

HIGHLAND PARK BOROUGH
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
REGULAR MEETING – June 20, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, and was called to order by Mayor Foster at 7:00 PM. Annual Notice of this meeting was provided to The Home News Tribune, the Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on January 4, 2023 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 4, 2023, and has remained continuously posted as required by law.

In addition, notice of this meeting via Zoom was emailed to the Home News Tribune, The Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on May 12, 2023 and was posted on the Borough website at www.hpboro.com and on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, 221 So. Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on May 12, 2023 and has remained continuously posted as required by law. As a courtesy and to expand access to the meeting, the Borough offers a Zoom option to allow the public to participate remotely.

To attend the meeting electronically, please follow the instructions below:

By phone: 1-929-205-6099

Webinar ID: 920 9574 9666

By computer, smartphone or tablet:

<https://zoom.us/j/92095749666>

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK:

The Mission of the Highland Park Borough Council is to establish a government based upon the principles of good government: ethics, efficiency and the effective provision of services.

The Borough Council is committed to creating a thriving community, which is sustainable economically, environmentally and socially.

The Borough Council is further committed to creating a community which values its unique and diverse populations and encourages direct public participation in the governing process.

*Denotes Consent Agenda Posted Items. Ordinarily, consent agenda items, pursuant to Ordinance No. 920, are not read nor debated unless there is a request by a member of Council or the public. Furthermore, unless requested by a member of Council or for a separate vote, all consent agenda items, as per Council Rules of Order, Article IV, shall be considered in the form of one **MOTION**.

Flag salute led by Chief Abrams.

Present: Mayor Foster, Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik; Borough Attorney Schmierer; Borough Administrator Jover and Borough Clerk Santiago.

Absent: None

Honors, Awards and Presentations:

Mayor Foster sworn in new Police Officer Jonathon Laraj.

On motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera the minutes of the Regular meeting held December 20, 2022, Regular Session, were approved, as distributed, by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: George (stepped out of room).

Abstain: None.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan reported quarterly tax bill will go out in July and will reflect the new values, the outcome for this year's budget and revaluation. She noted the bill will be due August 1, 2023 and if you have a mortgage on your property you will probably receive notification from your mortgage company.

Councilman Hale reported a recent meeting at Molimock-Graff Park/Karsey Park to discuss improvements. A survey for residents will be put online to get ideas. He stated he will be organizing and running a series of downtown redevelopment walking tours along Raritan Ave. to show residents where different redevelopment options are happening, they are working on more details for putting together a schedule and advised everyone to check the website and if anyone is interested to email him at mhale@hpboro.com. He announced the following: the Farmers Market will be taking place on Fridays, June 22nd Park Med Spa is having an open house, the event is called Beauty Skin Nutrition and Everything In Between, June 21st, July 12th and August 2nd there will be swing dancing under the Pavilion downtown at 7:30 pm. He mentioned that on September 10th we have Arts in The Park festival. June 23rd thru June 25th is Indie Weekend, there

will be a scavenger hunt throughout the Borough further details about this event can be found on the Main Street Highland Park website.

Councilwoman Canavera mentioned she did not have a report but wanted to apologize for missing meetings for the Commissions Liaison due to health reasons which have been resolved.

Councilman George offered his congratulations to Officer Laraj. He mentioned that they will be posting officer vacancies due to promotions and this will be posted on the website and social media. The Board of Trustees for the library voted on the transformation plan, the construction work is going to start on the state grant, and the plans are finalized. The library will be closing for transition on June 30th and will reopen at its temporary location, 901 Raritan for about six (6) months. Librarians will be going all over town doing pop up events throughout the months that they are closed.

Councilman Postelnik reminded everyone of the grocery store transportation and online food shopping assistance that's available through the Department of Community Services, if residents have any questions they can stop in at the Community Center during business hours. He also mentioned the Fourth of July Fireworks will be held at Donaldson Park on Sunday, July 2nd festivities begin at 5 pm and the fireworks will start at approximately 9:15 pm, the rain date is Monday, July 3rd. The Outdoor Concert Series will be held on Thursdays, starting July 22nd thru August 10th from 6 pm to 8 pm. The 2023 camp season is about to begin, day camp, sports camp and a theater camp with a few spots left if anyone is interested please visit the website. The Historical Commission will be giving a presentation on the history of Allen Park at Pinos on Thursday July 13th.

Council President Hersh said that he knows close friends allies here who might be here feeling disappointed and feel like that this is not the safe space that you know that it might be so I would just wanted to mention a few things about the pride festival and pride month and how we hope to move forward together. He attended the Middle School graduation and it was a really nice event and such a wonderful cross-section of the community and I'm sitting there and I'm watching all the kids and smiling faces and happy families having no idea when anybody's background is what happens at home or whatever or how anybody who conduct the lives of our kids as they progress into the high school and learn how to be a well-rounded exciting and tolerant. He recognized several of our young residents here tonight who I have known over the years and we've spoken two over the years in our community particularly there's a kind as it relates to Identity and I absolutely want as well sometimes when you want to do something and there's no Playbook to go from you just have to steam ahead one of my part in all this to wash the downtown in a celebration of pride in line with the queer candy event and in celebration with pride month and I wanted to just recognize Dell Sasso, Caroline Johnson and other organizers thank you so much for pulling off a herculean event it was it was a fun and impressive and I was really happy to see our Public Library, the Human Relations Commission, the Arts Commission and the Boroughs that played a part in in supporting this event. As a former soccer coach someone who doesn't know anything about soccer but because I was the only one who was able to coach sometimes when you put the ball in play you have to make things happen you have to make things happen by putting the ball in play and what happened here was not only did we illustrate that Highland Park is a safe and welcoming space for our LGBTQ+ plus community we also unintentionally demonstrated why we have to fly the pride Flags in the first place. We have up to five Pride Flags because there is still bigotry out there because we have to put and we have to fly the plot directly because there's still intolerance out there you have to fly the pride flag because we stand up for the rights dignity and safety of an LGBTQ+ neighbors friends and family for many reasons he feels a strong ally ship with our LGBTQ community; we as a community in society will show our support and create safe spaces for our public like this public building where we were convening we don't have to feel the threatened we're not to feel the threat of violence or intolerance and part of that is illustrating that support being excluded from societal institutions and traditions is not only emotionally painful but potentially physically threatening and I don't take that lightly. His entire life he has tried to stand up for folks from fear speaking their voices or fear violence if they do or if you're violent if they do have the courage to speak there's nothing more important from a societal standpoint than to show our children that being perceived as other whatever that means is unacceptable. When we celebrate Pride we're celebrating what it is that binds us all together and that's love we say love is love that's a CREDO that I embrace and then I'll continue to embrace until my dying day, and thinks that separates it from other cultural celebrations as well when you talk about Pride we are talking about something that affects not one religion not one code of beliefs not one ethnicity it's not one cultural background it really is a universal understanding of acceptance and then intentionally it is to support and protect our friends in the LGBTQ+ community. When he first met with the organizers for queer candy he was so excited to commit to having the Borough purchase assemble and install Pride flags on the avenue, symbols matter and being intentional with our symbols not only shows what we believe in this community that this is a safe welcoming space for LGBTQ family friends and neighbors that's something that I really want to drive home, to the residents here in the room as well, I'm sorry. We're also committed to the Boroughs Department of Public Works, for supplying delivering and seating for the event and I thank our Public Works and Teri Jover for her involvement and supporting that the flags were installed for the festival only as the Borough does not have the flags were installed for the festival the Borough does not have a flag policy on the Avenue in fact this was the first time anything other than the American flag and the POW flag flew from those flagstance and that's major and he felt really proud of our community for stepping up and showing that support. However, the borough installed U.S flags for Flag Day and it's the queer candy event included the flags were removed and I have to take responsibility and apologize for my part in not communicating that and not communicating effectively, with that the flags were better for this event and I was in conjunction with our flag with our pride flag raising that we're going to have on June 26th. I missed

