

REGULAR MEETING – OCTOBER 19, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held via Zoom, on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, and was called to order by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:02 PM. Mayor Brill Mittler read the Open Public Meetings Statement.

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.

Councilwoman Canavera reported that October is National Eat Better, Eat Together Month. It encourages families to gather for mealtimes. When families enjoy their main meals together, they tend to eat more balanced food choices. Also, what better way to spend time together and share each other's daily adventures. What a great time to get some take out from downtown and bond with your family. The Board of Health wants to remind everyone that Covid-19 is still an issue and to please follow social distancing and be vaccinated. Also, they would like to voice their support of the first two items on the consent agenda. *10-21-261 Resolution in Support of Fossil Fuel Divestment and Increased Green Investment in the New Jersey State Pension Fund and *10-21-262 Resolution in Support of Withdrawal of CPV Application for a Second Keasbey Gas-Fired Power Plant. Food insecurity is still high 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 following the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month 9:30am -10:30 pm-following Thursday of every month. Donations can be made using their Amazon wish list. HP Gives a Hoot Food pantry is open every Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Donations can be made by mailing a check to borough hall with a memo that it is for HP gives a hoot. Between these two programs, they are serving over 300 families. Mental health commission wants to remind everyone of the Middlesex county crisis hotlines: Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care HOTLINE: (855) 515-5700; Raritan Bay Medical Center HOTLINE: (732) 442-3794 PLEASE REACH OUT FOR HELP!!

Councilman Hale reported that if there is one thing that is good about Covid is that outdoor dining became a big part of many towns all throughout New Jersey. In Highland Park, we created the Town Tables and with a lot of work and collaboration between the Police, Department of Public Works, Main Street Highland Park and many residents, our Town Tables have been an unqualified success. However, we recently learned that as of November 1st, AND as they are currently configured, the town tables may not comply with DOT regulations, an executive order from the governor and new guiding legislation. We are currently trying to better understand what is and WHAT IS NOT permissible and as importantly, what will or will not be helpful to our downtown restaurants and businesses if we have to reconfigure or remove them. However, as we are working that through these details, I do want to point out a number of important points. 1) We remain 100% committed to permanently closing south 3rd and transforming it into a unique and vibrant public space. We have our traffic-engineering firm doing the major traffic study required to submit our permanent closure applications to the DOT. It is important to point out that the process for permanent closure has different requirements and standards that requirements for a temporary closure. We believe that we will be able to meet the permanent closure standards and will continue to work towards that goal. 2) We have already talked to Main Street Highland Park and received some great feedback and ideas on how and where we might reconfigure the town tables both on south 3rd and north 4th in the existing space and also options for placing new town tables around town during the winter so people can continue to use them. They have shared a number of great ideas and we look forward to working with them as we determine what is possible. 3) For example, we are re-examining the idea of creating table space within existing parking places along North 4th and south 3rd that may not interfere with these DOT requirements. This is of course in conjunction with restaurant and business owners. 4) As we have stated since day one of the redevelopment process, this council and mayor are committed to making sure that we have adequate and permanent public open space available before moving ahead with the larger downtown redevelopment plans. That has not changed. Therefore, the bottom line is that we are working as hard as possible to discover what is possible for the town tables. I wish I could promise they would stay as they are and eventually become permanent so that more wedding proposals can happen on them, but we thought it would be better to try to explain the uncertainty about them and how we are trying to work through that uncertainty.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan reported that last month the Tax Assessor advised the Finance Committee that the County Tax Board would most likely order Highland Park to complete a re-evaluation at their November meeting. They will ask that it be done for the 2023 tax year, which is the same time Middlesex Borough is scheduled to be completed. She will keep everyone informed as details become available. She reminded everyone that early in-person voting starts on Saturday, October 23rd and more information could be found at www.middlesexcounty.gov under the Clerk's Department. She wished everyone a Happy Halloween

Councilman Hersh encouraged residents to please join them this Sunday, Oct. 24th, for the annual Halloween Party & Costume Parade from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at the Community Center Parking Lot. (Please note the change in location this year). Please come out to participate in the parade, enjoy music and snacks, a trick or treat safety presentation from the Highland Park Police Department, a bounce house and more. On Tuesday, Oct. 26th, there will be a Community Blood & Platelet Drive in memory of NJ State Trooper Anthony Raspa from 12:00 noon - 6:00 pm at the Community Center. Please join us on the evening of Wednesday, Oct. 27th for the Zone 6 Haunted House located on the side of the Community Center from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm. The Highland Park Police Department Trunk or Treat event will also take place that evening in the Community Center parking lot. The Veteran's Alliance of Raritan Valley will be holding its annual Veterans Day Ceremony & Parade on Thursday, Nov. 11th starting at 11:00 am. The ceremony will take place at the Doughboy monument and the parade will proceed down Raritan Avenue ending in New

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Brunswick. We encourage spectators to attend the ceremony and line the streets to pay tribute to our Veterans. If you missed our recent Flu Shot Clinic, we will be holding another on Tuesday, Nov. 16th from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm at the Community Center, sponsored by Rite Aid. Please remember that the Borough offers FREE Covid-19 testing at the Community Center (220 So. 6th Avenue) on: Mondays (9 am – 6:30 pm); Wednesdays (9 am – 6:30 pm); Fridays (9 am – 6:30 pm); and Sundays (10 am - 3 pm). Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. You can register for a testing appointment at testnj.online. Testing is at NO COST to participants; those with insurance will have the tests be directly billed to their provider and those who are uninsured will have their tests billed to CARES. Minors are eligible to be tested provided they have a parent or guardian present.

