

**TOWNSHIP OF BERKELEY HEIGHTS
UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
COUNCIL MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 15, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:01 p.m. the Mayor called the meeting to order and the Township Clerk stated adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by posting the same on the bulletin board of Town Hall and forwarding a copy to the Courier News and Star Ledger at least forty-eight hours prior to this meeting, all in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. This meeting was contained on a list of meetings set by resolution dated January 4, 2022.

ROLL CALL

The following Council members were present:

Gentiana Brahimaj
Manuel Couto
John Foster
Jeanne Kingsley
Jeff Varnerin
Angie D. Devanney, Mayor

The following Council members were absent:

Paul Donnelly

Also present were:

Township Attorney: Alex Fisher
Township Administrator: Liza Viana
Township Clerk: Ana Minkoff

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Devanney asked everyone present to stand for the Flag Salute.

CONFERENCE SESSION

Police Department Accreditation

Police Chief Massimino presented an overview of the NJSACOP accreditation. Mayor and Council provided feedback and asked questions. A discussion followed.

Mayor Devanney opened the discussion on this topic to the public. Mayor Devanney read a statement regarding the procedures for public comment given the virtual (ZOOM) meeting.

No voices were heard.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING – December 7, 2021 and December 21, 2021

Approval of Minutes

Mover: Mr. Varnerin
Secunder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly

Result: Approved

HEARING ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Opening of the Hearing on Agenda Items Only

Mover: Mrs. Kingsley
Seconder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly

Mayor Devanney provided clarifying remarks regarding the resolutions related to drainage. (A copy of this statement is attached to the permanent minutes.)

Mr. Carrellas of 35 Sycamore Ave asked for clarification on the change to the contract for Mr. Solfaro in Resolution #12.

Ms. Viana read a comment in Zoom from Ms. Samuelson of 85 Orchard Lane expressing her support for the West Side Drainage project.

Ms. Minkoff read a statement submitted by Patrick Fuhrmann of 59 Orchard Lane

““Dear Mayor and Council,

I'm writing to express my wholehearted support of two resolutions being voted on this evening: The first is the authorization to apply for funding from the 2022 NJ DOT Local Project Fund for road work to be done on sections of Orchard Lane, Mercier Place, Old Farm Road and Deerpath Lane.

The second is authorization of a professional services contract to Neglia Engineering to continue working on the West Side Drainage Improvement Project.

As I have expressed before, The West Side Drainage Project HAS TO BE A TOP 3 PRIORITY FOR THIS TOWN. The deterioration of the roads and storm sewers in the Orchard Lane, Mercier Place, and Old Farm Road neighborhood are an increasing risk to our residents' health and safety, a dereliction of the town's obligation to properly maintain working infrastructure, a decay to our property values, and just plain embarrassing when friends and guests visit our neighborhood. Some documented facts that need to be considered when debating any funding for this project are:

1. Neglia Engineering has determined that the current storm sewer system is broken and cannot handle a simple 1-year storm. This means our sewers cannot provide adequate drainage for a common, and frequent, New Jersey summer rainstorm.
2. Flooding of our neighborhood, and those downstream from us, have caused and will continue to cause real property damage.
3. Over the past several years, residents and guests of our neighborhood have suffered bodily harm in the form of broken arms, ankles, and ribs, severe cuts, and many twisted ankles after tripping in our abundant potholes.
4. We have been paying taxes for many decades with little but empty promises from several previous administrations to show in return.

The funding we are asking for tonight will help to provide some minor relief and allow for Neglia to continue moving this extremely important project forward. I am asking that all council members and residents of Berkeley Heights support our neighborhood. We have kept our end of the bargain by paying our taxes. Now is the time for this town to fulfill it's obligation to provide working infrastructure and fostering public safety. This town council has a chance to right long-

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running wrong. I ask that you begin doing this by funding tonight's requests and continue doing it as the project progresses.

