

**BOROUGH OF DUMONT
BERGEN COUNTY, N.J.
EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 13, 2021
6:30 PM**

Deputy Clerk Siek opened the meeting of the Dumont Mayor & Council and announced that we continue to conduct our meetings by electronic means. She is hosting this meeting from Dumont Borough Hall located at 50 Washington Avenue.

Flag Salute-Councilman Chae

Moment of Silence for all those lost to COVID-19.

Sunshine Law: The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey have been satisfied by the inclusion of the time, date and location of this public meeting of the Governing Body by means of communication equipment, N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b). Notice was sent to the Record and the Ridgewood News, posted on the Borough website, Borough Hall and Facebook.

Roll Call:

Council members: Chae, Englese, Gorman, Harvilla, Rossillo, Stewart-present
Mayor Andrew LaBruno-present

Mayor LaBruno said that the following presentation is a requirement of Green Acres. The Recreation Commission has made a commitment to make improvements at Twin Boro to give girls softball a home, which they deserve. Our Recreation Director has been working on providing preliminary cost assessments which are needed. These improvements are for our youth and provides our adult community the access to improve their health with physical fitness in an outdoor setting. The plan is on our Borough website.

Administrator Tully said that this is a project which has languished for a long time. There had even been a Gina's Field presentation in the past. The Gina's Field committee met a number of times to discuss the project. Because of the irrigation issues, it was felt it was not the best plan. The Governing Body has had many discussions to make sure Gina's Field becomes an all-purpose field-it has a children's splash pad and a walking path for seniors. Twin Boro will become the home of girls' softball. The Borough is making the necessary changes to the field and that's why we have the preliminary cost estimates included in our bond ordinance tonight.

CFO Abbasi stated that in the bond ordinance there is an appropriation for \$1,200,000. We are expecting to receive almost \$500,000 in grant money. The bond market has stabilized and all government entities are finding it a very good time to borrow money for their projects. The Borough's Auditor, Bond Counsel and Financial Advisor continue to monitor the bond market and will advise the CFO, Administrator and Council finance committee on when they believe we should go out to the bond market to borrow funds.

Mr. Tully added that Mr. Norbut has spent a lot of time and resources to apply for substantial grant money from Green Acres and Bergen County Open Space, which is why there is such a large grant award for this project.

Mayor LaBruno stated that the Bergen County money is coming to a point where we "use it or lose it". It would be a waste to see us lose tax dollars that we get back from the County to

fund this project. Rec liaison Councilman Gorman and Council President Stewart have worked hard on this project.

Councilman Gorman thanked Recreation Chairman Prulello, Director Como, the Gina's Field Committee, Recreation Committee and Mr. Norbut for this concept plan. This involved many discussions. This project has something for residents of all ages-the splash park and playground for children, the field for U-10 soccer and flag football and exercise equipment and walkway for older residents.

Councilwoman Stewart added that she has been part of this project since she got on the Council in 2018. The scope has changed dramatically since then. Our Recreation Commission serves almost 18,000 people in Dumont and the number of children now enrolled in our Recreation programs is about 1,400. This plan to make this a spotlight in the town includes the entire community.

Councilman Englese said that three years ago when he ran for Council, he ran on the platform of moving Dumont forward. His priority has been our roads and our parks. We are improving the infrastructure of the town. Therefore, he supports this plan.

Councilman Chae said this is moving Dumont forward. It is important that the girls have a permanent footprint for softball.

Councilman Harvilla echoed the sentiments. He said he finds it refreshing that all the entities involved in this project are taking a strategic, consolidated approach that will benefit the broader sector of the community and he is proud to be a part of it.

Don Norbut from Remington Vernick Engineers is doing a presentation as a requirement of Green Acres, DEP in order to give the public an opportunity to be introduced to the plan and give input. The plan on the Borough's website is a plan that has come together over a period of time with a lot of input and a lot of smart recreation people in town. It's a plan to expand the uses of this park. It's not a huge park but a nice little centerpiece with a nice attraction of a water spray park for children. It draws a lot of young people and families to these sites; combining that with a fully ADA accessible playground area. It will have a restroom, which has been lacking. That, combined with multipurpose fields, which now expand the uses from just softball to a variety of different sports: soccer, flag football, softball and baseball leagues to use the field for practices. There will be a walkway around the whole perimeter of the site, including benches and fitness stations. Picnic groves will be added. There will be fourteen additional parking spaces along Aladdin Avenue; that, with the twenty spaces in the existing lot will give a good number of spaces off the street. This project is still a preliminary design. Once authorized, the project will go into a detailed design stage at which time dimensions, size of elements and placement of elements might be moved a little bit. The project is funded by 2018 and 2019 Open Space grants and a Green Acres matching grant. Green Acres is happy with this plan and has endorsed it. There is a budgetary number of \$1,200,000. This year he is finding that there are very good prices for infrastructure projects so it is a good time to move forward on this project. The project is planned for fall and ready for use by Memorial Day.

