

REGULAR MEETING
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
COUNCIL MEETING IN LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM
AND BY TELE-CONFERENCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH
N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, ET SEQ. AND EXECUTIVE ORDER 107

October 5, 2021

The following are the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council that was held on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was then opened with the Inspiration and Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Deputy Municipal Clerk.

At the commencement of the meeting Mayor Kownacki read the following statement of proper notice:

STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE: "Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Council being held on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, has been provided through the posting of the annual meeting schedule of said Council in accordance with Section 13 of the Open Public Meetings Act." Said Notice was forwarded to The Trentonian, The Times and The Princeton Packet on December 18, 2020.

The roll was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Powers, Ryan and Mayor Kownacki.
Absent: Councilwoman Lewis.

Also, in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Esq., Municipal Manager and David Roskos, Esq., Municipal Attorney.

Special Proclamations, Recognitions and Presentations

Vulnerable Populations Assessment Report – Keith Levine, Health Report

Mr. Levine reported when the pandemic hit in 2020 New Jersey State Department had secured some funds from the Federal Government which was distributed out among the towns in New Jersey to do an assessment of the vulnerable populations in their communities and Lawrence Township received one of those grants. One of their tasks were to complete the Vulnerable Population Assessment and provide a synopsis to the Council which his predecessor, Carol Chamberlain, did prior to her retirement last year. And, when they receive the funds for the second phase (2021-2022) they are required to

do an update of some of the statistics which they have completed. They are now in the process of submitting that information to the State and he wanted to share some of that data from the Assessment with the Council tonight.

Mr. Levine advised that they utilize the State Communicable Disease Reporting Surveillance System (CDRSS), and the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJISS), which are free, confidential, population-based systems that tracks and collects data for children and adults and between those two systems they track vaccination data for Lawrence Township. As of 2021, he is happy to report from the ages 12 and up – 81 percent of the Lawrence community is vaccinated. From the ages of 18 to 29 – 56 percent of the community is vaccinated, and they are targeting that demographic group to try and get more vaccination compliance and protection for the community. As for the 65 and up portion of the community, he is very proud to report that they are 99 percent vaccinated which is excellent and certainly well needed for the immunocompromised vulnerable population.

Mr. Levine stated along with that data they have additional statistics on other populations of which is included in the Summary he provided to the Council to review at their leisure. He indicated if the Council has any questions the Health Department staff is always available to answer them. He then opened the floor for questions or comments.

A general exchange of dialogue took place relative to the rationale regarding the low immunization rate for age group 18 to 29 and the general public's hesitancy as a whole in getting the COVID vaccine as well as educating those groups on the importance of getting vaccinated. Further dialogue took place relative to tentative discussions starting in late October, early November regarding vaccines for kids 12 and under. In conclusion, Mr. Levine introduced Emily DeHaan, Vulnerable Population Coordinator, who he advised is in the audience and part of his excellent team of people, along with two other VCP's, helping out with the vaccination efforts in reaching out to the vulnerable population. And, with the grant they received they were able to hire additional people who have been doing great work and he is proud of his team.

Mr. Nerwinski noted that Lawrence loss their former Health Officer, Carol Chamberlain, who retired after 30 years of serving Lawrence Township and took a lot of institutional knowledge with her; but, he must say, Mr. Levine has stepped up in the middle of a pandemic and Lawrence Township has not skipped a beat. He has woven himself into the fabric of the Lawrence organization and he is a valued member that he enjoys working with every day and they are really fortunate to have him.

Mr. Levine stated it is a pleasure working in Lawrence Township and he cannot say enough as to how supportive and wonderful the Township Council, Mr. Nerwinski and the community has been and thanked everyone again for all the support.

Public Participation

Mr. Peter Wood, 66 Lawn Park Avenue, advised that he is present this evening along with a number of other people in the audience to speak about Anne Demarais and her environmental contributions to Lawrence Township. He indicated if anyone has been involved with the County, Municipal or State open space use sometime in the past 35 years they probably came across Anne Demarais name, as she has been enormously influential in Lawrence Township. Yet, she has never been recognized officially by any kind of plaque or sign. He then proceeded to discuss one of Ms. Demarais contributions to Lawrence as it relates to a Nature Center and a program she ran, taking kids from the Village down the Johnson Trolley Line across the bridge, which she helped to establish and secure, to the Shabakunk Creek where there was a little shoal that the kids called the 'beach'. The kids would identify the leaves on the trees from the drawings in the pamphlet she distributed which was a brilliant way to teach them how to do researched and indicated she was a great teacher who use to teach in upstate New York.