Some possible objections to the West Side Project that I would like to address:

Objection: Drainage issues can be fixed with swales and French drains.

Response: We already have swales and French drains in our neighborhood. They lead to sewer pipes that are broken. An infinite number of French drains cannot fix our issue.

This objection also indicates an ignorance of the problem. A simple walk through our neighborhood will show that we are beyond a non-rebuilding solution. I'm extending an open invitation to anyone who would like a tour.

Objection: We need a holistic view of the town's drainage issues before we determine what projects get funding.

Response: This is Kick-the-Can-Down-The-Road 101, which never turns out to be the right solution. The need for our project is well documented and abundantly clear. IT HAS TO GET DONE ASAP. No more delaying with studies and no more delaying pursuing funding. Please, spend the money, get the plans done, get the funding, and get the project done!

Delaying will only make matters worse. The storms are getting more frequent and larger, and the price tag will never be lower than it is today.

The reason our project is so dire is because previous Councils and administrations have kicked the repairs down the road. Let's stop doing this.

Objection: "The cost is too great" or "if we pay for this project, others will want similar projects."

Response: Money is not the problem. The problem is antiquated and broken infrastructure that has not been addressed in many decades.

Money is the solution. We can pursue state and federal infrastructure grants and secure low-to-no interest loans from the IBank that will minimize the financial impact to residents.

We can no longer stand by and watch our roads and sewers collapse simply because it costs money to repair and replace. Again, it will never be cheaper to repair our neighborhood than it is today. Hoping for some miracle is not an infrastructure strategy.

If anyone is concerned that residents will be unhappy with a Council that spends money on obvious and needed projects, just think of how many residents will be unhappy with a Council that doesn't spend the money needed to keep our town functioning and safe.

In addition to supporting the two resolutions mentioned above, I also wholeheartedly support the resolutions being considered for funding of other drainage projects in town. As residents, I think we should unite and support all of these long-overdue projects.

Thank you for your concern and attention to this incredibly important matter."

Ms. Minkoff noted that the following statement submitted by John Palmquist of 19 Orchard Lane expressed the sentiments as she read from Mr. Fuhrmann.

"Dear Mayor and Council,

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Ms. Minkoff noted that the following statement submitted by Marci Ryvicker of 20 Old Farm Road expressed the sentiments as she read from Mr. Fuhrmann.

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In addition to supporting the two resolutions mentioned above, I also wholeheartedly support the resolutions being considered for funding of other drainage projects in town. As residents, I think we should unite and support all of these long-overdue projects.

Thank you for your concern and attention to this incredibly important matter."

Ms. Minkoff read a statement submitted by Jessica Conroy of 85 Old Farm Road

"Dear Mayor and Council,

Although the words below are not my own, I agree with all of it. My home might not get the brunt of the flooding, but we are greatly affected by the worsening roads in our neighborhood. I am very nervous to even let my kids ride their bikes around the block. There is a stretch of road where the only safe way to bike across is the very center of the road.

When we moved in, we were told our roads were scheduled for paving in the next couple of years. That was 8 years ago and they've gotten progressively worse since then.

We are one hurricane or bad storm away from some major damage. This needs to be addressed now.

Ms. Minkoff read a statement submitted by Rick Baff of 69 Orchard Lane

"Dear Mayor and Council

I strongly support this project and reiterate Pat's points.

Ms. Minkoff read a statement submitted by Tamara Greben of 63 Old Farm Road

"Dear Mayor and Council,

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My basement flooded this past year and two summers ago my elderly father tripped on Orchard Rd where the street is broken apart and broke his foot. The last time my son and I took a walk on

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Orchard, he tripped on the broken parts which resulted in a bruised and bloody knee. It is a travesty this road has not been repaired! We have waited so long and simply cannot wait any longer.

Thank you for your concern and attention!!