the prime facts particularly when they came down and I felt the joy when they went up and I felt it hurt when they went down they bring joy acceptance and happiness to our little town and the removal also hurt for several reasons I will do and I will own my part to contributing to that hurt even if it was not my intention I'm sad that this turned into a negative but I will not be deterred and neither should you and neither should our town, stand up defending of something vulnerable folks who are here because they want to have a safe space where they can thrive, be themselves and contribute to society just like we all do. The flag raising that he mentioned before has always been near and dear to him so I was really excited to participate in an event that took the two things to the next level the whole point of pride is to be on display because we don't have to hide anymore so you know folks don't have to feel that they have to hide their shadows that they can actually be in their town and celebrate themselves celebrate life and celebrate everything that we have accomplished as a community. When it comes to accepting and tolerating and just being ourselves the initial positive response to the flags and the downtime is quickly reversed however and some shows to show their intolerance of the Pride flags that's how she senses it as well because we recently have seen anti-trans sentiment seep into our public discussion particularly on social media and I responded as best as I could alerting our Human Relations Commission so we can prioritize a response to the protocol this is not only about the Council it's about the community working together so focusing feel safe and loved to my friends and family and the LGBTQ community please note that no barrier is insurmountable and I'm here to advocate as best entirely as I possibly can for a community where you are safe welcome and heard that's all I'm here for it's all I'm here for any group that feels marginalized or unsafe you should not live in a town you do not feel accepted or where you see symbols of hate and react and a response that does not live up to your expectation. Inclusion, the tip of the iceberg is about illustrating support but now we have to do the hard work to show the support we have the hard work to show where mistakes were made and how we can and how we can handle things moving forward. What's interesting is that just on a personal note you know at work I might remember that my day job I am I'm currently under I'm currently involved in a training diversity equity institutions or anything which involves cultural sensitivity and in terms of language when it comes to how we present ourselves these are all these are all areas that you know are not comfortable spaces for me and probably not for any of us really particularly when it comes to speaking of course, speaking for myself you're letting you know the fact that we have a town where we have where we should be able to put up symbols that embrace factories of the community the actions of our community that need to be seen for and celebrated. Casual racism casual homophobia casual transphobia casual anti-Semitism and direct forms of all of those things as well never stand even if it defies your core beliefs we'll not stand for that you have to rethink what it means to be part of one community because we have no choice none of us is going anywhere, we have to figure out how to work this out. He deeply apologized for any of the harm that's caused one out of some born from something out of love and these are the hard decisions that we have to do in these are things that we have this is the burden that we have to do. He looks forward to hearing public comment from folks. He pointed out the following items on the agenda the Cultural Center there's a second reading of an ordinance tonight that will ratify the lease of the Environmental Center, who will be the stewards of the property and we are so appreciative of them for stepping up and showing the initiative and taking the care in this valuable Borough asset. Raices does an enormous amount of programming and recognized Nicole and Francisco from Raices and thanked them for being the environmental stewards, an environmental tool in our community. There is an ordinance on for first reading tonight providing improvements to the Felton Avenue tot lot in the amount of \$100,000 were itemized in the budget that we passed just a few weeks ago. This is part of the administration's and the Council's plan to improve our pocket parks and to create new public spaces throughout town in our neighborhoods. On the Avenue on the corner of Second and Raritan this is a jewel in the community and you know sitting there really compromised me of what you know all the possibilities.

Borough Administrator Jover – No report

Borough Attorney Schmierer - No report

Mayor Foster reported she was very pleased for the dozens of people that came out yesterday for the Juneteenth flag raising that's a huge accomplishment in our town, it's a huge accomplishment in our country that we were able to that we are finally able to celebrate Juneteenth after so many years. She thanked Sonya Highlands for her performance Ashton Burrell, Lucinda Holt for speaking and educating us more about the history of Juneteenth and what it was like and for her to have a the story and the history being told to her because her family lived across the street from the woman who was able to walk two and a half miles per day and till she got to Washington DC and got the President to have Juneteenth and I'm very proud and I'm very happy. She thanked Senator Diegnan, Assemblyman Karabinchak for attending and the students and the dancers and the Highland Park students that came out and to speak and to give us more words of knowledge and encouragement and a big thank you to Norma who chairs the Human Relations Commission and she did an amazing job with this event I can't say thank you enough also another heartwarming thanks to all the crowds that came out for the Caribbean Heritage Month last Monday so it was a spirited event filled with music from Raices the Cultural Center and again thank you Norma you're doing an incredible job with the Human Relations Commission. She mentioned she was delighted to participate in a ribbon cutting for Global Grace Market and was pleased to see the start. Congressman Pallone came out too as well as students from Highland Park High School and many attendees it was great. This is run by refugees employed by refugees as they assimilate into their new jobs and into their new country, it was encouraging and encouraged each and every one of you to go down to Global Grace Cafe and Marketplace and definitely stop in and utilize the service that they had they had products from all over the world. On a not so happy note, you know last Tuesday approximately this time there was a huge horrific accident that took the lives of two persons last Tuesday night at the corner of North 10th and Raritan, it's a

devastating loss to our community, the families had a wake tonight and it's just a huge loss for the children who lost their father and their grandfather, our hearts and our prayers go out to them. She received a call from Governor Murphy the day after the accident just letting us know that he's going to be helping us move along the projects that we need and to create that road diet on Route 27/Raritan, she also spoke with Senator Diegnan who is the chair of Department of Transportation and we will be setting up a meeting for them to help us to curb that traffic flow. It may be lights, speed humps, narrowing of the roads changing the speed of the road but something has to be done because again loss of life occurred in that specific area. Last but not least we have on Monday, June 26th we will be raising the Pride flag here in Highland Park at six o'clock in the evening so please do come on out and support and show your support for each and every one of us in town as we do these various events. These events are put together so we can come together as a community and as Matt mentioned make it one Highland Park. We are that welcoming town, we are the town that we're inclusive and we embrace each other and I want to see more inclusiveness and more embracing of each other, so please come out for that. On Monday, July 3 we'll be having the fireworks in Donaldson Park so come on and then that will be the start of ParkStock concerts month.