Mr. Wood went on to discuss the Initiative they will be proposing tonight as it relates to getting to know Lawrence Township and the people that helped grow the community and make it a better community to live and proceeded to discuss the Trail Guide Ms. Demarais put out in which she got ETS to print and pay for, Lawrence Community Foundation and Conservation Foundation to distribute and the Lawrence Gazette to help put it together. He indicated the Trail Guide featured ten (10) photographs of trails taken by Ms. Demarais and her name did not even appear in the pamphlet; only one photographer was given credit, Jim Goodman, who passed away last year, while all the other terrific photographs taken by Ms. Demarais received no credit. In addition, there were sixteen (16) web links that Ms. Demarais established with people and fifteen (15) other trails, many created by or through her efforts. So, for all of Ms. Demarais contributions to Lawrence Township he would like for the Township to acknowledge her efforts with something permanent and significant. He then thanked the Council for their time and consideration.

Ms. Margaret O'Reilly, 66 Lawn Park Avenue, advised that she is present this evening in support of Mr. Wood's request to commemorate the important contributions of Anne Demarais. She stated Ms. Demarais understood long before many others, that preserving the environment and making it accessible to the broadest number of people, not only feeds body, mind and spirit; but provides other tangible and intangible outcomes as well, including environmental, health, transportation and economic development benefits. Trails and green spaces help create positive community pride and identity and contribute to the local economies by creating desirable places for people to visit, live and work; Trails and greenway are accessible, free healthy recreation amenities for all ages and income levels to walk, hike, jog, cycle, ride and skate; Trails make it easy for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routine by connecting them with places they want to go, thereby, creating positives impacts on public health and wellness; Greenways and trails function as alternative transportation corridors, helping reduce greenhouse gases and cutting congestion, adding to the community's livability as well as safety and trails

and greenways are hands-on environmental classrooms, allowing people of all ages to see for themselves the precious intriguing natural world from which they often feel removed.

Ms. O'Reilly went on to discuss Ms. Demarais not knowing all the facts when she started her grassroots efforts in the 1980s; but quickly gaining the knowledge needed to speak to potential volunteers, neighbors, funders, partners, and even elected officials, about the elements of the projects most meaningful to them. She knew they could not be her projects, they had to be 'our' projects with as many individuals, businesses, homeowners, college administrative and township official in order to advance the ideas she was proposing. She also knew building a consensus was the key to success, so she built the coalitions necessary to realize the Lawrence Greenway, the trails of Drexel Woods, Pole Farm, Lawrence-Hopewell Trails and the Bridge between Ewing and Lawrence. And, she not only led the efforts to get the work done on the trails, woods and the Nature Center, but always emphasized the connectedness created throughout the Township, allowing residents to get to school, the Senior Center, library or markets by foot, bike, skates or pushing a stroller.

Ms. O'Reilly advised that Ms. Demarais has always been an inclusive and respectful partner, inviting in many perspectives, knowing that a wide diversity of voices leads to deeper community engagement ultimately enhancing the efforts of all. She indicated central to Ms. Demarais work has been a sense of community and how nature can be conduit to human connections. For example: the first public walk on the initial section of Greenway in 1990 with 50 Township residents; three-mile walks, which became known as the Senior Loop, which brought senior residents of the Township along the Greenway from the southern edge of Colonial Lake to the former Darrah Woods and back again; a fifth grade teacher from St. Ann's School reaching out about nature study in the Drexel Woods for her students; Eagle Scout projects contributing to the marking of trails throughout the Township; nature and art-related programs for Township children and their families becoming popular staples of programming activities of the Lawrence Nature Center and the birders and photographers enjoying all the Township trails, meadows and green spaces.

Ms. O'Reilly further advised that Ms. Demarais was the founder and longtime chair of the Lawrence Greenway Committee, president of the Lawrence Nature Center, and more importantly as a committed member of the community had critical hand in planning, managing, publicizing and staffing many of those events. She indicated all who have, and who will, benefit from Ms. Demarais commitment to open space owe her a debt of gratitude, as their community is better for her efforts, and their lives are richer for her vision. And, they hope the Council will consider honoring Ms. Demarais' extraordinary contributions by dedicating a significant site to her. A few suggestions would be The Anne Demarais Lawrence Nature Center, the Anne Demarais Trails at Drexel Woods or another meaningful site would be appropriate.

