

**MINUTES OF  
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL  
WORKSESSION AND REGULAR MEETING  
May 27, 2020**

A Combined Meeting of the Municipal Council of the Township of Edison was held via Telephone Conference. The Meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Council President Ship-Freeman, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Gomez, Joshi, Patil, and Ship-Freeman

Councilmember Diehl entered meeting at 6:02pm.

Also present were Township Clerk Russomanno, Deputy Township Clerk McCray, Township Attorney Northgrave, Business Administrator Ruane, Health Director Elliott, Acting Recreation Director Fircha, Township Engineer O’Krepky, Director Smith of Water & Sewer, Police Chief Bryan, Fire Chief Latham, OEM Deputy Chief Toth and IT Jim DeVico.

The Township Clerk advised that adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975, has been provided by an Annual Notice sent to The Home News Tribune, The Star Ledger, Criterion Sentinel and News Indian Times on December 13, 2019 and Special Notice sent to Homes News Tribune on March 31, 2020 and posted in the Main Lobby of the Municipal Complex on the same date.

**4. REPORTS FROM ALL COUNCIL COMMITTEES:**

Councilmember Coyle reported the Beautification Committee is in discussions on several parks and looking into improving entrance to Highland Park.

Councilmember Gomez, the Finance Committee has a meeting scheduled for tomorrow May 28<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember Joshi reported the Library is working with the Director to finalize the plans for the library renovations and completing the grant application to submit.

Council President Ship-Freeman, Housing Authority met they are discussing different projects for Julius Engle and Robert Holmes Gardens, moving forward in a positive manner.

**5. POINTS OF LIGHT**

Council President Ship-Freeman, on Memorial Day we had three additional street naming and a ceremony on Veterans Park. She announced our June meetings will be on Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> and June 24<sup>th</sup> combined at 6:00pm.

**6. FROM THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR:**

a. and b. Councilmember Brescher the budgets are up for Introduction.

c. Councilmember Brescher asked for explanation.

Ms. Ruane explained we do this every year, it’s for next year budget.

d. Councilmember Coyle, asked what is the procedure for this 95,000 open end for Lowes.

Ms. Ruane, it’s a not to exceed by the year.

**7. FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE:**

a. and b. No comments were made.

c. Councilmember Brescher, is it the same dollar amount prior to quarters.

Ms. Ruane explained the amount by law is up to 5%, adjustment made in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

**8. FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW:**

a. Councilmember Coyle, asked for explanation for the scope of work.

Mr. Northgrave explained need to have an ideal of the cost to see if we want to pursue land acquisition.

**9. FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ENGINEERING:**

a. No comments were made.

- b. Councilmember Brescher, Councilmember Coyle asked at the last meeting how do we know if the work is completed. Did the Engineer sign off? According to bid document it called for molding to be replaced. He went there himself it was not replaced. Is there an Avenue that is checking work that has been done?

Mr. O’Krepky, all work was inspected and performed according to the Contract. He will look at that line item and get back to you.

Ms. Ruane will set up a meeting.

**10. FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS:**

- a. Councilmember Coyle suggested we take digital photos to be sent to council with completion of Street Opening.

b. through e. No comments were made.

**11. FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK:**

- a. through c. No comments were made.

**12. FROM THE COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE PLANNING BOARD:**

Councilmember Coyle, reported the Planning Board hasn’t met, once a meeting is set he will confirm.

**13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:  
ORDINANCES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND PUBLIC HEARING:**

O.2069-2020 Councilmember Brescher, expressed he doesn’t know he if comfortable supporting this.

Councilmember Patil stated we don’t know what is going to happened can capital improvement wait.

**17. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**Council President Ship-Freeman:**

- a.

**Councilmember Brescher:**

- a. He thanked Council President for moving in the direction of Zoom Meeting.
- b. He asked if Fireman go on EMT calls.

Fire Chief Latham, no we don’t since 2018 when it was eliminated.

**Councilmember Coyle:**

- a. He also thanked Council President for the Zoom Meetings
- b. He asked about grants for Open Space and possibly look into a steward to live on the Ferrante Property to take care of maybe consider renting it.
- c. Thanked the Administration for a wonderful Memorial Day Services.

**Councilmember Diehl:**

- a. He thanked all the people who are working through this health care crisis.

**Councilmember Gomez:**

- a. He thanked everyone who made the Memorial Day Services possible.
- b. He thanked everyone for being patient and the gratitude and support on State and Federal level.
- c. He explained why it is important to move forward on this Ordinance. The Sewer Capital Plan is approximately 300 Million, the age of the sewers are very old and have been neglected so long we need to keep moving forward on improvements.

