

**BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE**  
**Mayor and Council Reorganization Meeting**  
**January 2, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.**

**STATEMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICER**

Mayor Canose read the following Statement of Presiding Officer:

Notice of this meeting was provided to the Bernardsville News and Courier News, filed in the Office of the Borough Clerk, and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board on December 14, 2023.

**OATHS OF OFFICE**

The Oath of Office for Council Member Christine Zamarra was administered by Borough Clerk, Anthony Suriano, for a three year term expiring December 31, 2026. The Oath of Office for Council Member Jeffrey Roos was administered by Congressman Josh Gottheimer for a three year term expiring December 31, 2026.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mary Jane Canose. Present were Council Members Jay Ambelang, Jena McCredie, Chad McQueen, Al Ribeiro, Jeffrey Roos, and Christine Zamarra. Also present were John Pidgeon, Borough Attorney, Nancy Malool, Administrator, and Anthony Suriano, Borough Clerk.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MAYOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS**

Mayor Canose gave the Mayor's Annual Address.

**2024 Bernardsville Mayor's Address**

First, I'd like to congratulate Christine on winning her third term on the Council and Jeff for starting his first term. I look forward to working with you both.

The annual Mayor's Address is my opportunity to reflect on the past year's accomplishments, to thank all our employees and volunteers who make us all look good, and to look forward to our plans for the new year.

So first, some of the highlights of 2023:

The Borough Council dedicated its road improvement funds to making the much-needed improvements to Bernards Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods including Grove Street, Maple Street Extension, Lower Garibaldi Street and Mine Avenue.

With the retirement of our administrator Tom Czerniecki, we hired Nancy Malool, who has done an outstanding job of making our departments more streamlined and efficient.

With a focus on safety and quality of life, we worked with NJDOT to install a new pedestrian crosswalk from the train station to Bistro Seven Three and improved the signage at our other crossings. With a Safe Streets grant and the help of Ridewise, we conducted a study of the five corners intersection on Claremont to find ways to improve pedestrian safety. We invited JCP&L to a Council meeting to respond to residents' questions on storms and outages. And at another meeting, we hosted Chief Remian to discuss the recent car thefts with residents.

Thanks to the efforts of the Recreation Department and The Mayor's Wellness Campaign Committee, Bernardsville moved up from bronze to silver and is now designated as a Healthy Town to Watch. We also received the Bronze rating from Sustainable Jersey, thanks to our Green Team and Jeff Hammond. The Recreation Department's Trails Committee helped clear and mark the trails and listed them on the Borough website to make them easier for residents to find and use.

The non-profit 501(c)3 Law Enforcement Foundation that was created two years ago held a successful fundraiser at Upton Pyne and with the funds raised, provided an appreciation breakfast for our police department, made improvements to the practice range, and provided new equipment.

The Borough's collaboration with MainStreet Bernardsville brought a vast array of activities and events for our residents and businesses.

Looking forward to 2024, we will see the completion of Phase I of the Comprehensive Recreation Plan. At the Polo Grounds, the pickleball courts are open and being well used, and plans have been completed for the pavilion which will include restrooms and a kitchen, improved lighting and a walking path that will connect with the Old Army Trail and the Audubon.

The Council invested a great deal of time, which included several public meetings, reviewing the redevelopment plan for the Palmer properties which will now advance to the Planning Board for site approval. I, along with the Council, am committed to redevelopment that honors the historical and aesthetic nature of our downtown. Our goal is to create a downtown that is attractive, safe and pedestrian friendly. Our Land Use Committee will continue with plans for Quimby Village, but on a scaled down basis.

Our work over the last few years as a Governing Body, and the endless efforts of organizations like Main Street Bernardsville and our many volunteers throughout the community, I am proud to say, has created a real renaissance not just for our downtown, but for our community. This is evident by new businesses wanting to set up shop here, including David Burke's Red Horse,

rising property values, and record number of attendees at our events throughout the year. It is a really exciting time to be a resident of Bernardsville, and it was fitting that the New York Times, of all papers, featured our community in its real estate section at the end of 2023.

While we're excited that our borough and businesses are growing and thriving, it has brought a higher demand for parking, which is actually a good problem to have! The Council will be hiring a traffic and parking engineer to review our current and future parking needs. It has taken a while, but we expect to finalize plans to redevelop the former Audi dealership and the train station building in 2024.

We will also be moving forward with our required affordable housing projects. Through careful planning we were able to avoid a builder's remedy and the loss of open space as these projects will be incorporated into the downtown community.

And, of course, 2024 is our Centennial year, so there will be a number of opportunities to celebrate our history.

Finally, I want to thank all our employees who have provided endless service to our community and all our volunteers who so willingly give their time and expertise to improving our town. The theme that continues to run through all our past accomplishments and future goals is collaboration and I am grateful for all the departments, boards and organizations that have supported our efforts to make Bernardsville a wonderful town in which to live and work.

As we move into the new year, there will be many opportunities for residents and businesses to share their ideas, time and talents. Change and growth can be challenging, and it is my hope that by working together, we will successfully navigate through those challenges and create a positive future for our community, where we truly live up to our motto of small town, big community.

I wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year.

