

REGULAR MEETING – SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held via Zoom, on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, and was called to order by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:01 PM. Mayor Brill Mittler read the Open Public Meetings Statement.

Present: Mayor Brill Mittler; Councilpersons Canavera, Fine, Foster, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan; Borough Attorney Schmierer; Borough Administrator Jover; Borough Clerk Hullings.
Absent: None.

Mayor Brill Mittler read proclamations in recognition of the 100th birthdays of Julia Talia and Muriel Federman Levine.

Mayor Brill Mittler asked the Council members to present their reports.

Councilwoman Foster reported that the upcoming Police community forum will be held on September 24th at 7:00 p.m. If residents wish to submit questions, they can do so. Also on the 24th, the Attorney General's Office is having a forum for the Asian community that has been under great attack. Information on both forums is posted on the Borough's website and the Police Department website. She has been asked whether there would be a trunk or treat held this year and they are not yet sure if it will happen. The street relining and street signage project is going well at the intersections. Last week, the Governor signed into law that Juneteenth (June 19th) will become an official holiday starting next year.

Councilman Fine reported that he wanted to recognize the observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month, which is observed from September 15th through October 15th, to celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. Secondly, he thanked the Public Information Officer for drafting this part of his Council report tonight to publicize the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment, which recognized the right of women to vote, and to encourage all citizens to exercise their right to vote, the Highland Park Arts Commission is sponsoring "The Voting Project", a month-long contest running, running September 15th through October 15th, that invites creative expressions of all types that highlight our right to vote. The Commission welcomes poetry, essays, paintings, sketches, sculptures, rap, spoken word, dance, comedy and other forms of art that celebrate voting. Contest submissions may be made to the Highland Park Arts Commission between Tuesday, September 15th and Thursday, October 15th, by sending photos, PDFs, sound recordings, or videos of the art to info@hpartscommission.com. The Highland Park Arts Commission will judge entries between 10/15/20 and 10/20/20, and post the results on its website – hpartscommission.com. The top 3 submissions will be shared via the Borough's social media from October 20th through November 3rd. Finally, for those who will soon be observing the Jewish High Holidays, he wished them a Shana Tova a happy, healthy and sweet New Year.

Councilwoman Canavera – No report.

Councilman Hale thanked the Public Information Officer for part of his report and Governor Phil Murphy who has allowed for some increase in indoor dining. Restaurants are open inside and out and indoor dining has some restrictions. Inside dining is limited to 25% of their capacity and the number of people per table is limited to 8, unless you are all from the same household. When people are seated and placing orders, the goal is to not be walking around and to wear masks when not eating or drinking. This is a partnership between everyone and the restaurants. He encouraged residents to take advantage of the opportunities to eat out in Highland Park. Wished everyone who celebrates, Shana Tova.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan reported that the mobile COVID-19 testing had 55 people pre-register and 43 people showed up. The Board of Health discussed holding another mobile COVID-19 testing as we gear up for the fall and flu season. They also discussed the challenges around trying to get youth tested. They are reaching out to compile a list of doctors and facilities that will test children; especially children under the age of 5. She congratulated Kathie Lombardi of the Highland Park Food Pantry who will be receiving the Volunteer Hunger Hero Award from Feeding Middlesex County on Thursday, September 24th at 7:00 p.m. She encouraged residents to join them for this virtual event by visiting www.feedingmiddlesexcounty.org. The Food Pantry has been doing a lot since the pandemic and even before that. The Housing Authority buildings will be getting a comment box outside of the office to drop questions for the Commissioners that would be read at the meetings that are being held virtually. She thanked Governor Murphy for declaring Juneteenth a holiday. Today is National IT Professionals Day. She thanked all the IT professionals as we need them now, more than ever.

Councilman George asked residents to be patient with all the road improvements going on around town and with the PSE&G work being done. If your street is blocked by construction on trash or recycling day, you are asked to leave the trash and recycling at the curb and the crews will be back the following day to pick it up or as soon as the road is clear. The Mayor will be appointing Nancy Kranich to the Library Board of Trustees later in the meeting. The Library's curbside pickup and Librarian's choice are very successful. They are running a virtual art gallery starting with submissions by the Arts Collective. Finally, he extended his and his families wishes for the high holy days and wished them to be safe and satisfied with family.

