

REGULAR MEETING – DECEMBER 7, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held via Zoom, on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, and was called to order by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:03 PM. Mayor Brill Mittler read the Open Public Meetings Statement.

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

Absent: Councilperson Foster.

Mayor Brill Mittler read proclamation to celebrate the 90th birthday of Ellen Rebarber, a long-time Borough resident. Ms. Rebarber thanked the Governing Body and noted that it has been her delight to live in Highland Park and to be surrounded with such wonderful friends and family.

Mayor Brill Mittler read proclamation to celebrate the achievements of Borough Clerk Joan Hullings, who will be retiring at the end of the year after thirty-six and a half years of service.

Borough Administrator Jover noted that she reached out to some of the former Mayors that the Borough Clerk worked with and they submitted remarks. Former Mayor Meryl Frank, former Mayor Stephen Nolan and former Mayor Gary Minkoff submitted remarks and the Borough Administrator read them into the record.

Mayor Brill Mittler asked the Council Members if they would like to say a few words. Council President Phil George, Councilwoman Tara Canavera, Councilman Matt Hale, Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, and Councilman Hersh thanked the Borough Clerk for her years of service and wished her well in her retirement. Borough Attorney Schmierer added his congratulations to the Borough Clerk on her retirement. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that when all of them joined the Governing Body, that the Borough Clerk personally sat with every one of them to review the rules and regulations. She hoped that the Borough Clerk has an enjoyable retirement.

On motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, the minutes of the Regular/Work Session Meetings held September 14, 2021, October 5, 2021, October 19, 2021 and November 9, 2021, were approved, as distributed, by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Foster.

Abstain: None.

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

Chief Abrams reported on behalf of Councilwoman Foster and noted that the Police Department is still looking to hire one additional Crossing Guard. Anyone interested in applying should contact headquarters and speak to Sgt. Soden. The Borough has been experiencing a rash of burglaries via open and unlocked doors. Residents are encouraged to lock their doors, use their alarms and make sure motion sensor lights are activated. Power tools have been taken from unlocked garages and electronics have been taken from unlocked houses, particularly on the first floor. If anyone has any security or ring camera footage from the areas where the burglaries occurred, they are asked to contact the Police Department or the Detective Bureau. Lastly, package thefts are on the rise during the holiday season and residents are asked to take precautions to make sure their packages are safe. There are three different methods residents can use; have them delivered to a hub, you can have them delivered with a signature being required, or you can ask for notification when the package is three or four doors away.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan – No report.

Councilwoman Canavera reported that the Highland Park Human Relations Commission will hold an interfaith memorial service on Friday, December 10, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the Highland Park Community Center parking lot to commemorate the victims of the December 10, 2019 attack by two assailants at the Kosher Supermarket in Jersey City that left four innocent victims dead and others injured. It is also a time to remember that the Jewish community continues to be attacked as reported by the Anti-Defamation League. New Jersey has the second highest rates of anti-Semitic incidents in 2020. We all need to be vigilant to protect our residents and the town. Covid cases are rising in New Jersey and the Board of Health recommends being vaccinated or getting a booster shot. They also wanted to remind everyone that e-cigarettes are just as dangerous as smoking. For help in quitting smoking visit www.nj.njquitline.org. The Food Pantry and HP Gives a Hoot are serving our 300 families each month. If you would like to donate, you can do so through their amazon wish list or by sending a check to Borough Hall. 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 Hale reported that the Borough is moving ahead with the implementation of the Neighborhood Preservation Program grant. To date, we have received over 350 responses to our community-wide survey about Woodbridge Avenue. This survey was designed by the State Department of Community Affairs and is being implemented in all of the NPP towns. From what we gather, the Borough's response rate is amazing, but we can do better. If you have not yet filled out the survey, please visit the Borough website and do a search of Neighborhood Preservation Program and a link to the survey is there. You can also look for the flyers posted around town with the QR code and access the survey that way. We have a number of meetings with people who live and work on Woodbridge Avenue coming up. The

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Business Roundtable is Wednesday, December 8th from 7:00 – 9: p.m.; the Resident Meeting #1 (Daytime) is Wednesday, December 15th from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.; and the Resident Meeting #2 (Evening) is Thursday December 16th from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. These are all zoom meetings and there is a virtual signup sheet on the NPP page on the website or you can email Emma Von Thun at evonthun@hpboro.com. These meetings are designed for people who live and work on Woodbridge Avenue. With the year, winding down you might think Main Street Highland Park is winding down, but you would be wrong. December 11th is the Night Owl Market from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. Also on December 11th, Pino's is hosting a punk rock flea market. The Farmer's Market has two more meetings, Friday, December 10th and Friday, December 17th.

