

REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 16, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held via Zoom, on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, and was called to order by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:00 PM. Annual Notice of this meeting was provided to The Home News Tribune, the Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on January 6, 2021. In addition, notice of this meeting via zoom was faxed to The Home News Tribune and emailed to The Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on March 12, 2021 and was posted on the Borough website at www.hpboro.com and on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on March 12, 2021 and has remained continuously posted as required by law.

Present: Mayor Brill Mittler; Councilpersons Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan; Borough Attorney Schmierer; Borough Administrator Jover; Borough Clerk Hullings.

Absent: None.

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

Councilman Hale reported that they had a great meeting with the planners and planning team from Rutgers. This was set up by a meeting the Mayor had with Rutgers President Holloway. We are going to be exploring new ways of partnership between Rutgers and Highland Park. The Redevelopment Entity Meeting scheduled for April 27th has been moved to April 13th at 7:00 p.m. There is a Redevelopment FAQ document posted on the Borough website. He thanked Abby Stern Cardinale for all her work on matching people up with vaccines. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Abby. Anyone needing assistance can be directed to <https://bit.ly/hpvaxhelp> or they can email HPVaxHelp@gmail.com. The Borough is starting to get information about the stimulus package that was passed recently. There is a specific restaurant revitalization piece for 5 billion dollars that is important to restaurants that are smaller such as those in Highland Park. If you are a municipality with over 50,000 residents, it is direct federal aid. Highland Park will receive their municipal aid through the State of New Jersey.

Councilwoman Canavera reported that March is DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH. The campaign seeks to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all areas of community life, as well as awareness to the barriers that people with disabilities still sometimes face in connecting to the communities in which they live. The figures show as of 2017, about 1 in 6 children are identified to have some type of developmental disability. However, people should not have to be worried or alarmed if someone has a developmental disability. They can usually live normal lives as long as they have the proper support. This is a good time to remind our children and ourselves to try to be inclusive to all members of our town. The Human Relations Commission is meeting tomorrow. The link is on the website. The Board of Health has asked residents to remember to wear masks at all times when in public and to keep trying to sign up for the vaccine. They also asked residents to follow their Instagram account at Hpboroboh.com. The Commission for Universal Access is looking for community input on events the community would like to see to promote inclusion for all residents. Food insecurity is at an all-time high and we have two programs to help. The Community Food Pantry is open the second and 4th Thursday 9 am to 10:45 and 6pm-7and the Saturday 9:30am -10:30 pm-following Thursday of every month. Donations can be made using their Amazon wish list. The HP Gives a Hoot Food pantry every Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Donations can be made by mailing a check to boro hall with a memo that it is for HP gives a hoot. Between these two programs, they are serving over 300 families and growing. ALL school age child can get free lunch Monday through Friday at the high school cafeteria 1pm to 2 pm. The Mental Health Commission has a Facebook page called the Highland Park Mental Health Commission. They are also hosting their first event this Sunday the 21 "Grieving our Losses Together". Anyone with a mental health crisis please reach out for help Middlesex county crisis hotlines: Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care HOTLINE: (855) 515-5700 and Raritan Bay Medical Center HOTLINE: (732) 442-3794.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan reported that the Community Development Block Grant Committee held their public hearing on applicants and the committee has approved the following projects: Highland Park Community Food Pantry - \$3,000; Summer Camp Program - \$20,000; Community Youth Outreach Programs - \$13,445; Senior Outreach - \$13,000; Senior Transportation - \$15,000; and Façade Improvement Program - \$12,000. The proposed projects are on the agenda tonight for a vote by the Council. She thanked the committee for their efforts. Departments depend on these funds year after year. Tonight on the work session, we will be discussing the 2021 budget and if anyone has any questions, they can reach out to her or the Borough Administrator. Today is World Social Work day and she gave a shout out to all of our Social Workers in the Community, including Councilwoman Canavera. You are truly appreciated whether it is responding to crises or getting your clients access to the resources they need to improve their lives. Lastly, she wished residents a Blessed Passover and Easter. She thanked Abby as well for her efforts.