Borough Administrator Jover reported that the annual hydrant flushing and inspection routine is upon us. The water and sewer bills were issued. Councilman George mentioned the work being done by PSE&G and the Borough road projects on South Park Avenue, Cherry Street and South Adelaide Avenue. They are working on sewer components first, then tree work, curb work and then do final restoration. Project is expected to be completed by the end of October. Flu clinics will be resuming this year with three in October.

Borough Attorney Schmierer - No report.

Mayor Brill Mittler reported that she has been receiving emails from residents who are working with their children remotely and they asked her to ask the residents to be courteous and understand that many of our children and parents are trying to work through the e-learning. Lessons go until 1:00 p.m. and they ask that residents keep the noise levels outside as minimal as possible so that the children have best opportunity to learn while at home. Later tonight on the work session, the Council will be discussing the deer issue in town. They have received many letters from both sides of this issue and it is emotionally charged. The Council is working hard and trying to learn as much as they possibly can about all sides of this issue. Tonight is an opportunity for them to discuss different aspects of it amongst themselves. There will be no decision on a hunt or no hunt tonight. Tonight is for them to have a discussion and think of next steps in preparing themselves for whether or not they are going to do this.

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the meeting for public discussion and called upon all those wishing to speak to identify themselves. The total time for this session is 21 minutes; three minutes maximum per speaker. Comments are limited to items on the agenda. If you want to speak on an item that is not listed, there will be an opportunity to do so later in the meeting.

Anna Hallin, 235 Montgomery Street, asked how the new law against false 9-1-1 calls would be implemented in Highland Park. She asked if the Dispatchers will inform callers if they suspect they are making a false call. She asked if a call is determined to be false, how that caller will be held accountable. She asked what compensation, if any, the person can expect who was subjected to police control based on a false call. She asked when they would invite APL to give a presentation about deer to the Council and the public. She noted that the Borough did contact APL for their opinion but then told them why the hunt was necessary. APL indicated that they do presentations, but it seemed that the Borough was not interested. She finds this strange, since the residents of Highland Park have repeatedly asked the Council to invite APL to give a presentation. She learned from Angie at APL that the Borough estimates that only 10% of the residents in Highland Park are for the hunt. She wondered why you would start a hunt that 90% of the community does not want. She asked when the Borough would show the data of how many people are contacting you with complaints and how many for each type of complaint. She wanted to know how many people are contacting them that do not want a deer hunt. She and others have repeatedly asked for these numbers, yet they are met with only silence. She asked if they have the data why they do not release it. If you do not have it, what are you basing your decision about a potential hunt on? She asked if they have spoken to residents who have contacted them and offered solutions to the different issues that people complain about. She asked if they have made any efforts to learn from the residents about what approaches could be viable. She asked why they are considering a hunt when it has been shown that it does not solve the actual complaints people have regarding deer. When it comes to forests, Monmouth State Park has been hunting deer for 25 years, but the understory has not improved. They have been hunting in the Great Swamp for 40 years, but the deer population has not stabilized and the forests have not regenerated. She has over 250 signatures on a petition against deer hunting in Highland Park and that number is growing each day. The majority of this community does not want a deer hunt, so do not start it.

Oz Duncan, 311 Lawrence Avenue, commented about the deer and the reasons why they should not support the hunt. The hunt will cost tax dollars. Even if there is a volunteer hunt, that costs no tax money from the government, the deer corpses that the hunt will leave must be picked up by someone. Killing deer will not help with the overpopulation and the killing of plant growth.

Michael Adas, 35 South 3rd Avenue, commented that a deer hunt is probably the cruelest way to carry out this process. There are many pictures on social media of deer with arrows in them. When they are shot with arrows, they run and they will run into neighborhoods and die. Imagine children watching deer being slaughtered and dying in their yards. He thinks a hunt is unnecessary, as there are many ways to manage deer and to protect food in people's yards and the flowers in their gardens. One of the ways is to contact a tree expert. Another way is to have proper screening if you have a vegetable garden. If you kill the deer in this area, a whole new group of deer will come in and you will have the same problem all over again. They are gentle, wonderful creatures and we are lucky to have them. If he had a choice, he would put a sign at all the entrances to Highland Park saying that this is the speed limit in town as we are a deer friendly community and do not exceed the speed limit or you will get a huge fine. If we do anything, the one thing we can do is control the birth of the females.