Councilman Hersh reported that the Borough received a letter from a number of parents with young children that expressed concern about the limited recreational programming in Highland Park for young children. The Borough has been working with the Department of Recreation and the Department of Public Works on improving our pocket park spaces while the County Parks, Johnson Park and Donaldson Park, are out of commission. One of the things asked was the reasons for the limited programming. Kim McGraw and Kimberly McGraw at the Community Center do a terrific job and are in a transition and they are doing a top to bottom assessment of programming. One area that was sidelined was the youth basketball program. He went over a few things that parents can expect to see in the coming days and weeks and information can be found on the Department of Recreation website – highlandparkrec.com. Winter track will be starting on Sundays for 3rd through 8th grades. This program will focus on speed, agility and running form and the program is run by Coach Farmer from the Highland Park Middle School Team. There will be five sessions starting in January and they will take place at the Municipal Complex. Pre-school Stem with the Library will be on Wednesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The program is for 3-5 year olds to join the Highland Park Library Youth Services Librarian for pre-school stem activities and stories. This program begins in January and will be held at the Community Center. Park Parties grew out of an effort from communication with a number of parents that expressed concern about the limited park space. They have been working with Kimberly McGraw at the Recreation Department. He hopes that this institutionalizes long-term use and investment in our pocket parks. The Borough's pocket parks are the Felton Avenue Tot Lot and the Molimock-Graff Park (Karsey Street Park). There are also playgrounds at the Borough schools and they are in discussions with the school district about sharing those spaces. Some of the equipment at the pocket parks needs some updating with some resurfacing, some more tables, additional lighting, etc. They will have many events at these parks to encourage outdoor play and create a safe social environment targeted for children between the ages of three and five. Registration for upcoming events is preferred and it is free. The youth basketball clinic will be starting in March. Other programs coming are the theater arts studio that is virtual and begins in January; indoor adult soccer on Sundays; men's basketball on Wednesdays; women's basketball on Tuesdays; and adult volleyball on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. They will have nature explorers at Donaldson Park for grades 3 through 8, soccer on the turf, music programming, reading with daisy, a partnership with the Library, and pickup games at the park, that is a partnership with the Teen Center. He thanked the parents who submitted the letter for their patience, encouragement and advocacy. It is important that we are able to provide alternative forms of recreation during times when logistics can be difficult. The Recreation Department and the Mayor went on a field trip to the new Piscataway Recreation Center and they are looking to collaborate with Piscataway on some programming. There is an Arts Commission meeting this Thursday that will be held at Pino's at 6:00 p.m.

Councilman George reported that the Department of Public Works is doing leaf pickups on Wednesdays. When the crews have extra time, they come around and collect leaves on other days of the week. On tonight's agenda, there is a resolution to purchase a new street sweeper. The new street sweeper is a truck type of sweeper that does not need to be transported if repairs are necessary. This is a new type of street sweeper and the Department of Public Works is looking forward to obtaining the vehicle to assist with general cleanup and also with cleaning out the storm sewer vents that get clogged with leaves and other debris. He has met with the Superintendent of Public Works regarding their budget for 2022. The Public Works Committee will discuss the Public Works budget at their next meeting along with the snow removal plan. He thanked Councilman Hersh and Councilwoman Canavera for all the work they put into completion of the snow removal plan. The Shade Tree Advisory Committee is doing a reorganization study to be more efficient and better communicate with the Department of Public Works for tree replacement and Sustainable Highland Park. They are doing site inspections where streets trees planted in the last couple of years may have failed and creating the inventory for the 2022 planting schedule. The Environmental Commission is undergoing a review of the commentary from the Borough on the leaf blower ordinance to control the noise and carbon emissions. They had some excellent suggestions and they are performing their own study and research to bring forth to the Council. They are looking at ordinance that other towns are doing and they will reach out to lawn service companies for suggestions and thoughts on possible control for not only noise, but also electric powered leaf blowers. Allan Williams, a founding member of Sustainable Highland Park is stepping down at the end of the year

Borough Administrator Jover reported on the Code Blue program. They are following a similar program to what they did last year in partnership with the Reformed Church. They have an apartment at one of the Borough's properties for use when it is cold. Someone in need can call the non-emergency line at 732-572-3800 to see if space is available.