Councilman Hersh reported that if you need a Covid test the diagnostics lab will be on site at the Highland Park Community Center to administer the tests three days a week. Mondays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Wednesdays 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Fridays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The testing is done at no cost to participants and will be billed directly to your insurance company or billed to the Cares Act if you are uninsured. Information can be found on the Borough's Facebook page. Registrations can be done online at testnj.online/reg.aspx prior to coming to the testing site, but walk-ins are welcome. Identification and insurance are required (if you have insurance). He thanked Teri Jover and Emma Missey for helping to set this up. Last week, about 150 people utilized the testing site. If anyone has questions, they can contact emissey@hpboro.com. If you need to get a shot, contact the Community Center at 732-819-0052 and they can assist you. If you have not done so already, please register to make an appointment through the New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System at covidvaccine.nj.gov. The Highland Park Recreation Department has several programs open for registration now including theater, youth sports, coding classes, adult sports and adult classes. Please go to highlandparknj.myrec.com to see all that the Recreation has to offer. They will be announcing camp registration soon. July 1st will be the Independence Day Fireworks event and the rain

date is July 5th. There will be summer camp job opportunities through the Recreation department and those will be posted shortly. The Highland Park Department of Aging with some help from its friends is going to be placing Leprechauns around town for the month of March. Take selfies with five leprechauns and email them or post them on our Facebook page and we will have a prize (while supplies last). You will need the luck of the Irish to find all 10. Game starts on March 11th and ends on March 30th. Clues and pictures of locations will appear on the Highland Park Department of Aging page on Facebook.

Councilwoman Foster reported that the Teen Center continues to do great work. They have been busy supplying for the needs of not only food to 28 families every two weeks. They have consistently worked with different entities to provide more programming to the youth that attend the Teen Center. They were able to partner with Alpha Aviations, which is a pilot school located throughout the east coast. The founders ran a zoom call with 12 of our students, sharing their experiences as young pilots in the flight world. The Teen Center was open for internet use for those who do not have internet at home. They had an opportunity to drop in, do their schoolwork, and then play basketball on the court that was donated to the teen center. They participated in a youth town hall discussion with students from Camden County in early February to discuss the climate of today's world and how our youth can build up the communities, they live in. This past Saturday she stopped by the Teen Center and noticed chairs outside. They were doing a movie production, with professional people there that were helping to show them how to do videos, etc. There were two fires in town this weekend. One was a brush/mulch fire on North 4th Avenue and another at St. Paul's Church that can be contributed to the high winds. She responded immediately to both and by the time she arrived, both the Firefighter on duty and the Police Officers were already engaged in knocking down the flames. The First Aid Squad also responded as well as members of the Volunteer Fire Department. The initial response by the paid Firefighter and the Police Officers surely saved what could have turned into a much larger incident on North 4th Avenue and that same response at the church helped level the situation quickly and without incident. Shift Commander Soden, Officers Olarra, Giles and Buttermark did a great job and they went above and beyond to help. Officer Buttermark's knowledge of firefighting skills and procedures was a real plus as he is a skilled firefighter in his hometown. Since Covid, there has been a huge decline in emergency volunteer services. Some squads have gone out of business completely and others are looking for creative ways to get volunteers. Highland Park is struggling to find volunteers. They were not able to do much training last year at the Fire Academy due to the pandemic. The Highland Park Volunteer Fire Department and the Highland Park First Aid Squad are looking for volunteers. The Police Department will be hosting a community forum on Thursday, March 18th at 7:00 p.m. Information can be found on the borough website. The Police Department will be hosting the Junior Cadet Academy from July 12th through July 18th. Registration is available on the Borough website. She thanked Abby Stern Cardinale for all the work that her and her team are doing to make vaccination appointments.

