

MINUTES
BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK/EXECUTIVE SESSION
JANUARY 26, 2022
7:00 PM

MAYOR BARSÀ

COUNCILMAN ASCOLESE
COUNCIL PRESIDENT FOSCHINO
COUNCILMAN KIM

COUNCILMAN BRIZZOLARA
COUNCILWOMAN HAUSMANN
COUNCILMAN ROONEY

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Norwood was held at Borough Hall on the above date.

Mayor Barsa called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and led those in attendance in a salute to the American Flag and asked for a moment of silence

Mayor Barsa stated:

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, setting forth the time, date, place and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in the Record and Star Ledger, filing a copy in the Borough Clerk’s office, and posting on the bulletin board.”

Roll Call:	Mayor Barsa	Present
	Council President Ascolese	Present
	Councilman Brizzolara	Present
	Councilman Foschino	Present
	Councilwoman Hausmann	Present
	Councilman Kim	Present
	Councilman Rooney	Present

Mayor Barsa mentioned his thoughts and prayers are with those victims of the senseless acts of violence in New York City and the NYPD.

The mayor said that Livingston Street is flourishing with new businesses and new tenants moving in. Both projects are near completion with only minor landscaping requirements that need to be completed once the weather warms up. There was a recent ribbon cutting at Yoga6 which he was happy to be a part of.

Mayor Barsa stated that there was a meeting held to discuss the handicapped accessible playground. Those in attendance were the Mayor, Council President Foschino, Borough Engineer Michael Neglia, Borough Clerk/Administrator Jordan Padovano, County Clerk John Hogan, Closter Mayor John Glidden and NVRHS Superintendent James Santana. The meeting was to discuss the possibility of creating a playground for the handicapped children in our area at a better-suited location. The mayor stated that the borough does not want to have a playground where they feel as if they were a second thought.

The mayor announced that the Mayors Wellness program is off to a great start. Recently there was a virtual seminar given by a registered dietitian. This was geared towards getting eating habits back on track after the holidays. You are able to find the presentation on our website and Facebook page. All are welcome to attend.

Mayor Barsa mentioned that Norwood would be hosting the annual rabies clinic on February 1st from 5:30 to 7:00pm. All 2022 pet licenses are due by February 28th.

Mayor Barsa reminded residents that taxes are due on February 1st with a 10-day grace period. Taxes can be paid online by visiting the borough website, through the mail, placed in the drop box that is in the borough hall vestibule, or in person at borough hall.

Lastly, the Mayor urged as the cold spell that is hitting our area continues it is important to check on your neighbors, especially the elderly. These cold temperatures can very quickly bring on hypothermia in the elderly, even if they are indoors. If anyone needs a place to get warm, they are always welcome to come to borough hall.

CONSENT AGENDA

Matters listed below are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion of the Council and one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests an item be removed.

Approval of the following resolutions:

2022:44 Resolution Supporting Mutual Aid Plan and Rapid Deployment Force

2022:45 Emergency Replacement of Radios

2022:46 Payment of Vouchers

2022:47 Appointment of Donald Helmstetter as Borough Appraiser for a one-year term to expire 12/31/2022

2022:48 Appointment of Neglia Engineering as Borough Engineer for a three year term to expire 12/31/25

Approval of January 5, 2022, Mayor and Council Minutes

Council President Foschino pulled Resolution 2022:45 from the agenda pending the current insurance claim.

Approval of Resolutions 2022:44, 46,47, 48 and approval of the January 5, 2022 Mayor and Council Minutes was motioned by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Councilman Rooney. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- Sidewalks & Crosswalks

- All Inclusive Playground

The mayor stated that there is a safety meeting scheduled with Norwood Public School on the 27th of January. He then turned the discussion over to Michael Neglia, Borough Engineer. Michael Neglia referenced the list of capital improvements provided to the Mayor and Council right before the meeting started. He said that the estimates are a bit high right now. Kennedy field playground received \$197,000 of grant money from BCDG and an additional \$60,000 of grant money from open space. That is also including shade trees and dugout rebuilding. The DEP has been in contact with Neglia's office regarding the dog park with minor comments which have been addressed. They anticipate the permit shortly. Michael Neglia recommends purchasing the dugouts under state contract and that way no public bidding is required. That would be the quickest way to get that done. The drainage at 15th street is complicated due to the low area of the road, catch basins, and multiple easements. There is serious erosion on Millbrook circle due to drainage issues. Michael recommends increasing the height of the headwall. There is a section of Millbrook that asphalt needs repairing. The Meadow Lane headwall has been an old problem. Catch basin that surrounds the property and is eroding again. Ambulance parking is being deteriorated because of constant traffic of the trucks. Will be reinforcing that with concrete and hopefully that will alleviate the problem. The sidewalk along the Norwood public school is complicated but doable. The grade of elevation drops severely. To put a sidewalk in is a big project. Possible sidewalk needs to be discussed with the Board of Education. Drainage is also an issue, which is why the preliminary number is so high. Last part of the list is a couple of streets on the road paving program list. Some consideration behind the Northern Valley Program to have an all-inclusive playground in conjunction with the school's needs. Neglia feels it would be very special if that partnership is showcased. This will be brought up to the Board of Education this week for their approval. This project will take some time to get off the ground and running. Open space money will be looked at from surrounding towns and grant money as well. Knickerbocker field went out to bid again and hopefully will have that under construction in a short period of time. The Blanch Ave bridge has to have bar steel rail on the bridge deck. That should be installed in 3 weeks. Suez needs to do 4 days of water work on the bridge. If Neglia could have it open sooner, then he will do that. His target date is the end of February.

