

ROCKAWAY TOWNSHIP COUNCIL –FEBRUARY 22, 2022 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Rockaway was held on Tuesday, February 22, 2022. This meeting was held remotely/electronically using the platform Webex Events and commenced at approximately 7:06PM, the delay due to technical issues at the Municipal Building.

Council Vice President Sackett led those present in the flag salute.

Council Vice President Sackett called for a moment of silence to remember the services and sacrifices of the armed service members who protect our Nation and the first responders who protect our neighborhoods. Mayor Jackson said that the former Township Engineer, Jim Lutz, recently lost his mother Jane, who was 77 years old.

Roll Call was taken for attendance.

Present: Councilman Quinn, Councilman Friedlander, Councilman Brookes, Councilman Kritz, Councilwoman Noon, Councilman Salberg, Councilwoman Brookes, and Vice President Sackett.

Present from Administration: Mayor Jackson, Attorney Iacofano, Attorney Perrone, Ms. Patricia Seger, Mr. Bryan Coward, Ms. Lisa Palmieri, and Ms. Allison Ferrante.

Council Vice President Sackett stated, “Notice of this meeting was sent to the Daily Record and the Star Ledger, the official newspapers for the Township of Rockaway, on February 14, 2022. Notice was posted on the official bulletin boards of Rockaway Township.”

Council Vice President Sackett stated, “Please be advised that all electronic/remote meetings of the Township Council held on Webex are recorded. Full and complete information concerning public attendance at all Webex meetings is published on the Township website. All members of the public will be provided the opportunity to speak. Please be further advised that during any “public hearing” or “open to the public” sections of the meeting, the Township Clerk will send an “unmute request” to each member of the public and ask if they wish to speak. Once the Township Clerk has sent the unmute request: If you are attending the meeting by telephone, you will be prompted to press *6 to unmute yourself and if you are attending the meeting using your computer, you will receive a pop-up requesting that you unmute yourself. As per Rockaway Township Code 2-5.14, any person desiring to address the Council shall first seek recognition by the presiding officer; and upon recognition by the chair, the person shall give their name and address for the record. Unless further time is granted by the Council, they shall limit their statement to three minutes. Statements shall be addressed to the Council as a body and not to any member thereof. A Councilman shall not direct any question to a speaker addressing the Council, except through the presiding officer. In addition to speaking on the record during Council Meetings, members of the public may submit questions and comments to the Council by emailing questions@rockawaytownship.org by the end of the “Open to the Public” session.”

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

Motion was made by Councilman Friedlander, seconded by Vice President Sackett, to elect Jonathan Sackett as Council President.

Attorney Iacofano advised that before conducting the roll call, Vice President Sackett should complete the nomination process by asking if there are any other nominations.

Motion was made by Councilman Salberg, seconded by Councilwoman Brookes, to elect Howard Kritz as Council President.

Attorney Iacofano stated that now that there are two nominees, the protocol is to take the roll call on the nominations in the order that they were made.

Roll call was taken to elect Jonathan Sackett as Council President.

Yah Votes: 2 (E. Friedlander, A. Sackett)

Nah Votes: 5 (J. Quinn, H. Kritz, M. Noon, A. Salberg, R. Brookes)

Abstentions: 1 (D. Brookes)

Motion fails.

The results of the vote were announced. Two yes votes, five no votes, one abstention. Motion fails to elect Jonathan Sackett as Council President.

Roll call was taken to elect Howard Kritz as Council President.

Yah Votes: 5 (J. Quinn, H. Kritz, M. Noon, A. Salberg, R. Brookes)

Nah Votes: 2 (E. Friedlander, A. Sackett)

Abstentions: 1 (D. Brookes)

Motion carries.

The results of the vote were announced. Five yes votes, two no votes, one abstention. Motion carries to elect Howard Kritz as Council President.

SWEARING-IN OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

Ms. Clipperton swore in Howard Kritz.