In support of her request, she is submitting a copy of her remarks to the Council, as well as other documents, news clips, and materials which are available for their full review. Additionally, the Lawrence Greenway Committee minutes are available should the Councilmembers determine they would be helpful. In closing, she stated they are looking forward to working with the Council on advancing this initiative and thanked them in advance for their time and consideration.

Ms. Eleanor Horne, Co-chair of Lawrence-Hopewell Trail, greeted the Mayor and Council and advised that her house is located at 18 Pin Flower Lane in West Windsor; but, her heart will always be in Lawrence, which will always be her community. She indicated Lawrence Township has a tradition of celebrating its heroes as they are all familiar with the name Captain James Lawrence and Colonel Edward Hand and suggested they add another fierce warrior to their list of heroes, Anne Demarais, who has fought many battles without firing a single shot. And, her victories have been in the many ways the reason Lawrence Township has become a greener, healthier, more sustainable, more pleasant place to call home.

Ms. Horne stated for as long as she can remember Ms. Demarais has been powerful, committed, effective advocate for all that is good in Lawrence. She has worked tirelessly to make the community respectful of the land they walk on, the air they breathe and the people who make the community so special. She indicated in 2002, when the idea of the Lawrence-Hopewell Trail (LHT) was born they sought the advice of Ms. Demarais; because everyone said she was a huge advocate of trails and open space and had provided so much of the leadership that resulted in the early work of the Trails in the Township. She quickly became one of their main supporters, a fountain of good information and source of wise counsel. They consider her a major asset to the creation of the LHT which now have more than a half million users each year.

Ms. Horne imparted that Ms. Demarais has long been concerned about the separation of north and south Lawrence by the Interstate. So, for more than 20 years ago she has advocated for a bridge over I-95. She was so adamant about the need for the bridge it was once suggested that the bridge be called 'Anne Spam'. And, when criticized for advocating for a bridge to nowhere she insisted that a bridge over I-95 was a bridge to everywhere. Today, there is a group of local, county and region trail advocates following in Ms. Demarais footsteps, trying to make the bridge over I-95 a reality. Another, one of Ms. Demarais crusades was for the preservation of the Pole Farm that is now a featured in Mercer Meadows Park which was recently voted one of the most beautiful parks in the northeastern United States.

In closing, Ms. Horne stated when Ms. Demarais is determined to see something happen; it usually happens. And, now a group of Ms. Demarais biggest fans are determined to see her many accomplishments be recognized by the town she loves dearly. They are determined to make it happen, and they hope that members of Council will join them in recognizing the many ways Anne Demarais has made Lawrence the special place it is today. She then thanked the Council for their time and consideration.

Mr. David Mizenko, 5 Village Court, stated he is a representative of the Friends of The Lawrence Greenway and they are requesting that the Council consider naming the trails in Drexel Woods "The Anne Demarrais Trails at Drexel Woods", which he will speak more about a little later. It is their suggestion being Ms. Demarrais name is so intertwined with the Trails, and they think it would be most appropriate.

Mr. Mizenko advised that the Friends of The Lawrence Greenway is a local non-profit founded by Anne Demarrais as a means for her to advocate for greenways to connect residents to community resources and nature. So, this would be a fitting way to honor her involvement with the Trails by naming a trail after her and in listening to the other speakers Ms. Demarrais involvement with greenways and trails goes back longer than even he imagine; because during his research the earliest document he found was dated in the 90s in which there was a detailed proposal for the Eight-Mile Loop and recited the route.

Mr. Mizenko imparted as if the Eight Mile Loop was not ambitious enough, Ms. Demarrais looked for other ways to gather around the town using greenways by which people could walk or bike that led to a series of Greenway Walks that ran for 25 years. He indicated each year the Friends of Lawrence Greenway selects a route and invite the public out and they have had some excellent attendance. And, one particular event that took place at Mercer Meadows was quite memorable as there was an article about it in The Trenton Times. They have also had some events that were not so well attended; but, it was a good way to introduce the community to the possibilities. He then echoed some of the previously comments relative to Ms. Demarrais' involvement with the Lawrence Nature Center as well as her being an early board member on the LHT Committee which was going to be a linear path that connects the campuses of Bristol-Myers Squibb and Ms. Demarrais being instrumental in helping to expand that vision into the more than 20-mile loop it is today, mostly completed in Lawrence Township. So, for all of those reasons discussed this evening, he believes Ms. Demarrais is deserving of the proposed recognition of having the Trails in Drexel Woods named the "Anne Demarrais Trails at Drexel Woods".