Borough Attorney Schmierer – No report.

Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler reported on the Covid-19 situation in Highland Park and Middlesex County. Statewide, 68% of the population has received both doses of the vaccine and 10% have at least started with one dose. In the County, 92% of our population has received at least one dose. In Highland Park, children aged 5-12, 75% have had their vaccinations completed and 12% have had them started. Children aged 12-17, 83% have completed their vaccinations and another 10% have started them. For ages 18 and up, 82% have completed their vaccinations and 10% have at least started them. In Highland Park over the last 24 hours, there have been 9 new cases reported and that is something she wants everyone to think about. We know that there have been family gatherings and that this has been going on forever, but she

urged residents to please be cautious and wear masks indoors and stay six feet apart when you are indoors. Let's not give up on the protocols we have been following. We are all very tired of this, but the last thing we want to do is see our municipality have increasing cases of Covid being reported. Councilwoman Canavera mentioned the December 10th vigil in memory of those who lost their lives in the Jersey City shooting. Mayor Steve Fulop of Jersey City will be joining Highland Park at this vigil. She has received several letters from residents about the ongoing traffic incidents that have been occurring on Raritan Avenue and 4th Avenue. The Police Chief and the Police Department have been working with the DOT and they have resolved some of the issues and will be addressing the left turns from North 4th Avenue onto Raritan Avenue. Chief Abrams noted that they reached out to the DOT and spoke to them about Raritan Avenue and North 4th Avenue and that left turns from that intersection seem to be the most dangerous in town. They agreed with the Police Department's findings and they have started the ball rolling to make that intersection no left turns from North 4th Avenue onto Route 27. It will be a 24/hour, 7/day a week prohibition on making left turns at that intersection. The hope is that this will be in place sooner rather than later. With the NJDOT, sometimes things move at a glacial pace, but they are doing their best to stay on top of them to get this done as quickly as possible. In the meantime, they are looking at some plans that the previous Chief had discussed with DOT for other intersections that did not go anywhere. They are looking at them to see if they are viable to come up with solutions for the other intersections. The primary goal is to get North 4th and Raritan Avenue set up to be a safer place for people to cross. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Borough has been talking with Piscataway about a joint program allowing Borough residents to participate in the amazing recreation center that they built. There are gyms, lots of equipment, an indoor swimming pool, and an outdoor swimming pool. It would be a wonderful thing for our residents to be able to participate in the programs that they have there and use the facilities.

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 about the Mayor reporting 9 new cases of Covid in the last 24 hours. This is an undercount, and she knows that for a fact. She wondered about the procedure for people who take an at home antigen test and test positive for Covid and how their information is counted in the official numbers. She also wanted to know if this information could be advertised throughout town so there is accurate information. The Borough needs to be capturing accurate data so that policies can be implemented based on correct number. She feels strongly that there needs to be more advertising and more information about boosters. The FDA now recommends them for everybody who is 18 and older. The Borough needs to be working hard to spread the word about initial vaccinations, and convincing people to get their boosters. She asked why Highland Park has not implemented their own indoor mask mandate. She asked if vaccines have been mandated for all of Highland Park's staff with no testing opt out. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that she would bring up these issues with her Covi-19 Task Force. Borough Administrator Jover noted that staff have to provide proof of vaccination or proof of twice weekly testing.