Councilwoman Foster asked for a moment of silence for Colin Powell, the first black US Secretary of State who died of Covid-19 complications amid a cancer battle. There was a car accident this morning where a pedestrian was struck. The Highland Park Police Department will host Operation Take Back on October 23, 2021 where residents can drop off unused and expired medication. October 27th will be the third annual Police Department trunk or treat event. They will be returning to the Community Center parking lot for the year's event. Anyone interested in decorating a trunk should reach out to Officer O'Mara at bomara@hpboro.com. Flyers with more details will be coming out soon. Car setup is at 4pm to be ready for kids from 5pm to 7pm. The Highland Park Police Department is looking for 20 applicant for their first ever Highland Park Police Department Adult Police Academy. The academy consists of seven sessions, begins at Borough Hall on Monday, November 8th, and continues every Monday through December 20th from 7pm to 9pm. The goal of the academy is to give applicants an opportunity to meet and learn from our Police Officers while giving some insight into what Police Officers do. Participants will have an opportunity to see how our Patrol Division, Detective Bureau and Traffic Bureau operate, as well as experience lessons regarding use of force – to include the use of an interactive video simulation with de-escalation and decision based scenarios at the Middlesex County Police Training Center. Anyone interested in attending should contact Officer O'Mara at 732-572-3800, ext. 4262 or bomara@hpboro.com. Schools are in session and more programs are being run outside of the buildings during and around school hours. It is important that residents be aware of additional foot and vehicle traffic and slowdown in our town. It is Fire Prevention Week and residents are encouraged to change the batteries in their smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. The Zone 6 Teen Center will host a haunted house on October 27th at the Community Center from 6pm-8pm. It is a collaboration between Zone 6 and the Library. On November 12th, the Zone 6 basketball team will be facing Team Detroit at 7pm. Anyone interested in joining the team should reach out to aburrell@hpboro.com.

Councilman George reported that this week and next week would be the last two weeks for bulk trash pickup by appointment. After that, the Department of Public Works switches over to leaf collection and leaf bags are available at the Borough Garage. He reported on the spotted lanternfly and noted that the best way is to stomp on them, but they are all over the place and will start breeding in the spring. The Borough has been meeting and trying to put together a plan in consultation with the Shade Tree Advisory Committee, as well as volunteers from the trail and native plant sanctuary. They have come up with a number of suggestions that will be posted shortly on the Borough's website. If someone loses a tree due to the spotted lanternfly and it needs to be removed, the Borough will waive the permit for the removal of the dead tree and waive the mandatory replacement fees. For residents with bird feeders, he has seen cardinals and blue jays chasing the spotted lanternfly's around and eating them. Lastly, he reported on trash and litter removal near the farmer's market and around town. They have been using temporary totes and they seem to be handling the excess trash in those areas.

Borough Administrator Jover reiterated the information about removal of dead trees due to the spotted lanternfly.

Borough Attorney Schmierer – No report.

Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler announced that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has selected the Borough of Highland Park as one of 20 new communities to join the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP). NPP was designed to strengthen the economic health of threatened, but viable neighborhoods, and to encourage private investment in these communities. The Borough's application focused on revitalizing the Woodbridge Avenue commercial district and its adjacent residential neighborhoods to make it a more welcoming gateway into the Highland Park community and to nurture economic development. DCA selected communities like Highland Park based on community engagement, staffing capacity, readiness to proceed, NPP mission fit, feasibility of goals, neighborhood assets, distress level, past revitalization efforts, and work to leverage other place-based designations. Emma Von Thun, Assistant to the Borough Administrator, will serve as the NPP Coordinator and work closely with the Borough's Stakeholder Engagement Team to create and implement a five-year plan to improve the Woodbridge Avenue district. Members of the Stakeholder Engagement Team include residents and businesses from the district as well representatives from the Historical Commission, Planning Board, and Main Street Highland Park. The Director of Middlesex County's Office of Business Engagement, Sandy Castor, will also serve on the team to help identify ways to align the Borough's work with that of the County's Destination 2040 plan. The Borough will receive \$125,000 in grant funding during the first year of the program with the opportunity to receive additional funding of \$100,000 annually for up to an additional four years. In addition to the funding, a hallmark of NPP is that the program offers an array of technical assistance and training to support the empowerment of participating local governments and neighborhood district stakeholders so they can build a foundation to sustain their revitalization efforts over time. She thanked Councilman Matt Hale and the other members on the Council's Economic Development Committee in advance for the work they will be doing to see this program through and for all their support in getting this important new initiative passed. I know it is tempting, and we are all just so tired of the Covid-19 restrictions we've lived under for the last couple of years, but, please, friends and neighbors, don't abandon your face masks indoors just yet. Yes, 81% of our adult population has been fully vaccinated (Yay, Highland Park!) Yes, 72% of our 18-29 year old population has been fully vaccinated. This is great news.

