

REGULAR MEETING – NOVEMBER 9, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held via Zoom, on Tuesday, November 9, 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 (7:06 PM), 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 Kim-Chohan reported that on tonight's agenda there is an amendment to the salary resolution appointing the Neighborhood Preservation Coordinator and to hire Crossing Guards.

Councilwoman Canavera reported that the Board of Health wants to remind you that it is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Please remember the danger of smoking not just to you, but those around you. The food pantry and Gives a hoot would like to thank the residents of Highland Park. While other towns struggle to meet needs, both programs have been able to keep up with demand thanks to all of your donations. If you are in need, the hours are: Community Food Pantry 2nd and 4th Thursday 9 am to 10:45 am and 6 pm-7pm and the Saturday following Thursday of every month 9:30 am -10:30 am. Donations can be made using their Amazon wish list. 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 borough hall with a memo that it is for HP gives a hoot. The Mental Health Commission wants everyone to remember anyone with a mental health crisis please reach out for help. Middlesex county crisis hotlines: Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care HOTLINE: (855) 515-5700; Raritan Bay Medical Center HOTLINE: (732) 442-3794.

Councilman Hersh reported that on Thursday, November 11th the annual Veteran's Day Parade will take place, starting with a ceremony at 11:00 a.m. at the refurbished doughboy monument at the intersection of Woodbridge Avenue and Raritan Avenue. The parade will proceed down Raritan Avenue into New Brunswick and conclude at Monument Square at the intersection of George Street and Livingston Avenue with another ceremony. On Monday, November 22nd, at 12:00 p.m., the Community Center will be providing a grab and go Thanksgiving lunch with turkey and all the trimmings for its members to enjoy at home. It is in lieu of the traditional Thanksgiving gathering that they usually host. There will be a flu clinic at the Community Center on Tuesday, November 16th from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Residents are required to pre-register to receive their shot. The Covid-19 testing center is still in operation Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. He encouraged residents to get vaccinated or to get their booster shot. There is a mobile unit at the Farmer's Market every Friday and you can just walk into Rite Aid to get your shot. On the agenda tonight is an item regarding the Reformed Church of Highland Park providing housing for refugees and he wanted to say that he was honored to walk with his neighbors at the Interfaith Rise 7th Annual walk for refugees and families arriving from Afghanistan around the globe. Pastor Kaper-Dale mentioned that having a host community that supports these efforts is invaluable. The things that a host community can do are things like what are on the agenda tonight and he is proud to be a part of that. He added to his report by noting that due to the significant damage to the playground area at Donaldson Park and the fact that nothing will be done until next year, he has been working with the Department of Community Services, the Office of Recreation and a group of residents to collect new or gently used toys for the Borough's pocket parks, Karsey Street Park and the Felton Avenue Tot Lot. They are looking for residents to donate items for the younger residents in town, five and under, who are unable to be vaccinated. This would provide outdoor space for them to have playdates and to congregate. The Recreation Coordinator is accepting donations and fielding questions. They are looking for ride-along toys, chalkboards and chalk, sit and spins, yard games (corn hole), oversized connect four games and ring tosses.

Councilman Hale commented that he wanted to give a shout out to a couple of local business who recently were named in some exciting ways. There was a story the other day in the Star Ledger about the lack of live music in Middlesex County and it was decrying the fact that there had not been live music. One of the quotes was "you cannot tell me that Highland Park has the only rock club in the whole region" and that is Pino's. Pino's has helped us and has been one of the very few live venues for music in Middlesex County. They found a way to make it work and he wanted to give a shout out to them and thought it was pretty special that Highland Park was mentioned as the live music capital of Middlesex County during Covid. Pithari Taverna was ranked by New Jersey Monthly as the best Greek restaurant in all of Central Jersey. On November 13th, the Nutcracker will be at the Farmer's Market lot with two performances at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Information about tickets can be found on the Main Street Highland Park website. In November and December, the Farmer's Market is open from 11:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., because it gets dark earlier. We have the mobile vaccine clinic there again this week until 4:00 p.m. for free first shots, second shots and boosters of J & J, Moderna and Pfizer for anyone 12 and older. They will have kids' doses of Pfizer for those ages 5-11 next week. The Night Owl Market will take place on November 27th and December 11th from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Farmer's Market Lot. The Neighborhood Preservation Program had a kickoff meeting that was put together by Emma Von Thun with the help of the Mayor and Teri. It was a successful introductory meeting about what the next steps are. There will be public meetings for people in the neighborhood about how the grant money can be used to improve the neighborhood. Lastly, He thanked everyone who helped put together the recent vaccine clinic for kids at the Bartle School. His youngest son got his vaccine and told him it was not awful, which is high praise from an 8 year old getting a shot. He thanked everyone who made this happened and those who are going to continue to make it happen for our kids.

