

MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
BOROUGH OF CLOSTER  
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2013 – 9:00 A.M. TO 12 NOON

The Mayor and Council of the Borough of Closter held a Special Meeting on Saturday, June 8, 2013, for the sole purpose of discussing goal setting for the Borough. Mayor Heymann called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

1. PROVISIONS OF OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey, was published in The Record and the Star Ledger on May 30, 2013, was posted on the Municipal Clerk's bulletin board on May 30, 2013 and has remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of the notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

2. ROLL CALL

The following persons were present:

Mayor Sophie Heymann  
Councilpersons John C. Glidden, Jr., Alissa Latner, John Kashwick,  
David Barad and Arthur Dolson  
Borough Administrator, Richard Sheola  
Borough Attorney, Edward T. Rogan  
Borough Clerk, Loretta Castano

The following persons were absent:

Councilwoman Victoria Amitai

Also present:

Reagan Burkholder, Principal Advisor, Summit Collaborative Advisors, LLC

3. DISCUSSION WITH REAGAN BURKHOLDER, PRINCIPAL ADVISOR OF SUMMIT COLLABORATIVE ADVISORS, LLC REGARDING GOAL SETTING FOR THE BOROUGH

At this time, Mayor Heymann introduced Mr. Burkholder and informed he is here to facilitate a goal-setting discussion with the Council.

Mr. Burkholder explained he has worked several times in the past with Borough Administrator Richard Sheola on goal setting. He said his business life started 35 years ago in municipal management in Leonia in 1974 as Borough Administrator. His next position led him to East Windsor Township and then he spent 17 years in the City of Summit in Union County. Mr. Burkholder retired 11 years ago and has spent the time since then consulting with municipalities and non-profit agencies on various aspects of municipal management and operations and goal setting. He is pleased to have the opportunity to work again with Mr. Sheola and to work with the Borough.

Mr. Burkholder said he believes in goal-setting very strongly because his past experiences have seen municipalities that have not dealt with some items for as long as decades come forth and be addressed. He explained that this happened because those governing bodies came together with the staff to discuss goals for their communities to focus operations on what goes on in their community or what they determined were the most important things going on. He passed out a sheet with thoughts on goal setting and what you get from it.

Mr. Burkholder informed he reviewed the Borough's mission statement on our website and noted he is impressed with same. He noted a lot of towns don't go through creating a statement and it should be set in stone somewhere. Once goal-setting has been completed and periodic review will keep the agency focused. He has had some experiences where he has left a meeting with attendees saying what a great idea it was; and when he checked back 6 months later, those same people remembered the discussion but nothing had happened. He suggested Mr. Sheola provide a quarterly report to keep everyone focused. His experience tells him the things can get done in Closter whereas in other towns it may not happen for years and years.

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Mr. Burkholder said one of the mistakes most often made is thinking too narrowly, for example, thinking of a specific traffic light instead of the real issue of overall traffic safety. Thinking in terms of quantity versus quality, perhaps informing your Chief of Police that a lot of people are speeding on Main Street and they need to go issue more tickets when the main issue is the people speeding, which issuing tickets is not going to solve. Another mistake is that the goals that you set are not the only things the organization needs to get done. He said the Ford Pinto is a good example: Ford's goal was to build a light car under one ton that sold for under \$2,000, and they did. But they forgot some other things; and ultimately the Pinto exploded in rear end collisions because they forgot some important issues like safety and quality. The fact that you have goals should not mean that everything else goes by the board, nor does it mean you should focus exclusively on your goals. He reminded of the concept of smart goals that you need to be specific when setting a goal – doing a better job is not a real goal.

Mr. Burkholder explained that being specific means it needs to be a measurable goal. How do you know whether you've done that better job – what does it mean. It has to be attainable in the sense that you have the power to make it happen – not someone else. It has to be reasonable that it's not such a stretch like ending world hunger – it's just not reasonable. And it needs to be timely: let's do project "x" by 12/31/13. On 1/1/14 you can say to each other "we did accomplish that" by our goal date.