Public Participation

Mayor Foster 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.

Nicole Wines, 318 South 3rd Ave. representing the Raices Cultural Center, as mentioned Council will be voting on the authorization of the lease tonight and wanted to say thank you. Raices is a non-profit organization that works to preserve cultural groups through arts, history and ecology and we will be building this space, we will be open to the community and everyone is welcome we hope that we do see you there. We hope to collaborate with people from the public with the committees and commissions in town, the library and other entities in town and welcomed everyone into their space. Nicole gave a brief overview of their work and mission as an organization, to help preserve and share untold stories and voices that often don't get out into the public.

Austin Morreale, Volkert Street, thanked Matt Hersh for being an amazing ally to the LGBTQ+ community and something Matt said something about a response that does not live up to your expectations and that sums up last week. When speaking with Mayor Foster about a conversation she had with a Rabbi here in town and then she stated that subsequent to that conversation four Pride Flags had been removed from in front of the Temple well in advance to the other flags around town that was a response that really didn't live up to my expectation. Austin felt that would have been an amazing time to try to build some bridges to try to make connections between communities instead of what could be interpreted as reinforcing some ignorant beliefs. On December 20, 2022 Highland Park passed a resolution in support of LGBTQ+ residents and Mayor Brill Mittler said in her report to Council on December 6th hate has no home here it's not merely an idealistic means in Highland Park it's a guiding principle and a firm commitment inhibited efforts by the Highland Park Police Department, Human Relations Commission, Highland Park public schools and the Mayor and Council to foster greater acceptance of diversity and deter any acts of intolerance and thought that conversation could have been used to foster greater acceptance rather than to further divide the town.

Alexis Thomason, Exeter Street Alexis had an email conversation with Mayor Foster and thank you for getting back to me about the flag removal and shared some of that with your positions in your Facebook post that you wrote dated Friday June 16th and I quote "I want to assure you that our decision to remove the flags was not in response to any specific request we're a distributory motive but in an email back to me dated June 18th you wrote I made what felt like a fair decision requests of removal and this is your emphasis of a few Flags out of many as the synagogue does have a right to make requests relevant for its congregants and their culture based on the request of a religious leader and those are on public street, Alexis does not believe that they do have a right to ask you to do that I mean maybe they have the right to ask but does not think you have the right to do it. We have something called the separation of church and state and that's very important. It's important to people of the Jewish faith I want to make that very clear that protects all of us. Alexis added what Austin said this was at a time when the LGBTQ community are getting attacked from many styles but specifically from the religious rights in this country and all over the world and we have a responsibility as a community that is quite accepting to show a better example and it should have been a time when you had opened it up to a discussion and you didn't do it and bent to the will of a religious leader in a secular community.

Jen Huddy, 22 Redcliff Ave. who identified as Malco feels that the Pride Flags were taken down out of disrespect regardless of the intentions. Raritan Avenue is a public space, everyone should be treated the same. Malco felt they were not given support by leadership in Highland Park and said, you do not have to accept me but just respect me. Mutual respect is easy. Highland Park can demonstrate that and many different communities can co-exist peacefully together. Malco said that the 2020 census of Highland Park the estimated number of residents in the borough was a little over 30,000, at age 34 and of Hawaiian and Chinese decent and identifies as Māhū which is a fair gender in native Hawaiian culture. Jen moved to Highland Park last year in April, worked at a local New Jersey smoke business, shops at the farmers market on Fridays, Jen's Alyssa's partner is a mail carrier and delivers mail to many Highland Park homes. Jen came here tonight to talk about the importance of the values we teach each other in our collective community because whether any of us like it or not we live here together. Regardless of the reasons why

the flags were taken down the fact is that they were taken down in disrespect. If there was miscommunication that means to me that the LGBTQ+ community was not given enough prospector support by the people in the leadership positions at Highland Park despite however good their intentions were. It doesn't matter how good your intentions are when you're making decisions for an entire community. If the flags are only supposed to remain up for a certain period of time why wasn't that discussed, if the cost of quality materials was out of the Borough's budget why wasn't that mentioned, when the flags were taken down why weren't the people who advocated for them to be put up notified. Raritan Avenue is a public space that we all paid for with our collective taxes, it belongs to all of us equally it, should be a place that represents the diverse community. Next time conference of mutual respect should be easy it's embarrassing that I have to come up here at all to talk about something that was taught to me in grade school. We have a unique opportunity in Highland Park to demonstrate to a country falling apart to culture wars that many different communities can coexist peacefully together.

Alyssa Kaplan, 323 Harrison Avenue, has lived in town nearly 30 years and sees herself as a potential model as a bridge because of being an orthodox too and raised my family my children as Orthodox Jews and was very happy to say that my life partner and I just celebrated 19 years. Talking about tolerance is a problem because nobody just wants to respond, people want to be accepted for who they are and appreciated for who they are. Putting aside core beliefs is a throttle and I've had both of my communities pressure me at various times about giving up the other community, Alyssa has found a discourse online to be very struggling and upsetting and what I would really hope is that there is much more mutual respect for each other.

Craig Hanoach, 220 Montgomery St. said that the posting of Pride flags or flyers on the bulletin boards should be handled in the same manner as other Highland Park sponsored events, otherwise there could be various groups who could put up flags that could be offensive to others without discussions or approval with the council. We have to be careful not to open a door whereby any group can promote anything. This should be about how we honor and celebrate a particular issue or group.

Eric Lipton, 123 South Adelaide, said to the previous speaker it was a Borough event the Borough was involved in queer candy the flags went up with the approval of the DPW in fact what I don't know what was followed with the taking down of them before the event. Mr. Lipton asked about the process by which I mean I don't know maybe when you become Mayor you have the right to redecorate the downtown to your win but honestly taking down the flags beforehand was a capitulation to bigotry. The quote from the Rabbi and the publicly made email was that the flags were are a violation of human dignity and asked if that was that reason to remove them and they are not a violation of human dignity, it is not about sex. It was cowardice, powerless and an upfront to the people in this town who looked to Highland Park as a place of safety to take those flags down before the event maybe there's a policy after the event it is powerless to send out an apology, pass a new resolution about Flags to make it so Pride Flags will never go up on Raritan again and it was cowardice tonight to have a public statement and not mention this at all. If the flags offended the synagogue this synagogue does not have to fly a pride flag but the sidewalk is not the synagogue and it was power it is and dangerous to every queer person queer child in this town to capitulate to that level of bigotry I am ashamed and disappointed.

