

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.  
December 15, 2022**

---

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, New Jersey on December 15, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm by Mayor Bernstein who welcomed everyone who was joining the meeting in the audience and on Zoom Webinar. He 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 one opportunity during this meeting for public comment and he will advise at the appropriate time.

Mayor Bernstein asked that the 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 and on the Borough Website, published in The Record within the first 10 days of the New Year, and copies are sent to The Ridgewood News and Star-Ledger. Notice of this meeting by the December 5, 2022 Sunshine Notice was sent to The Record, The Ridgewood News and Star Ledger and has been posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building and Borough website."

**ROLL CALL:**

PRESENT: Councilmembers Liz Homan, Susanne Lovisolo, Matthew O'Toole, Steve Sasso and Amy Wilczynski, and Mayor Bernstein

ABSENT: Councilman Ed O'Connell.

ALSO PRESENT: Raymond Wiss, Borough Attorney  
Ron Kistner, Director of Operations/Administrative Officer  
Linda Louise Cervino, Municipal Clerk  
John Gil, Director of Communications

**PRESENTATION:**

Proclamation – Honoring Mayor Bernstein

Councilpresident Wilczynski reads the following Proclamation:

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.  
December 15, 2022**

---

**“Proclamation  
in Honor of  
Mayor Ari Bernstein**

**WHEREAS**, Ari Bernstein is a lifelong resident of Allendale and a proud graduate of the Allendale School District and Northern Highlands Regional High School; and

**WHEREAS**, Ari's early dedication to Allendale was displayed through his coaching of his daughter's softball team; and

**WHEREAS**, Ari represented the needs and concerns of Allendale's residents for 10 years on the Allendale Council, serving in that capacity from 2008 to 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, during his time on Council, Councilman Bernstein served on various committees including Public Safety, Administration and Finance, and the Land Use Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, in November of 2018, during a heavily contested election, the voters of Allendale elected Ari as Mayor, where he has served for the last 4 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Bernstein's love of his hometown and his understanding of the importance of looking to our past was exemplified by his words upon being sworn in as Mayor; "I am standing on the shoulders of giants and am deeply indebted to the men and women who made Allendale such a great place to live and raise a family"; and

**WHEREAS**, a benchmark of Mayor Bernstein's tenure was his leadership in managing Allendale's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Bernstein has served the residents of Allendale with honor and dignity during his time as Councilman and Mayor.

**NOW, THEREFORE, We, The Members of the Council**, on behalf of the residents of the Borough of Allendale, on this 15th day of December 2022, hereby acknowledge, with gratitude, Mayor Ari Bernstein's dedicated service to the Borough of Allendale and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.”

Councilpresident Wilczynski presented a plaque to Mayor Bernstein; a key to Allendale.

Photos were taken.

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.  
December 15, 2022**

---

Councilpresident Wilczynski said it has been wonderful working with you all these years. We went to high school together so we've known each other for a really long time. You have this wonderful way about you where you really can see all sides of the story and you really can understand all of the elements of what people are talking about and you really do try to understand both sides to really make a conscious and well thought-out decision. I think that's a wonderful trait to have that will take you long, long places in life. We had fun on the council. I hope you're feeling good and you're feeling like you're going to have some free time now.

Mayor Bernstein said Councilman O'Connell asked me whether it was bittersweet. Honestly, it's been sweet. I have nothing but love in my heart for all of you and for my time up here.

Councilman O'Toole thanked Ari Bernstein for his guidance and his mentorship over the years; more importantly, though, for their friendship. Councilman O'Toole stated it's been a pleasure and honor to serve with you. I shall never forget the evenings spent in this room recording videos with Ron and Tyler during the pandemic to keep everyone up to date. It's been nothing but a pleasure even when arguing or butt heads, but there's always respect. You're an honest gentleman and I wish you nothing but the best. Mr. Bernstein thanked Councilman O'Toole.

Councilwoman Lovisolo said she feels so fortunate to have been a part of the council this year. Years ago, I remember you and I talking about some day hopefully being lucky enough to serve on council together and we got one year together and I am so happy about that. We've been friends for many years and I know as well as everyone in this room how much your love for your hometown emanates from your days of both of cheering on our girls during softball together, to you helping me pop up the Fell House tent during Allendale Festival Day. You enjoy being a part of the incredible fabric of this town. As Mayor, you had an act for making every resident feel heard and appreciated and I witnessed many of those residents, some in the audience right here, show their appreciation of you in turn. I was so happy to be placed on the Land Use Committee after being on the Land Use Board with you for many years and the re-established Green Team has been a lot of fun. I thank you for making my first year so enjoyable. Thank you for your friendship, for your many years of service as council and for your term as mayor. I do appreciate it. I'm honored to present to you, to our handsome hometown mayor, another little token of our appreciation on behalf of your council and the great residents of this town. Many thanks to Fred Litt who helped me pick it out. Mayor Bernstein said he will treasure it and it will go on his wall and will think of you all when he looks at it.