## **MAYOR'S APPOINTMENTS**

Mayor Canose's appointments were as follows:

### **Planning Board**

Christopher Otteau and Shari Bunks Geller, Class IV Members, 4 years  
Ross Zazzarino, Mayor's Representative

### **Environmental Commission**

Johanna Wissinger, Chair  
Johanna Wissinger and Michelle Conover, 3 years

### **Library Board of Trustees**

Jay Ambelang, Mayor's Alternate

**OEM Coordinator/Deputy Coordinator**

John Remian, Deputy, and Glenn Miller, Deputy, 1 year

**Historic Preservation Advisory Committee** (all 1 year terms)

Dan Lincoln, Steve Sbaraglio, Gerry Jo Cranmer (Chair),  
Eileen Grippo, Valerie Barnes, Joseph Bonk,  
Vacant (Alt #1 and Alt #2)

**Shade Tree Advisory Committee** (all 1 year terms)

Markus Dickson, Roberta Ruschmann, Johanna Wissinger

**Somerset County Solid Waste Advisory Committee**

Jeff Horowitz

**Somerset County Wastewater Management Plan Committee**

Mary Jane Canose, Tony Hajjar, and John Macdowall

**Municipal Alliance & Youth Services**

Coleen Butler, SHSD Guidance, Lisa Drew, Bernardsville High School  
Marcy Craver, Chris Habermas, Middle School & Megan Dooley, Bedwell School  
John Remian, Chief of Police, Mary Jane Canose, Mayor

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

Mr. Ambelang moved to appoint Mr. Ribeiro as Council President for 2024. Ms. McCredie seconded and a roll call vote followed. Mr. Ambelang, Ms. McCredie, Mr. McQueen, Mr. Ribeiro, Mr. Roos, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes. Mr. Ribeiro took the oath of office for Council President.

**RESOLUTIONS**

- #24-1      **COUNCIL CONFIRMATION OF THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENTS**
- #24-2      **ORGANIZATION OF BOROUGH COUNCIL**
- #24-3      **BOROUGH COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS AND/OR APPOINTMENTS OR NOMINATIONS TO SOMERSET COUNTY OFFICES**
- #24-4      **APPOINTMENT OF BOROUGH OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES**
- #24-5      **AUTHORIZING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES APPOINTMENTS AND CONTRACTS**

- #24-6 **AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENTS/CONTRACTS FOR EXTRAORDINARY, UNSPECIFIABLE SERVICES**
- #24-7 **MEMORIALIZING THE 2024 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**
- #24-8 **AUTHORIZING ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS FOR SUPPLIES & SERVICES**
- #24-9 **ADOPTING A CASH MANAGEMENT PLAN**
- #24-10 **AUTHORIZATION FOR INVESTMENTS**
- #24-11 **DESIGNATION OF DEPOSITORIES AND SIGNATORIES**
- #24-12 **AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CLERK TO SIGN A TRANSPORTATION SERVICE CONTRACT WITH SOMERSET COUNTY**
- #24-13 **SETTING RATE OF INTEREST ON 2024 DELINQUENT TAXES, SERVICE CHARGES FOR CHECKS RETURNED FOR INSUFFICIENT FUNDS, AND CHARGES FOR DUPLICATE TAX SALE CERTIFICATES**
- #24-14 **TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR OPERATING PURPOSES**
- #24-15 **APPROVING TEMPORARY BUDGET LINE ITEMS**
- #24-16 **ADOPTING POLICE DEPARTMENT RULES & REGULATIONS**
- #24-17 **DESIGNATING WRECKER SERVICES FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**
- #24-18 **DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS**
- #24-19 **SLEO APPOINTMENTS FOR 2024**
- #24-20 **RENEWING LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH MAIN STREET BERNARDSVILLE ALLOWING IT TO USE THE SPARE OFFICE AT THE BOROUGH RECREATION DEPARTMENT FOR A NOMINAL CONSIDERATION**
- #24-21 **ESTABLISHING A LIMIT FOR CASH TRANSACTIONS**
- #24-22 **AUTHORIZATION TO PAY BILLS PRIOR TO REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

Ms. Zamarra moved adoption of Resolutions #24-1 through #24-22. Mr. McQueen seconded the motion and a roll call vote followed. Mr. Ambelang, Ms. McCredie, Mr. McQueen, Mr. Ribeiro, Mr. Roos, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

### **TIME CAPSULE**

Mayor Canose read the Time Capsule listed below.

The following letter, dated July 18, 1977, is passed on in the public record, as requested by the Bernardsville Shade Tree Commission (now Shade Tree Committee), membership consisted of John Edmonds, Chair, Victoria D. Schmidt, John Croot, Marty Craig and Barbara Heckman:

*To the Mayor of Bernardsville and Members of the Borough Council:*

*With the recent restoration of the borough pond, it has been possible to complete the Time Capsule Project by imbedding the capsule in concrete at the base of the Bicentennial Liberty Tree. This tree, a red oak, was planted on April 17, 1976, at a point about 108 feet from the northeast corner of the Borough Hall Building. A plaque is affixed to the top of the concrete marker which reads:*

*1776 - 1976  
Bicentennial Liberty Tree  
Bernardsville  
Shade Tree Commission*

*April 17, 1976*

*Information concerning the Time Capsule and its contents are contained in the accompanying envelope addressed to the residents of Bernardsville in the year 2076. Another copy, the original, has been placed in the Time Capsule itself.*

*It is the wish of the members of the Shade Tree Commission (1976-1977) that this letter be passed on from year to year on January 1 during the swearing in ceremonies of each new council through the year 2076.*

*At that time, during the Tricentennial Celebration of our country, the Time Capsule (see attached plans) is to be broken open for the residents to examine the items we have assembled which reflect the life and times of the Bicentennial Year.*

### **OPEN SESSION**

Mayor Canose opened the meeting to the public. Hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Canose closed the open session.

**CLOSED SESSION – None**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm

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