Mr. Mizenko stated on behalf of the Friends of The Lawrence Greenway he would like to express their sincere appreciation to the Council for their collaborative relationship and the advocacy they have long enjoyed with the Township. He indicated one of the visual results of their collaborations are the signs that are marked in Maidenhead Meadows Park and Veterans Park, where they previously had no signage, but through collaboration they were able to work with the Township to get the signs made and put in place. He then discussed a current priority of the Friends of The Lawrence Greenway for the coming year which is to complete the Shabakunk portion of the Eight Mile Loop which he spoke about earlier that would go from Colonial Lake Park to the Harold Vereen Walkway; a connection that is relatively simple, establishing a direction from Drexel Woods to the western terminus of Lawn Park Avenue.

Ms. Terri Gabriell, 41 Rolfe Avenue, greeted the Council and stated that Anne Demarais believes in the healing and beneficial powers of nature and has dedicated much of her time over the last several decades working towards preserving the natural treasures of Lawrence Township and making them accessible to everyone. She has known her for more than 40 years and as long as she has known her, she has worked diligently and tirelessly to achieve those goals. She has worked to save open space throughout the Township and create a greenway, a walking path to tie them together. She had a vision, that the Greenway could become a loop to connect open spaces, parks and woodland trails in a network of nature and beauty that could be enjoyed by the people of Lawrence Township today and for generations to come.

Ms. Gabriell stated it seemed as if Ms. Demarais spent years with maps in hand finding the spaces, the trails, the connections, the easements and the grant money to make the vision a reality. Projects that include the Greenway, Drexel Woods and its trails, the Lawrence Nature Center, the Pole Farm, the Salt Bossio preserve and the Lawrence Hopewell-Trail along with many more projects. She advised that she lives right down the street from the Salt Bossio preserve and she is thankful to have woodlands for her nearly daily walks in the woods. In closing, Ms. Gabriell stated they all owe Ms. Demarais a debt of gratitude for her vision and tireless work and urged every member of Council to spend part of an autumn day walking those trails and enjoying Lawrence wonderful open spaces and she is sure they will agree.

Mayor Kownacki thanked the speakers for enlightening them on the wonderful achievements of Anne Demarais and supporting her efforts. Mayor Kownacki assured them that the Council would review their request and they would contact them once a decision is made. Thereafter, members of Council spoke about the benefits and the enjoyment they get from the beautiful trails in the woods and some of their fondest memories as it relates to Ms. Demarais projects and environmental achievements.

Review and Revisions of Agenda

There was no review or revisions to the agenda.

Adoption of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mr. Bobbitt, the Minutes of Closed Session Meetings of August 17, 2021 and September 21, 2021 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

Same was carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Powers, Ryan and Mayor Kownacki.
Absent: Councilwoman Lewis.
Abstain: None.

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On a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mr. Bobbitt, the Minutes of Regular Meetings of July 20, 2021 and August 17, 2021 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

Same was carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Powers, Ryan and Mayor Kownacki.  
Absent: Councilwoman Lewis.  
Abstain: None.

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Awarding or Rejecting of Bids

On a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mr. Bobbitt, Resolution (9-A), Authorizing Awarding Bid for 2021 Tree Removal, was presented for adoption.

Resolution No. 321-21

WHEREAS, on Thursday, September 23, 2021 bids were received and publicly opened for the project known as **Bid No. 21-16: 2021 Tree Removal**; and

WHEREAS, two (2) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was US Athletic Fields, Inc. who submitted a bid in the amount of \$127,400.00, and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the accounts to be charged are;

| Acct.           | Ord. No. | Name              | Amount       |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1-01-20-190-299 | ----     | Ash Tree Removal  | \$100,000.00 |
| 1-01-26-290-255 | ----     | Streets and Roads | \$20,000.00  |
| 1-01-28-375-255 | ----     | Parks             | \$7,400.00   |

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Engineer, the Mayor and Municipal Clerk are hereby authorized to execute a contract with US Athletic Fields, Inc., 668 Country Route 601, Belle Mead NJ 08502 in the amount of \$127,400.00; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Same was carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Powers, Ryan and Mayor Kownacki.  
Absent: Councilwoman Lewis.  
Abstain: None.