Councilman George reported that the New Jersey Department of Transportation would be resurfacing Route 27 between Second Avenue and Fifth Avenue starting Monday, March 22nd, weather permitting. Work will be at night and traffic will be detoured much like Street Fair days from approximately 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. each night. NJDOT estimates that it will take three days to complete. Please remember that this will cause some traffic delays and that you should have moved your car if you are in the downtown area before the work starts or you could be towed. DPW is taking phone reservations for by-appointment bulk trash removal. DPW will be doing pickups every Wednesday in April, May and June by appointment only. To make an appointment, please call Public Works at 732-247-9379. DPW has returned to pothole repairs now that the weather is abating and crews are out almost every day working on the roads. They are trying to get to all repairs and if you have called or there is patching in front of your house, try to keep your vehicles away from the repair because if there are cars parked and the crew cannot get someone to move them, the repairs may be delayed. The Native Plant Society had its second plant sale by the NJ Native Plant Society on Saturday. He stopped by to thank the volunteers for the vent, which was strictly pre-paid, vehicle delivery with social distancing. He thanked Councilwoman Canavera and Councilman Hersh for their work on the snow removal-working group in the Public Works Committee. We have been at work with the Administration and DPW looking at past and present practices, and examining ways to improve delivery of snow removal in normal and extreme conditions, which may become more the same in the future. We hope to have recommendations for Council discussions by April. The State has announced the second round of Library bond funding and the Highland Park Public Library will be participating. He wished residents a Happy Passover and Easter.

Borough Administrator Jover reported that PSE&G would be back in town to continue their infrastructure upgrades of the gas lines, mains and service connections. First up will be Franklin Street as well as some locations along Duclos Lane. The Borough will put out a Nixel with more details as to which roads will be affected. The Borough will be balancing the work PSE&G does with their own road improvement program. On the consent agenda tonight, the Council will adopt a resolution to award the bid for the Spring Tree Planting Program. The focused neighborhood this year was the Triangle and any household receiving a tree would have received a letter from the Shade Tree Advisory Committee.

Borough Attorney Schmierer – No report.

Mayor Brill Mittler reported that residents might have heard that Highland Park will benefit from the Federal COVID-19 relief bill passed by the Congress and signed into law by President Biden last week. What we know now is that the amount Highland Park is to receive is in the area of \$1.3 million and that it will be dispensed to us via the State. What we do *not* yet know is how exactly or when we will receive the funds. Nor do we know what the limitations will be on the use of these funds. The information I receive on this keeps changing. Like all of you, I look forward to final word on this part of the Stimulus Package coming to Highland Park. Total March new positive Covid-19 cases through 3/14 are 64. Our numbers have been increasing this month. In fact, since December 2020 our numbers have been going in the wrong direction. According to numbers I received from Middlesex County, to date 26.7% of our population has been vaccinated. We must get that number up! To assist with that, Middlesex County has just announced that seniors age 65 and older have access to free, dedicated COVID-19 vaccine appointments in NJ. For more information, call the New Jersey Department of Health senior hotline from 8 AM to 8 PM at 856-249-7007

or visit: covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine. Rite-Aid of Highland Park is one of the locations providing Covid-19 vaccinations. If you need assistance getting an appointment for vaccination, please contact our Community Center staff at 732-819-0052. We continue to offer free Covid-19 testing at our Community Center on Mondays 10 AM – 4 PM, Wednesdays 12 PM – 4 PM and Fridays 10 AM – 1 PM. Highland Park is so close to making progress against this virus. PLEASE do not let us slip backwards. Continue to wear a mask when you leave your home. Maintain 6' feet of social distance from others outside your immediate family. Wash your hands often. Get tested for the virus. Get vaccinated. We can do this Highland Park! In honor of Women's History Month, I will share this profile of an admirable Highland Park resident who is making an impact on the global scene. Nasrin Rafiq grew up in Afghanistan and received her bachelor's degree in Languages and Literature from Kabul University. She has worked with international, donor-funded programs such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and USAID for over 16 years. She has developed remarkable expertise in leading programs that foster women's and youth economic development and independence. She came to the United States with her family in 2017. Nasrin currently works in the US as the director of Afghanistan for Women's Campaign International, a not-for-profit group that works in emerging democracies and post-conflict regions around the world. This group equips women to be able to actively participate in public advocacy, markets, and political processes. As one measure of her remarkable skills and success, over 75% of graduates of her internship program have gained full-time jobs or internships with a variety of projects and financial organizations. Nasrin has been a member of Highland Park's Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, now a sub-group of our Human Relations Commission, for the past four years. Nasrin is a natural leader and a role model and we are privileged that she calls Highland Park home.

