

REGULAR MEETING – DECEMBER 6, 2022

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held in Borough Hall, 221 South 5th Avenue, on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, and was called to order by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:01 PM. Annual Notice of this meeting was provided to The Home News Tribune, the Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on January 5, 2022, and was posted on the Borough website at www.hpboro.com and on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on January 5, 2022, and has remained continuously posted as required by law.

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

Absent: Councilperson Kim-Chohan.

Mayor Brill Mittler asked Austin Morreale to do a poetry reading.

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

Councilman Hale thanked Austin for the poem, it was very meaningful. The new snowflakes are up on Woodbridge Avenue. We've had snowflakes up for the winter season on Raritan Avenue, but because of an NPP Grant and hard work by folks at Main Street and elsewhere, we've put the lights up all the way up Woodbridge Avenue. While you're there, stop at any of the businesses and get whatever you need. The public plaza is something we've been talking about for quite some time. He is aware that there's some concerns that have been raised on Facebook. Teri is going to talk about some of those conversations we've been having recently. The rent control ordinance will be introduced tonight and he is excited about that. He has heard some horrible stories from renters about things that are going on and he is hopeful that we can move ahead with the adoption of the rent control ordinance. He was lucky enough this week to attend the Downtown New Jersey Conference, which is a conference about how to revitalize downtowns from experts from all over the State. What was exciting to him was how many of the things we're doing in Highland Park are things that are being recommended all over the place, whether its housing density, parking scooters, public spaces and rent control. There are a lot of things that we're doing that other municipalities are doing. He gave a shout out to Economic Development Director Teri Jover because we really seem to be on the right page with what's going on in the cutting edge of the state. On Thursday night, the Planning Board is going to be holding a hearing about the area in need of redevelopment around Stop and Shop. Another exciting opportunity for us to make sure that we have a grocery store. We will do everything we can to have a grocery store. There is a lot of moving parts with the Stop and Shop, but this is an important one and he wanted to thank the Council. There's a bunch of different people who've been interested with Stop and Shop and he wanted to call out a couple of people that have jumped in and provided help and volunteer service and provided data and information; Aaron Weissman, Mark Russo, and Jeremy Rennick. Sometimes it takes a village to build a village. Main Street Highland Park is having a Menorah lighting on December 18th in front of the Main Street offices at 4:15 p.m. During this holiday season remember to do everything you can to shop local and go to the Farmer's Market. The Night Owl Market will begin on December 17th and our merchants need you now so make sure to make some of your purchases in our local shops and restaurants. This is a time where they could really use it.

Councilwoman Canavera reported that December is National Human Rights Month. It is a time to spread the word about the importance of treating everyone around us with respect, dignity and kindness no matter their gender, age, race, religion, political views or social status. National Human Rights Month is about acknowledging that people are people, plain and simple. The Board of Health would like to remind people that Covid is still here along with the flu, so please consider getting vaccinated or getting your booster. They would also like to remind you that e-cigarettes are just as dangerous as smoking. For help quitting, go to the website www.njquitline.org. The Community Food Pantry is open the 2nd and 4th Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and the Saturday after that Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Donations can be made using their amazon wish list. The HP Gives a Hoot food pantry is open every Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Donations can be made by mailing a check to Borough Hall. They are also taking donations at the Zone 6 Teen Center. The Mental Health Commission wants to remind everyone that if you have a mental health crisis to please reach out for help. You can call the National Suicide Prevention line at 988. The Middlesex County hotline numbers are Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care HOTLINE: (855) 515-5700; Raritan Bay Medical Center HOTLINE: (732) 442-3794 Or Text HOME to 741741.

Councilwoman Foster reported that it is good to be sitting in Council Chambers again. She noted that the snowflakes look really good on Woodbridge Avenue and she thanked Councilman Hale and the Neighborhood Preservation Program. The Police Department welcomed new Police Officer Sampson to the department. The Police Department is looking for Dispatchers and also for another Police Officer. She has received a lot of emails in the past couple of weeks regarding pedestrian safety, the bike plan and other items. On Tuesday, the Public Safety Committee will be meeting to review the pedestrian safety plan. The Borough received a Firefighter grant from the Department of Community Affairs for \$31,000.00. The grant will go towards turnout gear for the Fire Department and EMS supplies. The Zone 6 Teen Center is accepting new toys, clothes and electronics from now until December 20th. Donations can be dropped off at the Zone 6 Teen Center. For more information, you can contact Ashton Burrell at aburrell@hpboro.com.