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Introduction of Ordinances

There was no introduction of ordinances.

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Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Kownacki read by title, an ordinance entitled, "BOND ORDINANCE AMENDING BOND ORDINANCE BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, COUNTY OF MERCER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, IN ORDER TO REVISE THE DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPROVEMENT HEREIN"

Ordinance No. 2405-21

BOND ORDINANCE AMENDING BOND ORDINANCE BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, COUNTY OF MERCER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, IN ORDER TO REVISE THE DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPROVEMENT HEREIN

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey (not less than two-thirds of all members thereof affirmatively concurring) as follows:

Section 1:

- a. Section 3 (a) of Bond Ordinance 2211-15, finally adopted March 17, 2015, amended by Ordinance 2299-18, finally adopted June 19, 2018, amended by Ordinance 2371-20, finally adopted November 5, 2020, be and are hereby amended to add the following purposes:

Acquisition of Various Computer and Office Equipment consisting of ...“to include Security Camera System, Monitoring and equipment necessary for local and remote viewing and recording in Municipal Buildings...”

Section 2:

The capital budget of the Township of Lawrence is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this ordinance to the extent of inconsistency herewith. The resolution in the form promulgated by the Local Finance Board showing full detail of the amended capital budget and capital program as approved by the Director of Local Government Services is on file with the Clerk and is available there for inspection.

Section 3:

This amending bond ordinance shall take effect twenty (20) days after the first publication thereof after final adoption, as provided by the Local Bond Law.

Adopted:       October 5, 2021

The Ordinance was adopted after the public hearing thereon, on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL        | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|----------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Mr. Bobbitt    | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Lewis      |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Mr. Powers     | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mr. Ryan       | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mayor Kownacki | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

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Mayor Kownacki read by title, an ordinance entitled, “ORDINANCE TO APPEAL IN ITS ENTIRETY ORDINANCE NO. 1691-02 ENTITLED,”AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE CODE TO CREATE A HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE”

Mayor Kownacki asked if there were any questions or comments from the public or members of Council.

Councilman Ryan advised that the Ordinance removes the Human Relations Committee in its entirety and creates a new committee bringing it up to date.

Councilman Powers echoed previous comments from the last meeting with regards to him voting 'no' on the Ordinance due to the incumbent members from the Human Relations Committee having unexpired terms that will not be able to transfer over to the new Diversity, Equity and Inclusionary Committee.

Councilman Bobbitt stated he had a few reservations about dissolving the Human Relations Committee; but in thinking about how the Committee has operated over the past few years in the Township, it seems appropriate to start fresh.

Mayor Kownacki indicated he previously stated every member on the Human Relations Committee can reapply to the new DEI Committee after the Ordinance is adopted and the interview process will start after the Reorganization Meeting in January. The Committee will consist of eleven (11) members and whoever reapplies does have a chance of coming back as they never stated during any of the meetings that the old members could not be appointed to the new Committee. And, he agrees with Councilman Bobbitt with regards to starting fresh and this ordinance moves them into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Ms. Robin Bridges Johnson, 282 Glenn Avenue, greeted the Council and stated she is present this evening along with Krista Gervon, who resides at 80 Stonicker Drive, and Mona Hasan, who resides at 3 Hedge Road, who could not be present this evening. She imparted that they do not represent anyone, they are just three citizens that care and love Lawrence, which is what brought their friendship together. However, they do represent the full diversity and uniqueness that makes Lawrence Township so special.

Ms. Johnson stated she is a black woman, Ms. Gervon is a white woman in an interfaith married with a Jewish man and Ms. Hasan is Muslim, and the three of them got together when they learned about the changes to repeal the Human Relations Committee, as they were concerned and thought there was an effort on the part of the Township to disband a committee that is needed, most significantly, at this point and time. So, they got together and they attended one of the Human Relations Committee meeting, which they have no affiliation with in terms of them owing anyone anything. They are just three citizens that care about things that make the Lawrence community a rich and vibrant place to live, raise a family, and to grow in.