Councilwoman Stewart cautioned against calling it the water spray "park" because it is a small feature.

Motion to open to the public for comments on the presentation only: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

All in favor.

1. John Sansone, Beacon Street, thinks it is a great plan. He is concerned about the cost,

including the Engineer's work so far.

2. Bill Wicker, 4 Dance Blvd., is concerned about a 300-year-old tree being removed. Why didn't we meet at Gina's Field so people could ask their questions? He feels that the work being done at Gina's Field and Twin Boro Field will cost more than expected.

3. deLyon, Beacon Street, feels it is a good plan but is concerned about debt. The bond ordinance was not posted until after 4PM today. He feels that people's opinions don't matter to the Council. When are the costs going to hit taxpayers?

4. Maryann Russini, Roosevelt Avenue, asked if there is historic fill at any of the sites to be worked on? Has the soil been tested? Are the fields going to have grass or turf? How much are the taxpayers going to pay per home? She likes the plans. If the bathroom is moved closer to Aladdin, the trees wouldn't have to be removed. Can the girls play 24/7 and can two fields be used at the same time?

5. Gerry Aponte, Hickory Street, has a cost concern. What is RVE's experience with this type of park?

6. Teresa Riva, Merritt Avenue, asked if the Shade Tree Commission had been consulted.

7. Lynne Vietri, Wilkens Drive, asked when the Spano family was spoken to. This presentation should have been on Zoom or something similar. She thinks the plan is good. She also has a concern about the trees. There won't be lights on Gina's Field so soccer and flag football will have limited time to use the field because it will be dark earlier in the fall when they play. The girls will be raising money through use of the hut. Will they share the money with the other Recreation programs? She feels that the cost of this project will be higher than \$1,200,000. The Mayor had mentioned something about detractors but she feels people are concerned about taxpayer money.

8. Teresa Mertz, Omaha Street, said she would like the younger parents to go to the Bergenfield water park at 9PM on a Saturday night to see what happens.

9. Brian Joyce, Hunting Drive, is a coach of various Rec programs and a Recreation Commissioner. He supports the Gina's Field concept plan and the future home of girls' softball at Twin Boro Field. A lot of time was put in to come up with a plan that would benefit all of Dumont's youth and at the same time to ensure a proper environment for the residents of that area regarding parking and safety. He said he envisions the final plans will benefit our summer Rec programs so the children can use the Swim Club and have non-water related options on a steady basis, instead of just Mondays. He feels the fund-raising options for girls' softball with the use of the concession stand as a huge benefit. Nothing was overlooked and the intentions of the concept plan were solely to give all youth in our Borough what they deserve, which is to go out and play and have fun.

10. Mary Normoyle, Randolph Avenue, has an issue with the way these plans were presented. There was no information about plans for Twin Boro Field. There was a sign on the Twin Boro fence before the vote was taken by the Commission.

11. Mary Keefe, Prospect Avenue, said she knows the Spano family. She feels Gina's Field should just be fixed up. Twin Boro can be used for soccer and flag football. She is concerned about the cost.

12. Ed Fanning, Highland Avenue, said the trees should not be removed. He's glad there will not be lights. The sign is up already and comments are being asked for today. There has been no outreach to the residents. This is a crowded area and hazardous.

13. Joanne Wicker, Dance Blvd., is not against park beautification. She is against the splash

park. It should be eliminated. How much liability is there? Will we need police officers? There is no way to keep out-of-towners out. Who will maintain the park and bathroom?

14. Lisa Fatera, 49 John Place, asked if there has been any discussion about junior football using Twin Boro usually starting mid-August. Now we'll have three teams competing for the same field.

15. Karen Valido, Overlook Drive, asked the cost of Twin Boro. Girls' softball is still not being fully considered. She has a concern about emergency vehicles and trees. She feels the town should be run like a household. If you don't have the money, you should wait.