However, the CDC still recommends cautionary behavior in NJ. As reported on the New Brunswick, NJ Patch.com website earlier this week: "the Centers for Disease Control still recommends that most of New Jersey wear a mask in indoor, public settings — even if they're fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The CDC advised all who are eligible, to be vaccinated against the virus, "because many generations tend to gather to celebrate holidays," the agency said in its guidance released Friday. The agency also recommends masking for fully vaccinated individuals at holiday gatherings in communities with "substantial to high transmission." As of Monday, that includes all of New Jersey except Union County, which has "moderate" transmission, according to CDC data. While I am discussing recommendations for health precautions, let me add that as we are in the middle of the fall it is time for people to get their flu shots. The flu shot is quick, nearly painless, and a proven step to protect your health and that of your family & friends. In this vein, I am happy to advise that the HP Community Center will host another Flu Shot Clinic. It will be held on Tuesday November 16th, from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. As I learned from Mr. Rick Lear, Director of the Middlesex County's Office of Parks and Recreation, the following is the status of Donaldson Park in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Ida: Picnic Grove 1 & 4 are open for picnics; all Comfort Stations have been repaired, cleaned and are open for the remainder of the season; the off-leash dog area is open; the tennis Courts are open; the majority of the walking paths and parking lots are cleared, with the exception of southern portion of the park; the Good Earth Garden is open; both of the playgrounds have been inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) and have been deemed *unsafe and damaged beyond repair*. They will need to be replaced. Both playgrounds have signage reflecting their closure. The equipment vendor representative has been out to take measurements and he is pulling together a plan for replacement; He will need approximately 3 weeks to get the County a DRAFT plan, equipment production and shipping schedule and cost estimate. Once the plan is complete, they will then be able to solicit estimates on the removal of the existing playgrounds, and installation of new equipment, plus upgraded safety surfacing to the Poured-in-Place (PIP) rubber surface. This information will then be reviewed with County Engineering, Planning, the County Administrator and the Commissioner Board for feedback and input that will further inform our potential scheduling of replacement. Until they have this additional information, they do not have a proposed timeline. However, they say that based upon the preliminary information they have from their vendors, replacement will NOT happen in 2021. There are many ways this governing body is working to improve life for our residents. Change is never easy. We will not all ever agree 100% with one another. However, when we disagree, we MUST find a way to do so civilly and with respect. Here are some guidelines I would like us to follow for constructive public discussion. I will be following these guidelines in monitoring public comments at all our meetings: When one-person talks, do not interrupt. No sarcasm toward or bad-mouthing should be levelled at another speaker. Do not display aggression or contempt towards those with whom you disagree. Raise your hand on the Zoom application so that we know you have something to say. If you disagree with someone else's perception, always be respectful.

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.

David Evans, Senior Counsel. Cannabis Industry Victims Educating Litigators, 203 Main Street, Flemington, NJ, commented that if the Borough approves a marijuana facility/laboratory testing facility within a thousand feet of a school, it is a violation of the federal controlled substances act. There is a proposed Jewish girl's school within 500 feet of the proposed site of the laboratory. Another problem is that this facility would be in a residential neighborhood and having marijuana facilities in residential neighborhoods lowers the property values. 71% of the other municipalities in New Jersey rejected them with good reason.

Milagros Aguayo, 102 South 10th Avenue, commented that she agreed with Mr. Evans and wants the Council to vote no on the laboratory resolution.

Jonathan Lerner, 228 Magnolia Street, commented that he had some questions regarding the agreement with the Rutgers Gun and Boat Shop and the Reformed Church of Highland Park. He asked about reference to RCHP AHC being responsible for the cleanup of the first floor with support from the Borough. He wanted to know what type of support the Borough would be providing. Borough Administrator Jover noted that a lot of the minutia would be ironed out in the forthcoming lease agreement that the Borough Attorney will draft. The intent is to provide a few hours of Public Works support as well as helping them pull some materials out of the building. Mr. Lerner asked about RCHP AHC renting out the second floor of the building to provide affordable housing to a low-income family. Borough Administrator Jover noted that it is a one-bedroom unit on the second floor.

Ellen Whitt, 20 South 1st Avenue, spoke in support of the resolution that calls for the withdrawal of the application of the competitive power ventures proposed second gas-fired plant in Keasbey. This plant is not needed and would put out over 2 million tons of greenhouse gases annually, which is contradiction with New Jersey's environmental justice statute as well as the New Jersey Energy Master Plan to reduce greenhouse emissions. She also voiced her support for the resolution regarding fossil fuel divestment and green investment in the New Jersey State Pension fund.

Tina Weishaus, 143 North 5th Avenue, commented that she is the Chairperson of Sustainable Highland Park and wanted to speak in favor of the two resolutions on the agenda that Ms. Whitt just spoke about. Back in June, Sustainable Highland Park wholeheartedly voted to support both resolutions and submit them to the Borough Council for approval. Highland Park's elected officials understand that the climate science is telling us that time is running out regarding our ability to stave off the worst impacts of global warming. We must stop burning fossil fuels now to make sure that the worst does not happen based on the science. Continuing to invest the New Jersey pension fund in fossil fuels using tax dollars is unsupportable financially and morally, it is terrible for the pension and terrible for the planet. Investing in

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renewables to hasten the energy transition is a must and if Keasbey does need another power plant, it must be renewable, as we can no longer ignore the increased greenhouse gases that will come from this fracked gas power plant and the pollutants from burning fossil fuels that increase respiratory and cardiac problems and even shorten life spans. She thanked the Mayor and Council for being environmentally conscious.

Don Stern, 317 Summit Place, commented that he wanted to speak in support of the divestment resolution. We need to stop using fossil fuel as fast as we can. The town is in jeopardy, the state is in jeopardy, the country is in jeopardy and the world is in jeopardy.

Lois Lebbing, North 2nd Avenue, commented about the Rutgers Gun and Boat Shop and that the public hearing would be at the next meeting. She asked when the Borough closed on the property and how much it cost. She asked about the inventory that was left behind and how it would be disposed of. She asked if the tree that fell on the building had been repaired. She thinks it is great that this long-suffering building is being refurbished. Borough Administrator Jover to provide the cost information to the Clerk's Office. They need to discuss their obligations with the Borough Attorney in terms of selling items versus disposing of them.

Paul Sauers, 242 South 6th Avenue, commented that he is a member of Sustainable Highland Park and he echoed the comments of Ellen, Tina and Don with regard to the two resolutions.

Dr. Keren Ebel Avery, 402 Graham Street, commented that she wanted to support comments made by David Evans. The residents of Highland Park do not need, do not want and do not desire a marijuana weed laboratory in town, particularly in a residential area. The proposed location is literally in the same building as a pediatric office. She thinks that it is harmful and she does not support that designation and at authorization of a lab in town.