The process he will be using this morning is the same as he used when he met with the key staff recently. He asked everyone in attendance to make a list of 5 goals and starting with Councilman Dolson they will share their list. In each round he will ask for one item on each person's list and by the time they get finished everything that is on anybody's list will be on his presentation board. They will look for common themes and similarities. Although there are 7 people with 5 goals each, experience tells him there will not end up being 35 different goals on the page. He will assess if they fall under an umbrella as referred to in the report from the meeting with the staff. At that time, they will take a short break. When they return, he will ask them to create a new list of 4-5 items based on the first list up on the board to see what emerges by going through it twice and then obtain a consensus.

Depending on how time goes, he said they could get into another level of detail and that is saying exactly what goals they want to set in a particular area and what they want to accomplish with those goals. Mr. Burkholder will report back, in writing, in about a week or so the results of today's meeting. He suggested Mr. Sheola get together with the staff and individuals interested in specific areas. He said they should develop a program that is concise with 5-6 goals because they don't want to have so many on the list that they don't really have goals.

Regarding a listing of goals, Councilman Dolson cited excessive property taxation, which is a regressive system that has a negative impact on our community as indicated in the demographics and the fact that 48% of the State revenue comes from property taxes. Reversing the negativity of the tax system as it is done in other states should be a goal and should be discussed with our legislators. Councilman Barad said we need thriving businesses; and he cited ordinances that should be reviewed to support diversity and make Closter friendlier to businesses. Mayor Heymann said her particular goal is to complete projects by their originally announced dates. Councilman Kashwick wished to see clearly defined roles for the Mayor, Council, Borough Administrator and Borough Attorney so there are no over-lapping responsibilities. Councilwoman Latner cited having the Whole Foods project move forward, which would provide an incredible response from the residents. Councilman Glidden referred to the improvement of the downtown area as a goal, which would increase our ability to attract thriving higher end businesses. He expressed concern about the development of Closter in terms of increasing the present density.

Councilman Dolson cited maintenance issues in the Borough Hall; and referred to the exterior condition of the Borough Hall, which was in need of painting, gutter repair and elimination of leaks in the building. Councilman Barad cited the need to create a public transportation system and to see the community less dependent on cars and being able to walk to town or use a tram. In answer to the moderator, Councilman Glidden cited the light rail that goes to Englewood and not further north. Councilman Dolson said it is a problem of having different types of railroads in different areas of the State and the current proposal for the three tracks leading to Suffern is to have two tracks using diesel and the third converted to electric and move the roadbed, which does not make sense. Mayor Heymann cited the years she has attended meetings on regional public transportation but the State has not given any money for transit in northern New Jersey. She said another goal is to better integrate with the Korean community and encourage more volunteerism. Councilman Kashwick said embracing new technology and social media is another

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of his goals; and Councilwoman Latner cited the frustration encountered by the Council dealing with the concerns of residents to make them understand that we are not being adversarial. Councilman Glidden also cited communication with the residents.

Councilman Dolson cited the functions of the staff, making these functions known to the residents and having the staff respond to community needs. Councilman Barad felt that the process of appearing before Boards should be more efficient. Mayor Heymann said she would like to see more respect for one another both as volunteers and staff. Councilman Kashwick said he would like to see the Borough more pedestrian friendly; and Councilwoman Latner said there should be a better perception of Public Works and Sanitation relative to issues and operation. Councilman Glidden wished to see the enforcement of existing ordinances.

Councilman Dolson expressed concern about open space preservation funding and the pursuit to acquire more property. It is a considerable portion that interferes with tax revenue. He cited the poor condition of Borough owned properties and the lack of maintenance. Councilman Barad referred to downtown parking, which is poor and affects the businesses. Mayor Heymann cited the inadequate communication between Council members with the community, which leads to frustration. Councilman Kashwick supported the expanded use of open space acquisition funding and not for operational activities. Councilman Dolson referred to the occupancy ordinance for the downtown area, which included a reference to a State document in the publication of same; but a different ordinance was passed; and if multiple versions of an ordinance are generated, the final one should be marked as such. Councilman Barad noted that projects such as the Farmers Market should be encouraged and Councilman Kashwick cited improving green elements in the Borough.

