

**HARDING TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022
IN-PERSON
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
at 7:00 PM
Kirby Hall, Blue Mill Road, New Vernon, New Jersey**

MEETING MINUTES

CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Mayor Jones

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

ROLL CALL – Municipal Clerk

Ms. Chipperson, Dr. Lacz, Mr. Platt, Mr. Yates, Mr. Jones

Mrs. Sharp called the roll as follows:

Present:

Ms. Chipperson (arrived at 7:10 pm), Dr. Lacz, Mr. Platt, Mr. Yates, Mr. Jones

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Mr. Falzarano, Township Administrator; Mr. Vincent DeNave, Assistant Administrator

Public:

68

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Jones led members of the Township Committee and members of the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADEQUATE NOTICE:

ADEQUATE NOTICE of this May 24, 2022 special meeting of the Harding Township Committee was given as follows: Notice was sent to the *DAILY RECORD* and the *OBSERVER TRIBUNE* on April 22, 2022 and May 10, 2022 and published in the *OBSERVER TRIBUNE* on April 28, 2022 and May 12, 2022. Notice was posted on the Bulletin Board in the Township Municipal Building on Blue Mill Road in Harding, NJ on May 13, 2022, and Notice was filed with the Municipal Clerk on May 13, 2022.

Mayor Jones announced that adequate notice of this Special Meeting of May 24, of the Township Committee was called to order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Mayor Jones -- started the public meeting by saying the Township Committee members come the second Monday of every month and residents have the opportunity to join the meeting and hear what the Township Committee does. There are a handful that show up every month and it is nice to see so many in the audience this evening.

The genesis of this meeting happened in July 2021 as the Town emerged from the pandemic and realized that the Township's open spaces were utilized in a different manner than they had been in previous years. A concerned citizen brought this to the Harding Township's Open Space Trust meeting in July 2021 with a notion that Bayne Park

had suffered some tree damage over the years due to storms. This member of HOST attended a Township Committee meeting and brought this to the Committee's attention and asked to have the trees in Bayne Park looked at so the Township can make sure that the park looks the way it does in the next fifty years. Mayor Jones commented what brought my family and I to Harding was this bucolic state and people keep moving in. In 2021 Harding saw 75 homes change hands and 2020 saw 80 homes change hands. There are new visions new people. What started as an idea that the Town should take care of our landscape and take care of our park and ensure it's preserved for generations to come has morphed into Mayor Jones fielding numerous calls regarding Bayne Park. There are no preconceived notions of anything that should go on in Bayne Park other than to keep the park as beautiful as it has been. Normal Rockwell said "the common places never come tiresome. It is we who become tire who cease to be curious and appreciative. We find not a new scene that is needed but a new viewpoint." Mayor Jones explained he thinks of Harding as kind of a Mayberry.

Mayor Jones -- *explained the Township Committee makes decisions that relate to; when does the Township buy new Police cars, new dump trucks, how much salt should be purchased and how much money should be allocated for these purchases. These are the decisions the Township Committee make and who tries to keep regulations light and obviously we are upsetting residents about this park. The residents are here this evening to speak and the Township Committee is here to listen and gather information and collect recommendations from the public about Bayne Park, etc. What do we want as a community, how do we use the Township's Open Space. The trail is a great example. Many residents were upset that the trail was put in but now walk it every day.*

Let the record show that Township Committee Member Chipperson joined the meeting at 7:10 pm.

Bayne Park Public Input from Harding Township Residents

Mayor Jones -- *informed members of the public to come up to the microphone; state your name, address, and make your recommendation. Mayor Jones reported that the Township Committee reached out to CPAC and asked this advisory committee to look into this. Part of the reason we are here this evening, the Township's volunteer from CPAC, D. Wilson, has been pounding the pavement and getting residents input. This has all been fact finding and no decisions have been made. Tonight we will take the recommendations from members of the public. There will be another meeting where the recommendations will be placed for people to review, vote on, and make a decision on what it is the residents would like to see at Bayne Park.*

1. Larry Wepler, 181 Lee's Hill Road – *commented he is in favor of the trail, has seen the negative impacts of the path near the horse trail, and my wife and I walk the trail every day. It is unbelievable how much use this path gets. L. Wepler believes the park needs tending to; new trees, trees need to be pruned, needs to be reforested, consult with the Environmental Commission. Should the grasses be longer at the west end of the park, how will the Town minimize nitration infiltration into the pond? Some type of assessment should be conducted.*

2. Gloria Gengos, 125 Glen Alpin Road – *is there a program for regular maintenance for trees, and the vegetation that happens on a regular basis. If not, has there been an assessment conducted recently on the condition of the park. Mayor Jones explained there is a report that J. Linson, the Township's tree representative, prepared which is what the Department of Public Works, works is off of, then a storm came through and wiped out Mr. Linson's report and now there are other needs. The Township's CPAC group is responsible for four (4) parks; Bayne, Memorial, Barrett, and the Showgrounds. CPAC looks at each park and will focus on a particular park each year. G. Gengos asked to see the report. Mayor Jones responded the report can be made available for review.*