Mary Botteon, 709 Madison Avenue, commented that the Borough's actions on the Rutgers Gun and Boat Shop and Keasbey are great. No so great is the proposed laboratory resolution and ordinance. Neither one specifically excludes cannabis which many of us recognize to be the town's approach of trying to allow a weed lab in Highland Park. She and the 150 other residents, whose names were entered into the record, specifically request that they vote no based on the current missing language. At a January 28, 2020 meeting to discuss the girl's school on Cleveland Avenue, the Mayor was asked if the school would provide a drug-free zone for the neighborhood and she responded yes. Marijuana is specifically mentioned in the federal safe and drug-free communities in school act and remains on the federal controlled substances list. In order to protect the school, neighborhood residents, potential business owners, potential property owners and to protect the Mayor's integrity, the recommendation is for the Council to vote no on the proposed resolution and ordinance until they are modified to exclude cannabis or properly specify one thousand feet from schools, churches, synagogues, parks or residential areas. She asked if the town advised property owners and business operators who have approached regarding pot that there is legal peril to proceed and that there are many residents in town who adamantly oppose the municipality hosting. If you have given this caution when did you do so? If you have not provided this information to them, why have you not done so?

The Clerk reported that an ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, MIDDLESEX COUNTY AUTHORIZING A LABORATORY USE WITHIN THE COMMERCIAL, PROFESSIONAL OFFICE AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL ZONES AND AMENDING THE "CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK", had been introduced in writing by the Economic Development and Planning Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

On motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilman Hersh, 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 Economic Development and Planning Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilman Hersh, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 10-21-259

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, MIDDLESEX COUNTY AUTHORIZING A LABORATORY USE WITHIN THE COMMERCIAL, PROFESSIONAL OFFICE AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL ZONES 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, November 9, 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.

The Clerk reported that an ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING A LEASE WITH THE REFORMED CHURCH OF HIGHLAND PARK - AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION PERTAINING TO PORTIONS OF BLOCK 1704, LOTS 41 AND 42, ALSO FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE RUTGERS GUN AND BOAT SHOP PROPERTY, had been introduced in writing by the Economic Development and Planning Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

On motion made by Councilman Hale, 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, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Economic Development and Planning Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 10-21-260

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING A LEASE WITH THE REFORMED CHURCH OF HIGHLAND PARK - AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION PERTAINING TO PORTIONS OF BLOCK 1704, LOTS 41 AND 42, ALSO FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE RUTGERS GUN AND BOAT SHOP PROPERTY, has been introduced and duly passed on first reading;

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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. 10-21-261 through 10-21-272, were duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstained: None.

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

No. 10-21-261

WHEREAS, the international scientific and political communities have widely accepted that the burning of fossil fuels, which release harmful emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, is the main driver of global climate change with its corresponding harmful impacts on our natural environment; and

WHEREAS, the October 2018 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report highlights the urgent need for immediate actions to sharply reduce fossil fuel use. The report concludes that absent aggressive action, many effects once expected decades in the future will arrive by 2040, and that global net human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases need to fall by 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, in order to avoid catastrophic climate change; and

WHEREAS the International Energy Agency, in their annual Global Energy Review, issued April 2021, said that countries need to move faster and more aggressively to cut planet-warming pollution in order to meet a necessary deadline of carbon neutrality by 2050 and, therefore, nations need to stop the development of new oil and gas fields immediately; and

WHEREAS, President Joseph Biden and Governor Philip Murphy have identified climate change as an existential threat to humanity in need of bold and aggressive action; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection published "2020 New Jersey: Scientific Report on Climate Change" cataloguing the statewide impacts of climate change, i.e., rising temperatures, sea level rise, increased flooding and numerous other adverse events with potentially disastrous consequences for public health, safety, and the economic vitality of the State; and

WHEREAS, Highland Park was severely impacted by Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy including power outages, severe flooding and property damage and is now recovering from Hurricane Ida remaining extremely vulnerable to the impacts of future storms and hurricanes; and

WHEREAS, today the most respected institutional investors in the world including BlackRock, the largest global asset manager, have declared that "climate risk is investment risk;" and Swiss Re, one of the largest global insurance and reinsurance companies, has predicted a loss of \$23 trillion in annual global economic output by 2050 due to climate catastrophes; and

WHEREAS, the oil and gas sector has been the worst performing sector of the Standard & Poor's 500 for the last decade, and today represents just 2.5% and is the smallest sector in that investment index; and the sector's decline indicates a negative trend for the future value of fossil fuel investments; and

WHEREAS, fossil-free investment portfolios have performed as well or better than those with oil and gas stocks; and

WHEREAS, solar and wind are the cheapest and safest sources of energy now and will be the rising energy sector in institutional portfolios in the near low carbon future; and

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WHEREAS, fossil fuel divestment is one approach to reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels by removing the financial underwriting of the fossil fuel sector; and

WHEREAS, more than 1400 institutional portfolios - pension plan, faith based, university, and government - have already divested, or have committed to divest, their portfolios totaling more than \$14 trillion of assets under management (AUM); and

WHEREAS, Highland Park has been a leading green municipality in New Jersey since the early 2000's, was certified by Sustainable Jersey in its first round, and has been a Silver Certified Community since 2011, attesting to its commitment to reduce our carbon footprint and address climate change; and

WHEREAS, Highland Park Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler is a member of Climate Mayors, joining when President Trump announced the U.S. exit from the Paris Agreement, and is committed to addressing climate change in all ways; and

WHEREAS, New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, the fiduciary for the best funded State pension in the country, worth \$226 billion, announced in December 2020 that his plan will be divesting from the riskiest fossil fuel investments over the next four years, and further committed to decarbonize the entire portfolio by 2040, setting an international standard for protecting the value of long-term sustainability of retiree plans; and

WHEREAS, New York City divested \$4 billion of fossil fuel investment in January 2021, from two of five pension plans in its fund; and