Lindsay, 324 Magnolia Street, commented that the Division of Fish and Wildlife will directly benefit financially with an annual cull and she strongly believes their input on this is completely biased and not to be taken seriously. Deer hunting is completely ineffective as other towns have been doing it for years and still have not seen improvement in the numbers or confirm that is a solution to the issue. Another person stated that the corpses would be picked up, but after how long. The deer will run and wind up in people's backyards, on public streets and different areas of town and may not be discovered and picked up for days, weeks or even months. If hunters are trying to lure them and corral them to the meadows, that is great, but they are not going to stay there. When the deer are shot with arrows, they will run and the hunters will not be able to chase them, as they will be up in the trees. It is a developer issue, not a deer issue. It is an overdevelopment problem, not a deer problem. Due to the low speed limits in Highland Park, it is not a problem, except for residents complaining about the deer being in their backyards and eating their plants. We do not have a confirmed number of deer, but the majority of residents do not believe it is enough of an issue to validate hunting in our family oriented community.

Elena Gerstmann, 127 North 6th Avenue, commented that she is strongly against the hunting of the deer. She also spoke about the Mayor's comments for keeping the noise down before 1:00 p.m. because of remote learning. She does not think they would be happy to see a little deer running outside the window with an arrow in it when their children are trying to learn. She is happy about the upcoming police forum and there has been some progress in the last year in terms of police reform as it relates to social, and racial injustice, but not enough. She is a big supporter of redistributing the funding of the Police Department. What concerns her is that you are asking the Police Department to make recommendations for themselves about their own budget. Both the NJ PBA and Police Unions have supported and endorsed Donald Trump for President and she does not trust Trump states on law and order. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Police Department puts together their budget, but it goes through the Public Safety Committee for review.

Tatiana Gelfand, 118 North 5th Avenue, commented that she was not alone in contacting the Council with many questions and concerns about the deer. She personally wrote several emails where she presented some possible solutions. None of the questions that were asked were ever answered by the Council. One of the requests was to invite APLNJ for a presentation about non-lethal solutions about deer control. This was always ignored and repeated many times and never addressed. She does not see the point of having the public speak when nothing is ever taken into consideration. People have solutions and she personally voiced her solutions to a group of gardeners and many people like it, including people defending native plants. The Town of Saddle River started a deer hunt on Saturday and there were two episodes involving deer, where deer crashed into a residential yard and lay dying and where one could not be tracked. She wants the Council to take these matters into consideration because the distance from the Meadows to the Bartle School is very close.

Frank Bridges, 119 Park Place, commented that he is against the deer hunt. If the data shows that we have too many deer and they are causing damage, he understands, but he believes there are other more humane ways. To go out and kill these deer in such a small town and call it a hunt where these deer are clearly urbanized, is not a good way to teach our kids and other people that this is a way you solve a problem.

Emma Barker-Lazar, 233 Raritan Avenue, commented that she is completely against a deer hunt and recently moved to Highland Park. She would be very disappointed to find out that the town she is falling in love with would participate in something so needlessly brutal when many other people have said that there are tons of other non-lethal options out there.

No one else appearing to be heard, the Mayor closed the public portion.

The Clerk reported advertising an ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING CHAPTER 9 OF THE "CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, 2010" BY DELETING SECTIONS 100-102, for consideration of passage on final reading by title and that affidavits of publication thereto are on file. She also reported that the ordinance had been posted and made available to the public, as required by law.

On motion made by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote, the above-entitled ordinance was taken up on final reading by title.

Mayor Brill Mittler declared the public hearing on the ordinance open to all officials and persons present and called upon all those wishing to speak for or against the ordinance to do so.

No one appearing to be heard and no objections having been received in writing, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

On motion made by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, the ordinance entitled as above, being Ordinance No. 20-2012, as amended, was duly adopted by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Fine, Foster, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Health and Human Services Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 9-20-251

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING CHAPTER 9 OF THE "CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, 2010" BY DELETING SECTIONS 100-102, passed on final reading at this meeting be delivered to the Mayor for his/her approval, and if approved by him, that the same be recorded in full by the Borough Clerk in a proper book kept for that purpose, and be advertised by publishing the same by title in the "Home News Tribune", of Neptune, New Jersey, a newspaper published in the County of Middlesex and circulating in this municipality, there being no newspaper published in this municipality, in the manner prescribed by law.