Ms. Minkoff read a statement submitted by Nancy Leger of 35 Mercier Lane

“Dear Mayor and Council,

Unfortunately I am unable to “attend” this evenings meeting but must express my support of two resolutions being voted on tonight.

The first resolution is the authorization to apply for funding from the 2022 NJ DOT local project fund for road work to be done on Mercier Place, Old Farm Road, Orchard Lane and Deerpath Lane.

The second is authorization of a professional services contract to Neglia Engineering to continue working on the West Side Drainage Project.

The West Side Drainage Project must be top priority for this town due to the ongoing deterioration of the roads and storm sewers in our neighborhood. The deteriorating roads are a constant danger to the people walking the block. Several people have already been hurt after falling in the holes. It’s the towns responsibility to properly maintain the infrastructure in our town not only for safety but to preserve our property values.

The project can no longer be delayed, this will only exasperate the problem. This can no longer be kicked down the road for the next administration, it needs to be done NOW.

Ms. Minkoff read a statement submitted by Kali Cannizzaro of 22 Mercier Place

“Good Morning,

I reside at 22 Mercier Place, where potholes and cracked road surfaces abound. Nearby streets have been repaired time after time while our immediate neighborhood occasionally receives patchwork that doesn't last even a year. Our neighborhood takes pride in maintaining our properties while our township has repeatedly dismissed and disregarded the dangerous road conditions. You are welcome to visit our home and see what we have to negotiate just to utilize our own driveway. It is terrible and requires remediation without delay. I have seen no other road in our town that matches the level of disrepair on our neighborhood streets. We have waited long enough while getting flat tires and becoming injured while taking a stroll around the block. It is unacceptable and irresponsible.

I fully support the West Side Project and want to see it get completed ASAP - preferably within 24 months.

Thank you for your dedication to our community and this project.

Ms. Minkoff read a statement submitted by Lisa Marie Kostrowski of 88 Old Farm Road

“Dear Mayor and Town Council-

I would like to voice my support for the west side drainage project. We have lived on Old Farm Road for 6 years. The roads were in need of repair when we moved here six years ago and they have only gotten seriously worse since. I have emails dating back to 2017 and 2018. At the time, Tom Solfaro gave us the mid to late summer time line for engineering construction to be completed. This was four years ago!! Our taxes have increased exponentially in that time, and yet my three kids still cannot ride their bikes on the street (it should be noted we have no sidewalks).

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I am urging the Town Council to find a way to make this long overdue project happen. Not only is it embarrassing for the town to have let the infrastructure in our neighborhood get to this point, but it is completely unsafe for all the residents as well.

I look forward to hearing a full timeline for this project to be completed.

Ms. Viana read a comment in Zoom from Mr. Ray of 43 Orchard Lane expressing his support for the comments made here.

Closing of the Hearing on Agenda Items Only

Mover: Mrs. Kingsley

Secunder: Mr. Varnerin

Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Mr. Donnelly

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution approving Bill List dated February 15, 2022, in the amount of \$829,904.61.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mr. Foster

Secunder: Mrs. Kingsley

Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Mr. Donnelly

Result: Approved

2. Resolution awarding a contract to The Rodgers Group, LLC., for consulting services to assist the Berkeley Heights Police Department in attaining NJSACOP Accreditation, in an amount not to exceed \$39,900.00.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mr. Couto

Secunder: Mrs. Kingsley

Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Mr. Donnelly

Result: Approved

3. Resolution authorizing the application of the 2022 New Jersey Department of Transportation Local Project Fund for drainage, curbing and repaving of certain sections of Orchard Lane, Mercier Place, Old Farm Road and Deer Path.