Mark Schulzen, 36 Cedar Avenue, stated explicit to trying to explain is the opposite of shame and the point of having a pride week is to be able to say that you know by the way I'm a transgender male I've been married to a woman for three years that's not the point I'm also an Orthodox Jewish but I don't understand what the opposition is because it's okay to be me, it's okay to be them and by taking the flags down that was cheap and was very disappointed.

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

ORDINANCES REQUIRING A SECOND READING:

Ordinance No. 23-2072

The Clerk reported that Ordinance 23-2072 An Ordinance Authorizing a Lease with Raices Cultural Center Pertaining to 20 River Road, Block 502, Lot 6, also known as the Eugene Young Environmental Education Center was duly advertised for consideration of passage on final reading by title and affidavits of publication are on file. The ordinance was also posted and made available for public inspection as required by law.

Mayor Foster 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 Council President Hersh and seconded by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, Ordinance No. 23-2074 entitled as above, was duly adopted by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik
Opposed: None.

Absent: None.
Abstain: None.

ORDINANCES REQUIRING A FIRST READING:

Ordinance No. 23-2074

The Clerk reported that Ordinance No. 23-2074 An Ordinance Providing for Improvements to the Felton Avenue Tot Lot in the Amount of \$100,000.00 has been introduced in writing by the Finance Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

On a motion made by Council President Hersh, seconded by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, the ordinance entitled as above was tabled, by the following roll call vote, to wit:

ROLL CALL Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik
Opposed: None.
Absent: None.
Abstain: None.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS – RESOLUTIONS.

Resolution Nos. 6-23-145 through 6-23-162 were duly adopted on a motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

ROLL CALL Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik
Opposed: None.
Absent: None.
Abstain: None.

Resolution No. 6-23-145

WHEREAS, effective July 22, 2022, the Legislature enacted P.L. 2021, c. 182, “An Act concerning certain lead-based paint hazard, and residential rental property, and establishing lead-based paint hazard programs, supplementing P.L. 2003, c. 311 (C. 52:27D-437.1 et al.) amending various parts of the statutory law, and making an appropriation;” and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-437.16(b)(1), a municipality that maintains a permanent local agency for the purpose of conducting inspections and enforcing laws, ordinances, and regulations concerning buildings and structures, is required to inspect for lead-based paint hazards in certain specified single-family, two-family, and multiple rental dwellings, at the time periods set forth in the statute; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-437.16(b)(2) a municipality that does not maintain such a permanent local agency must hire a lead evaluation contractor, certified to provide lead paint inspection services by DCA, or enter a shared services agreement as permitted by law, for the purpose of conducting the inspections for lead-based paint hazards; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Section 9 of P.L. 2021, c. 182, the State of New Jersey has allocated the sum of \$3,900,000 to effectuate the purposes of P.L. 2021, c. 182 (C. 52:27D-437.16). Further, pursuant to the FY 2023 Appropriations Act (P.L. 2022, Chapter 49), DCA received a grant-in-aid amount of \$3,900,000 for P.L. 2021, c. 182, for a total of \$7,800,000 in appropriations to effectuate the purpose of the Act.

WHEREAS, DCA has allocated \$7,000,000 of this appropriation to the development of the Lead Grant Assistance Program (“LGAP”) for the issuance of grant funds to municipalities for the purpose of assisting in municipal compliance with P.L. 2021, c. 182.

WHEREAS, the Division of Local Government Services (DLGS), within DCA, administers the LGAP; and

WHEREAS, the LGAP exists to provide funding to help off-set the costs to municipalities to provide the required inspections at stipulated times of certain single-family, two-family, and multiple rental dwelling units for lead-based paint hazards, pursuant to P.L. 2021, c. 182; and

WHEREAS, an authorized municipal officer must execute the attached grant agreement in order to receive LGAP funding.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Governing Body of the Borough of Highland Park, County of Middlesex, as follows:

1. Authorize Mayor Elsie Foster to sign the attached grant agreement, and thus bind the Borough of Highland Park to the grant agreement’s terms in order to receive the \$6,000 grant from the DLGS

Resolution No. 6-23-146

WHEREAS, applications for renewal licenses issued in the Borough of Highland Park under the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Law (NJSA 33:1-1 et seq.) have been made by the hereinafter applicants, and

WHEREAS, said applications have been examined and the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park have made the following findings of fact with respect to each of the applicants:

1. Said applications are complete in all respects.
2. The applicants and the premises are qualified to be licensed in accordance with Title 33, all regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and local ordinances as amended and supplemented pertinent to and consistent with Title 33.

3. The applicants have disclosed, and the issuing authority has ascertained and reviewed, the source of any additional financing obtained in the previous license term for use in the licensed business.
4. The Mayor and Council are of the opinion that said applications should be approved.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the following renewal licenses issued under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law (NJSA 33:1-1 et seq.) to sell alcoholic beverages upon the premises set forth opposite their names under the terms and conditions prescribed in the Act aforesaid, the amendments and supplements thereof, and the ordinances, rules and regulations promulgated by the Director of the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, State of New Jersey, shall be and are hereby approved, to wit:

PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LICENSES

Pad-Thai, Inc. d/b/a Pad Thai, 217 Raritan Ave. – 1207-33-005-004
 Wilhelm & Young, Inc. d/b/a Park Pub, 182 Woodbridge Ave. - 1207-33-011-002
 Kiadan Inc., 13B North 4th Ave., Pino’s Wine Cellar - 1207-33-010-011
 Eisigian LLC t/a Mr. Pi Sushi & Kumamoto Noodle – 1207-33-004-008

PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LICENSES WITH BROAD C

Highland Park Wine & Liquor LLC, 97 Woodbridge Ave., WITH BROAD PACKAGE PRIVILEGE-1207-32-003-007

PLENARY RETAIL DISTRIBUTION LICENSES

Rite Aid of New Jersey, Inc., d/b/a Rite Aid 2561, 332 Raritan Avenue – 1207-44-001-005
 Surdas LLC t/a Park Liquors, 80 Raritan Avenue – 1207-44-007-006 (*INACTIVE*)
 Kiadan Inc., d/b/a Pino’s Fruit Basket Shoppe, 13A North 4th Ave. – 1207-44-006-010

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk shall be and is hereby authorized and directed to issue to the aforesaid licensees the license aforesaid, which licenses shall be effective July 1, 2021 and shall expire June 30, 2022.