The Clerk reported that an ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS OF THE BOROUGH CODE TO UPDATE LANGUAGE SUCH THAT IT MORE ACCURATELY REFERS TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE ACCESSIBLE PARKING ASSOCIATED THEREWITH, had been introduced in writing by the Health and Human Services Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

On motion made by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, the ordinance entitled as above was duly adopted on first reading by title by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Fine, Foster, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Health and Human Services Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilwoman Foster-Dublin, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 9-20-252

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS OF THE BOROUGH CODE TO UPDATE LANGUAGE SUCH THAT IT MORE ACCURATELY REFERS TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE ACCESSIBLE PARKING ASSOCIATED THEREWITH, has been introduced and duly passed on first reading;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that this Council meet at the Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, New Jersey, on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, at 7:00 PM, for the purpose of considering said Ordinance on final passage after public hearing thereon.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said a Notice of Pending Ordinance and Summary of said Ordinance be published once at least one (1) week prior to the time fixed for further consideration of said Ordinance for final passage in the "Home News Tribune", of East Brunswick, New Jersey, a newspaper published in the County of Middlesex and circulating in this municipality, there being no newspaper published daily in this municipality, together with a notice of the introduction thereof and of the time and place when and where said Ordinance will be further considered for final passage as aforesaid.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of said Ordinance shall be posted on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, New Jersey, forthwith and that the Borough Clerk have available in her office for the members of the general public of Highland Park copies of said Ordinance for those members of the general public who may request the same.

Resolution Nos. 9-20-253 through 9-20-255, were duly adopted on motion made by Councilwoman Foster, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Fine, Foster, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 9-20-253

WHEREAS the Borough of Highland Park entered into an Agreement with the Highland Park Department of Public Works Association (HPDPWA) for the period of January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2021; and

WHEREAS the Agreement establishes a new wage scale for Public Works employees covered by HPDPWA for the period of January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that that the salary resolution No. 01-19-14 and 01-20-14 are hereby amended as articulated below.

TITLE	NAME		HOURLY RATE	EFFECTIVE DATES
Driver	Robert	Cahill	\$34.38	01/01-12/31/19
Driver	Robert	Cahill	\$35.07	01/01-12/31/20
Driver	James	Coleman	\$35.21	01/01-12/31/19
Driver	James	Coleman	\$35.91	01/01-04/30/20
Driver	Edward	Corson	\$35.21	01/01-12/31/19
Driver	Edward	Corson	\$35.91	01/01-12/31/20
Driver	Michael	Milan	\$34.38	01/01-12/31/19
Driver	Michael	Milan	\$35.07	01/01-12/31/20
Driver	Jeffery	Reap	\$28.28	01/01-12/31/19
Driver	Jeffery	Reap	\$28.94	01/01-12/31/20
Equipment Operator	Thomas	Kohler	\$36.06	01/01-12/31/19
Equipment Operator	Thomas	Kohler	\$36.78	01/01-12/31/20
Maint./ Custodian	Ronald	Rowe	\$21.63	01/01-12/31/19
Maint./ Custodian	Ronald	Rowe	\$22.06	01/01-08/31/20
Master Laborer	Dennis	Chekenian	\$25.96	01/01-12/31/19
Master Laborer	Dennis	Chekenian	\$26.62	01/01-12/31/20
Master Laborer	John	Geoghan	\$26.62	01/01-12/31/19
Master Laborer	John	Geoghan	\$27.29	01/01-12/31/20
Master Laborer	Mark	Rohan	\$28.65	01/01-12/31/19
Master Laborer	Mark	Rohan	\$32.40	01/01-12/31/20
Master Laborer	Rudolph	Rohan	\$27.97	01/01-12/31/19
Master Laborer	Rudolph	Rohan	\$28.65	01/01-12/31/20
Mechanic	Robert	West	\$36.88	01/01-12/31/19
Mechanic	Robert	West	\$37.62	01/01-07/07/20
Senior Laborer	Antonio	Avila	\$21.12	01/01-12/31/19
Senior Laborer	Antonio	Avila	\$22.22	01/01-12/31/20
Sr. W&S Maint.	David	Baldwin	\$23.62	01/01-12/31/19
Sr. W&S Maint.	David	Baldwin	\$24.46	01/01-06/30/20

