

Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale
Work Session Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2020

PRESENT: Mayor Ari Bernstein
(*in person*)

PRESENT: Councilmembers Liz Homan, Edward O’Connell, Matthew O’Toole, Steve Sasso,
Jim Strauch and Amy Wilczynski
(*via teleconference*)

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Attorney Raymond Wiss
(*in person*) 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 on May 28, 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, access to the public was provided via GoToMeeting video and teleconferencing only, with adequate notice of same posted for public viewing. The meeting was called to order at 7:30p.m. by Mayor Bernstein who reminded the public to mute their phones 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.”

Public Comment:

Mike O’Reilly, 85 Elmwood Avenue, read a prepared statement on behalf of the Democratic Club of Allendale advising of a letter sent to the Mayor and Council dated April 20, 2020, which thanked the governing body for adopting the ceremonial LGBTQ Pride Month proclamation in June 2019. Further, the letter suggested that as a stigma free community the town’s support should also include flying the Pride flag, which the club offered to donate, outside of Borough Hall every June, as some nearby communities do. Mayor Bernstein confirmed receipt of the letter and thanked him for the positive message. Mayor Bernstein expressed the governing body’s genuine and heartfelt support for the words and sentiments written in the proclamation and advised that a similar one was on tonight’s agenda. He agreed that Allendale is a proud stigma free community, one which strives for inclusivity for everyone everywhere, and believes that the governing body takes their commitment to this with the utmost seriousness. He further stated that no one should be discriminated against or harassed. With respect to the flag, Mayor Bernstein advised of the Borough’s longstanding policy to fly only the American, State of New Jersey and MIA flags, which predates his tenure. Mayor Bernstein further stated that this has been done on the advice and recommendation of legal counsel. Mayor Bernstein informed Mr. O’Reilly that he had discussed displaying the Pride flag in the downtown area with the Chamber of Commerce as well as other residents and councilmembers. In response to Mr. O’Reilly’s question of whether the tradition/policy could be changed, Mayor Bernstein shared that while the policy could be changed, the governing felt that it was an appropriate policy as the Borough doesn’t give preferential treatment and if the door is opened for one, it becomes difficult to close for another. Councilwoman

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Wilczynski agreed that this has nothing to do with excluding this flag, rather this is about other interest group's requests that could and have come. Allowing one interest group's flag means allowing all interest groups' flags. The Borough has had to say no to other requests as well on the advice from legal counsel. The American flag encompasses everybody and all communities. The Council took the initiative to draft and present this proclamation.

Mark Savastano, 22 Vreeland Place, questioned the decision to prohibit flag displays but allow religious holiday displays. Mr. Wiss responded that both are in fact policies that have been adopted. With regard to religious holiday displays, those have been deemed appropriate as long as there is equal balance and no favoritism shown. This has been subject to, outside of Allendale, many judicial interpretations that allow for that policy. When it comes to requests for flag displays, there is potential to have a request from unworthy causes. The appropriate way to express support for such worthy groups and causes is through a proclamation, not flying flags.

Michael Buckley, 49 Dale Avenue, commented that since policy is at the discretion of the Mayor and Council, this policy can and should be changed, especially because the rainbow flag is symbolic of LGBTQ Pride and adds visibility to the support. While acknowledging that creating policy can be difficult, he feels that both the proclamation and flag are appropriate. Mayor Bernstein recognized and thanked Mr. Buckley for his comments. Mayor Bernstein stated that the governing body was not inclined today to change the policy, but re-iterated that he has spoken to residents, the Chamber of Commerce and councilmembers about this. Should there be a flag raising downtown, he will attend in support as a resident and in his official capacity as Mayor. The heartfelt proclamation is the expression of the governing body.

Mayor Bernstein expressed his appreciation for all who shared their comments.

Proclamation:

With no other public coming forward, Mayor Bernstein read the LGBTQ Pride Month Proclamation, attached hereto and made a part of the record, which will also be posted on the website.

Administration:

A. Agenda Review

Mayor Bernstein advised that the approval of minutes was being pulled and relisted for the next meeting. Ordinance 20-10 establishing Chapter 181 "Short Term Rentals" would be introduced and invited Councilman Sasso to comment on this. This prohibits short-term rental of dwellings for a period of thirty days or less. Councilman Sasso stated that this has been done in neighboring communities and is being done in Allendale to protect the quiet, family-oriented nature of the town.

Before moving to review of the Consent Agenda, Mayor Bernstein shared that the Borough has been discussing ways to support Allendale's hard-hit business community. The pandemic has forced temporary closure with permission to re-open under very restrictive circumstances. He would like the governing body's support, through motion during the Regular Session, to direct Mr. Wiss to draft a resolution to temporarily relax, through Labor Day, some of the Borough's regulations prohibiting display of signage. This will allow them to promote that they are open for business, provide information on their operations and also show support for those affected by COVID-19. Councilman O'Connell suggested that temporary relaxations regarding outdoor dining, when

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permitted by the State, also be included. Mr. Wiss advised that Mr. Kistner can be directed to work with the Building Department to effectuate the emotion and sentiments of the resolutions.

B. Council Reports

Due to time constraints, this Agenda item was addressed during the Regular Session meeting.

C. Mayor's Report

Due to time constraints, this Agenda item was addressed during the Regular Session meeting.

D. Staff Reports

Due to time constraints this agenda item was addressed during the Regular Session meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman Strauch, second by Councilman O'Connell, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Michelle Ryan
Acting Municipal Clerk



Borough of Allendale

A CEREMONIAL PROCLAMATION FOR LGBTQ PRIDE MONTH

WHEREAS, on June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, a courageous group of citizens resisted harassment and maltreatment, setting in motion a series of demonstrations which became known as the Stonewall Uprising and are widely considered to constitute the most important events leading to the gay liberation movement and the modern fight for LGBTQ rights in America; and

WHEREAS, while the LGBTQ rights movement has realized much progress, there is more work to be done. As long as the promise of equality for all remains unfulfilled, all Americans are affected. If we can work together to advance the principles upon which our Nation was founded, every American will benefit; and

WHEREAS, all people deserve to live with dignity and respect, free from fear and violence, and be protected against discrimination, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. During LGBTQ Pride Month, we celebrate the proud legacy LGBTQ individuals have woven into the fabric of our Nation, we honor those who have fought to perfect our Union, and we continue our work to build a society where every child grows up knowing that their country supports them, is proud of them, and has a place for them exactly as they are; and

WHEREAS, Allendale promotes a proud Stigma Free community, accepting people from all walks of life,

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale, NJ, do hereby proclaim June 2020 as LGBTQ Pride Month in the Borough of Allendale.

Mayor Ari Bernstein

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