16. Maggie Bambach, Wilkens Drive, said it seems like people are taking advantage of the pandemic to get this plan through. If this was a normal situation all the people would be here and be able to ask their questions. She was displeased with the sign.

17. Joan O'Connor, Lincoln Avenue, is concerned about police presence needed at the park. Who will maintain these? The DPW will not be able to handle the extra maintenance.

18. Dary McCabe, Hickory Street, doesn't like the spray park. She would like to see the money used for fixing up the tennis courts and a pickle court by White Beeches.

19. Ed Aguilar, Sherwood Road, asked if the Roller Rink will be impacted by this project. He said he is excited about the idea of the spray park. He is disturbed by the comments from people saying it will bring bad people to the town. We should be a welcoming community.

20. Jim Savage, Howard Street, feels this plan is beneficial. He thanked Mr. Joyce for his comments. The snack stand is at Twin Boro which will allow the girls to do fundraising. He hopes the girls don't need to work around other sports. We should plan for the future. 14-15 year-olds could take care of the parks. Speed bumps could be used to slow down traffic.

21. TJ Reissner, 182 Larch Avenue is concerned about preservation of the Eagle Scout projects that are in and around the parks.

22. Jennifer Grom, Hickory Street, is very pleased about the upgrade to our parks. She likes the splash pad. The parks are old and some are dangerous. She goes to other towns' parks. This is where she would like her tax dollars to go.

23. Alyssa Fanning, Highland Avenue, lives near the parks. This is a lot of money. It should be put into green infrastructure. She is concerned about trees and wildlife.

24. Tom Kelly, Beacon Street, said this project has gone on many years. The purpose of this hearing is to get stakeholders' input. We're just going through the motion to satisfy Green Acres. Parks have been upgraded. There is a lack of communication. The project should be done responsibly and with input from others in town. The sign is already up; the decision has already been made. Less than ten years ago, Twin Boro Park was completely upgraded. He said Twin Boro field has two diamonds but only one that is useable at a time, whereas Memorial Park has five separate ballfields that can be used all at the same time.

Motion to close to the public: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

All in favor.

Review of Consent Agenda Items: All items with an asterisk are considered to be non-controversial by the Council and will be approved by one motion. There may be further discussion prior to the vote upon request of a member of the public or a Council member. Also, any item may be removed for further discussion or for roll call vote in which case the item will be removed and considered in its normal sequence as part of the general order of business.

RESOLUTIONS

#21-117 Antonio Galianos-Hire as a Crossing Guard *

#21-118 Thomas Osborne-Hire as a Crossing Guard *

#21-119 Approval of a Town-wide Garage Sale *

#21-120 Approval of LOSAP Contributions for the Volunteer Fire Department and Volunteer Ambulance Corps *

#21-121 Michael Fredricks-Authorization to Hire as Dispatcher *

#21-122 Authorization of Execution of BCUA Agreement *

#21-123 Approval of Execution of Agreement of Fire Truck Shared Service with Ramsey *

#21-124 Mike Versace Landscaping, LLC-Clean up Entire Property at 28 Hillcrest Drive-\$3,500 *

#21-125 Emergency Temporary Appropriations to the Calendar Year 2021 Budget *

#21-126 Utilization of Three Year Average Method to Calculate the Maximum Miscellaneous Revenues *

#21-127 Authorization of Execution of Agreement with the County of Bergen for Site Access *

#21-128 Resolution Approving Reimbursement to Officers for Pension Buyback *

#21-129 Larry Bongard-Accept his Letter of Retirement *

#21-130 Jeanine Siek-Appointment as Dumont Municipal Clerk *

#21-131 Authorization to Advertise for an Administrative Assistant *

Councilman Chae congratulated Jeanine Siek.

Mayor LaBruno explained that the Personnel Committee did interviews early this week. Jeanine has done a great job as Deputy Clerk and they're happy she will be continuing to work in the Borough of Dumont.

Ms. Siek responded she is honored and excited to continue her career with the Borough.

Motion to open to the public for Comments on the Consent Agenda Only: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

All in favor.

1. Bruce deLyon, Beacon Street, said he has dealt with Jeanine through email and she has been very upbeat and professional and Mrs. Connelly, who has been very upfront and professional with him. However, the Mayor does not understand the process and he is upset about some items for the agenda being posted after 4:00 the day of the meeting.
2. Bill Wicker, Dance Blvd., asked when the answers to the questions posed at the Gina's Field hearing going to be answered.

