

**TOWNSHIP OF CEDAR GROVE
ESSEX COUNTY NEW JERSEY**

COUNCIL STAFF MEETING

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 27, 2023

1. ROLL CALL – OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT BY MAYOR

Mayor Maceri called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and made the required announcement concerning the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Adequate notice of this meeting was duly provided to the Verona-Cedar Grove Times and the Star Ledger, filed with the Township Clerk, and posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building's lobby in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Present: Councilmembers Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri

Also Present: Township Manager Zichelli, Township Attorney Nabbie, Township Clerk Forde

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Executive Session – December 7, 2022

Councilman Tanella moved approval of the minutes without release, seconded by Deputy Mayor Peterson, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri

NO: None

ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

b) Staff Meeting – December 19, 2022

Councilwoman Skabich moved approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Peterson, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri

NO: None

ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

c) Executive Session (1) – December 19, 2022

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved approval of the minutes without release, seconded by Councilman Tanella, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri

NO: None

ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

d) Executive Session (2) – December 19, 2022

Councilman Tanella moved approval of the minutes without release, seconded by Councilwoman Skabich, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None
ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

e) Special Meeting – January 3, 2023

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilman Tanella, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None
ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

f) Executive Session – January 3, 2023

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved approval of the minutes without release, seconded by Councilwoman Skabich, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None
ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

g) Special Meeting – January 4, 2023

Councilman Tanella moved approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Deputy Mayor Peterson, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None
ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

h) Executive Session – January 4, 2023

Councilman Tanella moved approval of the minutes without release, seconded by Deputy Mayor Peterson, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None
ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

i) Staff Meeting – January 23, 2023

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Skabich, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None
ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

j) Executive Session – January 23, 2023

Councilwoman Skabich moved approval of the minutes without release, seconded by Councilman Tanella, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None
ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

- 3. TOWNSHIP MANAGER** – The Township Manager reported twelve Cedar Grove garages were taken by the County. He reported the County planned to demolish the garages and create a parking lot for the new field. He reported that he purchased Seed containers to store items at Panther Park and at the Public Works Department. The Township Manager also reported he provided information to the Governing Body regarding the CARES Act. He explained that funds could be used as a downpayment on the Firehouse; therefore, reducing the bond. He explained there were strict parameters for how the funds could be allocated. He reported the CFO could amend funding.

Mayor Maceri asked if the Township would lose the money if it were not used. The Township Manager responded affirmatively.

The Township Manager asked the Governing Body to check their calendars for an April date to dedicate the plaque to former Township Manager Thomas Tucci. The Township Manager reported that he and the Township Clerk were working on the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance that was proposed by the DEP. He reported it should be prepared for introduction in April. The Township Manager requested an Executive Session to discuss personnel and litigation.

4. TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY – No Report.

- 5. TOWNSHIP CLERK** – The Township Clerk reported she provided the Governing Body with a list of vacancies and/or expired terms on the various boards and commissions. She explained that she researched the Township's Sustainable Jersey Green Team which was created by the State to get municipalities to adhere to Green initiatives. She explained there was no real benefit other than a point system leading to silver/gold status. She asked the Governing Body's decision regarding filling those appointments and informed them that Notice would be posted as early as tomorrow and She asked Council's input regarding the deadline date to receive interest letters.

Mayor Maceri advised the Township Clerk the Clerk continue to advertise the vacancies until all positions are filled and the Council would schedule interviews as necessary. The Members of Council opted not to re-establish the Sustainable Jersey Green Team.

6. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilwoman Skabich – Councilwoman Skabich reported she was interested in a Community Garden at Morgan’s Farm. She explained she wanted to gauge the community’s interest in the garden. Councilwoman Skabich reported she would like to recognize the volunteers and cheerleaders of the Cedar Grove Recreation Competition Cheer Team.

Councilman Tanella – No Report.

Councilman Zazzali – No Report.

Deputy Mayor Peterson – No report.