Resolution No. 6-23-147

WHEREAS, application for renewal licenses issued in the Borough of Highland Park under the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Law (NJSA 33:1-1 et seq.) have been made by the hereinafter applicant, and

WHEREAS, said applications have been examined and the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park have made the following findings of fact with respect to each of the applicants:

1. Said application is complete in all respects, including submission of the club member list.
2. The officers and directors of the club are qualified according to all statutory, regulatory and local governmental ABC laws and regulations.
3. The club maintains all records required by N.J.A.C. 13:2-8.8. (special events open to non-club members) and N.J.A.C. 13:2-8.12 (true books of account for receipts and disbursements).
4. The Mayor and Council are of the opinion that said application should be approved.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the following renewal licenses issued under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law (NJSA 33:1-1 et seq.) to sell alcoholic beverages upon the premises set forth opposite their names under the terms and conditions prescribed in the Act aforesaid, the amendments and supplements thereof, and the ordinances, rules and regulations promulgated by the Director of the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, State of New Jersey, shall be and are hereby approved, to wit:

CLUB LICENSES

The White Mountains Cretans Fraternity, 1152-1154 Raritan Avenue - 1207-31-012-002

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk shall be and is hereby authorized and directed to issue to the aforesaid licensees the license aforesaid, which licenses shall be effective July 1, 2023, and shall expire June 30, 2024.

Resolution No. 6-23-148

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park has concluded negotiations with the of P.B.A. Local No. 64 (PBA), on a Collective Bargaining Agreement for Calendar Years 2023 thru 2026;

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

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

Resolution No. 6-23-149

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park has concluded negotiations with the of Superior Officers Association of P.B.A. Local No. 64 (SOA), on a Collective Bargaining Agreement for Calendar Years 2023 thru 2026;

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

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

Resolution No. 6-23-150

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park has concluded negotiations with the Highland Park Department of Public Works Association (HPDPWA) on a Collective Bargaining Agreement for Calendar Years 2022 thru 2025;

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

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

Resolution No. 6-23-151

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 2023 budget in the sum of \$1,050.00, which is now available from the ANJEC Open Space Stewardship Grant Program, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum of \$1,050.00 is hereby appropriated under the caption of ANJEC Open Space Stewardship Grant.

Resolution No. 6-23-152

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 2023 budget in the sum of \$31,277.64, which is now available from the 2023 Clean Communities Grant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum of \$31,277.64 is hereby appropriated under the caption of 2023 Clean Communities Grant.

Resolution No. 6-23-153

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 2023 budget in the sum of \$54,581.00, which is now available from the HDSRF Grant – Bergen Car Care Center.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum of \$54,581.00 is hereby appropriated under the caption of HDSRF Grant – Bergen Car Care Center.

Resolution No. 6-23-154

WHEREAS, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) desires to upgrade its tree inventory to include additional data points for the nearly 3,500 trees that are catalogued; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has funds available for these purposes through their Stewardship Canopy Resiliency Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, STAC desires to apply for this grant funding in the amount of \$15,000 which requires no cash match; and

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

1. The Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute and submit, on behalf of STAC, the grant application to NJDEP.
2. The Mayor and the Borough Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the grant agreement upon acceptance on behalf of the Borough of Highland Park and that their signature constitutes acceptance of the terms and conditions and approves the execution of the grant agreement.

Resolution No. 6-23-155

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the annual Salary Resolution No. 01-23-20, which was adopted on January 21, 2023, showing the names, titles and salaries of the officers and employees of the Borough of Highland Park, is amended as follows:

Michael Orokos, Part-time Firefighter, \$22.23 Hourly, Effective 05/21/2023

Adrienne Hunt, Camp Counselor, \$16.00 Hourly, Effective 06/01/2023

Angelica Heard, Crossing Guard, \$20.14 Hourly, Effective 05/31/2023

Evan Rodgers-Farmer, Sports Camp Director, \$22.00 Hourly, Effective 06/01/2023

Kate Schwartz, Camp Counselor, \$16.00 Hourly, Effective 06/01/2023

Oz Duncan, Head Counselor, \$17.00 Hourly, Effective 06/01/2023

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Financial Officer 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.

Resolution No. 6-23-156

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution No. 7-22-175, adopted by the Borough Council on July 5, 2022, a contract was awarded to CCM Contracting Inc. of Greenbrook, NJ, 2021 Roadway Improvements Project for the resurfacing and reconstruction of South 1st Avenue between Johnson Street and Valentine Street, Tenth Avenue between Raritan Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue, North Tenth Avenue between Abbott Street and Raritan Avenue, Lexington Avenue between the Borough limits and Raritan Avenue, and Alcazar Avenue between Central Avenue and Cherry Street; and

WHEREAS, it appears from Pay Estimate No. 2, filed by CME Associates, that certain work under said contract has been completed and approved and there is due to CCM Contracting Inc. the sum of \$68,768.35 in accordance with said Pay Estimate for work performed from November 24, 2022 to June 2, 2023; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Account No. C-04-55-825-001 in the amount of \$255,779.68, as reflected by the Certification of Funds Available by the Chief Financial Officer, no 2023-44.

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

1. The Chief Financial Officer be and is hereby authorized and directed to pay CCM Contracting Inc. the sum of \$255,779.68, as certified by the Engineer in Pay Estimate No. 2, subject to the Clerk’s receipt of the Certified Payroll and Project Manning Reports.
2. Certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to Chief Financial Officer and the CME Associates forthwith.

Resolution No. 6-23-157

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park formally approve the grant application for the above stated project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to submit an electronic grant application identified as “MA-2024- Improvements to N. Fourth Avenue, Denison Street, & Harper Street-00285” to the New Jersey Department of Transportation on behalf of the Borough of Highland Park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Borough of Highland Park and that their signatures constitute acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and approve the execution of the grant agreement.

Resolution No. 6-23-158

WHEREAS, there is a need for repair the HVAC system at the Highland Park Public Works Building; and

WHEREAS, three (3) quotes were solicited and only one quote was received as follows:

East Coast Mechanical Contractors Inc.	\$8,292.27
Horizon Services	no response
NJ Home Services	no quote provided; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Public Works has recommended that said services be rendered from East Coast Mechanical Contractors Inc. based on their quote for same, response time, experience and equipment; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Current Fund Account No. 3-01-26-310-232, in an amount not to exceed \$8,292.27 as reflected by the certification of funds by the Chief Financial Officer no. 2023-43.