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Councilwoman Foster noted that she was going to yield a part of her report to Chief Abrams so that he could provide an update on public safety. Chief Abrams reported that there has been a recent uptick in pedestrian accidents on Route 27. The Police Department takes it very seriously. As of today, the message board is out on North 4th Avenue with a message to look twice, save a life, watch for pedestrians as a reminder to drivers as they are coming to the intersection from the north side of town to be careful. All of the accidents we have had recently have been drivers coming from the north side, making a left onto Route 27 and they are saying they did not see the pedestrian. Last week, they reached out to the State DOT and requested that they evaluate that intersection to look at the crashes. They sent them five years' worth of crash data to evaluate so that they can see what is happening and so that they can give some recommendations for possible solutions. It is a State highway and we cannot change the traffic pattern without their assistance. Lt. Sachau has been working with the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee and Councilman Hersh and there is discussion about possibly changing the pedestrian crosswalk light pattern at all the intersections on Route 27. There is a group called "Street Smart" and they had them come to the Police Department to give a presentation just before Covid. It is a pedestrian and driver education program centered on Highland Park that is put on by the DOT. It will be sponsored by the Police Department, the Borough and administered by the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee and they hope to roll this out in the spring of next year when people start getting out and walking around again. Councilwoman Foster reported that the next Police Community Forum would be December 9th at 7:00 p.m. She announced that the Borough has hired some Crossing Guards as well as two new Firefighters for the Fire Department. The teen center basketball team has been doing really well and they have a competition coming up. The Halloween party was a success and they had a huge turnout. The Police Department had to go out twice to purchase candy because so many people attended. The trunk or treat event hosted by the Police Department had a great turnout. She thanked all those that made these events happen that brought a little bit of togetherness and community building for everyone to participate in. Lastly, she reminded everyone to change the batteries in their smoke detectors, fire alarms and radon detectors. She also reminded everyone to be careful when walking around town at night. She added to her report by noting that the State of New Jersey just passed a law that whenever you are stopped, you can show a photocopy of your registration card. There will be an app where you can upload your registration.

Councilman George – no report.

Borough Administrator Jover reported that PSE&G would be back in the spring to finish the restoration of the roadways. They are still working on abandoning the old gas lines and they cannot move ahead with the restoration until they have completed the underground work. The Borough is monitoring the restoration work and coordinating it with the Borough's road projects. They heard comments from the South Side Cleanup group at the last Council meeting and she reported that this was a topic of discussion at the Public Works Committee Meeting. The Borough did install frame garbage cans that they use during the street fair at the Farmer's Market. They also plan to put additional garbage cans on the avenues between Raritan and Magnolia. They have a variety of garbage cans that are in good shape that are being painted and this is an ongoing project. They added a Friday garbage pickup at the Farmer's Market in the afternoons to address some of these concerns. For property maintenance, they are looking at the fee structures and increasing their inspections of those areas and this will be an ongoing project. Any recommendations will have to come through the appropriate Council committee and they will continue to do that. They are looking at the plastic bag circulars and the Borough Attorney's office looked at the existing ordinance and provide a memo this week. They are excited about the potential for an opt-out education campaign so that people who want them might be able to continue to get them and people who do not want them can remove themselves from the distribution list. The South Side group outlined some bigger ticket items that the committee will continue to discuss and evaluate during the preparation of the 2022 budget. She reported that she has received phone calls and has seen various Facebook comments regarding the Middlesex Water Company PFOA Notice of Exceedance. The Borough does not purchase their water from Middlesex Water Company, but the plant we purchase our water from is in Edison. The plant that is having this situation is in South Plainfield. If a resident needs to remove a tree due to infestation by the spotted lanternfly, the Borough is waiving the permit fee for the removal. As of November 4th, when you go to an establishment, they are not supposed to give you a plastic straw, except upon request. The Borough will be working with Main Street Highland Park to communicate this policy to the businesses in town. Lastly, on the agenda tonight is a resolution to make repairs to the library roof. She thanked Kate Jaggars and the Library Board for working with the Borough on getting the repairs done and navigating the issue with the insurance company. The roof repairs need to be done before any restoration work can happen to the interior of the library.

Borough Attorney Schmierer – No report.

Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler reported that she has heard from a bunch of parents who are distressed at the extended closure of the playground areas of Donaldson Park, due to Middlesex County's concerns about the safety of the structures. She appreciates that the inaccessibility of these playground areas has limited parents' options for safe, healthy, outdoorsy, and inexpensive play areas. That is why she has been in touch with the County a few times on this matter. As we await new playground opportunities in Donaldson Park, she reminded parents that there are other options, in our town. We have five municipally maintained play areas around town: Molimock-Graff Park, 225 Karsey Street (off of Woodbridge Ave); Felton Avenue Tot Lot, 220 Felton Avenue (between Benner and Harper Streets); the Municipal Recreation Complex Playground, 330 Wayne Street (behind HP High School/Middle School); the Irving Primary School Playground, 121 So. 11th Avenue; and the Bartle Elementary School Playground, 435 Mansfield Street (access to playground is from Benner St, between So. 4th and 5th Avenues. Please note that the School playgrounds are open to the public after school hours and on weekends. It always warms her heart when she gets to report that the Borough has received a large grant from the State to improve life in the Borough. She is pleased to share that we received word last week from Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, Commissioner of the NJ State Department of Transportation, that Highland Park would be receiving \$503,505.00 to support improvements to South 4th Avenue, Johnson Street, and Montgomery Street. We received these funds