Mayor Barsa wants to add Hemlock Court to this list as the road needs work leading into the courts. Looking at just this list of projects it will cost about 2.5 million for just the projects and another 2 million for paving. Michael Neglia will check on the grant amount awarded for the dog park. Engineer Yasseen Saad said that there was a \$99,500 matching grant for the dog park.

Councilman Rooney thanked Michael Neglia for the report. Sidewalks and Crosswalk stick out to him. Hopefully we can get grant money to subsidize that and maybe we can have a grant writer come in and look at that. Neglia stated that those projects will be attractive to grant writers.

Councilwoman Hausmann thanked Michael Neglia for the report. Councilwoman Hausmann asked about sidewalks on Broadway near Walnut intersection. A lot of foot traffic in that area should warrant a safety feature there. Councilwoman Hausmann had a question about the duplication of Millbrook Circle on the report.

Neglia explained that one line item is a repair of an area of the roadway that is in disrepair. The other item is to fix the entire street. But if the governing body is not in favor of paving all of Millbrook circle, then at least fix that small section. Most of these projects could be subject to grant money, now that we have a list, we can discuss hiring a grant writer with this council. Councilwoman Hausmann brought up the shuffleboard idea that was previously mentioned and suggested a pickleball court instead. It is a very popular game, and appropriate for all ages, if that could be considered that would be great. Mayor Barsa felt that we could add that to the list.

Mayor Barsa also wants to see if we can continue the Livingston streetscape to continue onto Broadway. Councilwoman Hausmann asked about the railroad tracks there. Neglia said that the railroad company would have to be contacted and the streetscape would have to skip over the tracks until that is approved. Councilman Ascolese asked about the width of the tracks, Mayor Barsa said it is 60 feet combined.

Councilman Kim asked if the Kennedy playground is the same as the handicapped accessible playground. Neglia said that only until recently was the discussion regarding only the playground at Kennedy field. That would add handicapped accessible bathrooms and add elements that are handicapped accessible. Councilman Kim asked if we are the only town in the area with a dog park and handicapped accessible playground. Neglia said that most towns have playgrounds and are updated regularly, and he thinks that Closter recently got a dog park. Pickleball is a very hot sport and Norwood would need to find a location.

Councilwoman Hausmann was wondering if we can remove the word "handicapped" as it does not reflect all those who will use these facilities. It is a very antiquated word and is offensive. It is a word that is not used in playgrounds at all anymore and it is a word that people with special needs do not like. I spoke to Rick and Jordan to change the word on the agenda. Borough Administrator / Clerk Padovano pointed out that it has been changed on the updated agenda.

Michael Neglia mentioned that the only other request that they received was filling the water retention feature in front of the police department, that is being investigated. Neglia is revisiting the Broad Street bridge project but may need additional funding. Neglia pulled an application to the state for grants with a cost of \$674,000. That is going to be a big project and complicated project. A temporary bridge would increase the cost of that as well. Councilman Rooney thought there was a \$500,000 grant for that project. Michael Neglia and Borough Administrator / Clerk will look into the file.

Council President Foschino wanted to go back to the original list and go over the must-dos. Fire department is a must and Neglia confirmed the Borough can save some money on that. Council President Foschino feels that drainage and dugouts are priority. That comes to a little over \$700,000 and adding in the EMS repair. Then if

we add the Hemlock Court paving and sidewalk installation to the road paving program. Sidewalks there should be looked at since speed can get excessive there. Councilman Rooney will check with the CFO, to see if there is still funding for road work. Council President Foschino wanted to remind the council about the fencing around the field on Walnut. If the council proceeds with the list of projects with a grant writer, then we cannot add these items to the budget for 2022. Councilman Rooney agreed. Council President Foschino feels that we should review this again with Neglia and highlight the mandatory projects for our budget.