Motion to close to the public: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

All in favor.

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

Roll call vote: Council members: Chae, Englese, Gorman, Harvilla, Rossillo, Stewart-yes

Mr. Norbut explained that the total cost of the project is estimated at \$1,200,000, which includes a 15% contingency because the project is preliminary. The construction cost is estimated at \$1,000,000. The soft costs due to design, bidding, construction, financing are approximately \$200,000. In answer to the question about historic fill, because this is a Green Acres project, an environmental preliminary assessment is required. An assessment was done in

2019 for approximately \$5,000 and there were no areas of concern-there was no historic fill found. A topographic and boundary survey was conducted for approximately \$18,000. Mr. Norbut addressed the question regarding tree removal. Trees will be planted as part of the project. Total costs over the past three years, including the survey, the preliminary assessment, series of renderings and a couple of different concepts is about \$45,000.

Mayor LaBruno said there are no plans for a turf field at this time. Girls can play two games at the same time. He has confirmation from the Recreation Director and the girls' softball president. Softball leagues don't interfere with the timing of football. We will work with the police to see what the best parking situation is there. We are going with a smaller version of the splash pad so that we don't need a lifeguard. Everything will be on a timer.

Mr. Tully said that Shade Tree was advised of the trees. There were flooding issues at Gina's Field that led to the change in scope of this project. Back in 2011, Twin Boro had remediation and the concerns about the field were addressed. Professionals, including an LSRP, will be consulted to make sure any issues are dealt with appropriately.

Councilwoman Stewart said she loves the plans for the park.

The Mayor said that many people were involved with working on this plan. He said the comments about out-of-towners is bias. This is not something this Council pushes forward. We have a committee for inclusion and diversity in the town. The comments are very disheartening and not acceptable. He said his family has been attacked on Facebook over this project.

Councilwoman Stewart added that we are an inclusive community.

ORDINANCES

First Reading

#1585 Calendar Year 2021 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a Cap Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)

Motion to waive formal reading: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

All in favor.

There was no discussion from the Council.

Motion to pass on 1st reading: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

Roll Call Vote: Council members: Chae, Englese, Gorman, Harvilla, Rossillo, Stewart-yes

#1586 Bond Ordinance Providing for Various Capital Improvements by the Borough of Dumont, appropriating the aggregate amount of \$3,219,000 therefor, including the aggregate amount of \$1,380,728 in Grant funds expected to be received from the State of New Jersey and the County of Bergen and authorizing the issuance of \$3,192,500 bonds or notes of the Borough to finance part of the cost thereof

Motion to waive formal reading: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

All in favor.

Mayor LaBruno explained this ordinance includes our capital improvements, including our road projects-Quackenbush, Grant and Lafayette Avenues. Quackenbush and Grant have grant funding.

Motion to pass on 1st reading: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

Roll Call Vote: Council members Chae, Englese, Gorman, Harvilla, Rossillo, Stewart-yes
Motion to open to the public for general comments: Councilman Chae
Second: Councilman Englese
All in favor.

1. Maryann Russini, Roosevelt Avenue, congratulated Jeanine. She asked when the budget will be introduced. She is concerned about the information regarding two games being played at the same time on Twin Boro.

2. John Sansone, Beacon Street, is happy about the road improvements in the ordinance. Was the Grant Avenue streetscape included in that? He feels that 90% of the callers are for the Gina's Field project. He asked when they would know about the tax impact per house for the Borough Hall construction. People need to budget for it.

3. Bruce deLyon, Beacon Street, is calling about our debt. He cited the debt of towns around us, stating they are low. He stated that Dumont's debt is about \$46,000,000. He complained about transparency and that they don't know what things are going to cost. The Council doesn't do much for him as a senior citizen.

4. Ed Fanning, Highland Avenue, said the people who live around the park should have received mailings about the hearing. He didn't like the sign.

5. Lynne Vietri, Wilkens Drive, spoke about articles about legalization of marijuana. Is the town going to allow facilities in town? T&M was paid \$45,000 for LSRP services, which was assigned to a different capital improvement bond. That would mean it was not taken out of the Borough Hall project. Why is Borough Hall closed to the public? We can enter many places as long as we wear a mask. Why aren't we having in-person meetings? The building is quite large. When people spoke about "out of towners" coming to Gina's Field, she doesn't feel they were referring to race. She thinks it has to do with them being concerned about their tax dollars being used.