Ms. Johnson and Ms. Gervon discussed their observations of the Human Relations Committee meeting they attended in July as it relates to the functionality of the Committee and the tremendous problems they witnessed as well as their concern with the manner in which the Committee was run with disorganization and control issues amongst the members. They both believe there is so much more the Committee could be doing to be reflective of the beauty and uniqueness of the Lawrence community which they are not

doing. And, they understand the HRC has a significant event held annually in October known as Diversity Day, none of which they have ever attended, which is troubling, problematic and and concerning, as they feel the Committee could have so many more inclusive meaningful events such as National Hispanic Heritage Month that is currently being observed or educating the public on Juneteenth which just because a Federal Holiday and many people have questions on. They also saw other areas of the Committee that clearly needs to be revamp to reflect their mission; one, being more diversified events representing all the different cultures and backgrounds reflective of Lawrence community which they have addressed with Mayor Kownacki, Councilman Powers and Councilman Ryan along with some other concerns.

Ms. Johnson advised that she would now be reading a recorded message from Ms. Hasan who was unable to attend the meeting this evening. She then proceeded to read the following in to record:

**Dear Mayor and Councilmembers:**

**Unfortunately, I am unable to attend in person today, as I am not feeling well but wanted to pass along some feedback on the Human Relations Committee and the new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. I concur with Robin and Krista, having attending the previous Human Relations Committee, I was able to see firsthand the need for a more dynamic and vibrant committee to represent our diverse community. The Human Relations Committee may have served the community well when it was formed years ago; but, as the community has grown, we need to go beyond holding a cultural festival once a year. A new a committee should be formed to serve, to elevate minority voices, as you all know my son, Nabeel, served on the Human Relations Committee for one year as a high school member who is currently on the Committee, right now. And, he also agrees that a new committee with a focus mission will be a positive role for our beautiful township. Thank you, Mona Hasan.**

Ms. Johnson and Ms. Gervon thanked the Mayor and Council for their time and consideration.

Mayor Kownacki advised that Ms. Hasan son, Nabeel, sent an email to Councilman Ryan and himself, asking to be appointed to the new Committee as he did not want to leave the former committee. And, his response to Mr. Nabeel's request, is he will be bringing him back as a member to the new Committee, as he is was a very person who had some good ideas that were ignored due to him being a high school student which in his opinion was wrong.

Ordinance No. 2406-21

AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL IN ITS ENTIRETY  
ORDINANCE NO. 1691-02 ENTITLED 'AN ORDINANCE AMENDING  
THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE CODE TO CREATE A  
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE'

WHEREAS, it has been determined that in the years since the creation of the Human Relations Committee the mission has widened and grown as has the diversity of the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Lawrence Township Council has recognized that changes are necessary in order to encompass inclusionary measures for all residents of the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Lawrence Township Council has determined that it is in the best interest of the Township to review its mission statement for diversity, inclusion and equity for its residents;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that the Human Relations Committee is hereby dissolved effectively immediately; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Lawrence Township Council and Municipal Manager shall determine an inclusionary membership composition, membership number, a mission statement that is relevant to the diversity of the Township as well as a complete listing of powers and duties after which the creation of a replacement committee can be made; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that members of the current Human Relations Committee be and are hereby invited to state their interest in being appointed to the new committee should they desire to do so.

Adopted: October 5, 2021

The Ordinance was adopted after the public hearing thereon, on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL        | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|----------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Mr. Bobbitt    | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Lewis      |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Mr. Powers     |     | X   |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Ryan       | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mayor Kownacki | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

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Mayor Kownacki read by title, an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE TO CREATE THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE"

Mayor Kownacki asked if there were any questions or comments from the public or members of Council.

There was an applaud and thank you from the audience after the adoption of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Ordinance.

Councilman Powers again voiced his objection to ordinance and argued that the matter is larger than one committee. The matter is about due process, as the people on the Advisory Committees have unexpired term limits; and, if the Council has a problem with an individual member on a committee they have the authority to remove that person and the Committee continues on. But, they are now setting precedent. if there is a change in administration and a person can come in and suggest they wipe out a committee regardless of the members term limits or years of volunteer service to the Township without to pay just because that person is unhappy with an individual on their committee. And, because there is a proper process for the Council to follow to remove an individual, not complying with the Mission Statement of a committee without repealing an entire committee, he will be voting against this Ordinance. But, he does support the Lawrence Township Volunteer Award proposed by Councilwoman Lewis which is long overdue for the volunteers who have diligently served Lawrence Township.

Councilman Ryan stated he disagrees with Councilman Powers comments, who served as the Liaison of the Human Relations Committee for 16 years, and indicated the dysfunction of the Human Relation Committee described this evening by Ms. Johnson and Ms. Gervon is what he has been dealing with for the past two years. And, part of that dysfunction is the \$630.00 worth of unpaid purchase orders he is holding in hand owed to restaurants from two years ago that he has been trying to straighten out with the CFO and Municipal Manager with little success due to the budget period and vendors having to wait until next year's budget to be paid.