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.

John Valeri, 106 South 6th Avenue, commented about the pandemic and that people should not let their guard down. He donated hand sanitizer, disinfectants, and toilet paper and paper towels to the Teen Center. He asked what is going on with road repair on South 6th Avenue. Borough Administrator Jover noted that his street is slated for resurfacing and they will be coordinating with PSE&G so that they finish all of their work in that area.

Jason Levin, New Brunswick Today, commented that he would like to write a story about the Mental Health Commission and the Municipal Alliance Committee. He is a recovering addict and wanted to know who he might be able to talk with. Mayor Brill Mittler explained why the Commission was formed. She noted that he could contact her office for more information.

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

The Clerk reported advertising an ordinance entitled, BOND ORDINANCE AMENDING BOND ORDINANCE #1968 PROVIDING FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF A NEW NJDOT GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$596,550 AND A REDUCTION IN THE AMOUNT OF PRIOR NJDOT GRANTS, 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 Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, 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 Councilman George, seconded by Councilman Hale, the ordinance entitled as above, being Ordinance No. 21-2019, was duly adopted by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:
No. 3-21-86

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Ordinance entitled, BOND ORDINANCE AMENDING BOND ORDINANCE #1968 PROVIDING FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF A NEW NJDOT GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$596,550 AND A REDUCTION IN THE AMOUNT OF PRIOR NJDOT GRANTS, passed on final reading at this meeting be delivered to the Mayor for his 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 East Brunswick, 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 advertising an ordinance entitled, CAPITAL ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR PHASE 2 INTERSECTION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY; APPROPRIATING \$250,000.00 THEREFOR TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, 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 Foster, 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 Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, the ordinance entitled as above, being Ordinance No. 21-2019, was duly adopted by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilwoman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 3-21-87

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Ordinance entitled, CAPITAL ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR PHASE 2 INTERSECTION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY; APPROPRIATING \$250,000.00 THEREFOR TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, passed on final reading at this meeting, be delivered to the Mayor for her approval, and if approved by her, 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 East Brunswick, 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 and that said Clerk shall annex to and publish with said Ordinance a Notice in substantially the following form –

The ordinance published herewith has been finally passed and the ten (10) day period of limitation within which suit, action or proceeding questioning the validity of such ordinance may be commenced has begun to run from the date of the first publication of this statement.

The Clerk reported that an ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ON-STREET PARKING REGULATIONS FOR RESIDENCES OCCUPIED BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND AMENDING THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, had been introduced in writing by the Public Safety Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

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

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilwoman Foster, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 3-21-88

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ON-STREET PARKING REGULATIONS FOR RESIDENCES OCCUPIED BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND AMENDING THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK", 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, April 6, 2021, 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. 3-21-89 through 3-21-99 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, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstained: Councilperson Canavera (No. 3-21-91).

The following resolution, introduced by the Recreation and Arts Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 3-21-89

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the By-Laws of the Highland Park Municipal Alliance, and on file in the office of the Borough Clerk shall be and are hereby adopted as the By-Laws of the Municipal Alliance for the year 2021.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 3-21-90

WHEREAS, the Highland Park Department of Public Works has a need to make repairs to DPW Vehicle #5, as more fully described on the attached Purchase Order; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Account No. 1-01-26-315-232 in the amount of \$8,600.09, as reflected by the certification of funds by the Chief Financial Officer, shown below;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Superintendent of Public Works is hereby authorized and directed to arrange for said repairs from Cambria Companies, PO Box 51061, Newark, NJ 07101-5161, at a total price of \$8,600.09; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to Superintendent of Public Works & Public Utilities and the Chief Financial Officer, forthwith.

