

Work Session meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Ridgefield was held on June 24, 2019 at 6:02 p.m. The meeting was held at the Ridgefield Community Center, 725 Slocum Avenue, Ridgefield, New Jersey 07657.

Mayor Suarez stated that this meeting of the Mayor and Council is being conducted pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act; adequate notice of the meeting has been given by publishing notice in The Record. Furthermore, notice was posted in the Borough of Ridgefield Municipal Building.

Roll Call: Mayor Suarez, Councilman Castelli, Councilman Penabad, Councilman Shim, Councilman Jimenez, Councilman Kontolios and Councilwoman Larkin are present.

The Mayor opened the meeting to talk about the Paramus Plastic Bag Ordinance. Councilman Jimenez stated he would like a discussion on the ordinance. He wished for the Environmental Commission to discuss the impact the ban would have on local businesses. He asked them to reach out to businesses in town that use plastic bags and find out what alternatives they could use. He stated the Environmental Commission should be given 90 days to discuss amongst themselves.

Councilman Castelli stated New York City's Plastic Bag Ordinance has 10 exemptions such as doggy bags, drug stores, restaurants. He stated he is for the ban, but exemptions should be included. He stated it is something the Borough has to look at it.

The Mayor stated NJ Food Council is looking for a state-wide law because many towns are passing their own bans.

Councilman Jimenez stated the biggest offenders are the supermarkets and delis. Councilman Shim asked how the supermarkets would change. Councilwoman Larkin stated the new supermarket handed out reusable bags on the day of their opening.

Debbie Fugnitti of the Environmental Commission stated the Commission has a copy of the Paramus Ordinance to look over. One concern the Environmental Commission has is people will fight the Commission on it. One suggestion to counter this is to supply people with reusable bags.

The Mayor and Council are interested in going forward with a plastic ban, but they would like to do it the right way.

Councilman Kontolios stated there will be a soft opening for the nature center but ground rules need to be set. The Environmental Commission needs to make the rules and the DPW has to make the sign. Councilman Kontolios stated he would like to run it through the DPW Committee first as a courtesy.

Councilman Castelli stated he would like the Mayor and Council to see the rules before the opening of the nature center.

The Mayor asked Councilman Kontolios when he would like to open the nature center. He stated he would like to open it the weekend after 4<sup>th</sup> of July and suggested they could announce it at the fireworks.

Debbie Fugnitti stated the DPW has to clean out piles of branches and put down mulch in the nature center.

Councilman Castelli stated a potential location for the community garden is across the street from the Community Center. Debbie Fugnitti stated the location floods.

Debbie Fugnitti stated the current location does not look like a garden. The Mayor stated a group of students from Bergen County Vocational Schools with a landscape architecture background offered to help the Borough with the community garden.

Councilman Kontolios asked if the Ordinance dictates that the Environmental Commission decides where the community garden goes. Borough Attorney Steve Pellino stated the Environmental Commission is in-charge of the community garden, but they need permission to use Borough property.

The Mayor stated the Community Garden Ordinance needs to be changed because the location is wrong.

Councilman Kontolios stated the Environmental Commission can re-do the Garden Committee at the end of the year. The students from the Bergen County Vocational Schools offered to take the Commission to Fort Lee to show their work. They stated it would be a 9-month turnaround project.

Debbie Fugnitti asked if there are any other properties available. She stated the garden needs an area without a lot of trees for the sun.

The Mayor asked how many plots the community gardens had. Debbie Fugnitti stated the community garden had about 30, but not all were used. Councilwoman Larkin asked how large each plot was, but the Environmental Commission does not know.

Meeting adjourned 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda M. Silvestri,  
Borough Clerk