Peter Spool, 146 Graham Street, thanked Abby for her comments and noted that masking is important because of spread of the omicron variant. He asked about Resolution No. 12-21-299 regarding the RFP for Downtown Redevelopment. All four tracts are mentioned in the document, yet the RFP's are being requested for only Tracts A, C and D. Tracts A and C are for property owned by the Borough, but not tract D. How can you issue an RFP for land that the Borough does not own? He asked how residents would be involved to give input once the proposals are received. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that tract B is owned by someone who has been working with the Borough on a redevelopment plan. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that any proposals submitted would have to follow the redevelopment plan that was approved. Borough Attorney Schmierer advised that the award of an RFP is something that is done by the Governing Body.

Mary Forsberg, 317 Denison Street, commented that the redevelopment plan for tract B has already been approved and the zoning was changed to allow for four and five-story buildings with no parking. She asked how the Borough could issue an RFP for private property, tract D. She mentioned that if the Borough decides to go with the MCIA that it would be a conflict of interest. She mentioned that people in town are opposed to a parking garage and she is appalled that they would think that a parking garage is appropriate for Highland Park. She noted that never mention the library and all of the great resources there. The Borough has not fixed the roof, the library is only partially functional, and that is pathetic. She again asked how they issue an RFP for land they do not own and she asked if they plan to use eminent domain.

Lois Lebbing, North 2nd Avenue, wished Ellen Rebarber a Happy Birthday and wished the Borough Clerk well on her retirement. She commented about Resolution No. 12-21-299 regarding the RFP. She also asked if the Borough has replaced or repaired any sewers in the Borough so that floods will not occur again. She asked if Middlesex Water Company has completed their study and issued a report. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the contractor that did the TV inspection of the entire sewer system. They put a value-add in terms of recommendations and are prioritizing what needs to be done. Report should be received by the end of the year.

Dan Stern Cardinale, 221 Harper Street, thanked the Governing Body for moving the redevelopment process forward. He echoed the comments made by Abby that testing every few days is not sufficient to prevent coronavirus spread. There needs to be a vaccine mandate issued by the Borough with no testing opt out. He asked how people report positive home test results so those numbers are included in the official statistics. Mayor Brill Mittler will discuss that with the Covid-19 Task Force and report at a future meeting.

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Borough Attorney Schmierer read email submitted by Marc Liebeskind dated December 7, 2021 regarding Resolution No. 12-21-299, RFP for development of Tracts A-D.

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

The Clerk reported advertising 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, 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.

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 Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, the ordinance entitled as above, being Ordinance No. 21-2038, was duly adopted, as amended, by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Foster.

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

No. 12-21-289

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the 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, 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 OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 86, ENTITLED, "FAIR SHARE AFFORDABLE HOUSING" OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK TO ADDRESS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW JERSEY SUPERIOR COURT, 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, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Foster.

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. 12-21-290

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 86, ENTITLED, "FAIR SHARE AFFORDABLE HOUSING" OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK TO ADDRESS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW JERSEY SUPERIOR COURT, 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 21, 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, ORDINANCE AMENDING THE HIGHLAND PARK BOROUGH CODE PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40:55D-53 REGARDING LAND DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE, MAINTENANCE AND RELATED GUARANTEES, 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 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, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

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Absent: Councilperson Foster.

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. 12-21-291

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, ORDINANCE AMENDING THE HIGHLAND PARK BOROUGH CODE PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40:55D-53 REGARDING LAND DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE, MAINTENANCE AND RELATED GUARANTEES, 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 21, 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. 12-21-292 through 12-21-302, were duly adopted on motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Foster.

Abstained: None.

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

No. 12-21-292

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that an Adjourned Meeting of the Mayor and Borough Council will be held at Borough Hall, 221 South 5th Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on Tuesday, January 4, 2022, at 6:30 PM.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Organization Meeting of the Borough Council for the Year 2022 will be held at Borough Hall, 221 South 5th Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

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

No. 12-21-293

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park is in need of replacing the postage machine in the Municipal Building, as more fully described on the attached proposal; and

WHEREAS, Pitney Bowes, Shelton, CT, quoted a per monthly charge of \$328.39 per month for the next 60 months for the lease of said equipment, including maintenance; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Account No. 1-01-20-121-202 in the amount of \$328.39, for the remainder of 2021 as reflected by the certification of funds by the Chief Financial Officer, shown below; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose shall be appropriated in each applicable budget year;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Borough Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to execute the agreement for the lease of the aforesaid postage machine from Pitney Bowes, 27 Waterview Dr., Shelton, CT 06484-4361 at the aforementioned monthly charge; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Finance Office forthwith.