from NJDOT's Municipal Aid Program, a competitive funding activity supported by the State gas tax. These street repairs should commence in the spring or summer of next year. One occasion that draws me out of Highland Park, my hometown and my passion, is the annual convention of the New Jersey League of Municipalities. She attends these conferences enthusiastically because she gets to meet with state and other municipal leaders, and learn from her peers about new ideas that can benefit our town. All these contacts enable her to advocate more effectively for Highland Park, in the county and in state government. This year's convention, taking place next week, offers an added treat. On behalf of Highland Park, she will be accepting the Borough's Silver recertification from the Sustainable New Jersey organization. This distinction recognizes Highland Park's consistent efforts to serve as an exemplar in environmental stewardship and in offering open and accessible government services. In accepting this award, she acknowledges the efforts of four groups that make this accomplishment possible – the Sustainable Highland Park Committee, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee, the Environmental Committee, and the Council's Public Works Committee, chaired by Council President Phil George, and our staff in the Administration Office. Once again, Highland Park lives up to its reputation as New Jersey's First Green Community. Lastly, she is pleased to share that six small businesses in the Borough of Highland Park would be starting the 2021/2022 winter season with a welcome boost of financial support, courtesy of a fund she established with Main Street Highland Park. Last winter, she announced that she was donating the \$5,040 net annual stipend she receives as Mayor, to establish The Mayor's Fund for Highland Park Downtown Businesses. The fund was designated to offer local businesses mini-grants of up to \$500 to help them recover from the challenges of closures and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the spring and summer of 2021, staff from the Borough and Main Street Highland Park publicized the new fund and encouraged businesses to apply. Main Street received six initial applications, which were all deemed worthy of support. Each business will receive a \$500 mini-grant. Last month she visited the six businesses to formally confirm the mini-grants and discuss the improvements they fund. The 2021/2022 mini-grant recipients are: 1) Bridge Turkish & Mediterranean Grill, 315 Raritan Avenue, <http://bridgerestauranthp.com>. Funds to be used for enhanced advertising. 2) Be Beauty Salon, 324 Raritan Avenue, <http://BeBeautynj.com>. Funds to be used to acquire a ventilator fan, for COVID-19 safety. 3) Hunan Manor Restaurant, 239 Raritan Avenue. Funds to be used to set up an employee reward fund. 4) Sweets to Nuts Desserts Shoppe, 72a Raritan Avenue, <http://sweetstonuts.com>. Funds to be used to improve outdoor signage. 5) Sushiana Restaurant, 17 North 4th Avenue, www.sushiana.com. Funds to be used to enhance outdoor seating options. 6) Penstock Coffee, 13 South 3rd Avenue, <http://penstockcoffee.com>. Funds to be used to purchase a new, enormous kitchen stand mixer. She is so excited to see these funds being put to great use by our businesses. These six recipients all found smart and strategic ways to leverage a mini-grant, to increase their potential exposure, productivity, and/or capability to bring in customers in a COVID-19 safe manner. She wished them all much success! Main Street Highland Park continues to administer The Mayor's Fund for Highland Park Downtown Businesses and invites inquiries about future mini-grants. For more information, please see: <https://www.mainstreethp.org/mayorsfund>.

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.

Abby Stern Cardinale, Harper Street, commented that she appreciates the focus on the small parks in town. She asked about funding for next year and the timeline for getting something put into the budget to make significant improvements to the local parks in town. She thinks that it is critical, as the Borough does not know the timeline for repairs to Donaldson Park, which is outside of the Borough's jurisdiction. The Borough should not rely just on the County Parks, but invest in their local parks. She asked about grants the Borough has received and whether some of that funding could be geared towards parks and recreation. Mayor Brill Mittler explained that the individual departments review their budget requests with their Council Liaisons and those budgets are then submitted to the Borough Administrator. Borough Administrator Jover noted that major improvements would be done through a capital ordinance. They are doing an assessment of all of the recreation/outdoor open space needs. Councilman Hersh noted that the Recreation Coordinator has been doing a top to bottom assessment, including capital needs, and they took a tour with the Mayor of other neighboring towns recreation centers to see what is possible and understanding the needs, we have at our Community Center. Also, making a serious effort of taking inventory of the existing recreational spaces we have.

Mary Botteon, 709 Madison Avenue, commented that it is important for the Council to hear some of the direct comments of the Planning Board from last week regarding their concerns of any marijuana lab in a prohibited zone, which is less than a thousand feet from a school. The Mayor's Office suggested a location that is only 236 feet away from the planned girl's school. The Mayor's Office suggestion was premature, but there has been no damage yet. This would be the time for the Council to take the steps recommended by the Planning Board. It is also important to realize that there are hazardous materials involved in any weed lab scenario according to the New Jersey Cannabis Screening Standard Operating Procedures. New Jersey appears concern about chloroform, methanol and concentrated nitric acid, citing, fire and explosion hazards. The SOP's for cannabis screening have statements about the health impacts of these chemicals being used and they have not been fully investigated. The range and quantity of hazardous substances used in these laboratories requires pre-planning to respond safely to chemical spills. These issues raise a valid objection to this type of lab being located one floor above a pediatrician's office. She referenced letter from Planning Board Attorney that stated that they would like to remind the Governing Body that any proposed user must be cautioned about compliance with State and Federal regulations. She reference comment from Acting Planning Board Chair that they need to make sure that the Borough Council is aware of State and Federal regulations regarding the ability of certain types of laboratories to be in the proximity of schools or other educational uses. They should also be mindful of the proximity of these uses to residential and medical offices and they should endeavor to do a better job of being open and transparent about important issues.