Councilman Hersh reported that today is the last day to register for 5th and 6th grade youth basketball. Starting tomorrow, there will be a \$15 late fee. Registrations will only be accepted if space is available. Please register at highlandparkrec.com. We're also hiring part-time referees, scorekeepers and sports clinic helpers for winter and spring sports programs. The Highland Park Artist Collective will host an art reception in the meeting room at the Highland Park Public Library on Sunday, December 11th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The artists invite you to get to know them, enjoy door prizes and light refreshments. He thanked Council President George for his participation in that effort. He congratulated Council President

George and Councilman Hale on their re-election. He asked everyone to join them for their swearing in on January 3rd at the Reorganization Meeting. He thanked Austin for reciting his poem.

Councilman George reported that the snowflakes are great. He walked Woodbridge Avenue so look at some other matters going on up there the Art Collective. It looks fantastic and it ties the whole town together for a change. The Department of Public Works wants to let everybody know that they may be doing the last leaf collection because of the weird weather and the fact that leaves are still falling. They will do a couple more Wednesday leaf pickups. Good news on the Raritan Avenue business district commercial pickup. The toters are on order and it will take six to eight weeks for them to come in and be assembled. The route is laid out and the crews are scheduled and they will use the one arm garbage trucks to do the work and pick it up fairly quickly and get the business district done before everybody wakes up. Sustainable Highland Park is busy working on the leaf blower ordinance and he is hoping to have it in shape to go the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee in January. The Environmental Commission will meet tomorrow night via zoom and they will continue to meet on zoom and it will be the last meeting on the year. One of the topics to be discussed is the leaf blower ordinance. They will also be talking about some general projects for the coming year.

Borough Administrator Jover reported that the water bills have been sent out. She is pleased to report that the issue with the e-bills has been resolved. The bills are due on the 30th of the month. She reported that there is an unfortunate delay in one of the road projects, the one concerning a portion of South First Avenue from Johnson Street to Valentine Avenue, South 10th Avenue from Raritan Avenue to Woodbridge Avenue, North 10th Avenue from Abbott Street to Raritan Avenue, Alcazar Avenue from Central Avenue to Cherry Street and Lexington Avenue. Those of you who live in those areas directly impacted by this project would have gotten we're getting started letters from our engineering firm CME Associates. We've had some issues and the contractor has run into some issues. Given the time of year, it's not prudent to push ahead on the road project at this time, but she assured everyone that they will be resuming in the spring. She has asked the Department of Public Works to do a drive through to make sure any potholes that may have been left knowing the road project was coming through get addressed before the nasty weather begins.

Borough Attorney Schmierer – No Report.

Mayor Brill Mittler reported that when residents ask her what one of her top concerns for Highland Park is as we approach the new year of 2023, she says it is the imminent loss of an anchor of our community, the Stop and Shop grocery on Raritan Avenue. The store's plans to close in early 2023 will have a difficult impact on many of our residents. She is especially thinking of our seniors and those who don't have cars, as well as those residents who prefer to reduce their carbon footprint by walking to go shopping. It will also affect people who are returning to town after a full day of work and need a reliable place to get that loaf of bread, that carton of milk, that basket of vegetables or other supplies at affordable prices for this homes. This closure will affect us all. We are exploring all viable contingencies. She's spoken a few times with the New Jersey Food Council as has our Borough Administrator. The Food Council is an alliance of food retailers and their suppliers who have been generous with their time and advice to us. We've been communicating with the property owners of the Stop and Shop building and lot and we're also looking into interim measures to ensure that our residents have access to other nearby supermarkets. She will keep everyone updated in the near future when they have details to share. Until then, please know that we are working on it as a top priority. She reiterated comments made by Councilman Hale and Redevelopment Director Jover regarding the planned relocation of our Farmer's Market. We are working closely with Main Street Highland Park on the most optimum setup for this once a week event. For the residents who have expressed concerns about The Yellow Brick Road Nursery and Daycare Center housed on South 3rd Avenue, this business has been a mainstay in Highland Park for decades. Her daughter was one of the first daycare center students. Teri Jover, in her capacity as Redevelopment Director, has been in contact with the owner of the daycare center to ensure that she is aware of any discussions or plans for the area. There are a lot of moving parts here and know that we are working closely with Main Street Highland Park. Many details still need to be addressed and we will certainly take the concerns of parents of Yellow Brick Road and others seriously. The holiday season has arrived in Highland Park and she wanted to echo the exhortations of Main Street Highland Park to shop locally as Councilman Hale advised for we have so many creative gift ideas and cozy locations to dine with friends. She has found innovative, endearing and amusing items at Roberts Florals, Pino's, Rite Aid, Gems, Galleria, Birnn Chocolates, the Greek Market and other locations in town. You can find lots of options right here in Highland Park and save yourself from getting lost in the mall or in a big box store while also contributing to our local community. As someone who evidently follows the news, I can tell you that I'm seeing two things that deeply concern me. One is a years-long rising tide of public expressions of hatred. It's become acceptable for some people to channel their frustrations of life into open expressions of contempt and disdain for anyone who differs from them. The other thing is a growing fear among members of several of our groups here, the LGBTQ+ community, our observant Jewish community, our Asian community and our African-American community that the hatred they are seeing in national news will find ways into our Borough. Let me be clear on this point, hate has no home here is not merely an idealistic meme in Highland Park, it is a guiding principle and a firm commitment. Our Police Department has taken a number of steps to monitor developments in this area regionally and to promptly investigate any incidents in our borders. They take great pains to listen to any resident with concerns and to demonstrate sensitivity to different backgrounds and lifestyles. She cannot emphasize enough that if you see or hear something, say something. She thanked the Police Chief and the entire department for their vigilance. The Huma Relations Commission has held a number of activities to highlight the history and concerns of different groups. They are currently exploring ideas for the New Year and invite residents who are interested in building bridges between groups to join the commission. If this work appeals to you, please contact our Public Information Officer, Harry Glazer, at hglazer@hpboro.com for more information on how to volunteer. You can get a volunteer form off the website. The Public Schools also invests a lot of effort in honoring our difference and they have held programming and staff training. The Mayor and Council are dedicated to doing what they can to sanction