**Councilmember Joshi:**

- a. He is doing research on a Municipal Board Band System.
- b. He would like to add to agenda “Resolution affirming the Township of Edison’s Commitment to the Safety and Well Being of all Community Members and combatting Hate Speech.”

**Councilmember Patil:**

- a. He asked Ms. Ruane for an update on Spring Clean ups and outdoor sports.

Ms. Ruane, we get updates and director from the Governors orders.

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S REMARKS:**

**CALENDAR YEAR 2020 MUNICIPAL BUDGET:**

A motion was made by Councilmember Diehl seconded by Councilmember Gomez to Introduce the CY 2020 Municipal Budget.

AYES - Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Patil and Council President Ship-Freeman

NAYS - None

Public Hearing set down for Monday, June 29, 2020 at 6:00pm to be held at Middlesex County College Performing Arts Center.

**CALENDAR YEAR 2020 SOLID WASTE BUDGET:**

A motion was made by Councilmember Gomez seconded by Councilmember Diehl to Introduce the CY 2020 Solid Waste Budget.

AYES - Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Patil and Council President Ship-Freeman

NAYS - None

Public Hearing set down for Monday, June 29, 2020 at 6:00pm to be held at Middlesex County College Performing Arts Center.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS  
ORDINANCES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND PUBLIC HEARING**

The following Ordinances, which were introduced by Title on May 13, 2020 passed on first reading, published according to law for further consideration at this meeting, were read by the Township Clerk:

**O.2069-2020      ORDINANCE AMENDS THE EDISON TOWNSHIP CODE  
TO REVISE AND UPDATE THE 2020 PER GALLON  
WATER RATES THE TOWNSHIP CHARGES  
RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL USERS FOR  
THE DISCHARGE OF NORMAL DOMESTIC SEWAGE  
AND THE RATES CHARGED SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRIAL  
USERS OF THE TOWNSHIP’S SEWER SYSTEM.**

(The above Ordinance O.2069-2020 can be found in its entirety in Ordinance Book #28.)

Council President Ship-Freeman declared the Public Hearing opened for O.2069-2020

**Send via address (flankey@icloud.com)**

Frank Lankey  
Velikan Place  
Edison, NJ

I urge Councilman Brescher, Councilman Patil, and Councilman Coyle to support and vote yes on the sewage rates being proposed in O.2069-2020.

To your concerns about the sewage system, why did you not address these issues when you and your peers set up this utility per your anti suez campaign?

Why are you now all acting like any other politician who takes advantage of a public sentiment but then never wants to fully fund their own creations?

Shame on you three if any of you vote no. It has nothing to do with “the best of the township” it has to do with “what’s best for me to sound good on Facebook”.

MY VIEWS AND COMMENTS ARE MY OWN AS AN EDISON VOTER AND RESIDENT.

Councilmember Brescher stated he needs additional information.

Council President Ship-Freeman said Mr. Bob Smith, Director can walk you through everything.

Ms. Ruane will get him the report of 2017 and 2018.

Mr. Smith explained his proposed five year Capital Plan which explains the biggest needs right away. He went on to explain the Pump Stations and Force Main problems.

Councilmember Brescher asked do we know what the number is for these repairs.

Hearing no further comments, on a motion made by Councilmember Diehl seconded by Councilmember Ship-Freeman and duly carried, this Public Hearing was closed.

On a motion made by Councilmember Joshi, seconded by Councilmember Brescher, TO TABLE THIS ORDINANCE.

AYES - Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Joshi, and Patil

NAYS – Councilmembers Diehl, Gomez and Council President Ship-Freeman

Motion carried to Table.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**PROPOSED ORDINANCES PUBLIC HEARING SET DOWN FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020.**

**O.2070-2020    ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET  
APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP  
BANK**

On a motion made by Councilmember Gomez seconded by Councilmember Patil this Ordinance was passed on first reading and ordered published according to law for further consideration and Public Hearing at the next Regular Meeting of the Township Council to be held on June 10, 2020.

AYES - Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Patil and Council President Ship-Freeman

NAYS – None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AS TO PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS**

Council President Ship-Freeman opened the meeting to the public for comments on Proposed Resolutions R.254-052020 through R.274-052020.

NONE

There were no other comments from the public regarding Proposed Resolutions. On a motion made by Councilmember Coyle seconded by Councilmember Gomez and duly carried, the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember Diehl requested that Resolution R.271-052020 be pulled for separate vote.

Councilmember Brescher requested that Resolution R.261-052020 be pulled for separate vote.

Councilmember Joshi requested to add “Resolution affirming the Township of Edison’s Commitment to the Safety and Well Being of all Community Members and combatting Hate Speech.”, Resolution R.275-052020 to Consent Agenda.

On a Motion made by Councilmember Joshi, seconded by Councilmember Coyle to add this Resolution R.275-052020.

AYES- Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Patil and Council President Ship-Freeman.