Mayor Maceri – Mayor Maceri reported his ‘Meet the Mayor’ Office hours were scheduled for March 1, 2023 from 4 PM - 5 PM. He reported the Police Department scheduled a free Senior Scam Awareness Seminar for March 2, 2023 at 11 AM.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a) To consider resolution appointing members to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, Essex County, that the following municipal officials are hereby appointed to serve as designee to the Essex County Solid Waste Advisory Council for a two-year term effective January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2024:

Dan Donavan – Engineering Aide
Karen McCarthy – Engineering Dept. Secretary

Councilman Tanella moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Deputy Mayor Peterson and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

- b) To consider resolution appointing the Township Manager to the Emergency Management Council.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, Essex County, New Jersey, that it does hereby appoint Township Manager Joseph Zichelli to serve on the Cedar Grove's Emergency Management Council effective immediately through July 1, 2023.

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilwoman Skabich and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

- c) To consider resolution appointing Planning Board Class III Member.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, Essex County, New Jersey, that John Zazzali is hereby appointed to serve as the Council Class III Member to the Planning Board, effective immediately and terminating May 9, 2023.

Councilman Tanella moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Deputy Mayor Peterson, and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None
ABSTAIN: Councilman Zazzali

- d) To consider resolution concerning re-appointment to the Planning Board.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, New Jersey, that Thomas Borkowski be re-appointed as a member of the Planning Board for a four-year term, effective January 1, 2023 and terminating December 31, 2026.

Councilwoman Skabich moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Deputy Mayor Peterson, and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

- e) To consider resolution concerning approval of raffle application – Verona PBA.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

WHEREAS, an application for raffle license has been received from:

APPLICANTS

EVENTS, DATES TIMES & PLACE

PBA Local 72 Verona Civic Association
 P.O. Box 72
 Verona NJ 07044

Off-Premise 50/50 Raffle to be held
 June 10, 2023 from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at
 Macedonian Orthodox Church
 1050 Pompton Ave., Cedar Grove NJ 07009

WHEREAS, the fees have been paid, and the application has been reviewed by the Township Clerk and found acceptable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove that it does hereby approve said application.

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilwoman Skabich, and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
 NO: None

- f) To consider resolution concerning the reduction of sewer bills.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

WHEREAS, it has been determined upon investigation of the Township Manager that the water /sewer bill assessed to the account listed herein should be reduced:

Location	Block	Lot	QTR	Original Bill	Penalty	Adjustment	New Adj. Bill
16 Loretta drive	344	11	1st qtr. 2023	317.85	57.29	227.85	90.00
35 Chestnut Court	370	11	1st qtr. 2023	156.15		66.15	90.00
9 Ring Place	350	7	1st qtr. 2023	259.05	47.41	169.05	90.00
13 Pine Drive	358	3	1st qtr. 2023	289.70	52.56	199.70	90.00
12 John Place	358	10	1st qtr. 2023	339.90	60.99	95.54	244.36
8 Pine Drive	350	8	1st qtr. 2023	281.10	51.11	191.10	90.00

41 Pine Drive	358	7	1st qtr. 2023	310.50	56.05	220.50	90.00
26 Donato Drive	344	15	1st qtr. 2023	454.76	80.29	364.76	90.00
184 East Lindsley Rd	390	65	1st qtr. 2023	678.00	117.80	338.08	339.92
16 Pine Drive	350	10	1st qtr. 2023	200.25	37.53	124.95	75.30
20 Essex Road	14	5	1st qtr. 2023	222.30		124.94	97.36
29 George Street	300	33	1st qtr. 2023	351.73	26.17	261.73	90.00
116 Lopez	305	48	1st qtr. 2023	185.55	9.56	95.55	90.00
39 Carson parkway	305	21	1st qtr. 2023	398.70	70.00	117.60	281.10
25 Oak Drive	356	6	1st qtr. 2023	170.85	87.00	80.85	90.00
210 East Lindley Rd	360	54	1st qtr. 2023	222.30		132.30	90.00
127 Stevens Ave	306	26	1st qtr. 2023	244.35		154.35	90.00
20 Laura Drive	311	9	1st qtr. 2023	1,199.85	205.49	411.57	788.28
20 Cole Road	354	15	1st qtr. 2023	229.65	13.97	139.65	90.00
208 East Lindsley Rd	360	57	1st qtr. 2023	354.60	12.43	230.30	124.30
65 Franklin Street	20	3	4th qtr. 2022	148.80		58.80	90.00
149 Franklin Street	10	6	4th qtr. 2022	338.28		115.98	222.30
56 Rugby Road	150	135	Penalty		19.44	-	-
87 Anderson parkway	303	32	1st qtr. 2023	104.70	1.47	14.70	90.00
5 Jennie Court	320	327	1 st qtr. 2023	237.00		147.00	90.00
303 Holly Lane	300	11	Penalty		54.82	-	-
28 Hillcrest Road	91	23	4th qtr. 2022	3,833.25		3,368.25	465.00
28 Hillcrest Road	91	23	Penalty		371.83	-	-
			Total	11,529.17	1,433.21	7,451.25	4,077.92