3. Mare Olsen, 86 Meyersville Road - *commented take care of what we have, replant more trees in order to make the park a leafy bower, take care of the trees. Plant more trees, native trees, keep the Park the same.*

4. Shauna Ratliff, 7 Long Hill Road – *commented keep Bayne Park the same and work on the trees. You see people skating, fishing, having picnics. The park is beautiful the way it is.*

5. Michael Gengos, 125 Glen Alpin Road – commented he loves Bayne Park the way it is. Dredge the pond (there is growth in it) and restore bank around it. Plant more trees. Residents may willingly donate trees. Do not build structures or sporting fields. Keep the trail natural, unobtrusive, do very little. It is nice to walk around and experience nature.

6. Courtney Thompson, 66 Blue Mill Road – commented she grew up at 64 Blue Mill. Recommendation is for the park to stay the same. C. Thompson hears talk of playgrounds, etc., and understands wanting to bring in this sense of community for small children to gather. Small children do not need equipment, they can use the park and enjoy the space.

7. Ronald Pack, Jr., 626 Van Beuren Road – commented he loves the park as it is and does not want to see anything happen to the park. Conduct some maintenance. Do not make Bayne Park a destination location and do not add any equipment, Bayne Park does not require a playground, it is a magical place.

8. Pat Ferguson, 28 Kennedy Lane – commented is the horse trails part of the parks purview. If they are part of the park, it would be nice to have a trail map. Mayor Jones responded some trails are deeded and owned by the Harding Land Trust, some are owned by the Municipality. Most are easements or licenses, or handshake agreements that go with the Bridle Path Association. In order to use the trail, it is required to be on a horse and a member of the Bridle Path Association.

9. Lotte Newlin, 61 Blue Mill Road – L. Newlin thanked the Township Committee for the path (trail), it was a great idea and mentioned she owes Mr. Platt an apology regarding the trail. L. Newlin called it the path to nowhere but walks it every morning. L. Newlin commented the pond needs some cleaning up, it is a scummy mess. Mayor Jones reported the pond was examined by an engineer several years ago and was given ten years before any dredging is required. Mr. Platt explained it is an algae plume. L. Newlin recommended the part of the park that is swampy should be a meadow for wildlife and pollinators. Do not put structures in the park, it is beautiful.

Mr. DeNave, Assistant Administrator, explained that the Township is working on the pond. There was a meeting with myself, Mr. Toribio, the Fire Department, Larry Wepler, and Black Lagoon to discuss the scummy layer on the pond. There is a lot more high grasses than in the past. NJDEP gave the Township permission to pull some of the high grasses out. There was a treatment conducted last week on the pond. Black Lagoon explained it has been a bad spring so the bond is more scummy than it traditionally is and it will take multiple treatments to get rid of the scum. It is not an issue that deals with the dredging of the pond. It is a balancing act between crystal clear water, the fertilizers and the nitrates coming in. Treatments by Black Lagoon will continue. The Township does not want to add more chemicals. The aerators were undersized and ineffective. More effective powerful aerators will be in within the next few weeks. There will be a routine maintenance plan for the pond.

10. Maureen Diehl, 8 Glen Alpin Road – commented our property abuts the park and the stream comes right through our property. M. Diehl explained they do not use fertilizers, they use organic. Bayne Park is beautiful and the trees could use some pruning. Volunteers can help save the trees. There are invasive species pulling the trees down. Agrees with what everyone else has mentioned this evening.

11. Louis Lanzerotti, 6 Brook Drive North – explained that his family financed to have the two streams monitored when Garry Annibal worked for the Health Department to understand some of the runoffs. This type of monitoring can be done. L. Lanzerotti forwarded copies of letters and deed from the Baynes' to the Township Committee and CPAC which interpreted some of Mr. Bayne's conveyances. Mr. Bayne did not want their name on a sign, wanted the park to stay bucolic in nature. No structures, no curbs, no sidewalks. A copy of the letter from Mr. Bayne is appended to these minutes. The Garden Club does a good job handling the centerpiece of the park and encourages the Garden Club to continue this type of volunteerism.

12. Jenna Ascari, 37 Post House Road – commented they moved to Harding in 1976 and the reason her family chose this community was due to the no sidewalks, no lights. Bayne Park is a beautiful spot, walk around and explore nature. This community is special for what it has. Why are we pursuing this, has something changed. Mayor Jones explained

that comments have been made on needs and wants at the park. The one item that needs to be address is skating and how to do this in a more ecologically friendly way. J. Ascari commented that the Township is blessed due to the Mennen family where there is a beautiful Mennen Arena for skating.