Council President Kritz read a statement, thanking Council for their vote of confidence and said that he looks forward to a continued good relationship with Vice President Sackett. He said that as a group they have proven that they put Rockaway first.

Council President Kritz took over the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 8, 2022 – Regular Meeting

Motion was made by Councilman Quinn, seconded by Councilman Friedlander, to approve the February 8, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Roll call was taken.

Yah Votes: 8 (J. Quinn, E. Friedlander, D. Brookes, M. Noon, A. Salberg, R. Brookes, A. Sackett, H. Kritz)

Nah Votes: 0
Motion carries

The results of the vote were announced. Eight yes votes, zero no votes, motion carries.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Bronwyn Springer said that she didn't want to speak at this point but she was disappointed.

An unidentified caller, DHRC201, stated that he believes it is a mistake to not have allowed Jonathan to continue.

Emily Kullman, 18 Lake Shore Drive. Ms. Kullman stated that she is also sorry that Jonathan can't carry on. She asked if there is any way to have a town ordinance to not have lawn signs on public property as it is a shame that they're all over the place still.

Isabelle Schaffer, 15 Lake View Court. Ms. Schaffer said that she is very upset that Jonathan Sackett couldn't continue as Council President and that she hasn't seen "Rockaway Green" that so many have talked about. She added that he has stepped in on several occasions and has done well. She added that there was no reason for Howard to run as Council President.

Jim Warters, 48 Seneca Ave. Mr. Warters said that Jonathan Sackett is his ward Councilman and despite the fact that they're from different parties, he thinks that he has done a great job and should get the recognition he deserves. He added that it is long past time for Council to give strong consideration to going back in-person full time and that it was an incredible waste of time for everyone who had to sit and wait tonight.

Justin Norman, 60 Valley Road. Mr. Norman stated that he worked with Jonathan Sackett a short time and he thinks he has done a great job and that it is unfortunate that he didn't get the role of president. He is looking forward to seeing what Mr. Kritz can do as well. He ended by saying that he agrees that going back to in-person will be beneficial.

Lili Sweet, One Oakland Ave. Ms. Sweet wished Mr. Kritz congratulations and said that Mr. Sackett did a wonderful job. She said that the Rockaway Committee of the Gazebo has completed the schedule for nine free concerts in July and August and she invited all to come.

Mike Ilardi, 19 N. Brookside Drive. Mr. Ilardi said thanks to Allison for addressing the blind spot on Old Middletown and West Lake Shore. He said that the corner of North Brookside and Algonquin hasn't been addressed yet but Allison said they were sent a letter. He brought up a concern about Lake View Court off of Lakeshore Drive where work was done recently, creating a berm that is causing drainage issues for neighboring properties with everything ending up in White Meadow Lake. He said that he heard paving will be done in the spring and he would like the Township to consider putting in a catch basin. He commented on rocks from Tilcon trucks that are all over Mt. Hope Avenue and the turn onto Rt. 80, adding that there should be a sweeper and that the Township should get after how the trucks are loaded. He noted that there is a White Meadow Lake bi-annual blood drive on March 15th from 1 to 7 p.m. and asked the Township to advertise this. He ended by saying that there is no reason to not go back to live, in-person meetings and that there have been issues with them online.

Patricia Degnan, 88 Valley View Drive. Ms. Degnan thanked Jonathan for all of his hard work. She added that it is time to go back to in-person meetings and it was a waste of over a half hour this evening waiting for the meeting to start.

Paul Kardos, 204 Cleveland Lane. Mr. Kardos said that he wants to know if Rockaway Township meetings are run according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Lara Lockman, 325 West Lake Shore. Ms. Lockman said that she is disappointed that Jonathan Sackett won't be continuing and she thanked him for his hard work and she hopes to see good things moving forward.