The following resolution, introduced by the Economic Development and Planning Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 3-21-91

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the following schedule of proposed use of CDBG funds allocated to the Borough of Highland Park for the funding period 2021 – 2022 be and the same is hereby approved and a certified copy hereof be submitted to the Middlesex County Housing and Community Development Committee for their approval. If there is a reduction in the CDBG allocation, the reduction should be divided evenly to each project.

Dept. of Aging: Senior Outreach	\$13,000
Dept. of Aging: Senior Transportation	\$15,000
Main Street Highland Park: Façade Improvement Program	\$12,000
Dept. of Recreation: Summer Camp Program	\$20,000
Dept. of Recreation: Community Youth Outreach Programs	\$13,445
Highland Park Community Food Pantry	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$76,445

The following resolution, introduced by the Recreation and Arts Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 3-21-92

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that Section 3. of Resolution 1-21-13, adopted by the Borough Council on January 5, 2021, shall be supplemented by adding the following fees for programs conducted by the Recreation Department:

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>PARTICIPANT FEE</u>
Travel Baseball Spring/Fall	\$300.00 Resident \$360.00 Non Resident

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Finance Department and the Recreation Program Coordinator forthwith.

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

No. 3-21-93

WHEREAS, EK No. 11 LLC (Ely Kotin) has filed with the Clerk of this Borough an application for an Owners License to operate taxicabs in this Borough under the provisions of the Ordinance providing for such licenses for the year 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Chief of Police and/or his designee has investigated said applicant and has reported favorably upon said application;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Council hereby determined that said applicants are qualified and that public necessity and convenience would be served by the issuance of such License.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk shall be and is hereby authorized and directed to issue an Owner License to the aforesaid applicant.

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

No. 3-21-94

WHEREAS, David Angel and Ely Kotin have filed with the Clerk of this Borough an application for a License to operate taxicabs under the provisions of the Ordinance providing for such Licenses for the year 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Chief of Police and/or his designee has investigated said applicant and has reported favorably upon said applications;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that said applicants are qualified and that public necessity and convenience would be served by the issuance of said Licenses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk be and is hereby authorized and directed to issue an Operator Licenses to the aforesaid applicants.

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

No. 3-21-95

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park has concluded negotiations with the Highland Park Teamsters Local 97 on a Collective Bargaining Agreement for Calendar Years 2021 thru 2023;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park as follows:

1. The Mayor and Borough Council hereby approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Borough and the Teamsters Local 97, which is attached hereto;
2. The Mayor and Borough Clerk are authorized and directed to execute and attest the Collective Bargaining Agreement with Teamsters Local 97, said Agreement in a form having been approved by the Borough Labor Attorney;
3. The Borough Finance Department is authorized and directed to make payment of retroactive pay adjustments to members of the Teamsters Local 97, upon receipt and approval of a signed Collective Bargaining Agreement, and adoption of the appropriate salary ordinance amendments, if necessary.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 3-21-96

WHEREAS, Tripoli Towing & Transport LLC has filed with the Clerk of this Borough for a Wrecker/Towing License to operate heavy duty wreckers in this Borough under the provisions of the Ordinance providing for such license; and

WHEREAS, the Chief of Police has investigated said applicant and has reported favorably upon said application;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Council hereby determines that said applicants are qualified and that public necessity and convenience would be served by the issuance of such License.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk be and is hereby authorized and directed to issue Heavy Duty Wrecker/Towing Licenses to the aforesaid applicant.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 3-21-97

WHEREAS, advertisement was made for receipt of bids on March 4, 2021 for the 2021 Tree Planting Project; and