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.  
December 15, 2022**

---

Councilwoman Homan said I spent a lot of time with Ari not only on the council but we have two daughters that are the same age that have had a lot of fun in sports and Ari and I being together and sometimes coaching. It's been personally a lot of fun. I do remember you when you first expressed an interest in going on the council. It was a great opportunity. You do love Allendale. Other people do notice that and respond to that. It really has been a pleasure. Thank you very much for supporting me as I came on the council. I'm thrilled that you are feeling happiness. Mayor Bernstein thanked her for her support of him when he came on as well.

Councilman Sasso stated he had the honor and pleasure of serving three mayors; you being the last one. He further stated that he thinks it's great that an Allendale Boy came back to serve his community as a councilman and then a mayor. I hope that future generation can take that as an example. Mayor Bernstein thanked Councilman Sasso.

Borough Attorney Ray Wiss said we've been together for eight years; four years of you serving as mayor. When I think of you, dignity and class are really more than anything else. I always think of giving out presentations; whether it was someone who was 80, 90 or 100 years old, being recognized or as it was at the last meeting a young girl being here and the warmth that you have always manifest to somebody who was here making them feel warm and welcomed. That is not a trait or a characteristic that everyone has. It's amazing to see the way you've related to everyone here and treated them, essentially, as a member of the family and I think that's how you look at everyone in Allendale.

Mayor Bernstein said in 15 years, honor is the word that came to mind. The honor that you all gave to me and the honor that I felt to be a councilman and the mayor. I reached out to Fred to find out a list of people, and if I named five, I would have left out ten so I decided not to name any. To follow in the footsteps of great men and women who made this town; a town that I grew up in and a town that I played ball in, it feels so fortunate to have worked with such a great group on the council and off the council. I'm overwhelmingly struck by how well everyone worked together. You don't see that in other towns. Whether we agreed or disagreed, we came together for the greater good. The Financial Advisory Committee; brilliant people in the room trying to figure out how and what is the best move for Allendale. I've been up here for 15 years and I can say unequivocally we never came to a decision that we didn't think was in the best interest of Allendale. It was never someone that was doing something for their own good. I think that's amazing. I feel so privileged to have been a part of that.

I remember a couple of years ago, there was backhanded criticism and it was said you guys are always 6/0, 6/0 on every vote. How can you be 6/0, 6/0? I said that's not the case. There's a lot of things that we don't agree on and it never comes out of the committee.

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.  
December 15, 2022**

---

There are things that we don't agree on, but we find a way to agree. That is, I think, the magic of what we have. Liz had it when she was mayor. Vince had it when he was mayor. We don't agree, but we will find what's best for Allendale. That was really the end goal and I think it was the end product at least for the 15 years.

My four years as mayor I think part of it was definitely defined by COVID-19, March 2020, and it changed all the rules. We, as a borough, changed how we acted. A whole new lexicon that we were not ever familiar with; SARS, COVID-19, social distances, lockdowns, closing borough hall, closing the schools, closing the businesses. Those nightly reports from the county that we had to then report in terms of how many cases. Governor Murphy's executive orders. Everything changed. Our first responders were on the front line. What they did day after day going into homes where there was a known covid case where they had to go in and help people. The fire department, the police department and ambulance corp. I remember when that started. The first meeting in the police department we were all huddled. Now we know how silly it was that there were 25 of us huddled in the police department and then everything changed. To John, to Tyler, to Ron, to Matt, when we did the video. And almost under the cloak of darkness we came in, drafted them, talked about them, wrote them, videoed them, sent them up, but I couldn't have done it without you. I'm so thankful to have gotten you by my side.

I couldn't have done it without a lot of people. There has been a lot of support over the years; Assemblyman Chris DePhillips, Assemblyman Kevin Rooney, Senator Kristen Corrado. They've always been in our corner and they've always done for us. Chris is a friend of mine. Allendale is a special place. Somebody posted on Facebook on 07401 about how comforting it is to be able to look out and either you look at the neighbor ahead of you, behind you, on your side and you know if you needed something they are there. I often felt that. It brings tears to my eyes because that's what Allendale is. That's what we had. If you have a problem, the residents can't do enough. I feel so honored to be the mayor, to be a part of it, to live here and raise a family. When I think about what we've done trying to maintain the uniqueness of Allendale; where do we spend the money, where do we save the money, where do we invest in our infrastructure and look to the future, right? We try to do it while holding the uniqueness of Allendale.