Mayor Barsa wants a full list from every department for early February of their capital request.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Councilman Ascolese. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion.

Alexandra Fruhling – 40 Cobblestone Crossing

Over the past 2 years I have been discussing the dog park project with Mayor Barsa and Councilwoman Hausmann but over the years I have been told multiple things. Recently I have been told that the DEP permits are not in yet and that the grant has been lowered to \$30,000.

Mayor Barsa said that at the last meeting regarding the dog park, we made it clear that it may not happen. Engineer Yasseen Saad said he responded to the DEP immediately with their requests and should have an answer within the next two weeks. He sent it to the environmental scientist directly. Mayor Barsa said that if the council feels this project is fundable, we will go out for funding. Council President Foschino wanted to know if there is a plan b or alternative if this project does not happen. Alexandra said that there is no alternative. The council does not want to see anyone disappointed.

Nancy Congiusti – 195 Livingston Street.

Nancy Congiusti asked the mayor if there is still an all-inclusive playground committee that is still active? The mayor said yes there is still a committee, but funding is being worked on and there has been new discussions with the county and school in town for an all-inclusive playground there. Ms. Congiusti asked why the committee has not been involved with those discussions. Mayor Barsa stated that the committee is not part of that discussion. Ms. Congiusti wanted the dates of the last committee meeting and next committee meeting. Mayor Barsa said we have not had one in quite a while and there is not a new one scheduled yet. Ms. Congiusti

stated that Michael Neglia mentioned the playground at a different location will be for handicapped kids and is hopeful that verbiage can change, and that Neglia stated that those children would come first at that park. Ms. Congiusti wants to know if the park will be only for them or all-inclusive? Neglia first apologized and didn't mean to use any wrong terminology and stated that the way we envision this is that the Kennedy playground will still be in existence and this facility near the school will be geared towards that special needs population, rather than just putting in a couple pieces of ADA-compliant apparatus that is sometimes overrun during popular park hours. If down the road the school does put an aquatic center near the proposed park, that would be fantastic. The focus of the park would be 100% accommodating the ADA needs. Ms. Congiusti feels that it is a very nice gesture, however, also feels that what the town would be doing is segregating a specific population. Because now there will be a playground at Kennedy field strictly for typically developing children and the special needs children are somewhere else. Ms. Congiusti feels that sounds like segregation, not integration and not all inclusive. Michael Neglia apologized for any miscommunication, but he wanted to stress the fact that in the beginning of the presentation he mentioned the park would have an integration component. Ms. Congiusti mentioned the previous drawings where typically developing children can play with the special needs children. Neglia agrees and reassured Ms. Congiusti that the plans were still there. Neglia feels that another location would allow the park to be on a grander scale with access from the County and school system. This way all the special needs apparatus and the integrated apparatus can be expanded. Ms. Congiusti reminded all that the original concept at Kennedy was to replace outdated equipment.

Julie Krcmaric - 90 Mills Ave

Ms. Krcmaric is a special needs mom and feels like the Borough is focused on the Valley Program but there is a wide variety of special needs kids in town. Ms. Krcmaric wants to know if the parents of special needs kids be included in the design as well as special needs adults? Michael Neglia would 100% welcome that. Anyone in the special needs community should be involved. Ms. Krcmaric pointed out that some special needs kids in Norwood are bussed out of town. She would be more than happy to be involved.

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Rooney and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann. All councilmembers present approved the motion.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion by Councilwoman Hausmann, second by Councilman Ascolese, and unanimously agreed that 2022:49 Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Council to

proceed in Closed Session – Matters Relating to Employment be approved. The meeting temporarily adjourned to Closed Session at 8:11 PM.

The meeting resumed in open session at 9:00 PM.

RETURN TO OPEN

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to settle the lawsuit discussed in closed session. The motion was forwarded by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Councilman Rooney. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion via a roll call vote.

Mayor Barsa stated how proud he is of the Norwood Police Department. The Council talked to 4 officers with perfect records. Mayor Barsa nominated Sal Russino for the Captain position, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion. The motion was forwarded by Council President Foschino and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion via a roll call vote.

Mayor Barsa nominated Christopher Federici for the Lieutenant position, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion. The motion was forwarded by Council President Foschino and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion via a roll call vote.

Mayor Barsa nominated John Kuder for the Sergeant position, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion via a roll call vote.

Mayor Barsa nominated Dan Sullivan for the Sergeant position, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Ascolese. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion via a roll call vote.

The mayor mentioned the Council do a swearing in at the next mayor and council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Ascolese. All councilmembers present approved the motion. Meeting was adjourned the meeting at 9:18PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Padovano
Borough Clerk