WHEREAS, Rutgers University, in March 2021, has committed to a divestment plan from fossil fuels to be accomplished within the next ten years;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Highland Park Borough Council makes it be known by passing this Resolution that it supports fossil fuel divestment as one way of addressing and reducing the impacts of climate change and simultaneously preserving the value of the Borough's retiree funds in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS) and the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF), all part of the New Jersey State Pension System to which local municipalities contribute; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Highland Park Borough Council calls on the State Investment Council and the Division of Investment to commit to a Climate Action Plan that includes the divestment of all fossil fuel investment as soon as possible but no longer than four years from the date of this Resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Highland Park Borough Council calls on the State Investment Council and the Division of Investment to simultaneously increase its investments in green investments, thereby valuing sustainability and resiliency in the energy economy and helping to support and build a healthy future for its members, retirees and all residents of New Jersey who through their tax dollars are contributing as well to the New Jersey Pension Fund; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be sent by the Highland Park Borough Administrator to the following: Governor Murphy; Treasurer Elizabeth Maher Muoio; Acting Director of the Division of Investment, Shoab Khan; and Chair and Vice Chair of the State Investment Council, Deepak Raj and Adam Liebttag.

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

No. 10-21-262

WHEREAS, *Competitive Power Ventures (CPV) has proposed to build a 2nd gas-fired power plant "CPV-Keasbey" in the Keasbey section of Woodbridge, New Jersey, in a densely populated region within the most densely populated state; and

WHEREAS, Keasbey has already been identified as an overburdened** community in terms of income and minority population and is surrounded by other overburdened communities, as per New Jersey Department of Environment as directed by Governor's Murphy's Executive Order (EO) 23 in 2018 and legislation S232 passed and signed by Governor Murphy in September, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Central New Jersey, which includes Highland Park, already suffers high levels of air pollution from fossil-fuel power plants which are among the largest sources of such pollution in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, CPV Keasbey's application states that its proposal for the facility is to potentially emit 2,374,633 tons of Greenhouse Gases, (GHGs) annually and these emissions would be in direct opposition to the goals of the New Jersey Clean Energy Act, EO 28, EO 100, the 2019 Energy Master Plan and New Jersey's Environmental Justice statute; and

WHEREAS, CPV Keasbey's application also proposes for the facility to potentially emit nearly 50 tons of VOC's (volatile organic compounds), 40 tons of sulfur dioxide, more than 123 tons of particulate matter, more than 25 tons of sulfuric acid, more than 110 tons of carbon monoxide, more than 125 tons of ammonia, and large quantities of other harmful pollutants into the air, some of which are also GHGs; and

WHEREAS, the American Lung Association "State of the Air 2020" report gives Middlesex County, which includes Highland Park, the grade of "F" for ground-level ozone air pollution and is out of compliance with EPA limits on ozone, but this proposed plant if their air permit is approved will be allowed to increase the concentration of ozone precursors (volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides) resulting in increased ground-level ozone in this region through the purchase of "ozone credits;" and

WHEREAS, the American Lung Association "State of the Air 2020" report shows Central New Jersey, which includes Highland Park, already has significant populations with pediatric and adult asthma, COPD, and other conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, nervous disorders, and mental disorders which will be exacerbated by additional volumes of air pollution, and studies have shown ground-level ozone causes premature death; and

WHEREAS, Highland Park is within 7 miles of the site of the proposed CPV power plant and is within the area that will be impacted by the emissions from the project as listed above; and

WHEREAS, the rapidly declining cost of solar energy and storage have already caused the cancellation of projects using gas to generate electricity and is forecasted to become significantly cheaper than gas in the coming years; and

WHEREAS, CPV is building renewable solar and wind energy plants elsewhere; and

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WHEREAS, Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler has committed herself to the Climate Mayors Initiative demonstrating leadership on climate change through meaningful actions in Highland Park; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough Council of Highland Park, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, in the interest of protecting its residents and businesses, oppose construction of this gas-burning power plant proposed by CPV; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Borough Council of Highland Park call on CPV to withdraw its application for a gas power plant and resubmit its application for a renewable power plant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call on Governor Phil Murphy and the Department of Environmental Protection to oppose all fossil fuel projects in overburdened environmental justice communities, and impose a moratorium on same until rules are established pursuant to the state's environmental justice law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk shall forward this Resolution to Governor Phil Murphy, Congressman Frank Pallone, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Shawn LaTourette, State Senator Patrick Diegnan, Assemblyman Robert Karabinchak, Assemblyman Sterley Stanley, and the Middlesex County Board of Commissioners.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 10-21-263

WHEREAS, Hector Malave has served the Borough as a part-time firefighter for thirteen (13) years and also as a volunteer firefighter with the Highland Park Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, Hector Malave submitted his resignation to the Borough Administrator on October 4, 2021, who accepted his resignation as a part-time paid firefighter and a volunteer firefighter on that date.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park, that the Mayor and Council hereby accept Hector Malave's resignation, nunc pro tunc on October 4, 2021, from the Highland Park Fire Department, both as a part-time paid firefighter and a volunteer firefighter.