the perpetrators of acts of hatred and to create an environment where such actions are considered unfashionable, unconscionable and unwelcome.

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.

Peter Spool, 146 Graham Street, commented about the proposed ordinance for the pedestrian mall. He asked what they were planning in terms of a larger public space and where that space would be.

Lucinda Holt, 501 Raritan Avenue, thanked the Council for moving quickly on the rent control ordinance. She asked when the ordinance would go into effect if it passes on the 20th. It was noted that the ordinance would go into effect January 1, 2023.

Diane Hoffman, 58 Harrison Avenue, commented about the traffic flow that's going to result with the closure of South 3rd Avenue. She asked if they have taken into consideration the massive development on Cleveland Avenue and the new school that will be opening in the near future that is going to require school bus drop-offs and pickups. She commented about drivers using the local roads as short cuts to avoid Raritan Avenue and River Road.

Debbie Gerber, 10 South 3rd Avenue, asked if the Council has taken into consideration those people who live on South 3rd Avenue and who are experiencing great disturbance by the amount of people that utilize the space. There is an enormous amount of garbage and noise late at night, especially in the summer. She addressed pedestrian safety and noted that her brother was hit two months ago as he walked in the crosswalk at the green light heading towards the Provident Bank on Raritan Avenue.

Grace Mary Smallowitz, 245 Riverview Avenue, commented that attention has to be paid to the traffic patterns that are in Highland Park on Valentine Avenue going to South 2nd Avenue and how the park is used because parents drop off their children for camps for all kinds of programs. There is a lot of traffic in Highland Park and closing a major road distributes traffic into areas that are already heavily trafficked.

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

The Clerk reported advertising an ordinance entitled, ORDINANCE NO. 2064: AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A PEDESTRIAN MALL ON SO. 3RD AVENUE PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40:56-65 ET SEQ. IN THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, NEW JERSEY, 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 Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote, the above-entitled ordinance was taken up on final reading by title.

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

Michael Adas, commented that in talking to his neighbors there is a major concern that he does not think should nullify the project. There is a sanitation concern and if the farmer's market gets relocated there it will create a bigger problem. He also commented about noise and encouraged them not to have rock bands play in the area.

Dan Stern Cardinale, 221 Harper Street, commented that he is excited for the reopening of South 3rd Avenue as a pedestrian space. He thinks this proposed space is consistent with the master plan. He thinks it will contribute to the safety of pedestrians in and around that area. As a parent with a child at Yellow Brick Road Daycare when it was the pedestrian mall, it was safer both on foot and by car. Lastly, he commented that he is happy to hear that Highland Park is trying to follow the best practices. There is a lot of research behind opening up pedestrian zones.