Senior Laborer	David	Baldwin	\$24.46	07/01-12/31/20
Senior Laborer	Frederick	Long	\$23.62	01/01-12/31/19
Senior Laborer	Frederick	Long	\$24.46	01/01-12/31/20
Senior Laborer	James	Webb, Sr.	\$23.62	01/01-12/31/19
Senior Laborer	James	Webb, Sr.	\$24.46	01/01-12/31/20
W&S Crew Leader	Jose	Gonzalez	\$34.38	01/01-12/31/19
W&S Crew Leader	Jose	Gonzalez	\$35.07	01/01-06/30/20
Master Laborer	Jose	Gonzalez	\$35.07	07/01-12/31/20

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Finance Director be and is hereby directed to make the necessary changes in the payroll records of the Finance Department in accordance with the changes established by this resolution.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 9-20-254

WHEREAS, applications for renewal licenses issued in the Borough of Highland Park under the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Law (NJSA 33:1-1 et seq.) have been made by the hereinafter applicants, and

WHEREAS, said applications have been examined and the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park have made the following findings of fact with respect to each of the applicants:

1. Said applications are complete in all respects.
2. The applicants and the premises are qualified to be licensed in accordance with Title 33, all regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and local ordinances as amended and supplemented pertinent to and consistent with Title 33.
3. The applicants have disclosed, and the issuing authority has ascertained and reviewed, the source of any additional financing obtained in the previous license term for use in the licensed business.
4. The Mayor and Council are of the opinion that said applications should be approved.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the following renewal licenses issued under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law (NJSA 33:1-1 et seq.) to sell alcoholic beverages upon the premises set forth opposite their names under the terms and conditions prescribed in the Act aforesaid, the amendments and supplements thereof, and the ordinances, rules and regulations promulgated by the Director of the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, State of New Jersey, shall be and are hereby approved, to wit:

PLENARY RETAIL DISTRIBUTION LICENSES

Four W Properties LLC - 1207-32-008-013 (Inactive)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk shall be and is hereby authorized and directed to issue to the aforesaid licensees the license aforesaid, which licenses shall be effective October 1, 2020 and shall expire June 30, 2021.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 9-20-255

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that all claims presented prior to this meeting as shown on a detailed list prepared by the Borough Treasurer, and which have been submitted and approved in accordance with Highland Park Ordinance No. 1004, shall be and the same are hereby approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk shall include in the minutes of this meeting a statement as to all such claims approved as shown in a Bills List Journal in accordance with said Ordinance.

The bills approved for payment at this meeting, Bills List 9/15/2020 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 40.

Mayor Brill Mittler appointed Nancy Kranich to serve as a Regular Member of the Library Board of Trustees for a term to expire December 31, 2022.

The above appointment was confirmed on motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilwoman Foster, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

- Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Fine, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.
- Opposed: None.
- Abstained: None.
- Absent: None.

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the meeting for public discussion and called upon all those wishing to speak to identify themselves. Speakers are limited to 3 minutes and the discussion to end at 9:00 PM.

Ravit Duncan, 311 Lawrence Avenue, commented about the Equity Commission and a resolution that would dissolve this into an advisory Council. She asked for clarification about what that would mean and when the first meeting would take place. She also commented about the deer hunt and noted that 2020 has been hard enough. We have been immersed in death and negativity. Murdering deer right now is not what we need and not how we should end 2020. Mayor Brill Mittler explained that they appointed all the members to the Advisory Council at the last meeting. They will have the same functions that the ordinance called for. The Advisory Council will work directly with her, which she hopes will streamline the process.

Amy Livingston, 229 South 11th Avenue, asked the Council to consider at its next meeting, a resolution to support the energy innovation and carbon dividend act. This is a bill that seeks to address climate change by putting the costs of greenhouse gas emissions where they belong, on the biggest emitters, rather than on the people in the hardest hit areas, who are often low income, often people of color

and usually not major emitters of greenhouse gases. It does this by directly imposing a fee on the burning of fossil fuels but it is not a tax per se, as the money does not go into the government's coffers, it goes into a fund, the proceeds of which are distributed equally to every household in the US. This would primarily benefit lower income individuals and the money would more than offset the increased cost of fossil fuels, but those increased costs would still them an incentive to reduce their use of fossil fuels as it would for others. This is beneficial for people and beneficial for the planet and this is something currently before the house as HR763 and the group she represents, the Citizens Climate Lobby, is seeking endorsements from local governments, business leaders and other prominent individuals to draw more attention to this bill and help to get it passed. More information is available on the website energyinnovationact.org. Mayor Brill Mittler asked Councilman George to have his committee's take a look at this matter.