This Resolution shall be effective immediately.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 10-21-264

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has determined that it is in the best interest of the Borough and its residents to publicly bid for the services of its Professionals, including but not limited to, the Borough Attorney, Bond Attorney, Labor Attorney, Auditor, Engineer, Planner, Planning Board Attorney, Board of Adjustment Attorney, Redevelopment Attorney, Planning Board Engineer, Board of Adjustment Engineer, Tax Appeal Attorney, Special COAH Planner, Special COAH Attorney, Risk Manager, Prosecutor, and Public Defender to perform services for the Borough;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Borough is hereby authorized to publicly bid for the services of its Professionals to perform professional services for the Borough by a Request for Qualifications.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 10-21-265

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park's Tax Collector resigned; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:9-142 states that vacancies in the Tax Collector position shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired term; and

WHEREAS, the Borough has identified Mildred Ramos, Certified Tax Collector No. T-8606, as an excellent candidate for appointment to the open position; and

WHEREAS, Mildred Ramos meets all statutory requirement for appointment to this position.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park in the County of Middlesex that

1. Mildred Ramos (License No. T-8606) is hereby appointed to the position of Tax Collector, effective October 19, 2021 and ending January 1, 2024, for an annual salary of \$80,000.
2. Mildred Ramos is to work on an hourly basis as needed until November 3, 2021 at which time she will be employed full-time by the Borough.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 10-21-266

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Tax Collector shall be and is hereby authorized to cancel 3rd and 4th quarter 2021 taxes for the following due to tax exempt status:

<u>BLOCK</u>	<u>LOT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1704	41	\$4,053.95
1704	41	\$4,053.95
1704	42	\$7,300.28
1704	42	\$7,300.28

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Finance Director and Tax Collector forthwith.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 10-21-267

WHEREAS, the Department of Code Enforcement and the Clerk's Office utilize Spatial Data Logic (SDL) to log permits and volunteer board membership; and

WHEREAS, the Borough has funds available to pay the outstanding invoice balance to Spatial Data Logic (SDL) in an amount not to exceed \$9,900.00 from Account No. 1-01-20-140-218, as reflected by the certification of funds available by the Chief Financial Officer, shown below; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Department of Code Enforcement is hereby authorized to pay the outstanding invoice balance for a total of \$9,900.00 to Spatial Data Logic, Inc., 285 Davidson Avenue, Somerset, NJ 08873.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer forthwith.

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

No. 10-21-268

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park has need of the services of a Planner to provide redevelopment planning services in connection with advancing redevelopment on Cleveland Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Borough seeks assistance with testing design options for structured parking and identifying the development densities necessary to support it; and

WHEREAS, such services are professional services as defined in the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, LRK, Inc., is a firm of licensed planners of the State of New Jersey with extensive experience in providing these services; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council desire to provide for the method of compensation of said consulting engineer; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose will be available in a Capital Fund Account No. 1-01-20-170-233 in an amount not to exceed \$35,000.00, as reflected by the Certification of Funds by the Chief Financial Officer, shown below; and

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 on behalf of the Borough an Agreement for professional services with LRK, Inc., Public Ledger Building, Suite 756, 150 S. Independence Mall West, Philadelphia, PA 19106, a copy of which is attached to the original of this original, and that notice of this contract be published as required by law and that a copy of executed Agreement be placed on file in the office of the Borough Clerk.

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

No. 10-21-269

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park has need of the services of a Planner to provide redevelopment planning services in connection with advancing redevelopment on Upper Raritan Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Borough seeks assistance with testing design options for structured parking and identifying the development densities necessary to support it; and

WHEREAS, such services are professional services as defined in the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, LRK, Inc., is a firm of licensed planners of the State of New Jersey with extensive experience in providing these services; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council desire to provide for the method of compensation of said consulting engineer; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose will be available in a Capital Fund Account No. 1-01-20-170-233 in an amount not to exceed \$19,500.00, as reflected by the Certification of Funds by the Chief Financial Officer, shown below; and

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 on behalf of the Borough an Agreement for professional services with LRK, Inc., Public Ledger Building, Suite 756, 150 S. Independence Mall West, Philadelphia, PA 19106, a copy of which is attached to the original of this original, and that notice of this contract be published as required by law and that a copy of executed Agreement be placed on file in the office of the Borough Clerk.

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

No. 10-21-270

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 52:34-6.2 authorizes contracting units, including the Borough of Highland Park, to make purchases and contract for services through the use of nationally recognized and accepted cooperative purchasing agreements that have been developed utilizing a competitive bidding process by another contracting units within the State of New Jersey or within any other state; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 5-09-166, adopted May 5, 2009, the Borough of Highland park entered into an agreement with a local cooperative called ESCNJ; and

WHEREAS, ESCNJ enters into contracts for a wide variety of goods and services; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of entering the contract with ESCNJ was to obtain better prices than the Borough would be able to obtain individually, and to save the Borough the expense of bidding; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of the Department of Public Works has done research and recommends that the Borough purchase the following piece of equipment from the following vendor through Contract with ESCNJ:

Item Description	Vendor	Amount	Contract No.
Toro Grand Stand Rider Model	Storr Tractor Company	\$12,056.11	ESCNJ #8/19-25

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Account No. 1-01-26-297-242 in the amount of \$12,056.11 as reflected by the Certification of Funds by the Finance Department, shown below; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Borough of Highland Park be and is hereby authorized to executive and the Borough Clerk to witness any Contract with the above referenced vendor for the items and the amounts listed above.

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

No. 10-21-271

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

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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:

RENEE GEORGE, Administrative Assistant, at an annual salary of \$66,586.00, effective January 1, 2021.

INDRU UDESHI, Senior Library Assistant, at an annual salary of \$52,032.00, effective January 1, 2021.

KATE JAGGERS, Library Director, at an annual salary of \$98,970.00, effective January 1, 2021.

KAREN JARZABSKI MITCHELL, Senior Librarian, at an annual salary of \$75,731.00, effective January 1, 2021.

SHERRY JOHNSON, Senior Librarian, at an annual salary of \$81,775.00, effective January 1, 2021.

GRACE MCKENNA, Library Assistant, at an annual salary of \$36,230.00, effective October 1, 2021.

NATHALIE LEVINE, Adult Services Librarian, at an annual of \$57,151.00, effective November 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 5, 2021 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:

ALEXANDRA RYS, Seasonal Recreation Employee, at an hourly rate of \$12.00, effective October 6, 2021.

MORIAH HERNITER, Desk Assistant, at an hourly rate of \$13.00, effective October 15, 2021.