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

1. The Superintendent of Public Works is hereby authorized and directed to accept the quote for the repairs to the HVAC System at the Highland Park Public Works Building from East Coast Mechanical Contractors, Inc., 5133 W. Hurley Pond Road, Farmingdale, NJ 07727, at a total cost not to exceed \$8,292.27
2. A certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Superintendent of Public Works and the Chief Financial Officer.

Resolution No. 6-23-159

WHEREAS, Congressman Josh Gottheimer (D-5) is a cosponsor of the Invest to Protect Act of 2023 legislation introduced in the 118th Congress; and,

WHEREAS, the Invest to Protect Act will establish a grant program to provide assistance to small sized local police departments to provide de-escalation training for taking action or communicating verbally or non-verbally during a potential force encounter in an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy of the threat so that more time, options, and resources can be called upon to resolve the situation without the use of force or with a reduction in the force necessary; and,

WHEREAS, the Invest to Protect Act of 2023 will assist small local police departments with funds for victim-centered training for law enforcement officers in handling situations of domestic violence; safe contact with individuals with mental health needs; contact with individuals with substance use disorders; contact with veterans; contact with individuals with disabilities; contact with vulnerable youth; contact with individuals who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or trafficking; and, contact with individuals experiencing homelessness or living in poverty; and,

WHEREAS, the Invest to Protect Act of 2023 will also provide funds to small local police departments for signing bonuses and salary assistance for retention of trained police officers in these critical community policing skills; and,

WHEREAS, the Invest to Protect Act was previously introduced in the 117th Congress in 2022 and was adopted by a bi-partisan Assembly and Senate votes, but not signed into law by President Joe Biden; and,

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park have joined the ARRIVE program to provide such training and services to the Highland Park Police Department, and believe that the Invest to Protect Act of 2023 would allow the Borough to expand these significant, critical and expanded services for its citizens through the Highland Park Police Department.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that Highland Park most strongly supports the Invest to Protect Act of 2023, encourages the members of the United States Congress to enact the Invest to Protect Act of 2023 and requests that the President of the United States of America forthwith sign the legislation enacting the Invest to Protect Act of 2023 when presented with the legislation for endorsement; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Office of Congressman Josh Gottheimer and the other members of the Congressional Delegation of the State of New Jersey, all State of New Jersey legislative delegates, and President Joe Biden strongly encouraging support and action on the Invest to Protect Act of 2023.

Resolution No. 6-23-160

WHEREAS, the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) Stakeholder Team desires to revitalize Molimock-Graff Park and is seeking funding opportunities to do so; and

WHEREAS, T-Mobile has funds available for this purpose through their Hometown Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the NPP Stakeholder Team desires to apply for this grant funding in the amount of \$50,000 which requires no cash match; and

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

1. The Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute and submit, on behalf of the NPP Stakeholder Team, the grant application to T-Mobile.
2. The Mayor and the Borough Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the grant agreement upon acceptance on behalf of the Borough of Highland Park and that their signature constitutes acceptance of the terms and conditions and approves the execution of the grant agreement.

Resolution No. 6-23-161

WHEREAS, the Arts Commission desires to install meaningful public art in public spaces in Highland Park; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has funds available for these purposes through their Community-Based Art Program in partnership with the Coastal Management Program (CMP) and New Jersey State Council on the Arts; and

WHEREAS, the Arts Commission desires to apply for this grant funding in the amount of \$20,000 which requires no cash match; and

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

1. The Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute and submit, on behalf of the Arts Commission, the grant application to NJDEP.
2. The Mayor and the Borough Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the grant agreement upon acceptance on behalf of the Borough of Highland Park and that their signature constitutes acceptance of the terms and conditions and approves the execution of the grant agreement.

Resolution No. 6-23-162

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 6/20/2023 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 43.

APPOINTMENTS:

On motion made by Councilwoman Canavera and seconded by Councilman George, the following were appointed Community Food Pantry – Scott Brustein, Council on Aging – Elliot Freidenrich, Rent Control Board – Dr. Heather N. Pierce, Owner Occupied, Zoning Board of Adjustment – Dana Korbman, Wolfram Hoefler and Stanley Fessant.

Roll Call Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim Chohan, Postelnik

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Mayor Foster appointed Human Relations Commission – Longbo Yu - **NO CONFIRMATION NEEDED**

SECOND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Mayor Foster 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, prior to Work Session.

Clara Scott, a student who is a senior spoke on behalf of Co-President, Grace of the Sexuality and Gender Alliance at the Highland Park High School. Grace wanted the Council to know that she has had many queer people in town visiting her about the Councils actions. Clara stated she wants the flags back up to show bigots they have no place in Highland Park.

Royal Crosby, a student and the next president of Sexuality and Gender Alliance Club at the Highland Park High School. Royal asked the Council to reinstate a portion of the Pride Flags on Raritan Avenue because visibility. Seeing the flags on the way to school made it feel safe here. It is important and there is still a week and a half left in Pride month.

Abby Stern-Cardinale, Harper Street, thanked the Council for the funding of the Tot Lot. She wanted the Policy regarding flags through the Borough looked into by the Administration so more than the American flag will be flown.

John Kovac, No. 6th Ave., stated he understood both sides pertaining to the flag, but added that Mayor Foster did exactly what she should have done when faced with the conflict, by listening to and empathizing with both sides. He stated that each community must respect the needs of the other and that was what the Mayor and Council tried to achieve.

Lynn Ruben, No. 10th Ave., said that her block has changed. There are young children, and there was a fatal accident on the corner. It's a state highway and the speed limit was changed from 40 mph to 35 mph, with the reduction in speed you still cannot control the speed. You are not the driver and it did not help the two people that were killed, the car was doing 75 mph at 5:30 pm. 10th Avenue is the only block that goes to Woodbridge Avenue. That's where the people were going. It's a cut thru there and if we could make 11th Avenue a one way street going up and have a separate arrow making a left hand turn that would be great. People come from Edison and they cut from River Road to 10th and they speed down our block, put in speed bumps, as done on Harris and Cleveland. On 8th Avenue, there is a curve and there are trees at a house and you cannot see oncoming cars. You need to start checking your streets and take down the trees and bushes that block your view.

Kai Stevens, a student and also a member of the Mayor's Student Advisory Council. Kai has been openly transgender for the over six (6) years and heard about some situations regarding Pride. Kai is also politically involved but has also given advice to kids in high school who may have come out. The Borough needs to

be more considerate and thoughtful when making decisions regarding Pride. Kai feels Highland Park knows better and needs to be more considerate and clear with communications.