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Milagros Aguayo, 102 South 2nd Avenue, commented that she agreed with Mary and asked the Council to vote no on the laboratory ordinance. If the Council decides to vote yes, she wanted to know the reasons for their votes.

The Clerk reported advertising 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", 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 Hale, seconded by Councilman Hersh, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote, the above-entitled ordinance was taken up on final reading by title.

Borough Administrator Jover noted that the Borough Council received a memorandum from the Planning Board Attorney to report that at their meeting on November 4th, this matter was discussed and it was determined that the proposed ordinance is not inconsistent with the Master Plan, which is the test that has to be met. There were some additional comments that they are reviewing, one of which was some clarifying language and they are proposing some amended language with regard to the definition of a laboratory. Borough Attorney Schmierer explained that the substantive comment that the Planning Board made concerned further definition of laboratory and those changes could be made tonight, the public hearing can be held, and the ordinance can be adopted. Borough Administrator Jover read the definition of laboratory as follows, "a structure or rooms equipped for conducting property certified scientific experiments, analysis, examinations, research, testing and/or other experimental technical work, provided that all activities and equipment are housed within the principal structure(s) and that no hazardous, noxious or offensive conditions or noise are generated outside the principal structure(s)".

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.

Mary Botteon, 709 Madison Avenue, commented that she wanted to follow up on the comments describing the laboratory ordinance. She asked the Mayor's Office to explain why they referred a potential weed laboratory to the Cleveland Avenue vacancy that is within 236 feet of an incoming school and that would break federal law. She asked has the town advised landlords and business operators who have approached them about pot that there is a legal peril to proceed and that there are many residents in town who adamantly oppose the municipality hosting these types of businesses. If this notice was given, when was it given and if they have not provided this information, why have they not done so? Mayor Brill Mittler noted that her office does not and has not referred anyone to a commercial property regarding cannabis. The developer of the lab found this location on his own.

Dan Stern Cardinale, 221 Harper Street, commented that he thinks it is a good thing to open up the zoning to have more businesses that are going to fit in the buildings that we already have. In Highland Park, it is always a challenge to fill the sites that we have. If we can allow more businesses to fill those vacant sites, then that is a good thing. Most people in town are behind this because one of the big complaints is we do not have enough businesses, there are too many vacancies and there are not enough ratables. Here is an opportunity to attract more businesses to Highland Park. It is a laboratory and they would not be directly selling to anyone. Those types of businesses should also be welcome in Highland Park. This common sense change is in line with the ordinance that was passed regarding the types of cannabis businesses that would be permitted in Highland Park.

Rosie Baruh, 616 South 1st Avenue, asked if the ordinance would permit labs that investigate viral diseases and would it include animal testing. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that as long as whatever testing done meets the standards that appear in the ordinance as recommended by the Planning Board, they would be able to do that type of testing.

Mary Botteon, 709 Madison Avenue, commented about her statement that her office did not make the referral. She noted that she is intimately aware of the details of how that came about and it is her understanding and knowledge that the Mayor's Office did in fact make that referral and she thinks it is really important to keep the integrity of the Mayor's Office. It is important to give accurate information in these types of situations. She hopes that they will table the ordinance and make the suggested changes by the Planning Board. Mayor Brill Mittler again noted that she did not refer the applicant to that building.

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

On motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilman George, the ordinance entitled as above, being Ordinance No. 21-2036, was duly adopted, as amended, 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 George, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 11-21-273

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the 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", passed on final reading at this meeting be delivered to the Mayor for his/her approval, and if approved by him, that the same be recorded in full by the Borough Clerk in a proper book kept for that purpose, and be advertised by publishing the same by title in the "Home News Tribune", of Neptune, New Jersey, a newspaper published in the County of Middlesex and circulating in this municipality, there being no newspaper published in this municipality, in the manner prescribed by law.

The Clerk reported advertising 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, 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 Canavera, 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 Canavera, seconded by Councilman Hale, the ordinance entitled as above, being Ordinance No. 21-2037, was duly adopted, as amended, 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 Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 11-21-274

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

The Clerk reported that an ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR AND DETERMINE THE RATE OF COMPENSATION OF EACH OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK AND THE METHOD OF PAYMENT OF SUCH COMPENSATION", 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 Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, seconded by Councilman George, 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 Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 11-21-275

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR AND DETERMINE THE RATE OF COMPENSATION OF EACH OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK AND THE METHOD OF PAYMENT OF SUCH COMPENSATION", 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, December 7, 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. 11-21-276 through 11-21-287, were duly adopted 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.

Abstained: None.

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The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 11-21-276

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:

VALERI DRACH WEIDMANN, Master Circulations Coordinator, at an annual salary of \$62,310.00, effective January 1, 2021.

EMMA VON THUN, Neighborhood Preservation Coordinator, at an annual salary of \$9,000.00, 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:

TIBERIO CHEN, Seasonal Recreation Employee, at an hourly rate of \$12.00, effective October 9, 2021.

SAPIR FILHART, Seasonal Recreation Employee, at an hourly rate of \$12.00, effective October 29, 2021.

SHIRLEY ROUSSEAU, Public Safety School Crossing Guard, at an hourly rate of \$19.36, effective October 25, 2021.

MARY CARTER, Public Safety School Crossing Guard, at an hourly rate of \$19.36, effective November 1, 2021.