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

No. 12-21-294

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:

ANNMARIE SABOVICK, Community Services Assistant (Recreation), at an annual salary of \$43,839.00, effective January 3, 2022.

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:

JENIFER CALO, Public Safety School Crossing Guard, at an hourly rate of \$19.36, effective November 22, 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 Council as a Whole, was duly adopted as above:

No. 12-21-295

WHEREAS, pursuant to a duly advertised Notice to Bidders, on November 4, 2021 the Borough received four (4) bids for the Relocation of Water Mains, as follows:

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1. Matina & Sons, Inc. \$103,200.66
2. Crest Construction Group, Inc. \$155,970.00
3. Your Way Construction, Inc. \$172,936.30
4. B&W Construction Co. of NJ, Inc. \$188,079.00; and

WHEREAS, following the bid opening, by letter dated November 4, 2021, a copy of which is attached hereto, apparent low bidder Matina & Sons, Inc. made a formal request to the Clerk’s Office for permission to withdraw its bid pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-23.3, based on three (3) clerical errors in Matina & Sons, Inc.’s submitted unit prices; and

WHEREAS, in its request, Matina & Sons, Inc. explained that its numerical errors would amount to a cost difference of over \$20,000.00 for completion of the project, which would be borne by Matina & Sons, Inc. and cause it a severe financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Attorney’s office has reviewed Matina & Sons, Inc.’s request and recommends that the Council authorize Matina & Sons, Inc. to withdraw its bid; and

WHEREAS, the second low bid was submitted by Crest Construction Group, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Administrator has reviewed the bid submitted by Crest Construction Group, Inc., and in consultation with the Borough Attorney’s office, recommends that a contract be awarded Crest Construction Group, Inc. for \$155,970.00 as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has certified that the availability of sufficient funds for this contract is in Account No. U-06-55-603-001.

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 foregoing “Whereas” clauses are hereby incorporated herein as if fully restated.
2. The Council hereby authorizes Matina & Sons, Inc. to withdraw its bid pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-23.3.
3. The contract for the Relocation of Water Mains is hereby awarded to Crest Construction Group, Inc. for the contract amount of \$155,970.00.
4. The Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute an Agreement consistent herewith.

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

No. 12-21-296

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 4th quarter 2021 taxes for the following due to tax exempt status:

<u>BLOCK</u>	<u>LOT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
3001	7	\$2,776.56

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 Public Works and Public Utilities Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 12-21-297

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.
Odra MT4H Sweeper Mounted to 2022 Isuzu NRR Chassis	Sanitation Equipment Corporation	\$229,273.60	ESCNJ #20/21 – 55

WHEREAS, the Borough has \$215,000.00 in funds through the Middlesex County Improvement Authority’s 2021 Pooled Capital Equipment and Improvement Financing Program and \$14,273.60 in Account No. 1-01-26-315-232 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 Public Work and Public Utilities Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 12-21-298

WHEREAS, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) and Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) Stakeholder Engagement Team desire to expand the tree canopy in the residential portion of the NPP Woodbridge Avenue district; and

WHEREAS, the Arbor Day Foundation’s TD Space Grants are available to support tree planting as a way to advance environmental and economic benefits of a community; and

WHEREAS, STAC wishes to apply for a grant from the Arbor Day Foundation in the amount of \$20,000.00; and

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute and submit, on behalf of STAC, the grant application to Arbor Day Foundation, a copy of which is attached to the original of this resolution.

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

No. 12-21-299

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park, a public body corporate and politic of the State of New Jersey (the "Borough") is authorized pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq. (as same may be amended from time to time) (the "Redevelopment Law") to act as a redevelopment entity and to implement redevelopment plans and carry out redevelopment projects in the Borough; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Redevelopment Law, the Borough Council caused a redevelopment plan to be prepared for certain property located within the Borough, entitled the "Downtown Redevelopment Plan for Tracts A-D" (the "Redevelopment Plan"); and

WHEREAS, on September 14, 2012, the Borough Council approved Ordinance No. 21-2030 adopting the Redevelopment Plan; and