ANDREA SHAW, Desk Assistant, at an hourly rate of \$13.00, effective October 15, 2021.

JOSEPH ORITI, Desk Assistant, at an hourly rate of \$13.00, effective October 15, 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. 10-21-272

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 10/19/2021 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 41.

Mayor Brill Mittler appointed Kathleen Karthaeuser to serve as a Regular Member of the Council on Aging for a term to expire April 1 2024.

The above appointment was confirmed on motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, 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.

Allan Williams, 319 Harrison Avenue, commented that the term laboratory is overly broad. The ordinance would need to be referred to the Planning Board to see if it is consistent with the Master Plan. The current terms of commercial radiologic and medical laboratory would seem to cover cannabis for the uses that are being proposed. He does not see the need for this ordinance.

Joseph Fekete, 12 South 8th Avenue, commented that he represents Highland Park Southside Cleanup, a citizen-led group whose focus is to address the blight of trash currently affecting the streets of the Borough, specifically on the South Side where it is far more of an issue than the North Side of town. The volunteers meet every other Sunday to pick up garbage on the streets. Since their first meeting in May, they have removed over 415 pounds of waste from just the South Side. Trash continues to be a persistent nuisance on many of our streets. A lot of the litter comes from recycling bins without lids from busy commercial spaces that fail to keep up with their property maintenance. Litter also comes from overfilled receptacles along Raritan Avenue. On July 15th, he spoke to the Public Works Committee about some common sense ideas that the volunteers feel would have a big impact in mitigating this issue. They proposed recycling totes with lids, garbage receptacles along Magnolia Street, big belly solar receptacles in high traffic areas, an ordinance limiting junk flyers and circulars and higher and more frequent fines on messy businesses and properties. He spoke with the Mayor on October 5th about these ideas. It is challenging to grasp how a town that considers itself an environmentally conscious community has thus far failed to address this important issue in a meaningful and substantive way. It affects the environment, specifically the Raritan River, but it is an eyesore and an embarrassing blight on the town that does nothing to help property values or alert businesses to the ailing mainstream. He acknowledged some of the small actions taken that the Council President mentioned earlier but that is not enough. They requested a proposed timeline for the Borough to implement these initiatives by the next Council Meeting on November 9th. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that she has been speaking with the Council President and the Borough Administrator since your presentation in my office and they are looking at different costs. Anything the Borough decides to do will have an impact on the budget, which means they are going to have to wait until

next year's budget to enact some of these initiatives. The Council President and the Borough Administrator are taking this very seriously. She commended them for getting the temporary trashcans out on the South Side, particularly near the Farmer's Market.

Joanna Kwiatek, 9 Redcliffe Avenue, commented that she has lived in Highland Park since 2017 and she appreciates the atmosphere, local initiative and high safety level. She is concerned about the litter situation in town and she fully supports the Highland Park Southside Cleanup Group. She is a member of the group and she is participating in the adopt the block initiative organized by the group. The town has an ongoing issue with trash being spread across blocks. She reiterated the need for recycling totes with lids to help prevent trash from blowing around town. She mentioned the litter along the bridge between Highland Park and New Brunswick. There is no trash bin between the bridge and South Adelaide Avenue. She noted that winter is approaching and asked that Highland Park please make sure to clean the path along the bridge walkway for pedestrians.

Omaris Zamen, 14 South 8th Avenue, commented that she wanted to support the Southside Cleanup Group. We pay high taxes and there should be trash receptacles throughout neighborhoods to help keep the town clean. They are asking for simple strategies that may help in something that has a long-term effect on how a community feels of itself and how is perceived.

William Garcia-Medina, commented that he wanted to support the Southside Cleanup Group. He remembers talking to Jeff Hirsh and Joe Feketi about the issue. He remembers his first cleanup and the disbelief he had about the amount of garbage that was collected in the neighborhoods. During his second cleanup, he remembered more garbage in the area of Magnolia Street. He thanked Jeff and Joe for creating this movement and it is causing a lot of support in the community because people want to see their neighborhood clean.

Lois Lebbing, North 2nd Avenue, asked if there would be animal testing at a laboratory on Cleveland Avenue. At the last Planning Board meeting, there was mention of the International Market and rentals. She noted the ongoing issue with parking in that area. Lastly, she mentioned trashcans and that she had to beg to have trashcans put one block off Route 27 at the church parking lot on North 2nd Avenue. Mayor Brill Mittler asked the Borough Administrator to have Code Enforcement check the parking situation at the International Market.

Michael Klaser, 63 Cleveland Avenue, commented about the laboratory and reminded his fellow residents and the Council to not let fear and ignorance cloud good judgment. Behind his house is an analytical laboratory, certified by the DEP, to test for hundreds of hazardous chemicals, including benzene, lead and arsenic. He has never observed an employee of the lab smoking a benzene cigarette outside the lab. They are professionals and they test for hazardous chemicals all the time. They are regulated by relevant agencies and they have standards. We ought not to think that because they test for something that it is harmful in theory and that what they are testing for is harmful to the community.

Nancy La Paro, 219 Harper Street, commented that she was speaking on behalf of the Southside cleanup agenda also. She is a volunteer with that group and she has adopted a zone, which includes from Harper Street to the Main Street from South 2nd Avenue to South 3rd Avenue. This zone includes two public spaces, the Farmer's Market parking lot and the picnic tables on South 3rd Avenue. These are big areas for trash as more people utilize these areas on a weekly basis. Every week she spends about an hour picking up a whole bag of trash. She was thrilled to see the temporary trash receptacles that were placed at the Farmer's Market parking lot. She appreciated their efforts and looks forward to next year that there will be more money in the budget for more trashcans.

