson Rivera, to accept Correspondence Items A through C. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

### **ORDINANCES**

- A. Adoption of Ordinance

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinances published herewith were first read by title only on February 7, 2023 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

#### **ORDINANCE 23-2611 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 186 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED “LAND DEVELOPMENT”**

Public Comments on Ordinance 23-2611.

No one came forward.

Motion by Councilperson Lodato, seconded by Councilperson Deauna to close public comments. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

Motion by Councilperson Lodato, second by Councilperson Deauna, to pass Ordinance 23-2611 on second and final reading and are hereby adopted and notice of same shall be published according to law.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

- B. Tabled Ordinance

#### **ORDINANCE 23-2612 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 268 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED “STORMWATER MANAGMENT” (TABLED 3-7-23)**

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Rivera that Ordinance 23-2612 be removed from the table. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the ordinance updates storm water management. The borough attorney and the zoning officer redefined the purpose, applicability and exceptions. Mr. Gallo read from the ordinance that “the purpose of this chapter is to establish minimum storm water management requirements and controls for major development and all applications for a new construction, enlargement, or an addition to an existing structure, not defined in as defined in 268-2. Applicability. This chapter shall be applicable to all applications for building permits, new constructions, enlargements, additions, existing structures which completed development shall result in no increase in maximum approved lot coverage. If the 200 square foot addition does not exceed the maximum allowable improved coverage, no seepage pit is required. Also, exception, if you are putting on an addition and approved lot coverage exceeds the maximum allowable requirements for land development schedule B. Limiting then any new structure enlargement or addition to existing structure shall require a seepage pit for the total square footage of the addition.” It aligns with what we have been doing as aa standard practice with the zoning board.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated it is subject to the engineer. If the engineer reviews it and makes a determination whether a seepage pit is needed in order for it to be zero runoff generated by whatever the improvement is.

### C. Introduction of Ordinance

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting May 2, 2023 at 8:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard as the date and time and the Council Chambers of the Bergenfield Borough Hall as the place for a hearing on said ordinance. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion.

Mayor Amatorio read the title of the ordinance into the record:

#### **ORDINANCE 23-2612 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 268 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED “STORMWATER MANAGMENT”**

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting April 4, 2023 at 8:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard as the date and time and the Council Chambers of the Bergenfield Borough Hall as the place for a hearing on said ordinance. Council President Pascual seconded the motion.

Mayor Amatorio read the title of the ordinance into the record:

#### **ORDINANCE 23-2613 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 299 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED “VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC”**

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual	<i>aye</i>

### **A. CONSENT AGENDA**

**CONSENT RESOLUTION 23-107.** All matters listed below are considered by the Governing Body to be routine in nature. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If any discussion is desired by the Governing Body, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separately.

- a. **23-108/**To Approve Bill List
- b. **23-109/**To Opt-in to Examination Exemption Civil Service Hiring Procedures
- c. **23-110/**To Authorize Tax Refund – 7 Barry Place
- d. **23-111/**To Authorize Tax Refund – 1 Barry Place
- e. **23-112/**To Approve Temporary Emergency Appropriation
- f. ~~**23-113/**To Approve Proposal 1 – Redevelopment Plan for Church Street, Tyson Place, Front Street, and North Demarest Avenue~~
- g. **23-114/**To Approve Raffle Application RA 1392

Motion by Council President Pascual to remove Resolution 23-113 from the consent resolution and table the resolution. Councilperson Lodato seconded the motion.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Motion by Council President Pascual that the Consent Resolution be approved as amended. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

## B. Resolutions

### **23-115/**To Approve Police Chief Contract

Motion by Council President Pascual to approve Resolution 23-115. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### A. Recommendations and Nominations for Boards and Committees

## PLANNING BOARD

Mayor Amatorio nominates and appoints the following to serve on the Planning Board as a Class II member for a one-year term, terming expiring December 31, 2023.

Philip Neville            Class II            Term Expiring 12/31/23

**B. Administrative Hirings & Appointments**

**23-116/To Hire School Crossing Guards for School Year 2022-2023**

Motion by Council President Pascual to approve Resolution 23-116. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

**23-118/To Appoint Safety Coordinator – Alexandra Cacciatore**

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution 23-118. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

**COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Motion offered by Council President Pascual that the Committee/Department Reports be spread upon the minutes in full and filed. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS II**

Mayor Amatorio opens the meeting to Verbal Communications II and invites the public to comment on any subject matter, limited to five (5) minutes per speaker.

Laurie Phipps, resident and Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Library, expressed her appreciation the support the Mayor and Council have provided to the library. She reminded everyone that the library is valued by all the segments of society in Bergenfield. There are hundreds of Bergenfield residents at the library every day, and the library is open for everyone. Ms. Phipps congratulated Councilmember Almonte and stated she hopes that all of the members of the community will use the library. They do not just have books and movies, but also offer passport services, English as a second language programs, and cultural language programs.