Kristen Springer, 423 Denison, thanked Council President Hersh for his comments and stated the Pride movement is love is love. It is not a front to any religious or cultural groups. It's about loving everybody and loving your neighbor and she is in support of having the Pride Flags up, supportive symbols could save lives. Ms. Springer stated she appreciated Mayor Foster talking about having an inclusive town and the flag raising, but did not say anything about taking them down and this doesn't feel like it's inclusive and added the Mayor needed to make this right.

Del Sasso spoke about the following, LGBTQ Plus Youths attempt suicide every 45 seconds and the data which was collected before hundreds of pieces of legislation were passed targeting LGBTQ people, forcing our symbols, our leaders and our traditions out of the public life, denying medical care and targeting them in mass shootings and emboldening violent rhetoric against the LGBTQ. The Borough passed a Resolution ensuring the safety, security, acceptance and freedoms of all members of the LGBTQ Plus community. Del created an LGBTQ Plus non-Profit organization called QuEar Candy to affirm LGBTQ used for large scale Pride Music Festival to commensurate with our town's status as an LGBTQ Plus haven. There were two failed Park Partners Grant attempts in which typical rules and practices were changed both times that put them at a market disadvantage. Del made Mayor Foster aware of this and received a series of assurances that everyone shared our goals, and that we had received support when we clearly hadn't. Young adults and children are frightened and stressed when their peers and families are frightened or stressed. It is damaging to be told that you live in an LGBTQ Plus town with a large LGBTQ population but experience a different reality that adults will not speak of or acknowledge. That pervades town life and our school system in ways far too extensive to detail here. Words in your resolution will not protect our kids any more than the words in the transgender student policy that's never been implemented. Del wanted the flag flown for the month of June, there was several security issues at the QuEar Candy event. Different symbols have different meaning and importance to different groups. The flag policy that was instituted on June 13th may not be equitable. You are responsible for public safety, you passed a resolution to protect the LGBTQ Plus. We request that you individually state whether you are in favor or against the visible display of the Pride flags in Highland Park for the duration on of Pride month.

A resident of the Orthodox Community stated she fully supports the LGBTQ Plus community, if you could save one person from suicide that's worth everything between the corporations, government and all the different sides of things going on. She was against the Pride Flags being taken down, she hopes the flags will be put back up.

Norma Vargas, Wayne St., feels the Council should be accepting, loving and affirming. Her feeling is the only way to move forward is for Mayor Foster to take accountability and apologize. Ms. Vargas is the mother of two LGBTQ children who face discrimination not just from their communities but the world. She said that not only should the Flags be restored but she wanted to organize a rally for the force of the LGBTQ Plus community, on Monday, June 26, 2023 starting at 5:30 PM on Raritan Avenue and ending at the Community Center to reinstate flags on the Avenue and amend the policy that was just amended. If you want to heal and build bridges in this town be honest to the commitment and not be swayed by bigotry.

Grace Budd, Cording, stated she is the co-president of the sexuality and Gender Alliance at the high school. She identifies as bi sexual as well as her parents. She said she was raised in the gay community. Being queer is not just her identity, it is her family and heritage. Ms. Budd added her parents did not participate in Pride marches for years for her right to love who she wants to, and for the Council to bow to religious pressure. She feels it's is ridiculous and cowardly and they disgust her.

Hava F., Grant Ave., expressed her appreciation to Del Sasso and the other organizers of QuEar Candy for their careful choice of words. The diversity that exists in our community as a whole within the LGBTQ Plus community and the Orthodox community should not turn into an us versus them situation, in which no one can gain. I understand there is frustration with the Council and the Mayor for not addressing what happened with those four flags. She also understands why the Synagogue would make the request but does not understand why the request was granted to remove the flags. She finds it concerning about the precedent in terms of taking down the flags for the Synagogue, what if a business wants flags taken down? The worse thing would be a patchwork of flags based on opinions of particular people who want them or don't want them in front of their businesses. She feels that we can't move forward as a community without a better understanding of what happened in that situation.

Randi Ostro, 220 Wayne St., stated that having the Pride Flags on display in Highland Park demonstrates to those in the LGBTQ Community from all backgrounds that our town is an affirming and safe place to be. She said it appears that the Mayor may have bowed to pressure to remove the flags under the impression that it was the right thing to do, I believe it was not, they are not culturally insensitive. Perhaps some members of the Orthodox Jewish community did complain about the flags but what about those who did not. Why are the opinions of those who complained valued above those who did not, or those who most need to see those flags perhaps even before entering a house of worship where they know some people will not accept them. Perhaps seeing those flags on their walk as they enter a congregation gave them strength and resolve to begin or continue living their lives as their authentic selves as both. She called on the Mayor to replace the flags for the remainder of the month, so we can all move forward and heal as a community.

Rob Scott, 25 So. 2nd Ave., stated the Flags are a powerful symbol that states its ok to be me and it's ok to be you. It symbolizes as a community we accept everyone. He would like the Mayor to issue the best kind of apology for the muddled way this went down. He would like to see the flags up for the rest of the month. He also wants the issue of bowing to pressure addressed especially since there are social media sites claiming people talked to their Rabbi and they got the Mayor to take down the Pride flags, it was an account that just spews bigotry. If our Mayor and Council bow to that kind of pressure we need a clear explanation and a reversal.

Eric Lipton, Adelaide, wanted to hear the Mayor's thoughts on all that has been said and addressed on the flags that were removed.

Mayor Foster stated that she is the Mayor for all of Highland Park, not parts of Highland Park but the entire Town. If members in town state they have a concern, one of her responsibilities is to look into that concern and find ways to address those concerns. The Mayor said she had a private conversation with a Rabbi and a request was made, first of all the Council did not approve those flags to be the on the Avenue. The four flags were taken down were directly in front of the Synagogue. Mayor Foster asked Council President Hersh how many flags were on the Avenue. Council President Hersh replied 30.

Mayor Foster added that only 4 were removed. The 4 flags were removed on that Friday afternoon. The event happened on Sunday and the rest of the flags were removed Monday as it is with our policy. That is what happened to the remainder of the flags that are not flown now on the Avenue. We have a policy that when we do events in the Borough the flags stay up for 7 days at the Community Center and that is what has happened with all events. Prior to the policy that we put into place and started doing was more flag raising in our town. We have been raising the Pride flag at the Community Center for the past 3 years. This year was the only year where we were going to have a ceremony. The Mayor and the Council would say a few comments and that was it, but we proudly raised that flag. When I got into my office this past January one of the first things I did was to hang one of the flags that Del Sasso had in my office. She said she has no issue with any community and she was proud to hang it in my office. I have three flags in my office. The first flag that was hung up was the Pride Flag, then an American flag and lastly the State of NJ flag. I believe in an open and welcoming community for everyone so I welcome all your voices and opinions. I listened and took notes. Maybe I should have taken a step back and listened and waited but did not, to err is human and I am human. Should there be a next time is similar to this. I will take a little bit more time to process, but I was eager to create a one Highland Park where we all felt like we had a place and we had a voice. As she stated before as she listened to each and every one very carefully tonight and your voices have been heard, she heard them clearly. As Mayor of Highland Park she wants to create a welcome and inclusive environment for all. She added maybe she made a misstep and the next time when she receives a request from any community, I'll do my 24 hour rule that I follow. I write things down for 24 hours and if I feel the same was the next morning then I act on it. Lesson learned.