WHEREAS, three (3) bids were received as follows:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Sunset Creations Inc., Belle Mead, NJ	\$15,610.00
JSCLawncare Landscape Contractors, Cranford, NJ	\$41,295.00
JRCruz Corp., Holmdel, NJ	\$21,720.00

and

WHEREAS, following the receipt of the above-referenced bids, said bids were reviewed by the Borough Attorney's office to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Notice to Bidders and other bid documents; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the review, it has been recommended by the Borough staff that the bid be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, Sunset Creations Inc., based on their low bid; and

WHEREAS, funds are available for tree planting in the amount of \$15,610.00 in Account No. T-12-56-500-001, as reflected by the certification of funds by the Finance Director.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Mayor and Borough Clerk are authorized and directed to execute and attest a contract on behalf of the Borough with Sunset Creations Inc., 355 Route 601, Belle Mead, NJ 08502, in the amount of \$15,610.00, for the planting of trees as listed in the contract, said contract to be in accordance with the specifications and bid documents and in a form approved by the Borough Attorney.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 3-21-98

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Borough Clerk be and is hereby authorized and directed to notify the Borough Finance Director that since the adoption of a resolution on January 5, 2021 showing the names of the officers and employees of the Borough of Highland Park whose salaries are on an annual basis, there have been the following changes, to wit:

CHRISTIAN SUMANO, Housing Inspector, at an annual salary of \$47,000.00, effective April 1, 2021.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Borough Clerk be and is hereby authorized and directed to notify the Borough Finance Director that since the adoption of a resolution on January 7, 2020 showing the names of the officers and employees of the Borough of Highland Park whose salaries are on an hourly basis, there have been the following changes, to wit:

DONASHE SMITH, Building Maintenance Worker, at an hourly rate of \$22.22, effective April 1, 2021.

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. 3-21-99

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 3/16/2021 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 41.

Mayor Brill Mittler appointed Pernille Hemmer and Belle Gabel to serve as Regular Members of the Arts Commission for terms to expire August 1, 2022.

Mayor Brill Mittler appointed Marlene Tarshish to serve as a Regular Member of the Commission for Universal Access for a term to expire April 20, 2023.

Mayor Brill Mittler appointed Mark Rubin to serve as a Student Member of the Recreation Advisory Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2021.

Mayor Brill Mittler appointed Pam Holzapfel and Melanie McDermott to serve as Regular Members of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee for terms to expire December 31, 2021.

Mayor Brill Mittler appointed the following to serve as Regular Members of the Mental Health Commission for terms to expire December 31, 2021:

Ruth Beyer	Norma Bowe
Ken Kressel	Illana Bohm
Officer Brian O'Mara	Andrea Costas
Elizabeth Asamoah	Nicole Huff
Tara Canavera	Kate Jagers

The above appointments were confirmed on motion made by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: 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.

Ellen Witt, South 1st Avenue, commented that last year Highland Park passed an ordinance to establish a government energy aggregation program, which would allow the Borough to bulk purchase electricity on behalf of the residents. She wondered about the current status of this program and noted that she would like to see some benchmark goals added to the ordinance to move the Borough toward 100% renewable energy. She noted that neighboring towns such as Edison, East Brunswick and South Brunswick have recently passed similar ordinances and she wanted to know if the Borough has taken any steps to possibly partner with them to get better prices. Borough Administrator Jover noted that they hired a consultant and went out to the market to solicit proposals. They did not receive bids that were cheaper than the price charged by PSE&G. Benchmarks were not included in the original ordinance and Sustainable Highland Park is reviewing the ordinance. She has spoken with the Administrator in Edison. Councilman George noted that he has met with Sustainable Highland Park with regard to some ordinance changes and one of the biggest problems they have is that the bids we receive have to be more competitive than our present provider.

John Valeri, 106 South 6th Avenue, commented about the basketball court at the Teen Center and that he thinks it is great. He asked whether the basketball court would be reinstalled at Karsey Street Park. Mayor Brill Mittler asked that Councilman Hersh take up the matter with the Recreation Department.