Ashley Hartwyk, 216 South 2nd Avenue, commented about the deer issue and asked about the Frequently Asked Questions document prepared by the Borough Administrator about the deer management program. There is a section that discusses the study done by Cornell University in 2019 and there is a quote in the document prepared by Teri that says "neither sterilization, nor recreational hunting reduced deer browse rates, nor does either appear able to achieve reductions in deer population or their impacts". If hunting does not reduce the population, then why do something that costs money, adds stress and causes discord to the town. There are many things for years that residents have asked the Council to address such as potholes, stop lights that don't work, and the clogged storm sewers and they continue to go unaddressed. She asked why they go unaddressed when the majority of residents ask for them in favor of something that no one asked for, benefits no one, and does nothing but introduce discourse and hostility into the town. She asked why they would prioritize this over the many problems that have been raised and still are not addressed. She asked if hunters will be allowed to follow the trail of blood out of the meadows and pursue injured deer into surrounding areas. She asked if they will be allowed to pursue and kill deer in public areas of Highland Park. She asked if they would be able to do so on private property. She asked who is responsible for cleanup of dead deer on private property. No governmental agency right now will pick up dead carcasses on private property. She also asked about cost for removal and for cleanup. She asked about liability should someone be injured, etc. She asked about razor arrows left behind if hunters miss.

Matt Hersh, 333 Felton Avenue, thanked the Council for passing resolution at the last meeting in support of Senate Bill 2340, designed to build off Governor Murphy's Executive Order 106, a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions. Highland Park is the only municipality to pass such a resolution. The bill is the only piece of legislation that sets forth repayment standards for renters and homeowners who are financially impacted by COVID. It is a piece of a larger policy issue, the first being the moratorium, but administratively it has a landlord relief fund and he is hearing about other bills to provide funding for property owners who provide housing. When we are being asked to stay home during a pandemic for public health purposes, it is incredibly important. On top of that, when home is also school for so many families, your support of this bill is doubled. The bill has not passed the Senate yet and there is another hearing on November 27th and he and several organizations are trying to get this bill up for a vote. It has passed the Assembly by bi-partisan margins. He encouraged them to contact Senate President Sweeney and encourage him to put S2340 up for a vote.

Marian Sackowitz, 617 South 5th Avenue, asked if anything is happening with Buck Woods. It has been over a year since they cleared the site and she has not seen much happening in the way of testing or cleanup. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that the owners of Buck Woods filed last Friday their application with the Planning Board to begin the process to try and get approval for 75 units. The Planning Boards Consultants will begin to go through the application materials to determine whether or not the application is complete. After the application is deemed complete, the matter would move forward to hearing and notice would be given to residents in the area. Ms. Sackowitz asked about the status of financial responsibility as the Borough lost a lawsuit to Morris. She asked how much the Borough will be charged for cleanup of that site. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that it is a matter of pending litigation in the Superior Court and arguments are taking place and discovery is underway. There has been no decision made by the Court. Ms. Sackowitz asked for an estimate of the cost to clean up the site should the Borough lose the case. Borough Attorney Schmierer explained that they do not know the cost and they are in Court over that issue. They have to go through the process and see what the decision is and have the right to appeal the decision.

No one else appearing to be heard, the Mayor closed the public discussion.

Work Session:

Deer Management – Councilwoman Foster explained that information was sent out to the Governing Body by the Borough Administrator. They were looking for any questions or additional comments on that information. Borough Administrator Jover indicated that the information provided is a draft document. She noted that one of her first contacts was the Division of Fish and Wildlife. The Borough contracted with a Professor at Raritan Valley Community College and also with the founder and CEO of White Buffalo. The Borough did speak with the Animal Protection League of New Jersey, but did not get any follow up information. She also spoke with representatives from the County Parks Department, the Rutgers Ecological Preserve and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension. There is more work to be done if it is decided that a controlled hunt is the way to go on the Meadows property. Councilman George noted that he would like more information on the perimeter of the hunt area to control injured deer from fleeing. He also has a concern about the overgrazing of the Meadows and the affect it has on other species. Councilwoman Canavera noted that the Borough needs a plan in case an injured deer does get out. Councilman Hale commented that we need a deer management plan. It is either a hunt or there is nothing. There are examples in other municipalities where there is a hunt and other options. Councilwoman Kim-Chohan asked about the Animal Protection League of NJ doing a presentation. Borough Administrator Jover noted that she did not get directive from the Governing Body to have them come out. There are plenty of groups that could be called out to do presentations. Discussion about a controlled hunt and the