Mr. Burkholder reviewed the goals indicated by the Council members as they relate to the Business District, governance, communication, transportation, open space acquisition/funding and green elements. He said the next step after adopting goals is to adopt a plan to implement the goals. He cited the open space funding/acquisition goal, which could be discussed with the community; and noted that Wall Township established an open space plan providing for a density of not more than 1,000 people per square mile, and same is controlled by open space acquisition not by zoning which is subject to appeal.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 a.m. and resumed at 10:25 a.m.

The groups of goals were reviewed and the Council members indicated by raising their hands which items were most important to them. At the top of the list of goals were communications, open space and governance; and at a slightly lower level were Borough Hall, property taxes and commercial district. Communication issues, including technology, statutory limitations, web site usage, Mayor/Council blog and Facebook or Twitter were discussed; and the Borough Attorney advised that communication between individual Council members is to be avoided. Requests for service on the Web are forwarded to the Borough Administrator and the Reverse 9-1-1 is used to provide general information and emergency situations and deserves further discussion. The Borough does not publish a newsletter but does supply an annual calendar to the residents. Press releases are printed and two free newspapers are published. Mayor Heymann said that having meetings on cable would be a subject of discussion. Councilman Glidden said the Council strives to know what is going on in the community and within the Council; and Councilman Kashwick said with the committee structure, there is not always communication with other committees. Councilman Barad indicated that by the time a subject comes to the governing body, it may be heated and in the development stage of an issue, are discussed in the Mayor or Administrator's offices; and there is no existing system for communication at that stage. Mayor Heymann said that there are things going on in the Borough that do not involve the Borough offices such as the Brooks Farm which is now open for business without greenhouses, tractor trailers or a farm stand.

Councilman Kashwick felt that the Council should be proactive to try to anticipate issues that would upset the residents. Borough Administrator said occasionally resident frustration is caused by an issue that had not been taken care of by a Department Head. Borough Clerk explained that due to transition, members of the public are not aware of which individual/department to consult regarding their specific concern(s). She recommended that the Borough be more approachable and open to the community's needs. Councilwoman Latner suggested updating the website on Whole Foods; and Borough Administrator said that the staff should also update the website with Department and Board information. Mr. Burkholder indicated that community information for the website should come from a central office; and with Whole Foods, the website could indicate that discussions are underway but nothing official has happened as yet. Borough Administrator

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said a multi-faceted approach is needed for communication to keep the information proactive. Mr. Burkholder said there is a Rutgers study on communication after Sandy that is an excellent basis, which could be layered to meet the municipality's need. The goal should be to develop a layered plan for communicating issues, incidents and emergencies to the community over the next three months. It could also include an internal system using e-mail on a private page on the website. Borough Administrator said the Mayor and Administrator should be the ones that the residents approach for information; and the Mayor should be responsible for making policy announcements and direction and the Administrator responsible for procedures. Mr. Burkholder suggested contacting residents on the cultural factors with the relationship between the government and community.

In answer to Councilman Glidden, Mr. Burkholder said he would provide a report on the meeting within a week and provide recommendations and ideas on approaching priorities. He suggested that for the sake of public knowledge, the factual part of the report be adopted at a public meeting after review. He also recommended the review happen at the meeting in July and review of priorities be included in the October, January, April and July Agendas. Councilman Barad indicated that the Master Plan is a set of goals and should be put together with our listing of goals. Mayor Heymann provided a first draft of a partial Master Plan review which is about to be considered by the Planning Board and should have input from the governing body. She said that the bulk of the Building Department regulations have been translated into Korean.

Councilman Glidden left the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

4. OPEN MEETING TO PUBLIC FOR ANY MATTER, PER N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(a)  
(Subject to 5-minute limit per By-Laws General Rule No. 11)
  
5. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 11:34 a.m. was made by Councilwoman Latner, seconded by Councilman Barad and declared unanimously carried by Mayor Heymann.

Provided to the Mayor and Council  
on June 21, 2013 for approval at the  
Regular Meeting to be held  
June 26, 2013

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Loretta Castano, RMC  
Borough Clerk

Prepared by Carol Kroepke, RMC,  
utilizing recording and Borough Clerk's  
notes

Approved at the Regular Meeting held June 26, 2013  
Consent Agenda Item No. 20c.