Councilman Bobbitt stated he is looking forward to working with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and he thinks now that they have Juneteenth as a Federal Holiday and some other significant holidays, it would be nice to have an advisory committee that actually advises the Council on how to appropriately honor the citizens of Lawrence and proceeded to discuss a racial incident that occurred during his term as Mayor at the High School and him not receiving any help or guidance from the Human Relations Committee or any other committee regarding the matter. So, he is looking forward to the DEI Committee advising all of Council on how to proceed with some of the thorny issues and how to recognize members of the community. In conclusion, he advised the people in the audience to hold the Council accountable for the people they appoint to the new DEI Committee that will begin next year.

Councilman Bobbitt noted that Councilwoman Lewis is not present this evening as she is celebrating her daughter’s birthday. But, one thing she had mentioned at the Introduction of the Ordinance and made abundantly clearly is that the Council should set the charge for the DEI Committee as to what they should be advising the Council on... cultural events and things of that nature; something members of Council should keep in mind when they start the interview process.

Mr. Roskos stated for purposes of clarification the Human Relations Committee was formed 20 years ago and that committee and the Mission Statement set forth in the Ordinance for that committee was repealed as it does not comport with today’s reality. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Ordinance is specifically formed to deal with today’s issues and he thinks that might have been missed in tonight’s delivery. At least, that was always his understanding, as to what the Council is trying to achieve. It is not about a particular meeting or a particular member on a committee; it is about the Mission Statement and what type of committee the Council wants as they move forward in 2021 and beyond.

Mr. Nerwinski advised that he helped to create the language in the new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Ordinance and in looking at the old Ordinance it was deficient in a lot of ways. One of the ways to cure the deficiency is to make it absolutely clear that the DEI Committee is to serve as an advisory committee to Lawrence Township Governing Body and that the Governing Body provides and set mandates and polices for that committee which seemed to have been lost in the old language. So, it is appropriate to change the Ordinance for a lot of cultural and social reasons; but, particularly, for the authoritative reasons of setting what the Governing Body mandates are, and what polices they want to set for this committee as well as other committees that were established long ago that may need to be revised to reflect a more meaningful exchange between the Governing Body and the Committee.

Ordinance No. 2407-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE  
CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE TO  
CREATE THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP  
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, THE Lawrence Township Council strives to celebrate equity, diversity and inclusiveness within our community and believes that every member of humanity has a contribution to make to promote and strengthen these core values; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that equity, diversity and inclusion is an active process that requires continuous commitment to promote healthy people, a healthy community, and the overall success of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Council seeks to create and maintain opportunities for engagement, education, and discourse to foster open-mindedness, compassion, and inclusiveness within the community and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the committee shall address issues related, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, national origin, veteran status, social-economic class, religion, and professional status;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey hereby establishes an advisory committee to be known as The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee under the following terms and conditions:

Section 1. Membership

A. Approved by the majority vote of the Council, the committee shall comprise eleven (11) volunteer members who are residents of the Township with diverse cultures, backgrounds and life experience. Each member shall serve three (3) years terms except that the initial appointments shall serve as follows: five (5) members shall serve for a one (1) year term; three (3) members shall serve for a two (2) year term; and three (3) members shall serve for a three (3) year term. From amongst its members, the Council shall appoint a Liaison to the committee to serve a two (2) year term.

Additionally, the committee shall seek to engage active participation from at least one student and one member of the Police Department.

B. Vacancies shall be filled for the balance of any unexpired term.

C. A member may be removed for cause by a majority vote of the Council.  
Township of Lawrence  
County of Mercer

Section 2. Powers and Duties

A. The committee shall be advisory to Council and have no governing power or fiduciary responsibility.

B. The committee shall recommend, evaluate and promote programs in furtherance of the committee's mission.

C. Each committee member shall attend at least seventy-five (75) percent of the committee meetings and contribute their time, expertise, and thinking to the current and future work of the committee.

- D. The committee shall perform such other related work in furtherance of the Council's policy and mandate.
- E. A quorum shall consist of a minimum of six (6) voting members present at a properly called meeting in order to conduct business in the name of the committee. Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed for all matters of parliamentary procedure.