Eric Lipton thanked the Mayor and added that there was a powerful statement in removal of the flags. There is a difference when someone is asking for something to be removed. There is a statement of removal that is incredibly powerful and hurtful. Admission is the first step towards progress. He added I think that was something that a lot of us wanted to hear and he appreciated what she had said and hopes she takes her words to heart, especially about the kids. By putting up the flags, it was a gift to them and taking them down was an attack.

Del Sasso asked the Council who was in favor or against a generous visible display of Pride Flags in Highland Park for the duration of Pride Month.

Council President Hersh said yes.

Councilman Postelnik said yes and a permanent mural as well.

Councilwoman Canavera said yes and thanked the youth that spoke and was very proud of them.

Councilman George said yes. He added that some of you think of me as white privilege. I have an African American wife and the Mayor was the first slate of black women to run for office in Highland Park. I'm probably one of the most radical advocate to the rights of everyone. I've been pushing for that for a long time as well as more representation for everyone. One of the ways to move forward is to define who we are in this this town, not anywhere else. The nation is radically turning against the mindset that we have here in Highland Park. A freedom of liberty with a little looseness around the edges and maybe not perfect. We're under threat even from the people. This is part of the process and it's a messy process of redefining of who we are. There are no bad guys or good guys there's no winners or losers. Councilman George said at one point he and his wife moved from Highland Park but due to some racial incidents they decided to move back to Highland Park because of its' inclusivity and being welcomed by the Jewish and the Gay communities and safe.

Councilwoman Kim-Cohan said she was sorry that this had happened. There was a lack of communication and the flag policy was changed, we didn't have a discussion about it. Going forward we have to be more uniformed and communicate with each other. A lot of us didn't know what was happening. We should have done better for you guys and I'm sorry that you're hurt. We will try to do better not only for the remaining month but definitely for next year and going forward as well.

Councilman Hale stated he felt they did a lousy job at first communication and second of all the expectations. We never had an expectation that the flags were going to be up for a month. He said he is fully in favor of having a symbol for the month, perhaps the artwork that Councilman Postelnik spoke about, maybe the flag at the Community Center. I think we could do something that recognizes the importance of the month. He thinks there was a miscommunication and the expectations that were presented to the community about what was going to happen were not the expectations that we had, not the expectations the overall community had. We've never had flags on the Avenue for a month, so I am 100% in favor of doing something a month long, recognizing this is Pride month. We ought to have a discussion of how this will play out next year; whether there is artwork, whether there is a flag at the Community Center. I am in favor of having a display of pride, a display in the community for the entire month but I don't think the Avenue is an appropriate place.

Dell Sasso asked the Mayor for her response to the youth who stood up and the parents who stood up and said one flag is not enough? Mayor Foster replied for the past three years we have been raising the flag here in the borough and that she would be in support of the flag being flown in front of Borough Hall until the end of the month.

Del Sasso asked what would be the Mayor's response to the youth's that stood up here and said that one flag is not enough? Mayor Foster replied the other flag is going to be flown in front of borough hall until the end of the month and on Monday the other flag is going to be flown. That's not just one flag. We're talking about creating murals next year so the flag would be displayed permanently somewhere in town.

Del Sasso replied we appreciate your answers, the answer was no.

Mark Shulsam, a resident, said the Synagogue objecting on the grounds that they felt the flag represented something that went against their core beliefs. Others in this town worship different things. He stated he doesn't understand why the LGBTQ community is targeted. What is it that they're doing that violates my core beliefs worse than 15 others out there from different cultures? You might want to think about that.

Austin M., Volkert St., stated last week he was frustrated and mad at what he saw as a really poor leadership decision, tonight he is hopeful because of the allies in the room. He hopes that people in the room can make a change in town.

Blair Apgar, Benner St., mentioned that Mayor Foster's comments about trying to balance the needs of various communities in this town. Blair urged everyone to read the Paradox of Tolerance, it's the works of Carl Popper. Blair added that you cannot have tolerance when you accept intolerance. By trying to balance the needs of a small group who are calling for what amounts to tolerance, you are allowing a crack in that will seek to destabilize the means of tolerance throughout the entire community. I hope the leaders of the community will go out and find this book and read it.

Randi Sumner, Amherst St., asked the Mayor to take a moment and reconsider. Take a moment and say you know some mistakes were made in the way leadership went about putting up the flags, some mistakes were made in the process of communicating and the decisions about how everything happened. Maybe we need the leadership of the Human Rights Commission and ask them to meet instead of making decisions feeling stressed and pressured. Think about the entire community and put it in the hands of the people in the Human Rights Commission to make everybody in town feel that they are part of this community and work together. I asked the Mayor to take a moment and reconsider, say you know some mistakes were made and don't make split judgment.

Jasper Majeski, So. 4th, agreed with Randi Sumner and also stated a single flag is not enough to change the atmosphere of the town or convey support. When it's a single flag it's just a mere formality. Going in the future he feels there should be more flags where children and teenagers hang out to feel accepted throughout the town.

Rob Scott, South 2nd Ave., said saying we're just going to raise the flag in front of Borough Hall cuts against what so many people spoke about. Take time to think this through a bit more, and not to implement just the Borough Hall option, that does not have the same impact. It feels like a further insult to bury it in normality like we did our thing. Take a few minutes to think this thru and what can be done to bring them back. Embrace the community, it's really worth doing.

Mayor Foster thanked everyone for coming and sharing. There were valuable things that were shared tonight. We will all take that under advisement as we move forward.

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

Executive Session:

On motion made by Councilman George and seconded by Council President Hersh Resolution No. 6-23-163 entitled as above, was duly adopted by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik
Opposed: None.

Absent: None.
Abstain: None.

Resolution No. 6-23-163

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council is of the opinion that such circumstances exist.

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

1. The public shall be excluded from the closed session at close of tonight's open session.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
Executive Session: Potential Litigation - Cannabis Licensing;
Personnel - Public Safety
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when these matters are resolved or as soon thereafter as it is deemed to be in the public interest to do so.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Work Session: - None

There being no further business, on motion made by Council President Hersh, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 9:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Santiago
Borough Clerk