Kevin Dougherty, 405 Grant Avenue, commented that he is a member of Sustainable Highland Park, and wanted them to know that they are very interested in the Borough making an effort to change the ordinance about energy aggregation and trying to go out and solicit bids. He would also like to see benchmarks to get Highland Park to 100% and work with Edison.

Paul Sauers, 242 South 6th Avenue, commented that he is also a member of Sustainable Highland Park and echoed the comments made by Ellen and Kevin. Highland Park needs to move toward the goal of 100% renewables and they are more than willing to help.

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

The Borough Council took a recess at 8:07 p.m. and reconvened at 8:15 p.m. with all members previously in attendance still present.

Work Session:

Resolution in Support of Medicare for all Act of 2019 – Councilwoman Canavera noted that the Board of Health would like us to pass the following resolution in support of medicare for all; **H.R.1384/S.1129**. This bill establishes a national health insurance program that is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Among other requirements, the program must (1) cover all U.S. residents; (2) provide for automatic enrollment of individuals upon birth or residency in the United States; and (3) cover items and services that are medically necessary or appropriate to maintain health or to diagnose, treat, or rehabilitate a health condition, including hospital services, prescription drugs, mental health and substance abuse treatment, dental and vision services, and long-term care. The bill prohibits cost-sharing (e.g., deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments) and other charges for covered services. Additionally, private health insurers and employers may only offer coverage that is supplemental to, and not duplicative of, benefits provided under the program. Health insurance exchanges and specified federal health programs terminate upon program implementation. However, the program does not affect coverage provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Indian Health Service. The bill also establishes a series of implementing provisions relating to (1) health care provider participation; (2) HHS administration; and (3) payments and costs, including the requirement that HHS negotiate prices for prescription drugs. Individuals who are age 18 or younger, age 55 or older, or already enrolled in Medicare may enroll in the program starting one year after enactment of this bill; other individuals may buy into the program at this time. The program must be fully implemented two years after enactment. **H.R.1384** no action taken since 12/10/2019 Subcommittee Hearings Held. **S.1129** no action since 04/10/2019 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance. **H.R.6906/S.3790** This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to pay the out-of-pocket expenses of individuals receiving medically-necessary care or services during the COVID-19 (i.e., coronavirus disease 2019) pandemic. Specifically, the bill covers the costs for services provided through public or private health insurance and to uninsured individuals, including prescription drugs and care related to COVID-19, beginning on the date of enactment of this bill until a COVID-19 vaccine is widely available to the public. Health insurance plans are prohibited from increasing the cost-sharing requirements of plans while this program is in effect and HHS must report to Congress on the program on a weekly basis. **H.R.6906** no action since 07/13/2020. Referred to the Subcommittee on Health. **S.3790** no action since 05/20/2020 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education,