Peter Spool, 146 Graham Street, commented that tables in the street are not needed as the sidewalk is wide enough. The area will not be safer and he reminded that a woman was struck crossing the street and broke her hip.

Diane Hoffman, 58 Harrison Avenue, commented that it is difficult to do traffic studies in Highland Park because different seasons have different traffic patterns.

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. 22-2064, was duly adopted by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Canavera, 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. 12-22-270

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Ordinance entitled, ORDINANCE NO. 2064: AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A PEDESTRIAN MALL ON SO. 3RD AVENUE PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40:56-65 ET SEQ. IN THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, NEW JERSEY, passed on final reading at this meeting be delivered to the Mayor for his/her approval, and if approved by her, that the same be recorded in full by the Borough Clerk in a proper book kept for that purpose, and be advertised by publishing the same by title in the "Home News Tribune", of 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 BY THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, AMENDING CHAPTER 303, "PROPERTY MAINTENANCE," TO ADD ARTICLE V, TITLED "LEAD-BASED PAINT INSPECTION, had been introduced in writing by the Economic Development and Planning Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

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

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster.

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

No. 12-22-271

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, AMENDING CHAPTER 303, "PROPERTY MAINTENANCE," TO ADD ARTICLE V, TITLED "LEAD-BASED PAINT INSPECTION, 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 20, 2022 at 7:00 PM, for the purpose of considering said Ordinance on final passage after public hearing thereon.

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

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

The Clerk reported that an ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK CONCERNING RENT CONTROL REGULATIONS AND AMENDING CHAPTER 321 OF THE "CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK", had been introduced in writing by the Finance Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster.

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

No. 12-22-272

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK CONCERNING RENT CONTROL REGULATIONS AND AMENDING CHAPTER 321 OF THE "CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK", has been introduced and duly passed on first reading;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that this Council meet at the Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, New Jersey, on Tuesday, December 20, 2022 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. 12-22-273 through 12-22-278 were duly adopted on a 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.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Kim-Chohan.

Abstain: None.

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

No. 12-22-273

WHEREAS, the mission articulated in the Highland Park Community Forestry Management Plan is to strive to achieve an urban forest that is safe, healthy, diverse and aesthetically pleasing that also sustains and enhances valuable ecosystem services and biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, the annual tree planting program is an essential part of achieving that mission; and

WHEREAS, the Borough was awarded a grant from the NJ Urban and Community Forestry Program within the NJ Department of Environmental Protection to carry out tree planting and maintenance projects within the Borough in 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Borough Clerk shall be and is hereby authorized and directed to advertise for receipt of bids for the Borough's 2023 Tree Planting Program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said bids will be received at a date and time to be determined by the Borough Clerk and the Borough Administrator, said bids to be in accordance with specifications prepared by the Borough Administrator in consultation with the Department of Public Works and the Shade Tree Advisory Committee.

The following resolution, introduced by the Council as a Whole, was duly adopted as above:
No. 12-22-274

WHEREAS, the winter poses extreme hardship for unsheltered and inadequately housed low-income men, women and children in Highland Park; and

WHEREAS, the spirit of the holiday season of giving provides an opportunity for affirmation and renewal regarding the commitment to end homelessness; and

WHEREAS, December 21st has been designated National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and is so recognized by cities nationwide; and

WHEREAS, in this season of generosity and sharing, citizens of Highland Park are encouraged to commit themselves to promoting compassion and concern for all brothers and sister, especially those who are poor and homeless; and

WHEREAS, in remembering those who have died on the streets, the cause of ending homelessness is kept urgent as is the Borough's collective commitment to preventing such deaths in the future; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF HIGHLAND PARK BOROUGH, that we hereby declare December 21st as

NATIONAL HOMELESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL DAY

In recognition of the people who have died homeless in and around Highland Park, and we hereby ask all citizens to take a moment of silence in remembrance and encourage our citizens to support all local efforts to eliminate homelessness in our community.

The following resolution, introduced by the Council as a Whole, was duly adopted as above:
No. 12-22-275

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Reorganization Meeting of the Borough Council for the Year 2023 will be held at Borough Hall, 221 South 5th Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on Tuesday, January 3, 2023 at 7:00 PM.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 12-22-276

WHEREAS, GVK Taxi No. 5 LLC 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 Licenses for the year 2023; 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 Owners Licenses to the aforesaid applicants.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 12-22-277

WHEREAS, Venkateswara Reddy 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 Licenses for the year 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Chief of Police and/or his designee has investigated said applicants 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 Operator Licenses to the aforesaid applicants.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 12-22-278

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 12/06/2022 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 42.