FANIA TSAKALAKOS, Public Safety School Crossing Guard, at an hourly rate of \$19.36, effective November 1, 2021.

CARMEN FLORA, Public Safety School Crossing Guard, at an hourly rate of \$19.36, effective November 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. 11-21-277

WHEREAS, pursuant to P.L. 1997, Chapter 99, a municipality may hold a tax lien sale within the last month of a calendar year for any unpaid taxes or other municipal liens or charges that are delinquent as of the 11th day of the eleventh month of the calendar year; and,

WHEREAS, an electronic tax sale provides a greater pool of potential lien buyers, thus creating a more complete tax sale process.

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has solicited a quote for online tax lien services from ROK Industries, Inc. Agent/Realauction.com; and

WHEREAS, ROK Industries Inc./Realauction.com has the capability to conduct the sale according to the rules and regulations promulgated by the Division of Local Government Services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, New Jersey, that the Administrator is hereby authorized and directed to contract ROK Industries/Realauction.com as the vendor for the online tax sale and the amount not to exceed \$15,000.00.

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

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 11-21-278

WHEREAS, Michael Valor and Carl Michael Johnson 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 2022; 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 Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 11-21-279

WHEREAS, there exists various outstanding checks on the books of the Claim Fund of the Borough of Highland Park, and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that these checks are at least one year old and should be canceled,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the following outstanding checks in the Claims Fund IN THE AMOUNT OF \$14,003.31 be cancelled to Current Fund Surplus:

<u>CHECK #</u>	<u>CHECK DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>CHECK AMOUNT</u>
10523	7/21/20	Yanique Folkes	\$200.00
10626	8/18/20	Cedar Holding Associates	\$16,343.31
10686	8/18/20	Shoshana Lapp	\$90.00
10736	8/18/20	Joan Shen	\$95.00
10338	12/15/20	Leonardo Perez	\$275.00
	TOTAL		\$17,003.31

The following resolution, introduced by the Council as a Whole, was duly adopted as above:

No. 11-21-280

WHEREAS, THE Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse established the Municipal Alliances for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in 1989 to educate and engage residents, local government and law enforcement officials, schools, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, parents, youth and other allies in efforts to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse in communities throughout New Jersey.

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey recognizes that the abuse of alcohol and drugs is a serious problem in our society amongst persons of all ages’ and therefore has an established Municipal Alliance Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park further recognizes that it is incumbent upon not only public officials but upon the entire community to take action to prevent such abuses in our community; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park has applied for funding to the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse through the County of Middlesex; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey hereby recognizes the following:

1. The Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park does hereby authorize submission of a strategic plan for the Highland Park Municipal Alliance grant for fiscal year 2023 in the amount of:

DEDR	\$ 7,664.00
Cash Match	\$ 1,916.00
In-Kind	<u>\$ 5,748.00</u>
Total Alliance Budget	\$15,328.00

2. The Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park acknowledges the terms and conditions for administering the Municipal Alliance grant, including the administrative compliance and audit requirements.

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

No. 11-21-281

WHEREAS, under the terms and conditions of the Public Contracts Law of the State of New Jersey, a municipality may purchase items without competitive bidding from a firm or corporation currently under contract with the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS the Highland Park Police Department is in need of a new recording system (Eventide Recorder System); and

WHEREAS, under State Contract No. 83891, the Borough may purchase said recording system from Interaction Insight Corp., 125 Half Mile Road, Suite 200, Red Bank, NJ 07701, at the State contract prices; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Account No. C-04-55-812-002 in the amount of \$7,547.12 and Account No. C-04-55-820-002 in the amount of \$12,905.88, for a total amount not to exceed \$20,453.00 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 Chief of Police is hereby authorized and directed to execute purchase of said recording system from Interaction Insight Corp., 125 Half Mile Road, Suite 200, Red Bank, NJ 07701, at a total cost not to exceed \$20,453.00; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Chief of Police and Chief Financial Officer, forthwith.

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

No. 11-21-282

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that Michael Wieczorkiewicz, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works, is hereby authorized and directed to submit the 2021 Recycling Enhancement Grant application to the Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management in the amount of \$5,000;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon award and acceptance of said grant by the Borough of Highland Park and the County of Middlesex, the Borough Administrator and the Borough Clerk shall be and are hereby authorized to execute an agreement on behalf of the Borough of Highland Park;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Borough Administrator, the Director of the Department of Public Works and the Finance Director forthwith.

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

No. 11-21-283

WHEREAS, White Mountains Cretan Fraternity (“Taxpayer”), the owner of 1152-1154 Raritan Avenue, Block 100, Lot 6 on the Borough of Highland Park Tax Assessment Maps (the “Property”), filed appeals of its 2017 through 2021 tax assessments in the Tax Court of New Jersey, Docket Nos. 012338-2017, 010268-2018, 009503-2019, 010951-2020 and 009836-2021; and

WHEREAS, the Property was assessed in each of the years at a total tax assessment of \$150,700 which, based upon the common level ratio for each year, equalized to a value of \$340,257 in 2017 (44.29% ratio), \$361,391 in 2018 (41.70% ratio), \$369,544 in 2019 (40.78% ratio), \$364,450 in 2020 (41.35% ratio) and \$363,922 in 2021 (41.41% ratio); and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park met and discussed the aforesaid tax appeals and the recommendations of its Borough Tax Assessor and Special Tax Attorney; and