WHEREAS, as described in the Redevelopment Plan, the properties identified as Tract A: Block 1704 [173], Lots 41-49 & Portion of Lot 20 ("Tract A"); Tract B: Block 2201 [13], Lots 6 & 9 ("Tract B"); Tract C: Block 2202 [22], Lots 4, 32.02 & 33.01 ("Tract C"); and Tract D: Block 1604 [158], Lots 20-26, 42, 50-51 & Portion of Lot 47, and Block 1603 [162], Lots 36-38 ("Tract D") on the Official Tax Map of the Borough (collectively, the "Properties") have been designated as an "area in need of rehabilitation", "area in need of redevelopment" and/or a "condemnation area in need of redevelopment"; and

WHEREAS, the Borough desires to issue a Request for Proposals for the redevelopment property within Highland Park including all, or a portion of, Tracts A, C, and D in substantially the form on file with the Borough Clerk (the "RFP"), in order to create a fair and open process for the selection of the redeveloper(s) for Tracts A, C and D,

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

- 1) The recitals hereto are incorporated herein as if set forth in length.
- 2) The Borough hereby authorizes the issuance of the RFP and delegates to the Business Administrator the authority to complete same including inclusion of all dates and deadlines which may be revised or amended from time to time by the Borough Administrator with advice of counsel in furtherance of the RFP process.
- 3) The Mayor and the Borough Clerk are hereby authorized to take all actions necessary to effectuate this Resolution, in consultation with counsel.

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

No. 12-21-300

WHEREAS, Venkateswara Chinthala has filed with the Clerk of this Borough an application for a License to operate taxicabs under the provisions of the Ordinance providing for such License for the year 2022; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED 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 License.

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

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

No. 12-21-301

WHEREAS, GVK Taxi No. 5 LLC (Venkateswara Chinthala) has filed with the Clerk of this Borough an application for an Owners License to operate taxicabs in this Borough under the provisions of the Ordinance providing for such licenses for the year 2022; and

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

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

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

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

No. 12-21-302

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 12/7/2021 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 41.

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

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.
 Opposed: None.
 Abstain: None.
 Absent: Councilperson Foster.

No. 12-21-303

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:

CURRENT FUND		
Description	From	To
Tax Collector S&W	10,000.00	
Police S&W	8,000.00	
Social Security	20,000.00	
Fire S&W	25,000.00	
Borough Clerk S&W		8,000.00
Unemployment		40,000.00
Police OE		10,000.00
Buildings & Grounds OE		5,000.00
Total	\$63,000.00	\$63,000.00

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

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.
 Opposed: None.
 Abstain: None.
 Absent: Councilperson Foster.

No. 12-21-304

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87 provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by law and the amount was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget; and

WHEREAS, the Director may also approve the insertion of an item of appropriation for equal amount.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the 2021 budget in the sum of \$90,000.00, which is now available from the U.S. Treasury, American Rescue Plan of 2021-Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum of \$90,000.00 is hereby appropriated under the caption of American Rescue Plan of 2021-Local Fiscal Recovery Funds-Premium Pay.

Mayor Brill Mittler appointed Christy Van Horn to serve as a Regular Member of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2021.

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, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.
 Opposed: None.
 Absent: Councilperson Foster.
 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.

Peter Spool, 146 Graham Street, asked for an answer to his question about tract D. He asked why it makes sense to issue an RFP and pay all these costs for a piece of property that is privately owned. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Borough Council and the Administration have deemed it necessary for them to explore the possibility of a parking garage so that the sidewalks in front of the redevelopment projects remain safe for all pedestrians. Mr. Spool commented that the redevelopment plan is vague in many cases. They received notes from Main Street Highland Park about tract C and some other choices for locations of the farmer's market. He asked if the Borough Council would honor their choice that the farmer's market remain in its current location. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Borough Council has been working with Main Street Highland Park during this whole process.

John Bucu, 41 Byron Place, Somerset, commented that he is against what Highland Park is doing with marijuana in town. He has listened to previous meetings and he applauded the residents who have spoken up against it. Nobody wants marijuana businesses in Highland Park and he hoped that they will continue to fight against it to keep Highland Park safe and family friendly. He noted that the Borough could save more money by not paying the health insurance for Mayor Brill Mittler and Councilwoman Foster. Mayor Brill Mittler clarified that the State of New Jersey allowed for health insurance for Governing Body members until several years ago and anyone who was getting coverage was grandfathered in.