possible outcomes. Councilwoman Foster noted that concerns have been raised about the deer population since 2017. She asked the Borough Administrator to assist her with this project and they had different agencies come in. She did a tremendous amount of research on this project based on the direction given by the Council. Councilman George noted that they need a deer management plan that includes provisions for what is done in the off season. Councilman Fine noted that he has listened to his Council colleagues and residents about the deer situation for the last few years and he has always supported the need to address the issue. After listening the representatives of a number of our volunteer commissions, after reading all the emails for those that are for a hunt and from those that are against a hunt, and after considering all sides of the issues and discussions with my colleagues and the opinions about the costs and effectiveness of different methods, he has determined that in the interest of our environment and public safety, he is in favor of the establishment of a controlled bow hunt in Highland Park at the Meadows property. The Borough Council should consider a resolution at the next meeting that would authorize the Borough Administrator to draft a deer management plan by the end of this year; one that would specifically include controlled bow hunting. Mayor Brill Mittler asked the Borough Administrator to put together a resolution for the establishment of a deer management plan. Councilwoman Kim-Chohan would like to see other organizations brought in other than NJ Fish and Wildlife before the Council makes a decision. Borough Administrator Jover indicated that she is neutral on this issue and is just trying to provide Council with the best information that she has found to be credible and fact based to address the over-population issue of the deer. There is a difference between recreational bow hunting and a controlled bow hunt. Rutgers has used a controlled hunt and it has been effective. There are rules and regulations regarding a controlled bow hunt that need to be adhered to.

E-Scooters/RU-VeoRide –Borough Administrator Jover commented that this project was in the works when she started and one that Councilwoman Welkovits was working on with the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee. It started as Rutgers Knight Cycle Bike Share program and Highland Park was going to be a hub for a future bike share program. Rutgers switched to an RFP to have a company come in and the technology changed and it is now e-scooters. VeoRide is a company Rutgers entered into a contract with and they want neighboring communities to join in. New Brunswick has an e-scooter ordinance and the Borough Attorney has provided a memo outlining things to consider. There have been discussions at the Public Safety Committee and in Economic Development. Councilman George expressed some concerns with how young people operate e-scooters. Also concerned with traffic along Route 27 and Woodbridge Avenue. Councilman Hale commented that his committee has discussed this along with Main Street Highland Park and this is a slam dunk to do a lot of branding for the downtown. It has the potential to help the Borough move along towards the bike lane and master plan ideas. There are safety concerns that need to be discussed as well as enforcement issues. Councilwoman Canavera is for them, but they need rules across the board. There are young children that have e-scooters that are under the age of 18. Need to take this into consideration when the Borough makes a final plan for enforcement. Councilwoman Foster noted that Public Safety has been looking at the enforcement piece and whether they can be driven on sidewalks. Question whether they come with bells/horns. Councilwoman Kim-Chohan commented that she was recently in New Brunswick at an event and there were scooters everywhere. She thinks the Borough can learn from New Brunswick and make the rules more stringent. Borough Administrator Jover has been in touch with the Planning Director in New Brunswick and he has been very helpful. Discussion about contracting with a company and possibly making money. Councilwoman Foster noted that they need to look at the safety of having these scooters around. Will be checking with towns that already have programs such as Hoboken, Jersey City, Metuchen and New Brunswick. Lt. Sachau commented that he has been trading voicemails with an Officer in New Brunswick who has done some groundwork on the program, but has not gotten his thoughts on the program yet. There are some safety concerns. If you have not ridden one, he suggested they try it, it is a lot of fun. Highland Park has a different dynamic with narrow sidewalks and congestion on Raritan Avenue is a concern. Public safety is definitely a priority. Borough Administrator Jover noted that one of the selling points for the VeoRide Company is that they do a lot of outreach and education for their product.

Goals – Not discussed.

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Foster, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings
Borough Clerk