WHEREAS, an acceptable settlement of the aforesaid tax appeals has been negotiated which withdraws the 2017 tax appeal; which reduces the 2018 through 2021 tax assessments to a total tax assessment of \$125,700 for each of said years; and which adjusts the tax assessments for Tax Years 2022 and 2023 to a total tax assessment of \$150,700 for each of said years, barring a district-wide reassessment

or revaluation, as more specifically set forth in the Stipulation of Settlement annexed to this Resolution, which has been reviewed by the Mayor and Council; and

WHEREAS, Taxpayer has agreed to waive statutory interest provided that any refunds are paid within 60 days of entry of the Tax Court Judgments in the form of credits against future taxes due and owing the Borough. All such credits shall be applied to the quarterly payment next due following entry of the Tax Court Judgments; and

WHEREAS, Taxpayer has agreed to waive any and all claims for property tax exemption in the Tax Years that are the subject of the within settlement as well as Tax Years 2022 and 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Borough has agreed to withdraw any and all Counterclaims; and

WHEREAS, the aforesaid settlement has no general application to other properties within the Borough as a result of the aforesaid specific fact situation; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to apply the tax refund due as a result of the within settlement in the form of credits to the quarterly payment next due within sixty (60) days of entry of the Tax Court Judgments; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council make this settlement with Taxpayer without prejudice to its dealings with any other Borough taxpayer's request for tax assessment reduction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Special Tax Attorney is hereby authorized to execute the Stipulation of Settlement, a copy of which is annexed hereto, relative to the tax appeals captioned White Mountains Cretan Fraternity vs. Borough of Highland Park, Tax Court of New Jersey, Docket Nos. 012338-2017, 010268-2018, 009503-2019, 010951-2020 and 009836-2021, which withdraws the 2017 tax appeal; which reduces the total tax assessments to \$125,700 for Tax Years 2018 through 2021 at the allocations between the land and improvements set forth in the Stipulation of Settlement; which adjusts the total tax assessments to \$150,700 for Tax Years 2022 and 2023, barring a district-wide reassessment or revaluation; which waives the payment of statutory interest provided that any refunds are paid within 60 days of the entry of the Tax Court Judgments in the form of credits against future taxes due and owing the Borough; which provides that all such credits shall be applied to the quarterly payment next due following entry of the Tax Court Judgments; which provides that Taxpayer has agreed to waive any and all claims for property tax exemption in the Tax Years that are the subject of the within settlement as well as Tax Years 2022 and 2023; and which provides that the Borough has agreed to withdraw any and all Counterclaims.
2. The settlement outlined above shall be without prejudice to the Borough's dealings with any Borough's taxpayers' request for tax assessment reductions.

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

No. 11-21-284

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park (the "Borough") has determined it is necessary to obtain appraisal services to appraise the properties located at Block 1704, Lots 44 and 45 in the Borough (the "Properties"); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.*, by Resolution 4-20-147 adopted by the Borough on April 21, 2020, the Borough, as "redevelopment entity," determined the Properties to be an area in need of redevelopment with the power of eminent domain; and

WHEREAS, Integra Realty Resources – Northern Jersey ("Integra") submitted a detailed proposal to the Borough dated October 14, 2021 for appraisal services for the Properties (the "Proposal"); and

WHEREAS, Integra possesses the skills and expertise necessary to perform and complete the appraisal services set forth in the Proposal (the "Services"); and

WHEREAS, the Borough has reviewed the Proposal and desires to enter into a contract with Integra (the "2021 Contract") to perform the Services as outlined in the Proposal, for a total amount not to exceed Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00), to be paid in accordance with the rates set forth in the Proposal, and for a maximum term of one (1) year; and

WHEREAS, the total amount of the 2021 Contract was determined to be under the bid threshold established pursuant to the Local Public Contracts Law, *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.*; and

WHEREAS, the Borough hereby certifies that there are funds available for the costs of the Services set forth in the Proposal.

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

- 1) The recitals hereto are incorporated herein as if set forth at length.
- 2) The Borough Council hereby authorizes the 2021 Contract with Integra to perform the Services listed in the Proposal, for an amount not to exceed Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00), payable in accordance with the rates set forth in the Proposal, and for a maximum term of one (1) year.
- 3) The Mayor and the Borough Clerk are hereby authorized to execute and deliver the 2021 Contract authorized herein, and any and all other documents necessary to effectuate this Resolution, in consultation with counsel.
- 4) This Resolution shall take effect in accordance with law.