Approval of Resolution as Amended

Mover: Mrs. Brahimaj

Secunder: Mr. Varnerin

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Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: *Approved as Amended*

4. Resolution authorizing an award of payment of 2021 LOSAP benefits to eligible members of the Township Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Mrs. Kingsley spoke in support of the LOSAP program.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mr. Varnerin
Seconder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: Mr. Foster
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: *Approved*

5. Resolution authorizing a professional services contract to Neglia Engineering Associates for Surveying, engineering, permitting, grant support, and bidding services for West Side Drainage Improvement project in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mrs. Kingsley
Seconder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: *Approved*

6. Resolution authorizing a professional services contract to Neglia Engineering Associates for Preliminary surveying and engineering design services for “Spring Ridge” drainage study, in an amount not to exceed \$89,320.00.

Mrs. Kingsley clarified the area that is covered by this study.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mr. Foster
Seconder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: *Approved*

7. Resolution appointing Lisa DiMichelle and Karen Cassels to the Historic Preservation Committee.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mr. Couto
Seconder: Mrs. Kingsley
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: Approved

8. Resolution appointing Steve Hopkins to the Truth, Community Healing, and Inclusion Committee.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mrs. Brahimaj
Seconder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: Approved

9. Resolution appointing Yelena Lyudmilova to the Grants Committee.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mr. Varnerin
Seconder: Mrs. Kingsley
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: Approved

10. Resolution authorizing purchase of certain goods and services through the use of State, County, and Regional Cooperative purchasing for the year 2022.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mrs. Kingsley
Seconder: Mr. Foster
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: Approved

11. Resolution authorizing the repair of the Locust Avenue Culvert and Evergreen Road Culvert from the Storm Recovery Reserve in the amount not to exceed \$32,300.00.

Mayor Devanney clarified that this is related to Ida.

Approval of Resolution

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Mover: Mr. Foster
Seconder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: Approved

12. Resolution authorizing an amendment to the Professional services agreement with Neglia Engineering Associates, for Municipal professional engineering services, in an amount not to exceed \$112,704.00.

Approval of Resolution

Mover: Mr. Couto
Seconder: Mr. Foster
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: Approved

CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under Consent Agenda are considered routine by the Township Council and will be enacted upon by one motion; there will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

13. Consent Agenda Resolutions (a-i)

- a. Resolution authorizing a tax overpayment in the amount of \$3,091.29, to Vincent & Elizabeth Giaime, 312 Timber Drive.
- b. Resolution authorizing a tax overpayment in the amount of \$2,646.54, to Samuel A. Cooper, 802 Mountain Avenue.
- c. Resolution authorizing a tax overpayment in the amount of \$2,893.97, to Michael & Elaine Maggi, 20 Hampton Drive.
- d. Resolution authorizing a release of a cash bond to Ciraco Construction, in the amount of \$2,000.00, for work performed at 243 Lincoln Street.
- e. Resolution authorizing a release of a cash bond to Stonecrest Estate LLC., in the amount of \$12,500.00, for work performed at 682 Plainfield Avenue.
- f. Resolution authorizing a release of (2) cash bonds to Garden State Property Management, in the amount totaling \$4,000.00, for work performed at 17 Dogwood Lane
- g. Resolution appointing Tom Delia, to the Active roster of the Berkeley Heights Volunteer Fire Department.

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- h. Resolution appointing Austin Amiano, to the Active roster of the Berkeley Heights Volunteer Fire Department.
- i. Resolution appointing Patrick Wirkus, to the Active roster of the Berkeley Heights Volunteer Fire Department.

Approval of Consent Agenda Resolutions # 13 a-i

Mover: Mrs. Brahimaj
Secunder: Mr. Varnerin
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: Approved

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmembers provided Council Reports and Committee updates.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Mayor Devanney provided the Mayor's Report.
Ms. Viana provided the Administrator's Report

Approval of Township Council and Administration Reports

Mover: Mr. Varnerin
Secunder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly
Result: Approved

CITIZENS HEARING

Opening of the Citizens Hearing

Mover: Mrs. Kingsley
Secunder: Mr. Couto
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Mr. Donnelly

Mr. Chen of 6 Deep Dale Drive spoke in appreciation of the Council support and expressed his thanks to those who were a part of the Lunar New Year celebration.