Labor, and Pensions. Councilman Hale commented about the \$32 trillion dollar price tag for the Medicare for all bill and that there are a number of other options or bills that get us to universal coverage and universal healthcare for all with a lower price tag. He is not convinced that this is the way to get there. He suggested that a broader amendment about those overall goals might be something that he could be willing to support. Mayor Brill Mittler asked if the Board of Health discussed any other options to achieve the goal. Councilwoman Canavera noted that they have not in her presence but she could bring it back to them for further discussion. Councilman Hale noted that there is a report by the Urban Institute that outlines eight different potential options for improving health care in America and he would be happy to share it with the Governing Body. Councilman Hersh commented that there are 118 co-sponsors on this bill and we are being asked to support this particular bill. Councilwoman Foster noted that this bill is a catchall for people who desperately need health care. She would definitely support the bill proposed by our Senators. Councilman George commented that he thinks that by coming out in support of it shows that from the grassroots that there is an impetus to do something about this to ensure that everybody has reasonably decent health care that they can afford. He does not think the bill is perfect, but it is a step in the right direction. Councilwoman Kim-Chohan noted that the Board of Health started this discussion last year when she was the liaison. They have discussed this in the past and they brought it back up because of the pandemic. She thinks the Council should consider this bill as written now and discuss other options when they come around. Councilman Hale noted that Medicare for all provides people with insurance that do not need it and pays for it for people who do not need it. He would be happy to support something about universal healthcare and something about the need for more insurance. Councilman Hersh noted that supporting this bill signals our District Representative, who is not a co-sponsor that Highland Park is in support of this concept. Councilwoman Canavera added that she has worked very hard through the pandemic, meeting with clients and putting herself and her family at risk. She does not have insurance because she cannot afford the insurance that her job offers and there are many residents in Highland Park that are in the same position. She makes too much to qualify for state insurance but cannot afford to buy insurance from her job. This bill is not ideal, but it is sending a message that something has to be done. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that it is important for the Board of Health to understand some of the things that matter to Councilman Hale. We have the opportunity to support this and add in some language as discussed urging the legislators to consider this as well as some of the other bills that would make it equitable. She requested that the Borough Attorney could assist in drafting the necessary changes to the resolution. Councilman Hale added that the resolution can be put forth as is considering he seems to be the lone Councilperson not totally in favor of it. He respects the other Council Members' opinions and thoughts.

Reformed Church Affordable Housing Support Letter – Mayor Brill Mittler advised that she would once again be signing a letter of support for the Reformed Church Affordable Housing Group for another property for homeless residents.

2021 Budget – Borough Administrator Jover advised that the plan is to introduce the budget at the April 6, 2021 meeting with adoption slated for May 4, 2021. She will prepare the pie charts and do a presentation during the budget introduction. \$183.29 overall tax increase including the Borough, the County and the Schools. The municipality portion is \$63.57. Last year the overall bill was flat, if not a bit lower for the average assessment. Councilman Hale had provided Borough Administrator Jover with 2 pages of question in advance of tonight's meeting. Councilman Hersh mentioned that some Boards and Commission have been talking about some larger project that might require additional funding or a grant. He wanted to know the best way to communicate those things for inclusion in the budget. Borough Administrator Jover indicated that the Boards and Commissions were communicated with in advance of this budget being prepared. We do not always know in advance of budget submission all of the grant opportunities available. Councilman George mentioned the need for some capital equipment for DPW. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the capital budget would be distributed separately prior to introduction. Councilwoman Kim-Chohan noted that in the past, the Council had the Department Heads come to a Council meeting to do a presentation. She asked if the Borough Administrator met with any of the Department Heads. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the Department Heads were given instructions to be conservative with their budget requests. Councilwoman Kim-Chohan mentioned the public safety budget. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Public Safety Committee has been involved in long discussions regarding our volunteer public safety organizations and what is being addressed in the public safety portion of the budget. Councilwoman Foster advised that they want to make sure that there are enough funds going into the Fire Department so that they can make sure that should there be a fire in town that they are adequately staffed along with receiving mutual aid. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Public Safety budgets are lumped together and they need to find a different way to look at it moving forward. Councilwoman Foster asked that in the future if anyone has any questions about the Public Safety budget that they reach out to her. Councilman Hale commented that he believes this budget is conservative but there are a fair number of holes that they do not yet know the answers to, such as grant funding. The biggest one is the federal rescue money and he is worried that the public will think of that as a piggy bank. He thinks it is incredibly important to be transparent about the money we get and how that money is allocated and the process by which it is allocated. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the process would be that it would go to the Administration Committee where she invites the Finance Committee Chairperson to attend. The Committee would then make a recommendation to the rest of the Council at a Work Session Meeting. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the proposed budget does not have any of the federal money anticipated. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that she has been asked by Congressman Pallone's office to put together a list of almost shovel ready projects that we have on our agendas for funding exclusive of the federal funding in the one to two million-dollar range. He needs a response from each Councilperson by tomorrow.

REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 16, 2021

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings
Borough Clerk