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

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh.

Opposed: None.
 Absent: Councilperson Kim-Chohan

No. 12-22-279

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that transfers of 2022 budget appropriation balances shall be made as follows:

Budget Transfer #3			
	Description	From	To
	Group Insurance	35,000.00	
	Borough Clerk OE		10,000.00
	Motorpool OE		25,000.00
		<u>35,000.00</u>	<u>35,000.00</u>

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

Dan Stern Cardinale, 221 Harper Street, commented that before the pandemic they were talking about a bike plan and one component of that was tweaking traffic patterns on the South Side so that Magnolia Street and Benner Street could be one way in opposite directions.

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

Work Session:

Presentation by HP Gives a Hoot – Cami Russo, 119 Harper Street appeared. HP Gives a Hoot is a non-profit created by the Mayor and Council back in 2016 with a mission to contribute to the well-being of the children with the Highland Park community. Some of the main activities that we do that a lot of people might not be aware of, is in addition to the supply of grocery distribution at the Teen Center on Benner Street on Tuesday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., we also sponsor camp scholarships throughout the Borough for summer camp programs. We sponsor school care closets, providing personal products and take away food to any student as needed. We also provide a weekend backpack program to provide food over the days when the school is closed to ensure that all of our students and populations are served. Additionally, we also deal with ad hoc requests including summer basketball registration fees and other opportunities for our youth in need. Our primary sources of funding come from Replenish of Middlesex County based out of East Brunswick which is a provider to soup kitchens and food pantries and currently, they provide us about \$35,000.00 worth of goods annually, which provide 50 to 100 carloads of groceries for our local community. In addition, we receive an annual community development block grant from the State and right now we have to reapply for that. Additionally, they receive about \$6,000.00 in annual donations from the public and they currently use that money to purchase groceries for our community. As many of you know, we do partner with the Highland Park Community Food Pantry which serves over 150 families twice a month at the Community Center and they refer food donors to hoot. One of the questions that a lot of people ask is the difference between their group and the food pantry and why we need both. Essentially, one of the things that is different about hoot is that they provide their services on an anonymous basis so this allows for underprivileged families to come to us and receive our services anonymously. They provide other products and other needs to children throughout the community and right now they are working with Brooke from the Special Projects Board of Education and Jason Richardson, Vice President of Highland Park High School to make sure that we're meeting the needs of all of our students. One of the important things that's worth mentioning is that this year there has been a 42% increase in families served. In the prior year, they served an average of 32 families a week and now they are serving an average of 46 families per week. With that being stated and inflation continuously rising, we currently need more volunteers to join the commission, drivers to pick up food from Replenish in East Brunswick on Tuesday mornings and assistance at the teen center to help stack shelves, bag groceries and deliver to local clients. They are also working to promote their services to the community, particularly those that don't have internet access. They place flyers and door hangers throughout the community and also did an annual mailing. As many of you heard at the meeting this evening, there are concerns with the Stop and Shop closing but they are talking about ways to help get through that transition at their next meeting later this month including the possible need of providing grocery delivery from other Stop and Shop locations to our community. She thanked the Council and the current volunteers and partners for all that they do to help make a difference in this community. She specifically thanked the drivers that they currently have, the people that assist with the distribution, the people from the Highland Park schools, the people from the Highland Park Conservative Temple, as well as the Borough Administrative support of Monica and Carol. Mayor Brill Mittler commented that she is proud of the work that has been done. Soon after becoming Mayor, her office was downstairs and she saw children coming from the schools and passing through the building and they would ask for food. They inspired her to start the program and when she sees how this program has grown over the years and the work that your organization has done just fills her heart with joy. It's one of the things that she's most proud of in her 14 years on the Governing Body. Councilwoman Canavera noted that last season a family reached out to HP Gives a Hoot because both parents lost their jobs, they were struggling and they had nothing for their family for the holidays. Hoot couldn't give them funds, but Cami and every member of Hoot gave her money to go shopping. They got all five members of that family holiday gifts and a holiday meal. There is a lot that they do behind the scenes with their own money and time to help our community. Ms. Russo noted that if there is anybody else from the community that you think could benefit from their services please let them know. A lot of people have a fear of volunteering themselves based on shame or other factors that they don't want to know that they're utilizing some of the services but they do everything on an anonymous basis.

REGULAR MEETING – DECEMBER 6, 2022

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilwoman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Santiago
Borough Clerk