V. DeNave explained when he heard there will be work conducted in Bayne Park; aeration, extending the path, he was an advocate for conducting some master planning so the focus is on the park and that the work would not be conducted piecemeal. Look at an overall view of the park and what does it want to be when it grows up. The answer in the room so far, is that the park wants to be the same but maintained better. This is the answer V. DeNave is looking for as now he has a scope where dollar parameters can be made and funds can be dedicated.

13. Liz Colquhoun, 26 Sand Spring Road – *commented she grew up in town and never had anything in the park other than what you see today. L. Colquhoun remembers when the big pond would freeze and you could skate on the big pond. This was cool. The park is being used more due to the pandemic and this is great. Recommendation is to keep the park as is. All for maintaining the park. Weeping Willows are nice. Really special to see father and sons skating on the pond. Nothing needs to be added, the park is adequate.*

14. Cora Colquhoun, 26 Sand Spring Road – *Commented all for maintenance of the park. Nothing better than skating in the park, this is where C. Colquhoun learned to love skating. Keep skating in the park.*

15. Jeff Baydin, Cedar Hill Drive – *commented the path is enjoyable. Would like to see the path extended, it is healthy for the community to walk, and the bucolic nature of the park remain. All for skating. It is nice to see when you drive by.*

16. Wade Kirby, 45 Blue Mill Road – *there is a pride and joy of skating in Bayne Park. Is there a way to have the ice to be frozen for longer periods of time that is environmentally friendly without putting pipes and various things? No structures, enjoy the skating, it is a bonding experience. Mayor Jones commented it is something that will be investigated.*

17. Julia Somers, 501 Spring Valley Road – *commented that four geese are equivalent to one septic system. Get rid of the geese. Mrs. Somers thanked the Township Committee for being responsive to the residents and mentioned that you can see the public is very interested in this. Mrs. Somers commented that she does not believe a second meeting is necessary as the public is saying keep the park as is with maintenance.*

18. Brian McKittrick, 14 Millbrook Road – *commented the park over the last 20 years has changed. It was a pristine park with now it has a lot more grasses. There has been an uptick in wildlife (frogs, turtles, snakes) which is a good thing. The park is good but would like to see more trees. The data that you have on the water quality and where the nutrients are coming from is key to the health of the park. Look closely at the stream. Focus on the water quality.*

19. Alf Newlin, 61 Blue Mill Road – *thanked the Township Committee for sustaining skating. It is a great Harding tradition. Bayne Park is also about sledding which is very popular. The invasives are out of control around the perimeters and streambanks.*

20. Mare Olsen, 86 Meyersville Road-- *Commented stewardship and management. It is good to leave some open space natural Township Committee Member Chipperson – thanked all the residents for coming out and sharing their comments on Bayne Park. It is very important to have a maintenance plan in place.*

21. Kathleen Lazor, 12 Fawn Hill Drive – *thanked the Township Committee for all their time and work on this and thanked the public for showing up and providing their comments. This shows how much this means to all the residents. We love Harding because of all the open space, like to see more open space. Bayne Park has different characteristics that defines it.*

22. Jane Riley, 17 Young's Road -- *commented no structures in Bayne Park. Was totally against ice skating but do enjoy it. J. Riley is concerned with costs.*

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT TIME LIMIT

Hearing of citizens during the Public Comment section of the Agenda is an opportunity for any member of the public to be heard about issues which are/are not topics scheduled for Public Hearing tonight. To help facilitate an orderly meeting, and to permit all to be heard, speakers are asked to limit their comments to a reasonable length of time.

Mayor Jones opened the meeting to the public at 8:28 pm.

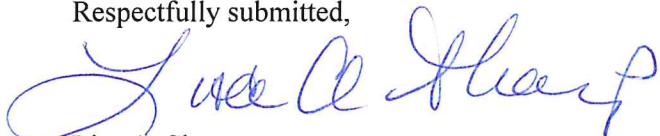
Township Committee Member Lacz -- commented if there is a need for a second meeting. *Mr. DeNave, Assistant Administrator commented there will be a need for a second meeting but not immediately. Based on some of the feedback, Mr. DeNave would like to meet with Rutgers and Great Swamp Watershed, etc., to get ideas about the pond and speak with a landscape architect to come up with ideas for planting around the park and the pond and then bring it back to everyone.*

With no further comments from members of the public, the public meeting portion was closed at 8:30 pm.

ADJOURNMENT – Mr. Jones

With no further comments, Mayor Jones asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion made by Township Committee Member Platt, seconded by Township Committee Member Lacz, and with a roll call vote of all ayes, none opposed, the meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa A. Sharp
Municipal Clerk