Closing of the Citizens Hearing

Mover: Mrs. Kingsley
Secunder: Mr. Varnerin
Ayes: Mrs. Brahimaj, Mr. Couto, Mr. Foster, Mrs. Kingsley, Mr. Varnerin
Nays: None
Abstain: None

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Absent: Mr. Donnelly

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mrs. Kingsley to adjourn and all were in favor.
(8:14 p.m.)

Approved: April 5, 2022



Anja Minkoff
Township Clerk

Council Meeting Remarks Feb 15, 2022
West Side Drainage & Related Drainage Project Work

Good evening. As you can see from tonight's agenda, we have several drainage and infrastructure-related resolutions on for Council approval, particularly as it relates to the 'West Side Drainage' study and surrounding areas. I wanted to take a few moments to put them all into context and explain what else we are doing behind the scenes to help move this project forward.

First, Resolution #5 on the agenda – authorizing Neglia Engineering, who has been working on the West Side Drainage project – to continue with another \$100,000 worth of work. The Council last year approved \$100,000 of additional work on this project. This resolution authorizes that to commence. The \$390,000 figure noted in the resolution is the remainder of work required to get this project to the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank for zero- to low-interest financing. After this \$100,000 is authorized and work on the described services continues, the Council will consider whether to fund the remainder of this work - \$290,000 – in this year's budget.

However, this funding may *also* be derived from a federal earmark. Last year, the Township applied for federal appropriations from both the U.S. House and Senate for help funding this project. We requested the maximum from both chambers - \$250,000 through Congressman Tom Malinowski's office in the House, and \$500,000 from Senator Cory Booker's office. Our \$250,000 request made it to the full House Appropriations Committee for inclusion in the budget. Meanwhile, in the Senate, our \$500,000 request was given to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies for inclusion in the Senate Appropriations bill. We are awaiting more information on the approvals.

This brings us to Resolution #3. Council will consider the Township applying for a state of NJ Department of Transportation grant in the amount up to \$1.5 million for drainage, curbing and repaving of certain sections of Orchard Lane, Mercier Place, Old Farm Road and Deerpath Lane. Orchard, Mercier and Old Farm are an extension of the broader West Side Drainage project – any basins or other infrastructure added to these streets with this grant would help satisfy some of the conditions under the overall West Side Drainage project. Simply paving this area will not suffice; unless the underlying drainage issues are sufficiently addressed, the paving jobs will continue to degrade and cost more money in the long run. Deerpath Lane is a road that has severely degraded in part, to ground water and surface runoff from above; these conditions have actually caused the curb line at Mountain Avenue and Deerpath to slide away from the road. The condition is serious and requires attention.

Resolution #6 – this is an additional drainage study Council budgeted funds for in 2021, for the Spring Ridge area of town. This resolution authorizes the work to begin. This will help give us a bigger picture of the drainage issues in this part of town.

We know that drainage is an issue in many other parts of town, and we have been prioritizing the most severe; it is an expensive undertaking to address it all, but we have to start somewhere. For the past few years, we have budgeted money for what we call “pocket drainage” project in town – namely, smaller projects we are completing with a combination of grant money and Township funds.

Meanwhile, we continue to seek out grants from county, state and federal government to assist with bigger projects, such as the West Side drainage area and clearing out our streams and rivers. We will seek out funds wherever we can find them to help offset the costs of tackling these challenges. We will leave no stone unturned. Be assured, we will use all contacts at all governmental levels to continue these efforts. Our residents deserve no less.