Jeff Hirsch, 261 South 9th Avenue, commented that he is a co-founder of Southside Cleanup. He pointed out that two of the big main businesses in town, Rite Aid and Stop and Shop, are huge offenders. The weeks that they do not clean up there seems to be more trash and it seems like they are barely making a dent. The first fine for violations is \$250 and he does not know if any steps have been taken to fine businesses. He want to see if there was a way to hold them more accountable since they take up two massive blocks in the downtown. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that she had a conversation with the Code Enforcement Officer and he will be having conversations with the representatives from both stores about keeping their properties cleaner. She is grateful for the work they are doing and they are looking into ways to make this better.

Mary Laney, 400 North 2nd Avenue, commented that she wanted to ask that the Council not abolish the cat ordinance. She asked that they make the ordinance substantive so that it provides more protection. She has a problem with roaming cats in her neighborhood that belong to her neighbors. She would like to see all cats licensed and leashed.

Charles Kratovil, New Brunswick, Central Jersey Organizer for Food and Water Watch, commented that he wanted to make sure resolution number 10-21-262 was adopted. He thanked the Mayor and Council, the residents, Sustainable Highland Park and everyone who was involved in taking a stand on this important local issue. There is already a gas-fired power plant polluting the air in the Keasbey section of Woodbridge and there is a plan for another one to be built that would double the air pollution. He encouraged them to continue to be vigilant and forward-looking when it comes to the issue of climate crisis.

Rose DeLorenzo, 440 Cedar Avenue, commented about pedestrian safety. She has noticed since school is back in session and kids are walking to school that there have been many near misses at the crosswalks. This morning, she saw in the news that a pedestrian was struck on North 4th Avenue and Raritan Avenue. She also mentioned the Crossing Guard shortage. This is a walkable town, but she is seeing too many cars not stopping or yielding for pedestrians at crosswalks. She mentioned an incident she experienced a week ago where she was almost hit by a mini bus, but she was not able to get the

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license plate. Councilwoman Foster noted that she and the Police Chief have discussed this issue, especially in light of what happened this morning and they will continue to look at ways to keep everyone safe. Councilman Hersh noted that at the last Safe Walking and Cycling Committee meeting they discussed having a representative from the NJ Transportation Planning Association's Street Smart Campaign come to Highland Park to discuss ways that the Borough can educate the public on safer streets and sidewalks. It is a driver and pedestrian culture-based effort that would improve safety conditions. Their next meeting is scheduled for October 25th.

Gina Hirsch, 261 South 9th Avenue, commented about the Southside Cleanup initiative and raised a few more points. Some of the things mentioned in Facebook groups are the shopping carts left around town and the coupon mailers. She considers both of these things to be littering. She asked if anything could be done to address the issue with Stop & Shop and with the companies that print those mailers. Mayor Brill Mittler commented that she would have the Code Enforcement Director address the shopping cart issue with Stop & Shop. Councilwoman Foster noted that years ago, when shopping carts were an issue, they had a program where you had to put a quarter in to get a shopping cart and then had to return it to get the quarter back. She commented about the weekly flyers and that people should dispose of them properly. She is a strong advocate for the people who deliver those flyers, as they are usually people who are trying to get their life back together.

Ray Bord, 429 South 2nd Avenue, asked if the Borough would be hiring Social Workers for the Police Department to assist them. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Police Department now works with Rutgers Behavioral Health. She has a Mayor's Equity Advisory Council that works with her and with Councilwoman Foster who handles public safety on things that they should be looking at as they move forward with the Police Department. Councilwoman Foster noted that in her earlier report she talked about working with the Obama Institute and the police reform on solutions that they are coming up with. This week they will find out what the next step is about using Social Workers in conjunction with the Police Department.

Lois Lebbing, North 2nd Avenue, commented about the unwanted flyers. She ended receiving those years ago by calling the phone number on the bag and asking them to stop delivery. She commented about pedestrians having their own time to walk on Raritan Avenue without vehicle traffic. She also asked if pedestrians could have their own green light, where traffic is stopped completely. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that they did look into that for some of their key intersections a couple of years ago. Councilwoman Foster noted that the Chief is looking at a traffic study for the Raritan Avenue corridor.

Joseph Fekete, 12 South 8th Avenue, commented about the coupon mailers. He understands the argument about the delivery of those providing employment to people but there are many places hiring right now. They pick up many of these mailers every week and for a town that has banned plastic bags; he finds it incredulous that they still allow the delivery of these flyers that for most people is just trash. He encouraged residents to join them on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. at the pavilion to see what they are talking about. Councilwoman Foster commented that there needs to be a place for all and that responsible citizens should take the time to bend down and dispose of the unwanted mailer. Councilwoman Canavera commented that as someone who is low income, those coupons that are in the mailer many times makes the difference as to whether or not her family is going to be able to eat that week. Those coupons help cut costs greatly.

Edwin Schmierer, Borough Attorney, noted that the Clerk's Office received a message this afternoon with a request that it be read at the meeting. The message referenced the contract with CME Associates regarding the traffic study and it was sent by Peter Spool.

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

Work Session:

Best Practices Inventory – Borough Administrator Jover explained that the Best Practices Inventory is something that the State requires every town to complete and the resulting score is one of the factors they use in determining whether you get your full portion of state aid. The Borough got 23 points, which qualifies full state aid reimbursement. The minimum amount of points is 15. The State is trying to get information about what is happening at the local level. The questions are across areas like personnel and financial administration policy. She prepared the PDF document of the Borough's responses and it is pending certification by the Borough Clerk that the Council has had this discussion. Mayor Brill Mittler suggested listing this matter for discussion at the next work session so that Council can review the document. Borough Administrator Jover noted that there is a deadline to submit the inventory to the State. Mayor Brill Mittler suggested that she send the document separately and that if any Councilmembers have questions, they reach out to her to discuss.

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 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings
Borough Clerk