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

No. 11-21-285

WHEREAS, on September 14, 2021 the roof at the public library failed and there were significant leaks causing damage to the interior of the library; and

WHEREAS, the roof was patched immediately following the leak and remediation work was completed; however, the restoration work at the library cannot proceed and the building cannot fully reopen without additional repairs to the roof system; and

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WHEREAS, the Borough has consulted with a licensed professional architect who has recommended the installation of additional roof drains and reinforcements of weak areas of the shingle roof; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-6 provides that public bidding and quotes is not necessary in an emergency situation; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Account No. 0-01-29-390-246 in an amount not to exceed \$40,000.00, 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 Northeast Roof Maintenance, Inc., 649 Catherine Street, Perth Amboy, NJ 08861, at a total price not to exceed \$40,000.00; and

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

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

No. 11-21-286

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution No. 7-21-179, adopted by the Borough Council on July 6, 2021, a contract was awarded to JADS Construction Company, Inc. of South River, NJ, for the resurfacing and reconstruction of South Sixth Avenue between Magnolia Street and Benner Street, South Ninth Avenue between Eden Avenue and Graham Street, North Ninth Avenue between Raritan Avenue and Abbott Street, Benner Street between South Seventh Avenue and South Ninth Avenue, Cliff Court, Lincoln Avenue between Lawrence Avenue and North Fifth Avenue, and Barnard Street between Central Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue; and

WHEREAS, it appears from Pay Estimate No. 3, filed by CME Associates, that certain work under said contract has been completed and approved and there is due to JADS Construction Company, Inc. the sum of \$240,611.49 in accordance with said Pay Estimate for work performed from September 28, 2021 to October 7, 2021; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Account Nos. C-04-55-821-001 and C-04-55-824-001 in the amount of \$240,611.49, as reflected by the Certification of Funds Available by the Chief Financial Officer, shown below;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Chief Financial Officer be and is hereby authorized and directed to pay JADS Construction Company, Inc. the sum of \$240,611.49, as certified by the Engineer in Pay Estimate No. 2, subject to the Clerk's receipt of the Certified Payroll and Project Manning Reports; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to Chief Financial Officer and the CME Associates forthwith.

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

No. 11-21-287

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 11/9/2021 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 41.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: None.

No. 11-21-288

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that transfers of 2021 budget appropriation balances shall be made as follows:

Description	CURRENT FUND	
	From	To
Motorpool S&W	23,200.00	
Clerk OE		18,000.00
Tax Collector OE		5,000.00
Tax Assessor S&W		100.00
Board of Adjustment S&W		100.00
Total	\$23,200.00	\$23,200.00
	WATER/SEWER UTILITY	
Description	From	To
Water Sewer OE	10,000.00	
Water Sewer S&W		10,000.00
Total	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00

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Mayor Brill Mittler appointed Ruth Bickhardt 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 Hersh, 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.

Eric Lipton, 123 South Adelaide Avenue, commented that he has been a resident of Highland Park for fifteen years and on Friday, he was hit by a car on 4th and Raritan. He was happy to hear the Chief's comments that the problems at that intersection are being treated with urgency. He is thankful that he is one of the people who survived being hit at that intersection. These were not just accidents; these were life-threatening situations at that intersection. He is pleased to hear how important it is to the Council and the Police Department to do something. He wanted to know what the Council is doing to light a fire under the DOT to take this as seriously as they should. He noted that Officer Bibby was extremely helpful to him as well as the EMT's who responded. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Governing Body is taking this seriously and she has been in contact with the Borough's State Legislators. She and the Chief have been talking on a daily basis and the Police Department has contacted the Traffic Coordinators at the DOT. There are different types of traffic signals, some that allow pedestrians to cross before cars can make turns. Chief Abrams noted that the Police Department is looking at a couple of different options for the pedestrian crosswalks. One is an all-stop for all traffic. It gives a certain pre-programmed amount of time for pedestrians to get started in to the intersection before it lets any of the traffic start to move. There is also a delayed green, where one side goes and then the other side goes. There is also the possibility of a turn only arrow or possibly no left turns from the intersection during certain times. These crashes are not happening due to speeding or people running red lights. They are making every effort to impress the State to get more involved and provide help and expertise. This is a slow process and they have sent five years' worth of crash reports to them. Councilwoman Foster noted that the Public Safety Committee discussed this matter at their meeting and they also discussed some temporary measures to implement. Chief Abrams noted that the message board is on North 4th Avenue now with a message to drivers to pay attention. Residents can expect to see police cars there on a regular basis to keep an eye on the intersection.

Dan Stern Cardinale, 221 Harper Street, commented that he loves the idea of an all stop phase for the traffic light that allows the Borough to prioritize traffic at that intersection and other intersections. He wished more people could see over the last year or two how many different things have been coming together to work in synergy at these meetings. He feels like many people are not seeing or hearing about things. The Borough is working on things to improve the economic health of the town that is part of one big plan that may take years to implement. He thanked the Borough Council for all the work that has gone into all of this.

Pam Dorman, 423 South 5th Avenue, commented that she wanted to speak to public safety on behalf of friends who live on Harrison Avenue at the border of Highland Park and Edison. During the flood at the end of September, there were a number of homes that were flooded up through the first floor. Calls were made to the Police and Fire Departments, but that section of Harrison Avenue was so flooded that they could not respond to those homes. They claim that they never received any response as to why nobody came to help them. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that this is the first time she is hearing of anyone who called for help that did not get help. She has spoken to several residents in the Harrison Avenue area and all of them had some help from either the Fire Department or Police Department during that time. There is a big issue with climate change and the Mill Brook in that area. She talks about this issue several times a week with the Borough Administrator. They are going to be working on a program to address these issues and they will be seeking assistance from their professionals. Ms. Dorman noted that the Mayor might have missed an email. She will get back to the two people she knows. Part of the email was to find out how to contact the emergency response group. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Borough has an Office of Emergency Management and a Civilian Emergency Response Team. The OEM Coordinator was in touch with her, Councilwoman Foster and the Borough Administrator throughout the whole situation.