William Degnan, 88 Valley View Drive. Mr. Degnan said that for the last couple of years, this Council has worked together, bi-partisan, on several matters. He believes that Jonathan Sackett should have been Council President and it shouldn't have gone along party lines. He said that Rockaway Green needs to come back.

Heather Teeter, 127 Jacobs Road. Ms. Teeter congratulated the Council President and said that even though the vote was split it's nice to see everyone working together. She stated that the residents at 91 Jacobs Road continue to operate their business without zoning approval and with code and health concerns. She added that the road collapsed this evening and is really not safe for all of the activity.

CONSENT AGENDA:

R-22-34 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE ROCKAWAY TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE GRANT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022 AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE GRANT

R-22-35 AUTHORIZING THE RETURN OF A PERFORMANCE GUARANTY TO U.S. HOME CORPORATION D/B/A LENNAR AS A RESULT OF ITS COMPLETION OF WORK RELATED TO A CERTAIN SOIL DISTURBANCE PERMIT #2014-9, WHICH WAS ISSUED BY THE TOWNSHIP RESPECTING BLOCK 22401, LOT 1.01

Motion was made by Councilman Friedlander, seconded by Councilman Salberg, to approve the consent agenda.

Roll call was taken.

Yah Votes: 8 (J. Quinn, E. Friedlander, D. Brookes, M. Noon, A. Salberg, R. Brookes, A. Sackett, H. Kritz)

Nah Votes: 0

Motion carries.

The results of the vote were announced. Eight yes votes, zero no votes, motion carries.

APPOINTMENTS:

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS:

Firefighters:

Ludwig Szollosy

Motion was made by Councilman Quinn, seconded by Councilman Friedlander, to appoint Ludwig Szollosy as a Firefighter.

Roll call was taken.

Yah Votes: 8 (J. Quinn, E. Friedlander, D. Brookes, M. Noon, A. Salberg, R. Brookes, A. Sackett, H. Kritz)

Nah Votes: 0

Motion carries

The results of the vote were announced. Eight yes votes, zero no votes, motion carries.

OLD BUSINESS, NEW BUSINESS, AND REPORTS:

Councilman Salberg congratulated Howard Kritz and thanked Jonathan Sackett for his continued leadership. He reported on the Board of Commissioners noting that there is a bond ordinance for improvements to the Morris County Vocational School System.

Councilman Brookes reported that the recreation signups for spring sports are still open. He responded to Mr. Ilardi's concern about Mt. Hope Avenue, noting that he lives nearby and the street cleaner comes by at least once a day but that they can look into how far down the road it goes.

Councilman Quinn congratulated the new Council President and thanked Jonathan for stepping in when needed. He reminded everyone that spring sports are starting and that volunteers are needed. He informed Administration that the trucks on Richard Mine Road are exceeding the weight limit and he'd like signs to go up so that the police can enforce this. He ended by noting the grand opening of PF Chang's is tomorrow, that he will be attending, and he hopes that the mall will continue to get more food establishments to recreate themselves.

Councilman Friedlander said that the Historical Society is starting up new programs including a meeting on March 7 at the municipal building at 7 PM about the importance of rice in Colonial America, tying this in to our town history. He stated that the Substance Abuse Alliance is having the Concert for Cause sponsored by the Rockaway River Barn from 11 AM to 11 PM. He thanked Ms. Seger for staying on top of the library repairs including plumbing issues and a brand new sign at the Hibernia branch. He ended by congratulating Howard Kritz.

Councilwoman Noon said congratulations to Howard Kritz and thanks to Jonathan Sackett. She reported on PF Chang's grand opening. She said that she is impressed with the improvements at Peterson field.

Councilwoman Brookes gave an update regarding the Board of Education, noting that there was a meeting last Wednesday and that they are starting the official Superintendent search with input from various community representatives.