6. Mary Normoyle said that at the last meeting she asked Councilman Harvilla about the resolution requesting legislation being removed from the court's hands. Another round of affordable housing is coming up and she is concerned about overdevelopment. She asked that the resolution be considered. She said she has been asking whether the contracts for the DPW Superintendent, Foremen and Police Chief have been done.

7. Denise Alvarado, Druid Avenue, commented about the foot bridge on Druid Avenue, which was taken down about a year ago. When will it be put up again? One of the advantages of being in a flood zone and paying extra is the foot bridge and the access it has to many areas. They never felt disrepair when they used it.

8. Jennifer Grom, Hickory Street, said that April 19th Dumont will be going back to school five days a week. She hopes everyone will be more diligent so that students can have a more productive few months and stay in school. Superintendent Triggiano will be retiring. The Board of Ed has been looking for his replacement. She feels the Board of Ed should be more technological. This became more apparent during the Pandemic. The Superintendent is the highest paid person in the Borough. Anyone with a fiscal interest should come to the Board of Education meeting April 27th.

9. Lili Binney, State College, Pa., asked about the status of Asplint. Councilman Harvilla said he would report on grants for the Library in April. She read that the New Jersey libraries will be getting \$3,900,000 in stimulus money. Has the Dixon Homestead Library responded with their wish list? Have the grant writers submitted an application? A couple of years ago

there was a presentation for Gina's Field, which put the cost at \$924,000. She recalled that Councilwoman Stewart was extremely surprised. The engineer said the plan could be scaled down. Now the cost is \$1,200,000. When will we stop spending money?

10. Karen Valido, Overlook Drive, referred to social media, said that her family is very diverse. She would never speak against multicultural. She hears about money being spent and overdevelopment. She had thanked Councilwoman Stewart at the time of the 2018 presentation for putting the project on the back burner because of the cost. Now things have turned around. The Superintendent is the CEO of the schools. One of the people who speaks on the social media page said that the Mayor & Council and everyone else should not be subjected to COVID. That person had been coming to Board of Ed meetings. We have lost control in town.

11. Jim Savage, Howard Street, thanked Councilman Chae who was an excellent source in putting together the AAPI vigil. He secured speakers and provided guidance. Dumont is a desirable location. The more multicultural, the better.

12. Teresa Riva, Merritt Avenue, said she cannot find the invoice for the sign referring to the Home of Girls' Softball on the bills list. She asked for a timeline.

13. Jamie O'Neill, Wilkens Drive, said as a former president of girls' softball, he feels that although there is talk of inclusivity, the girls are once again getting the short end of the stick.

Motion to close to the public: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilman Englese

All in favor.

Mayor LaBruno said that we applied for a grant for Grant Avenue Streetscape. He said that there have been attacks on he and his family on Facebook. He is a public official-that's one thing-but it's not right to attack his family. When comparing other towns to Dumont, many of them have a lot of rateables and a lower population. Emerson, for instance, has 7,500 residents whereas Dumont has almost 18,000. He said he wishes Dumont had more rateables, which would help with the taxes. Addressing the overdevelopment resolution, the Mayor said that without development, there will be no new businesses in town. There are no signs at Gina's Field. There is a sign at Twin Boro Field, a different project. He said that with the high numbers of cases of COVID, precautions are being taken to keep everyone safe. He wouldn't want to have someone get sick over a meeting. In 2016, he, Councilwoman Stewart and some residents brought back movies in the park, Dumont 5K and many other events which residents hadn't seen in years. We brought back the village.

Councilwoman Stewart commented that she has been a volunteer in Dumont for many years and appreciates the Mayor's comments.

Councilman Harvilla responded to Ms. Normoyle's question about a certain resolution. He had requested that Ms. Normoyle email him a copy of the resolution. He looked into what municipalities passed it and could not find any. There is no standard definition of overdevelopment-it varies from municipality to municipality based on the demographic makeup. In answer to the questions about the Library, he said he will provide information at the public meeting later this month. He appreciates callers' comments, whether he agrees or not. He appreciates the fact that they are engaging in the democratic process.

Councilman Gorman thanked Councilman Chae and everyone who organized the vigil. The Mayor, Council President Stewart and other Council members were present. He congratulated Jeanine and is looking forward to working with her.

Motion to adjourn: Councilman Chae
Second: Councilman Englese
All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Susan Connelly, RMC
Municipal Clerk