NAYS- None

Councilmember Brescher requested that Resolution R.275-052020 be pulled for separate vote.

The following Resolutions R.254-052020 through R.260-052020 and R.262-052020 through R.270-052020 and R.272-052020 through R.274-052020 were adopted under the Consent Agenda on a motion made by Councilmember Gomez and seconded by Councilmember Patil.

RESOLUTION R.254-052020

AYES - Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Patil and Council President Ship-Freeman

ABSENT

NAYS - None

The following Resolutions will be voted upon separately:

**RESOLUTION R.261-052020**

A motion was made by Councilmember Brescher seconded by Councilmember Coyle to TABLE this Resolution.

AYES - Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Joshi, and Patil

NAYS – Councilmembers Diehl, Gomez and Council President Ship-Freeman

Motion carried to Table Resolution R.261-052020.

**RESOLUTION R.271-052020**

A motion was made by Councilmember Diehl seconded by Councilmember Gomez to adopt this Resolution.

Councilmember Diehl, this is the best committee in town. The job Walter Stochel has done over 20 years assessing every parcel, looking at every parcel and recommending property to better our town. It’s residents like Walt and the members of the Committee that make our town great and I thank them all.

Councilmember Gomez, an honor to second a group which has a wealth of knowledge.

Councilmember Coyle, agreed with his colleagues.

Council President Ship-Freeman, she hopes to fill the committees with people who are dedicated like this Committee to our Township.

AYES – Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Patil and Council President Ship-Freeman

NAYS – None

**RESOLUTION R.275-052020**

A motion was made by Councilmember Joshi seconded by Councilmember Coyle to adopt this Resolution.

Councilmember Brescher, his only concern we didn't recognize Seniors or Veteran Homes.

Councilmember Joshi, **the purpose is for racial nations.**

Councilmember Coyle thanked Councilmembers Brescher, Joshi and Diehl that edited what is necessary.

Councilmember Gomez, said diversity.

Council President Ship-Freeman added that is why a Human Relations Committee is important we have diversity.

AYES – Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Patil and Council President Ship-Freeman.

NAYS – None

**ORAL PETITIONS AND REMARKS**

Council President Ship-Freeman opened the meeting for public comment.

**Send via address (flankey@icloud.com)**

Frank Lankey, Jr  
Velikan Place

Good Evening:

Council President, you have displayed more integrity tonight and in your short time on Council than others have displayed in their long careers.

What just happened to you tonight is a painful reminder of why we still have to talk about real social justice reform across the board.

My views are my own.

**Send via address (elizabeth.conway1@edison.k12.nj.us)**

Elizabeth Conway  
Netherwood Circle

Will residents of Edison who are seniors with Edison Senior IDs not get the increase?

**Send via address (eromatowski89@gmail.com)**

To whom it may concern,

Good evening Mayor and Council. My name is Erik Romatowski, and I am a resident of 66 Cedar Lane, Highland Park NJ. I am writing this e-mail in concern and opposition of your approval of a new warehouse to be built on Cedar Lane, currently known as 11 C Court S. While I understand that all public notices were made and required approvals apparently received - as a current student of Urban Planning at Rutgers, the process in which this project was approved is a shame, and the testimony provided in support of it objectionable at best.

While I understand approval was required from the County planning board, was any attempt made to contact the elected officials of Highland Park? The first notification that residents or any concerned party had, was when trees began to be cleared in earnest last week.

While this will simply be another ratable on the Edison Tax Rolls, the residents of Highland Park will be left to deal with only the negative effects of this project. How a traffic study reports that there will be "34 trucks per hour" entering the site (without even counting the 300-800 car spaces being provided for employees) and that it will not create an additional traffic situation on Cedar Lane is laughable at best. Cedar Lane in Highland Park consists of many apartment complexes, some very close to the road and bordering the site, which are filled with young families and small children - in direct conflict with this project located just across the border in Edison.

Additionally, I have concerns regarding the amount of newly impervious space this project creates, and the associated runoff which will flow into the adjacent Mill Brook - which downstream flows directly through the Cedar Lane apartments.

This project will change the character of the Cedar Lane neighborhood, leaving a permanent and negative impact on the quality of life of its residents. Again, I find your approval of this warehouse project to be deplorable and short sighted.

Sincerely,  
Erik Thomas Romatowski  
66 Cedar Lane, Highland Park NJ

Hearing no further comments from the public Councilmember Diehl made a motion to close the public hearing, which was seconded by Councilmember Gomez and duly carried.

Councilmember Coyle, Council President you did a great job with this virtual meeting.

Having no further business to discuss, on a motion made by Councilmember Patil seconded by Councilmember Diehl the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

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Joyce Ship-Freeman  
Council President

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Cheryl Russomanno, RMC  
Municipal Clerk