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove that the Chief Financial Officer is hereby authorized to reduce/ cancel the sewer bill & penalty.

Councilman Tanella moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Deputy Mayor Peterson, and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
 NO: None

g) To consider resolution concerning pool fees.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

WHEREAS, the Township Council did adopt an ordinance on May 20, 1963 providing for the establishment of fees for the Cedar Grove Municipal Swimming Pool; and

WHEREAS, the following fees be established for the Cedar Grove Municipal Swimming Pool for the 2023 season as follows:

Resident Family	\$585.00
Resident Individual	\$418.00
Resident Couple/Parent-Child	\$499.00
Resident Senior Citizen	\$200.00
Babysitter/care giver Mon – Fri (not household resident)	\$150.00
Household resident; non-main family member	Adult \$150.00
	Child \$ 75.00

WHEREAS, senior citizens who qualify for the State Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged Program (PAA) will be entitled to a reduced senior citizen rate of \$114.00.

WHEREAS, in addition, Cedar Grove residents who serve as First Responders (Police/Fire/EMS) receive a \$100 discount.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that non-resident memberships will be limited to one hundred (100). The following non-resident fees are established for 2023:

Non-Resident Family	\$1500.00
Non-Resident Individual	\$ 800.00
Non-Resident Senior Citizen	\$ 550.00

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Guest Fee for 2023 will be \$10.00 per day for an adult and \$7 for child.

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilwoman Skabich, and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

- h) To consider resolution concerning re-appointment to the C.A.T.V. Committee.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, New Jersey, that Andrew Fistner is re-appointed as a member of the CATV Committee for a three-year term, effective January 1, 2023 and expiring December 31, 2026.

Councilwoman Skabich moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Zazzali, and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

- i) To consider resolution concerning refund of overpayment – 144 Bowden Rd.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector of Township of Cedar Grove has received a request to refund the overpayment, and

WHEREAS, a homeowner has overpaid his property taxes in 2023 on the property tax account; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector would like to Issue a tax refund to the owner / entity acting on behalf of the owner requesting the refund.

Location	Block	Lot	Overpayment
144 Bowden Rd	160	74	\$2,368.50

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove that the tax Collector is hereby authorized to refund the overpayment in the amount of \$2,368.50.

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilwoman Skabich and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

- j) To consider resolution concerning refund of overpayment – 84 Ridge Rd.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector of Township of Cedar Grove has received a request to refund the overpayment, and

WHEREAS, a homeowner has overpaid his property taxes in 2023 on the property tax account; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector would like to Issue a tax refund to the owner / entity acting on behalf of the owner requesting the refund.

Location	Block	Lot	Overpayment
84 Ridge Road	50	31	2,568.49

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove that the tax Collector is hereby authorized to refund the overpayment in the amount of \$2,568.49

Councilman Tanella moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Zazzali, and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

- k) To consider resolution authorizing the exchange of recreational turf management equipment by and between the Township of Cedar Grove and the Township of Verona.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXCHANGE OF RECREATIONAL TURF MANAGEMENT EQUIPMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF CEDAR GROVE AND THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA.