Mayor Bernstein stated to Councilman Sasso you've been very cognizant of that. You've attacked those ordinances trying to keep Allendale the way that it is. Alissa Mayer, I thank her for keeping us on the straight and narrow. I'm not going to miss the budget meetings. To everyone at borough hall; the clerk's office, the finance office and the building department, thank you. You're on the front line. A shout out to Michelle Ryan and Tatiana Marquis, I appreciate all that they did for us and what they did for me. I felt like they always had never-ending support.

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.  
December 15, 2022**

---

Ron, I can't put into words how much you've meant to me and how much you've helped me and you've helped the borough. I don't know how you do it. Every borough and every mayor should have someone like you. Thank you from my heart. I could not overstate how wonderful it has been, Ray, your intellect, your acumen, your knowledge, your experience, the way you can deliver it, the way you can see the landscape. I'm not sure how you do what you do because I know you have the meetings until eleven o'clock and then five o'clock you're in the office and then 7:00 a.m. you're at the next meeting, but I'm so thankful that you do. You have been such a resource that I've never taken for granted. With that, to Amy, I am so happy for you. You're going to do wonderfully. You're ready. You're going to do a great job. To the team, Amy, Matt and Tyler; Tyler, you've been groomed for this position for years. You and I won't be serving at the same time, but I'm so thrilled. To the three of you, I'm wishing you only the best. You're going to do wonderfully. I look forward to reading about it, hearing about it, or watching it on Zoom from the local bar.

Proclamation – Honoring Councilman Steve Sasso  
Liz Homan reads the following Proclamation:

**“Proclamation  
in Honor of  
Councilman Steve Sasso**

**WHEREAS**, Steve Sasso a longtime resident of Allendale has established Allendale as his home along with his wife Rosa and son Robby and;

**WHEREAS**, Steve Sasso has served the Borough of Allendale as a member of the Council from 2014 to 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, Councilman Sasso, before serving on the Council, served Allendale in various capacities such as the Planning Board overseeing many projects that have benefited Allendale; and

**WHEREAS**, Councilman Sasso's passion on the Council was to review and evaluate our ordinances and codes to ensure that the residents of Allendale's quality of life was always protected; and

**WHEREAS**, Steve's devotion to our veterans and honoring their sacrifice was exemplified by leading the effort to dedicate streets to Allendale's fallen heroes; and

**WHEREAS**, Councilman Sasso has served the Council with a devotion to improving the lives of Allendale's residents.

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.  
December 15, 2022**

---

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Liz Homan,** on behalf Mayor Bernstein and the Governing Body and the residents of the Borough of Allendale, hereby acknowledge, with gratitude, Councilman Steve Sasso's dedicated service to the Borough of Allendale and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.”

Councilman Sasso stated that this started ten years ago at AB&G when Councilwoman Jackie McSwiggan said I should run. Three terms and nine years later here we are. I was never a big fan of campaigning. It's not my style. If you wanted to serve the borough you had to do it. I'm not comfortable talking about myself. One of my colleagues said you have to stop being so modest. What I did really love is working on the committee at 7:30 a.m. and working on current ordinances or creating new ones that will make or continue to make Allendale a better place after I'm gone. My mother would come up to Allendale to go swimming and it was like a day in the country for me. I guess in the back of my mind I always knew I'd come back. About the time I got on the council, my employer said to me if you want to get ahead you're going to have to go to Dallas for a while. I said very politely I am not going to Dallas. I wanted my boy to grow up in Allendale and go to school from kindergarten through twelfth grade in Allendale. And now my Northern Highlands senior boy is on the wrestling team and not the rodeo team. I feel really good about that. I don't even know where the years went and the time went, but I am proud to have served three mayors in this job. I have no regrets whatsoever. I made some friends. You're going to be busy. My only regret is I won't be working with you at 7:30 a.m. and then again at 7:30 p.m. My only regret, if I had one, is that I will not get to serve my fourth mayor and my very good friend, Amy Wilczynski, who I worked probably closer with in the last nine years than anybody, and I enjoyed every minute of it. We certainly didn't always agree on everything up to and including last night. But it was always fine. There was mutual respect and that goes for everybody that I worked with. I want to thank you all. I want to thank all my colleagues on the council, the ones that called me and text me earlier today and some in the audience. I know that Allendale is being left in good hands. I feel good about it and I'm looking forward to getting some time back to do something else.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman O'Toole, second by Councilwoman Homan and unanimously carried, the work meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Linda Louise Cervino*

---

Linda Louise Cervino, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

02/09/2023

Date Approved