February 15, 2022 Town Council Reports

Council President Jeanne Kingsley

Planning Board:

Met on February 2nd and heard 2 applications regarding the potential installation of solar panels. The first application was Brightcore Energy LLC, 100 Connell Drive, Block 4301, Lot 1.02. This applicant proposed solar carport canopies to be installed within the parking lot areas around the 100 and 200 Connell Drive office building complex. The attorney for the applicant stated that there will be no reduction in number of parking spaces, ten charging stations will be installed now with provision for 28 more for future use, new lighting will be installed under the canopies, and a tree replacement plan will be submitted for the trees to be removed. The application was approved with a 9-0 vote. The second application was SIG Mountain Heights, LLC, 420 & 430 Mountain Ave., Block 3803, Lot 9 (OR-Zone). This is an Application to install rooftop solar on the existing buildings. The attorney for the applicant stated that this is a rooftop mounted solar project with no variances required. The application was approved with a 9-0 vote.

Craig Johnson, the PB chairman, provided an update regarding the Master Plan. The sub-committee will be meeting on February 15 to discuss the updated plan to be provided by the township planner and then it will be submitted to the full Board for review.

The next PB meeting is February 16th.

Downtown Beautification Committee:

Met on Feb 8th – the committee met with the property owner at 450 Springfield Ave to tour the new luxury condo building and discuss options for the exterior sign on both Springfield Ave and Sherman Ave. The building is really a fantastic addition to our downtown and the committee is continuing to work with the property owner on a solution for the sign that will meet the downtown standards and also complement the building.

The committee discussed various options/ideas to improve the holiday decorations along Springfield Ave and determined that it is critical to have power added to the 20 existing decorative streetlamps that line Springfield Ave before any additional decorations can be purchased. I reached out to Joe Graziano and he is going to have an electrician look at the lights and give us an estimate to have the power added. The committee also is looking to work with the local property owners and the administration to create an agreement for maintenance

of the decorative streetlights along Springfield Ave to make sure the timing of the power is consistent and that the lights are functioning properly.

BH walks will be back – stay tuned for more information – the committee is looking to relaunch the initiative beginning in April and to have monthly walks through November.

We are working with DPW to remove the holiday baskets. The weather has not been cooperating since mid-January and they are frozen so they may need to wait.

The committee is currently selling the 1809 Wood signs and experience BH magnets at Berkeley Hardware. Stop by and pick on up and help support our downtown decorations initiatives

Council Vice President Manny Couto

No official committee report.

Councilwoman Gentiana Brahimaj

No official committee report.

Councilman Paul Donnelly

No official committee report.

Councilman John Foster

Historic Preservation Committee

Met on February 2nd. Amalia Mederios was elected Chairperson and Louisa Grossman was elected Vice Chair. The Eagle scout project to install a pathway at Little Lord Littel was partially discussed but was tabled until next meeting. There was a discussion of line item in town budget for Littel Lord Trust. A BIG THANK YOU to all who came out to help on 1/22/22 in moving items from the house so architects can now step in and move project along. 100- year old homes were discussed and possibly giving owners and option whether they want to be designated as such. Name is possibly going to be Century Club. Name of group of houses still in discussion. Also, the possibility of a register in town listing houses is possible. All things will be discussed with homeowners. The next meeting is March 3rd at 7:30pm.

Councilman Jeff Varnerin

Truth, Community Healing & Inclusion Committee

The TCHI Committee and leaders from other organizations such as the Diversity Council, YMCA, Board of Education and Little Flower met along with community members in frigid conditions Saturday 5-Feb-22 celebrate the raising of the Black History Month flag at the Municipal Complex. This was just one small yet visible step forward for Berkeley Heights to demonstrate to our friends and neighbors that we are a welcoming community. Thank you to the speakers and to the TCHI committee for making this a truly inclusive event.

Watchung Development

John Foster, Manny Couto and I attended the virtual Watchung Zoning Board meeting last Thursday February 10th to hear testimony on a planned development at 1375 Plainfield Ave, where currently an office building sits. Unfortunately, the developer canceled last minute and the topic was tabled until March 10th. I will plan on attending that meeting to ensure the interests of Berkeley Heights are maintained.