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove is in possession of three LandTek Field Turf Rakes and two pallets of rubber pellets; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove contracts with LandTek for its turf management and does not use the rakes or pellets; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Verona has indicated that their municipality has a use for the three LandTek Turf Rakes and two pallets of rubber pellets; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove will donate the three LandTek Turf Rakes and two pallets of rubber pellets to the Township of Verona; and

WHEREAS, by adopting this resolution, The Township of Verona agrees to accept this donation and indemnify and hold harmless the Township of Cedar Grove for any action associated with the donation or the use thereof; and

WHEREAS, Joseph M. Zichelli, Esq., Township Manager, has indicated this to be in the best interest of asset management,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, the donation and transfer of three LandTek Field Rakes and two pallets of rubber pellets is hereby authorized.

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Zazzali, and passed by the following vote.

The Township Manager reported the Cedar Grove contracted with LandTek, but had not used its Turf Rakes and pellets. He reported Verona did not contract with LandTek, but needed said turf rakes and pellets. He reported Verona would indemnify and hold harmless the Township for use of the donation.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

- 1) To consider resolution authorizing the donation of out of service Dump Truck #96 to the Cedar Grove Fire Department for purposes of Training on Extrication Tools and Procedures.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DONATION OF OUT OF SERVICE DUMP TRUCK #96 TO THE CEDAR GROVE FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR PURPOSES OF TRAINING ON EXTRICATION TOOLS AND PROCEDURES.

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove is in possession of out of service Dump Truck #96; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove has not used this Dump Truck for a period of three (3) or more years; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove has determined there is no value in auctioning, selling, or repurposing this Dump Truck; and

WHEREAS, the Cedar Grove Fire Department has determined Dump Truck #96 is no longer road worthy and poses a safety risk should it navigate public roadways; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove will donate Dump Truck to the Cedar Grove Fire Department for purposes of training on extrication tools and procedures; and

WHEREAS, upon completion of the training, Dump Truck #96 will be sold for scrap metal value with proceeds tendered to the Township of Cedar Grove; and

WHEREAS, Joseph M. Zichelli, Esq., Township Manager, has indicated this to be in the best interest of asset management,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, the donation of Dump Truck #96 to the Cedar Grove Fire Department is hereby authorized and the proceeds from scrap metal to be tendered to the Township of Cedar Grove is acknowledged.

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Zazzali, and passed by the following vote.

The Township Manager reported the Township had not used the truck in approximately five to six years because it would not run. He reported for purposes of the audit, the dump truck was donated to the Fire Department for training; then used for scrap metal. He reported the Township would receive any proceeds.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri
NO: None

m) To consider resolution concerning a Fireworks Display by Starfire Corporation.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, Essex County, that it does hereby approve a Fireworks Display to be furnished and executed by Starfire Corporation of Carrolltown, PA, at the Lower Panther Park Field in Panther Park on Thursday, June 29, 2023 with a rain date of Friday June 30, 2023.

Councilwoman Skabich moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Zazzali, and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri

NO: None

- n) To consider resolution authorizing the Township Manager to execute an Amendment to the Contract for the Purchase of the VFW.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board, and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE VFW PROPERTY

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove has previously entered into a land sale contract to purchase the VFW Property, known as Lot 149 in Block 310 of the Official Tax Map of the Township of Cedar Grove; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove has sent an amendment to the land sale contract to the Seller providing that the Township shall keep \$75,000.00 in escrow until remediation is complete; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Cedar Grove and the Seller shall split the cost of any cleanup equally, and

WHEREAS, The Township and Seller will each contribute up to \$20,000.00 toward the cleanup; and

WHEREAS, the Seller shall pay for all inspection costs related to the cleanup; and

WHEREAS, all other terms and conditions of the Land Sale Contract previously entered into remain in full force and effect; and

WHEREAS, a copy of the Seller's executed amendment is attached hereto;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, that Joseph M. Zichelli, Esq., Township Manager is hereby authorized to execute the amendment to the land sale contract attached hereto.

Councilman Tanella moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Deputy Mayor Peterson, and passed by the following vote.