**Section 3. Repealer**

All ordinances, or parts of the same inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Ordinance are now repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

**Section 4. Severability**

If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance shall be declared invalid for any reason, the remaining portions of said Ordinance shall not be affected thereby and shall remain in full force and effect.

**Section 5. Effective Date**

This Ordinance shall become effective twenty (20) days after adoption thereof.

Adopted: October 5, 2021

The Ordinance was adopted after the public hearing thereon, on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL        | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|----------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Mr. Bobbitt    | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Lewis      |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Mr. Powers     |     | X   |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Ryan       | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mayor Kownacki | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

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**Manager's Report –**

Mr. Nerwinski submitted invoice listings for the month October 2021.

Mr. Nerwinski reported that he distributed the 2020 Audit Report and Financial Statement prepared by the Municipal Auditor, Mercadien, P.C., and it is very good reading as there are no recommendations or areas of concerns identified in the Audit. He indicated that Lawrence Township financial status is in complete compliance with the State of New Jersey law and if they have any questions to please let him know in advance and he will invite the CFO to participate in the next meeting, if necessary.

Mr. Nerwinski advised that he spoke with Councilwoman Lewis earlier today and she wants to institute the Lawrence Township Volunteer Award for individuals and groups who perform outstanding volunteer service in the community on a quarterly basis, which is an ambitious timeframe, or whatever time period they determine is appropriate. Further, he has prepared the 2021 Nomination Form and Requirement Sheet along with some revisions from Ms. Lewis for their review and consideration. They will then have to decide who is going to make up the Committee; because, it cannot just be a makeup of township employees...they have to involve community members a well. So, this the first step in the decision-making process, and if they have any questions to please feel to contact him.

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**Attorney’s Report –**

There was no Attorney’s report.

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**Clerk’s Report –**

There was no Clerk’s report.

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**Unfinished Business –**

There was no unfinished business.

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**New Business –**

There was no new business.

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**Public Participation (3-minute limitation per speaker) –**

Mr. Paul Larson, 170 Darrah Lane, echoed previous comments regarding Anne Demarais overall involvement with a lot of parks and trails in Lawrence Township which he indicated they would not have today without her efforts. And, when he sends out his meeting notices Ms. Demarais name is the first name on the distribution list where it should be.

Mr. Larson stated he is not going to expand on the very thorough discussion that took place tonight regarding the Human Relations Committee and the new the Ordinance for the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion; but, he does think it is a good idea to review all of the Committees and the process behind them. He indicated he chairs a combined committee that was previously two committee formed into one joint committee and they have existing members from both committees. And, in looking at some of the language in the new Mission Statement versus the old one, there is a big difference with regards to the Trails, Open Space, and Stewardship Advisory Committee. So, it is a good idea to look at the process and the Mission Statement for each committee to see if it is actually accurate to follow in this day and age.

Mr. Larson further stated as a chairperson or just being a member of a committee, he would hope if there is some displeasure or some internal issues that they would chose to discuss them one on one or in a small meeting; because he is not sure if some of the things discussed tonight should have been discussed openly given passions can run high and sometimes get the better of a situation which they all have been guilty of.

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**Resolutions**

Resolution Nos. 308-21 (18-C.1) through 322-21 (18-H.7) were approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL        | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|----------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Mr. Bobbitt    | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Lewis      |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Mr. Powers     | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mr. Ryan       | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mayor Kownacki | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

Cited Resolutions are spread in their entirety in the Resolution Books of the Township of Lawrence.

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**Council Initiatives/Liaison Reports –**

Mr. Ryan reported that Community Day had a great turnout with 72 registered tables. They had the House of Rock, firetrucks, ziplining and the Lizard Man which he heard was there but did not see and commended the Public Works Department and the Recreation Department for a great job and a wonderful day of events.

Mayor Kownacki reported that the new Museum will open on Friday, October 22, at 10 AM at the National Guard Armory located on Eggert Crossing Road, and all is invited to attend. The General will be performing the ribbon cutting and there will be other VIP’s in attendance as well.

Councilman Bobbitt stated he agrees with the previous comments with regards to revisiting the process for Mission Statements for the Committees, which he will be looking into for the Growth & Redevelopment Committee as well as the Environmental and Green Advisory Committee. He further advised about an application the Environmental Committee has been working on for Notre Dame Turf field.

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**Written Communications –**

There was no written communication.

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There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned.

7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Tonya D. Carter, Deputy Municipal Clerk

Attest:

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James S. Kownacki, Mayor