

Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes  
December 2, 2021

PRESENT: Mayor Ari Bernstein

PRESENT: Councilmembers Liz Homan, Ed O'Connell, Matthew O'Toole,  
Steve Sasso, Jim Strauch and Amy Wilczynski

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Attorney Raymond Wiss  
Acting Municipal Clerk Michelle Ryan

A Work Session Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale was held in the Municipal Building at 500 West Crescent Avenue, Allendale, NJ December 2, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Mayor Bernstein who reminded the public to mute their devices so as not to distract from the business of the meeting. Mayor Bernstein advised the public that they would have an opportunity at an appropriate time during the meeting to be heard.

Mayor Bernstein asked that the Acting Municipal Clerk read the open public meetings statement: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. The meeting dates for the year are confirmed at the Annual Meeting, are posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building, published in The Record within the first 10 days of the New Year, and copies are sent to The Ridgewood News and Star-Ledger."

***Presentation:***

Mayor Bernstein stated that although this is a very bittersweet moment, it is also the highlight of tonight to be honoring Councilman Jim Strauch for his lifetime of service and dedication to the Borough of Allendale. Jim has served the community as Zoning Board Chair, Deputy Marsh Warden, Councilman, and so much more and will be remembered for his passion and dedication as a steward of the environment, with his focus on our recycling efforts, and advocate for preserving open space. His crusade to save what is now known as Orchard Common and initiate programs like the Green Team and Goose Patrol will forever be a part of his legacy. At the end of this year, he will be retiring from the Council after 18 years and he will be no longer be joining the Governing Body at the dais twice a month. He will be missed and while someone else will be sitting in the chair, Jim will never be replaced.

"Jim, you have been so much - a wealth of knowledge, a visionary, a watchful eye, a sounding board, a cheerleader, and most importantly a friend. The Governing Body, the residents, the employees, the Borough of Allendale in general are all better for you having served. We all thank you!" Mayor Bernstein read a proclamation, attached and made a part hereof, and presented Councilman Strauch with a key to the Borough.

Councilwoman Wilczynski stated that one of the most profound changes that Councilman Strauch made was to save Orchard Common Park, which prevented 24 condos from being developed in this open space. In recognition of that, a plaque will be placed in the park reading, "Orchard Common Park was saved from development by a

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grassroots effort led by Councilman Jim Strauch who served Allendale from 2004 to 2021.” She recalled meeting Jim during the “AMPA” days and working with him on saving the park, Passaic River Coalition matters, and at the Celery Farm. His love for Allendale and wanting to preserve its charm, while embracing and balancing change, is commendable. Establishment of the Goose Patrol has been a success and has saved thousands of dollars by keeping the geese away. She considers him Borough Historian and will miss his stories. He is a dear friend and she wished him well.

Councilwoman Homan shared that Councilman Strauch is a great example for all and she enjoyed working with him. She thanked him for his service as well as his family for sharing him with the community all these years.

Councilman Sasso recounted his experience working with Councilman Strauch on the Land Use Committee and admired his positive attitude and commitment to making Allendale a better place. Jim always had the historical knowledge on matters that arose, which was of great benefit. Councilman Sasso expressed his gratitude.

Councilman O’Connell recalled his first meeting with Councilman Strauch and how welcoming he was. He will truly miss serving with him and wished him all the best.

Councilman O’Toole said that Allendale is a special town and Councilman Strauch is a big part of making it the special place it is.

***Public Comment:***

Vince Barra, Mayor Emeritus, reminisced on all of Councilman Strauch’s efforts to save Orchard Common and shared that the people of Allendale owe him a debt of gratitude that they can’t begin to repay for this.

Mrs. Strauch shared that Councilman Strauch has always wanted to be in Allendale. She expressed her love and support for her son and described him as a kind, calm, decent person whose empathy and compassion for others extends to even those who oppose him. She conveyed how proud of him she is and thanked him for being her son.

Marsh Warden Jim Wright (*Via Zoom*) thanked Councilman Strauch on behalf of everyone at the Celery Farm.

Carlton Frost (*Via Zoom*) shared an anecdotal story about Councilman Strauch and the start of the Goose Patrol.

***Administration:***

A. Agenda Review

Mayor Bernstein conducted an overview of the agenda consisting of minutes of the June 10, 2021 and the June 24, 2021 Work and Regular, as amended, Sessions for consideration. He noted that Councilman O’Connell was absent from the June 24th

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meetings and will need to abstain. Also on the agenda is a public hearing on Ordinance 21-12 and introduction and first reading of Ordinance 21-13. Mayor Bernstein stated that there has been a change to the Consent Agenda, Resolution 21-268 has been pulled, so there are only 4 resolutions on the Consent Agenda. The mayor asked if any member had questions, no one replied.

***Adjournment:***

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman Strauch, second by Councilwoman Homan, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle Ryan  
Acting Municipal Clerk



## **Proclamation in Honor of Councilman Jim Strauch**

**WHEREAS**, Jim Strauch, a lifelong resident, has continued to make Allendale his home along with his wife Peggy Pyle and daughter Emma; and

**WHEREAS**, Jim's dedication to Allendale started at a young age, when at just 16 years old, he began attending council meetings, 'because he wanted to be sure they were working at keeping Allendale from being overbuilt and taking down too many trees'; and

**WHEREAS**, prior to joining the Council, Jim served Allendale in various capacities as Chairman of the Zoning Board, Deputy Marsh Warden of the Celery Farm, and as Founder of the Goose Patrol; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 7, 2004 Jim was first sworn in to serve on the Allendale Council, continuing his unwavering service to the Borough for the next 18 years; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2008, Councilman Strauch successfully led the effort to preserve 2.5 acres of Allendale's parkland known as Orchard Common; and

**WHEREAS**, during his tenure, Councilman Strauch has served on the DPW, Land Use, and Public Safety Committees, to name a few, and in 2012 was elected by his colleagues to serve as Council President, an honor which he held highly and a duty he performed enthusiastically; and

**WHEREAS**, Councilman Strauch will be forever remembered for his passion for improving Allendale's recycling program, his commitment to preserving open space and for his vast knowledge of all things Allendale.

**NOW, THEREFORE, WE**, the Governing Body, on behalf of the residents of the Borough of Allendale, on this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of December 2021, hereby acknowledge, with gratitude, Councilman Jim Strauch's dedicated service to the Borough of Allendale and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

**Mayor Ari Bernstein**

**Council President Liz Homan**

**Councilman Ed O'Connell**

**Councilman Matthew O'Toole**

**Councilman Steve Sasso**

**Councilwoman Amy Wilczynski**