Council Vice President Sackett stated that the PF Chang's grand opening is tomorrow at 4 PM. He reported that travel basketball boys' playoffs have started. He addressed the vote tonight saying that he is proud to be a Democrat and to be on Council for five years. He stated that he has put his time in, he appreciates people speaking up for him, and that it seems that politics do get in the way. He announced that he will be running for Mayor against Joe Jackson because we

need to get this swaying both ways, and we need to see some new people coming in. He ended by wishing Howard Kritz the best.

Council President Kritz thanked Jonathan Sackett for his service and said that everyone thinks highly of Jonathan. He said that there is no internal strife here, adding that we are a team, will remain a team, and this is the same team that has gotten us to this point and will get us forward in the future. He stated that the issue with the meeting tonight was not a Webex issue, it was a Township server issue. He added that he will work with Jonathan Sackett to put together a plan to go back to in-person meetings. He plans to attend the PF Chang's opening. He ended with a note about several sports programs and emphasized as others have that they are volunteer driven.

Mayor Jackson congratulated Howard Kritz. He wished Jonathan luck running against the Republican candidate for Mayor, stating it may or may not be him. He said that PF Chang's will employ an estimated 140 people and that they have fantastic food. He reported that he attended the Saturday Challenger basketball program at Stony Brook and that they'll be starting up with softball in April. He said that on Saturday he toured the Township with the Chief of Police and noted that it's amazing the number of services provided to all the roads throughout town. He encouraged the Council to tour neighborhoods outside of their wards, and he also said they should see the DPW facilities. He said that Pat Seger, Lisa Palmieri and he met regarding the budget which they will report on later. He ended his report noting that Allison Ferrante will give update on Beautiful Farms.

Ms. Seger reported that Peter Tabbot, the Health Director, provided Covid-19 numbers and that they are down to single digits. She added that he will keep an eye on the numbers because the mask requirements are lifted at schools effective March 7 and he urged everyone to keep doing a good job at washing hands and making an effort to keep the numbers down. She congratulated Mr. Kritz and Mr. Sackett and looks forward to working with everyone. She stated that the budget is done and available bound or via email.

Attorney Iacofano said congratulations to the Council President and thanked the Council Vice President for his service. He commented on earlier callers, stating that Robert's Rules of Order don't apply at Rockaway Township meetings but can be consulted. He reported on the land use issue about Beautiful Farms, saying that the property is subject to continual inspection and the town will proceed with enforcement as appropriate. He added that there are a number of matters awaiting decisions from the Municipal Court and the Board of Adjustment and a second hearing will be taking place. He said that he plans to provide a litigation report in closed session at the March 8 Council meeting.

Ms. Ferrante reported that Beautiful Farms is in front of the Land Use Board's Board of Adjustment for interpretation of permitted uses and a use variance. She said that the next meeting is on March 15 at 7:30 PM at Christ Church at 140 Green Pond Road. She said that the matter is still within the enforcement of Municipal Court but it is normal for Court to hold decision until after the Land Use Board has ruled on the matter. She gave the Planning/Zoning department's number as a contact for complaints during business hours, and said to use the Police as a contact after hours.

Ms. Palmieri reported that the budget will be ready for pickup tomorrow. She brought attention to the fact that the overall budget is up but with the increase in ratables, the average homeowner will see a reduction in the municipal portion of their tax bill.

Mr. Coward reminded the public that Peterson Field will be under construction and the contractor has been instructed to keep the site closed, but that the basketball and tennis courts are still open.

Motion was made by Vice President Sackett, seconded by Councilman Friedlander, to adjourn this meeting at approximately 8:06 PM. **There was general consensus.**

The next Regular Meeting of the Council of the Township of Rockaway is scheduled for March 8, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,


Christina Clipperton
Municipal Clerk

	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
J. Quinn	X		X			
E. Friedlander			X			
D. Brookes			X			
M. Noon		X	X			
A. Salberg			X			
R. Brookes			X			
P. Wojtowicz					X	
J. Sackett			X			
H. Kritz			X			