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Mary Forsberg, 317 Denison Street, commented that Main Street Highland Park gave the Borough Council three scenarios, but the one that they preferred was to keep the farmer's market on tract C not move it. She also commented about the Borough building a parking garage in a residential neighborhood to keep pedestrians safe. She asked again how they could issue an RFP for private property. She also asked how they could keep an individual who owns a piece of property from building what they want on their property. She does not want a parking garage and knows many people that do not want a parking garage and do not want to pay for a parking garage.

Dan Stern Cardinale, 221 Harper Street, thanked the Borough Council for their work on the cannabis resolution a few months ago. He asked them to keep up the good work.

Alvin Chin, 31 South 3rd Avenue, commented that he wanted to echo the comments of Dan Stern Cardinale regarding cannabis. He spoke about the Middlesex County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan listed on the work session agenda. He encouraged the Council to approve this resolution at the next meeting because not only is federal funding at stake for the Borough, but for the whole County.

Harold Sackowitz, 617 South 5th Avenue, asked if the Borough is guaranteed to close South 3rd Avenue. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that they are in discussions with the NJDOT.

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

Work Session:

Middlesex County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan – Borough Administrator Jover noted that this is a plan that is updated every six years. The County contracted with Rutgers University, and Alvin Chin is one of the people at Rutgers that has been helping finish this project. There is a draft of the plan that she will be distributing to the Governing Body. The Public Safety Committee and the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee will meet next week to discuss the plan. The plan gives an overview of some of the hazards in Highland Park. Staff members, the OEM Coordinator and the Environmental Commission provided input. Subsequent to Hurricane Ida, she has been working on securing the Borough the technical assistance needed to do a more comprehensive hazard assessment with some help from the NJDEP. FEMA looks for this plan to be in place for both the County and the localities in order to award future funding for mitigation projects in Highland Park.

Revaluation Order – Councilwoman Kim-Chohan reported that the Clerk's Office sent out the revaluation order that came from the County Tax Board last month. The revaluation has to be completed by November, 2022 for the 2023 tax year. The Finance Committee met with the Tax Assessor last Friday to start discussing the process. It is going to be a lengthy process and he is looking to get into over 85% of Highland Park homes once they hire a company. The annual tax card that residents receive from the Tax Assessor, taxes should be about 40% of that number. She encouraged residents to comply with requests to enter their homes to get their properties assessed. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that it has been decades since there has been a revaluation in Highland Park. Many apartment complexes in town are undervalued. The revaluation process will bring all of the different types of properties in Highland Park more in sync with what their actual values are in 2022. Councilman Hale added that it was a very informative meeting with the Tax Assessor. This is going to take an enormous amount of communication between the Borough and the residents about how the process works. The general idea is that 1/3 of the people will have their property taxes reduced, 1/3 will have nothing change and 1/3 will have their property taxes go up. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the goal is to get into 100% of the homes and properties in Highland Park. Councilman Hersh commented that he appreciated this topic being on the agenda and suggested that an FAQ be created to share with the residents. Councilman George noted that he represented a town that went through this process a couple of years ago. The town had the appraisal company come to several meetings and explain what they were going to do. He also recommended that an FAQ be created and posted on the front page of the Borough website.

Same Day Voter Registration – Councilman Hale reported that there is a bill circulating in Trenton to allow for same-day voter registration. Right now if you are not registered to vote for a certain period before an election, you are not eligible to vote. The registration requirements are punitive for lower income and communities of color. If the bill passes, it will be state law. He thinks that the Borough should adopt a resolution in support of this legislation. He hopes that the resolution can be introduced at a future meeting. Mayor Brill Mittler commented that she believes that it is an important piece of legislation that the Borough should be supporting and it should be placed on the next meeting agenda. Councilman George asked if the proposed resolution could be circulated before the next meeting. Councilman Hersh noted that there are 20 other states that allow for same-day voter registration and he agreed that it is time for New Jersey to enter the 21st century.

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings
Borough Clerk