John Smith, resident, stated back in September of last year, he had advised the Council he was trying to have the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall come to Bergenfield. The wall is coming to Bergenfield on Labor Day weekend from August 31, 2023 to September 4, 2023. He handed out information to the governing body with a breakdown of the information on the moving wall. Mr. Smith thanked Dr. Tully of the Board of Education for their monetary contribution, as the event will be used as school project for juniors and seniors. The moving wall will be displayed at the Roy W. Brown School. Mr. Smith stated there is a lot to be done by the Police Department, Fire Department, Board of Education and the DPW. He stated that there will be a meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup>

with Dr. Tully to discuss how to proceed. He requested there be a meeting scheduled prior to April 12<sup>th</sup> with the Police Department, DPW, and Borough Administrator to review the same. Mr. Smith stated they are requesting the Teaneck Armory's National Guard Unit to provide the overnight security and asked the Mayor to reach out to the Governor to make sure they have the coverage. He stated that on April 22, 2023, there will be a pinning ceremony for Vietnam War Veterans. There are currently 45 veterans who have signed up, but is not sure if all 45 will attend.

Chimene Houssou, resident, congratulated Councilman Almonte. She stated she has been a resident of Bergenfield for almost 5 years and stated she was looking to get 50 signatures to run for Mayor. She wanted to formally introduce herself and go over her plans. She stated she wanted to be heard and would be attending the meetings to be a part of the movement. Ms. Houssou stated she still needs her 50 signatures, and if she gets them, they will see much more of her. She spoke about growing up in Teaneck and noticing the changes in Bergenfield, reiterating that she wanted to be part of the change.

Barry Doll, resident, acknowledged Chimene Houssou's candidacy saying it was terrific and more people should run. He thanked the Council for the renovations at Cooper's Pond and the museum. Mr. Doll stated that on behalf of the Museum Trustees, they are contributing \$300 to the Food Pantry.

Sergeant Major Warren Williams, resident, congratulated Councilman Almonte and challenged him to assist the Veterans in the community. He spoke about the success of the USO Dance as it raised over \$2,000 reaching its goal. He stated there are a lot protocols that need to be followed for the moving wall for the five days it will be presented in Bergenfield. The ground that it rests on is sacred ground and there are programs at the opening every evening with the reading of the names. Sergeant Major Williams stated this will be announced state wide and there will be people attending from all over. The administrator spoke that the Board of Education is taking the lead, and the town will work with them. The last time the wall was in New Jersey, it was at Morris County College two years ago. He thanked the Mayor and Council for the support of the two bills the Governor signed: training and licenses for Military Training for Nurses, and that the counties will pay for the burial of veterans who cannot pay. He spoke about him and Mr. Smith working on educating veterans about resources available to them and filing claims.

Mary Sullivan, resident, inquired if anything be done with the reverse 9-1-1 messages going out. She stated they come out so late. For example, the St. Patrick's Day parade came out the day of.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the reverse 9-1-1 system is there to ensure public safety, for people driving in the area. He stated there are problems with doing it too early, but will be taken under advisement.

Dianna Flagg, resident, congratulated Barry Doll for his appointment as a crossing guard. She stated that someone took her handicapped spot tonight that she worked hard to get. Ms. Flagg acknowledged that there is a need for a 2<sup>nd</sup> handicapped spot. She inquired about the police chief's salary. Ms. Flagg stated there are motorcycles parking on the sidewalks on Washington Avenue. She stated the two spots by Lula's restaurant blocked by the police department with cones are moved every morning. She inquired if the ordinance of hiring Bergenfield residents first for positions is being followed. Ms. Flagg also inquired about the county reevaluation for Bergenfield.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated he will work on getting a second handicapped spot. Mr. Gallo stated the Police Chief's salary is \$205,000 with a 2.75% increase. Mr. Gallo asked Chief Rabboh to check the parking issue tomorrow. Mr. Gallo stated that ordinance is in regards to the civil service list. You have to now reside in Bergenfield.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated the reevaluation is determined by the ratio. He explained once the assessed value of properties falls below 15%, the county tax board starts reviewing and



requesting the municipalities undergo a reevaluation. The process is costly and takes a lot of time. Bergenfield has requested an extension. The Borough will have to do a reevaluation in the next couple of years.

Avinash Melkote, resident of Dumont, stated Norwood is on board with applying for a Quiet Zone designation. They held a zoom meeting to discuss the funds required for a diagnostic study. He asked if someone from SRF can reach out to the borough administrator. It would be a great opportunity to find out what the cost would be if Bergenfield did a diagnostic study for a quiet zone designation.

There being no one else who wishes to be heard, Mayor Amatorio closes Verbal Communications II.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

The councilmembers congratulated Councilman Almonte on his appointment. They thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and wished all a good night.

Council President Pascual asked for a moment of silence for the loss of Mr. Baldwin, a teacher at Bergenfield High School who recently passed away.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

RESOLUTION **23-117**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:


- A. Attorney-Client Privilege
  - 1. Construction Projects
  - 2. Police Department Personnel

Minutes will be taken of the meeting and released to the public at the time that the matter is resolved. After Closed Executive Session, the Mayor and Council will reconvene in the Executive Chambers to adjourn this public meeting.

On a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 9:45 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Council President Pascual and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hilda Tavitian  
Deputy Borough Clerk