The Township Manager reported he spoke with the Seller's attorney who agreed to split the cleanup costs with the Township and incur all inspection costs.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri

NO: None

8. APPROVAL OF BILLS

The Bill Resolution was read by title and amount as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, New Jersey, that the attached summary of bills having been duly audited and found correct be and they are thereby ordered paid and that warrants be drawn on the Treasurer in the aggregate amount of \$929,454.96.

Councilwoman Skabich moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Tanella and passed by the following vote.

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri

NO: None

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Maceri opened this portion of the meeting to anyone wishing to be heard.

1. Jean Jaeger, 9 Bradford Way – Mrs. Jaeger explained she was the President of the Historical Society. She explained she wanted to dispel any rumors about Morgan’s Farm and the farmstand. She explained the Farm was bequeathed to the Township as per the wishes of the previous owner. She explained the previous owner also requested, in his will, that the Historical Society create a Museum. She explained all Historical Society events would continue. She explained the Historical Society tried to work on continuing the farmstand, but that situation did not work out. She acknowledged the hard work of volunteer John Ostering. She explained the joint effort between Mr. Ostering and the other volunteers became strained when he indicated he wanted to use his own people on the farm and in the farmstand. She explained he became very disrespectful via emails and social media. She explained he harassed Historical Society Members and indicated there was an incident where he tried preventing a Board member from leaving the farm. She explained Mr. Ostering falsely advertised that he sold organic produce in the market. She explained Mr. Ostering constantly changed his mind on whether he wanted to work the following month, so the Board decided to sever ties via a letter. However, decided to send another letter and contract to Mr. Ostering who didn’t agree to the terms of the contract. She explained Mr. Ostering had not removed his property from the storage area on Morgan’s Farm.

Councilman Tanella thanked the volunteers and the Historical Society. He explained that farmstand was great thing that evolved. He explained he was disappointed and upset by what transpired.

2. Rosemarie Partington, 118 Sunrise Terrace – Ms. Partington explained Mr. Ostering informed the Historical Society that he no longer wanted to work with them once he worked the indoor market. She explained he did not want anyone else near the money.

Councilwoman Skabich asked if the Historical Society could issue a statement to clear up the confusion. Mrs. Jaeger explained Facebook was not the medium to address the issue because of all of the back and forth.

Councilman Tanella suggested going into executive session regarding the next steps for the Historical Society.

3. Amy Ravine – Ms. Ravine explained she was the person blocked in by Mr. Ostering while she was there to ensure he removed his personal belongings from the storage. She also explained that she received harassing texts. She shared that she received a letter from his lawyer just prior to the beginning of the Council Meeting that cautioned the Historical Society from implementing a community garden. She said the Historical Society was excited about the idea of a community garden. She explained Mr. Ostering was a bully who was using the farmstand as his own business and not a fundraiser.

Mayor Maceri indicated the Historical Society had full control over its volunteers while the Township had full control over Morgan's Farm.

4. Sal Minieri, 26 Sweetwood – Mr. Minieri explained he received an email to sign a petition in support of Mr. Ostering. He explained the situation had gotten to the point where residents did not fully understand everything that occurred.
5. Steve Young, 18 Young Ave. – Mr. Young commended the Governing Body for purchasing the VFW. He asked that they consider naming it Veterans Park and letting people use it. He commended the Governing Body for implementing a community garden at Morgan's Farm. He said the people should grow their own and give back to the community.
6. Sal Minieri, 26 Sweetwood – Mr. Minieri indicated the VFW location would make an excellent site for a flag display on September 11th.

There being no one else present wishing to be heard, Mayor Maceri closed this portion of the meeting.

AUTHORIZATION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings' Act (N.J.S.A.10:4-12 (b) (1-9) permits the exclusion of the public from a Meeting of the Mayor and Council in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Cedar Grove are of the opinion that such circumstances exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, State of New Jersey that:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of any action in the Executive Session of the Meeting of the Mayor and Council of February 27, 2023.

2. The general nature of the subject matters to be discussed are personnel and litigation negotiations.
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public as soon thereafter as it is deemed in the public interest to do so.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Deputy Mayor Peterson moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Zazzali, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Skabich, Tanella, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Peterson, Mayor Maceri

NO: None

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being nothing further to discuss, the staff council meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m. by acclaim.