Ray Bord, 429 South 2nd Avenue, commented that there are several residents that would like to create a civil matter restorative practices group to resolve some of the civil disputes in non-escalating environments. They would like to submit the petition to the Governing Body and discuss it with them. Mayor Brill Mittler advised that there are a number of Boards/Commissions that already exist to handle those types of situations. She referenced the Human Relations Commission and the Mayor's Equity Advisory Council.

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

A five minute recess was taken at 8:47 p.m.

Work Session:

Boards, Commissions & Committees Diversity Survey Report – Assistant to the Borough Administrator, Emma Von Thun, appeared at the meeting. She noted that the Borough of Highland Park conducted a survey through Google Forms of its Boards, Commissions and Committees. The survey was circulated through email during February and March and was anonymous with fourteen total questions, none of which was required. During the first round, there were 80 respondents and during the second round, nine additional respondents filled the survey out. There are more than two

hundred total volunteers on boards and commissions. The data shows that volunteers of the Borough are predominantly female (56.2%), employed in a full-time role (48.3%), have a total family income of between \$75,000 and \$99,999 (36%), live on the South Side (52.8%), own their homes (79.8%), are 60+ years old ((37.1%), and are white (84.3%). The volunteer membership of the Borough should better represent the town's diversity profile, but it is important to acknowledge that the burden of change should not fall on minority representation, and instead work from a holistic perspective. There are a variety of recommendations to help boost the diversity across various categories including advertising volunteering as a way to meet more people in Highland Park to interest renter and/or younger populations, establish an annual volunteer fair, and much more. Borough Administrator Jover noted that they had a meeting with the boards/committee chairs and talked about recruitment. Discussion amongst the Governing Body of ways to get a more diverse section of volunteers on the boards/commissions. Mayor Brill Mittler asked that Emma and Shetal work together and think about volunteerism in Highland Park to reach a new market/new group of people in a way that is non-traditional.

HP Gives a Hoot Mission Statement – Councilwoman Canavera noted that the current mission statement of HP Gives a Hoot talks about providing lunches. The group has moved past that and they would like to change their mission statement. They sent the proposal, which is HP Gives a Hoot, a non-profit commission of the Borough of Highland Park, contributes to community support for the well-being of our children in need. The Borough Administrator was going to check and let them know if the changes could be made. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the fund is a state dedication by rider for the collection of funds and they do not want to adjust the purposes of the organization in a way that jeopardizes that standing. HP Gives a Hoot runs the food pantry out of the Teen Center and they give scholarships to low-income students/residents for camp. They are still doing food, but not doing lunch anymore because not enough people were taking advantage of it and the school is giving free lunch to everyone. Borough Administrator Jover will check with the Chief Financial Officer.

Tree Planting Opt-out Provisions – Councilman George explained about a plan that Public Works came up with after long discussions with the Shade Tree Advisory Committee about revising the tree planting program and scaling it down to make it more manageable. The plan is to do planting by zones and to cut down the volume of trees planted. STAC is in agreement with the proposals and this will cut down on the money spent to purchase trees and will also cut down on the number of trees that do not survive after planting because they were not watered/maintained. STAC had concerns about the recommendation for solidifying and organizing the opt-out program. Street trees are planted in the verge, which is the right-of-way easement between the curb and the sidewalk. There have been problems in the past with communication about residents wanting trees and then deciding they no longer want a tree. Public Works and Administration felt that some opt-out, last minute programming needs to be in place and the alternative proposed is that we have alternate locations to plant trees.

Land Development Regulations Related to Automotive and Service Repair Garages – Councilman Hale explained that there a number of businesses that take old cars and refurbish them and they would like to be able to see them. They approached the Code Enforcement Officer and the issue was discuss with the Economic Development Committee. There was concerns about signage and concerns that there would a significant amount of additional cars parked at these service repair garages. There is some language in a resolution that they put together that makes it more circumscribed so that there is a specific number of cars that they can sell per year. They would not be parking cars along side streets and there are specific requirements about signage. The goal is to help a few businesses to offer them the ability to sell some cars to help their bottom line. Discussion by the Governing Body of used car lots versus service repair garages. Councilman George clarified that this would be for existing businesses. Councilwoman Canavera pointed out that this a good way for lower income families to be able to afford a car that could be sold at a lower price than a used car lot. Councilwoman Kim-Chohan noted that this particular business contacted the Code Enforcement Office because they needed something from the State to be able to purchase cars at an auction. Having this ordinance allows them to be able to apply for that license. Borough Attorney Schmierer to work with Councilman Hale on drafting this ordinance.

Land Development Regulations Related to Performance, Maintenance and Related Guarantees – Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that the State Municipal Land Use Law has been amended to make it a little easier for developers to post their performance bonds and the other sureties that they need to make sure they do what they are supposed to do. The amendment to Chapter 230 updates the Borough Code to follow state law.

Fair Share Housing Relate to Control Periods and Trust Fund – Borough Administrator Jover explained change that needs to be made to the ordinance that governs fair share housing. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that the state language, which we are adding, is that deed restrictions for ownership and rental units would be for at least 30 years. Adding this amendment so that affordable units will be deed restricted for at least 30 years and until the Governing Body releases them. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the other element is a cleanup of language regarding the affordable housing trust fund stipulating how the fund is set up, where the funds go, etc.

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings

