WORK SESSION OF MAY 5, 2020

Mayor Peluso called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Manager Van Kruiningen read the following Public Notice from the Borough of Fair Lawn:

Please be advised, that pursuant to the State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency declared and set forth in New Jersey Executive Order No. 103, and further limitations on public gatherings as set forth in Executive Order No. 104, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Fair Lawn, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey shall hold a Work Session on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 7:30 pm, with no members of the public physically present in conjunction with the closing of the Municipal Building to the general public. Should you wish to watch or participate in this Work Session, you may by do so by any of the following:

- You can watch the meeting live streamed on our website www.fairlawn.org/meeting OR you can watch the meeting broadcasted live by Fair Lawn TV on Cablevision Channel 77 or Verizon FIOS Channel 37.

OR

- If you would like to participate in the public portion of the Work Session, you can join the Work Session Webinar as an attendee by going to our website Fairlawn.org. You must first register for the Work Session Webinar. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing further information about the joining of the webinar. Once the webinar is live you will be able to click in the Question Box and leave a comment question for the Public Comments portion of the meeting. You must enter your name and a valid address with your comment and question to confirm you are a resident.

AND/OR

- You can also call 201-564-6185, which will be repeated further on in the meeting, to participate in the public portion of the meeting from home. This phone line will only be answered during the public comment portion of the meeting. You will be required to provide your name and address and your question.

PRESENT: Mayor Peluso, Deputy Mayors Reinitz and Rottenstrich, Councilmembers Cutrone and Krause.

ALSO PRESENT: Manager Van Kruiningen, Municipal Clerk Bojanowski and Attorney Verrone.
Mayor Peluso asked everyone to stand for a moment of silence following the flag salute in memory of all our soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Mayor Peluso asked the Council’s permission to move up Economic Development.

There was a unanimous consensus to move up Economic Development.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Isaac Kremer was present.

Deputy Mayor Rottenstrich stated that although they were in the midst of a serious pandemic that is going to have severe repercussions, she believed very strongly that they still need to plan for Fair Lawn’s economic future and development; in fact, it might be more important than ever to do so.

She introduced Mr. Kremer, a nationally recognized leader in Main Street revitalization, who has recently worked in Metuchen.

Mr. Kremer thanked the Mayor and Council, and the Borough officials he has interacted with, for their hospitality. They are in the new normal as this COVID situation unfolds. There have been very serious discussions held nationally and we may see a quarter of small businesses across the Country close in the next five months. Some businesses will feel the effects more intensely.

Fair Lawn is well positioned to weather the storm as there is a strong sense of community and people are committed to their neighborhoods. Additionally there is a strong effort from the Economic Development Corporation. The new normal will require they be flexible. He is hearing from his network that the next 10 to 12 months they are going to see the same innovation that would have occurred in 10 to 12 years. Shopping and commuting habits are shifting and changing. The urgent need is for public officials, residents and people involved in the civic discussion is to rapidly adjust and change to these circumstances.

He discussed his tool kit to jump start the Main Street comeback, which contains four different strategies: Protecting public health, looking at their distribution channels, long-term planning and generating a cash flow. This plan is being used all over the Country.

He previewed what was going on so they could make adjustments depending on the current situation. In the next three weeks, he will be delivering a report to the Borough with his initial recommendations. He has spoken to some of the
business leaders, but he is looking for more suggestions as to who else he should speak with before he gives his recommendation.

He felt it is crucial to have a case-based element to this report so he is not merely making a report that goes on a shelf, but is something people can see, feel and experience. He was happy to report that he was working with Councilmember Cutrone and the AARP Community Grant. They are incorporating some really nice ideas and he felt it was a compelling application and one that would hopefully get support. He encouraged them to consider place-based elements to show the residents of Fair Lawn that transformation is real, possible and achievable.

Deputy Mayor Rottenstrich asked if volunteers were important to economic development. She asked for ideas on how to get volunteers motivated. Mr. Kremer stated they needed to include everyone and ask people to make a contribution to their town to help the bigger picture. He reiterated that Fair Lawn is fortunate to have many pieces in place. As he makes his rounds and gets to know people he hopes to build on that. There are people out in the community such as business people or retired corporate executive with business experience that could be included. He felt it would be helpful to do a charrette, which is a rapid quick study - a day or two at the most – working with design professionals and local owners to envision the future for different areas of town. There is a lot of potential with an activity to rapidly bring people together and build community and create a vision to move forward. He would be happy to offer his resources of connections to make it happen. A good early step might be to have a charrette to design one area of town.

Councilmember Cutrone thought it might be a good idea to connect Mr. Kremer with Shannon Daugherty Lyons, who is helping with their Age-Friendly initiative, since Mr. Kremer had some great grant ideas related to this. Mr. Kremer said to let Ms. Lyons know that he is close with the Age-Friendly advocates up in North Jersey, at Rutgers and at the AARP. He would be more than happy to help out. Having an Age-Friendly initiative is a sign of a progressive community, because they are thinking about the needs of their older adults while making their town livable for people of all ages. He congratulated them for their efforts.

Mayor Peluso thanked Mr. Kremer for joining in on their meeting. He looked forward to working with him.

REVIEW OF TENTATIVE AGENDA

Municipal Clerk Bojanowski stated there were no changes to the agenda.
COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Krause thanked the essential workers and frontline workers, who can never be thanked enough. He stated residents can help by doing things such as paying their taxes if they are able to do so or being there for a friend. All those things are important and will go a long way.

Normally he would be updating residents about what his committees were doing. Unfortunately, many committees have not be able to meet and he misses their input and the opportunity to learn from them.

He acknowledged the High School students and other students graduating and moving on who didn’t get the chance to say goodbye like they wanted to. One of the devastating things about the virus is that it has disrupted their ability to go through milestones. He wanted to take a moment to let those students know he was thinking of them. He reminded everyone to be there for each other. If they were sad about the way things have changed, they should reach out to their friends.

He concluded by thanking the Fair Lawn Pays It Forward who has raised a lot of money to help the frontline workers and support Fair Lawn businesses. People who are in a position to contribute to these efforts should consider doing so.

Councilmember Cutrone stated it was nice to see everyone. She echoed Councilmember Krause’s comments about those who are on the frontlines keeping them safe. She thanked the Ambulance Corps for grocery shopping for the seniors who cannot get out to the stores, in addition to what they do on a normal basis.

She noted it was Teacher Appreciation Week. She thanked educators and education professionals who are really working double time to make life as normal as they can for their students.

She echoed Councilmember Krause’s comments about graduating seniors. She loves being a teacher and it is difficult for her to be out of the classroom. She realizes it is equally challenging for the students to not be able to be with their friends and teachers, especially the seniors who are missing some of the traditional rites of passage. The biggest take-away from events such as prom and graduation is the feeling of sense of community. She hopes that the graduating seniors and those students moving up to the Middle Schools and High Schools are feeling that sense of community times one million, because Fair Lawn is such a wonderful town were people come together for each other. She reiterated Councilmember Krause’s advice to be there for each other and lean on each other, because that is what Fair Lawn does best.
She recognized resident Jamie Gerard, who filmed a video of residents singing and dancing outside their homes to a song she wrote to spread a little happiness in these uncertain times. The video will be on Facebook.

She thanked Manager Van Kruiningen and Chief of Staff/Veterans Director Magarelli for helping to arrange this new meeting format so they can see each other at their meetings. She asked if some of their committees could also use this platform or if there was any direction they could give if they wanted to meet virtually. Manager Van Kruiningen stated they were using this program on a trial run. Since it seems to be working well they can see if something could be done to provide a similar avenue for committees. He will keep the Council updated.

Councilmember Cutrone stated she spoke with the Manager about having the fitness instructor, Nancy, at the Senior Center make exercise videos for Fair Lawn TV for their seniors. Manager Van Kruiningen and the Risk Manager pointed out liability issues in that the fitness instructor, Nancy, would not be able to see everyone exercising and they would not want someone to get hurt. However, Nancy is willing to do a feel good message that will be placed on Fair Lawn TV for their seniors to see. Many towns in the Age-Friendly network are placing public exercise videos that can be shared on their public access TV stations. If the Council was in agreement, she would pick up the videos from the towns so they could be played on Fair Lawn TV with guidance from the Manager.

She concluded by reporting that the Community Relations Committee met online and discussed Pride Month. They asked if they could have an actual Pride flag flown in town, perhaps at the Cadmus House, in addition to the bunting at Borough Hall.

Deputy Mayor Rottenstrich thanked the frontline workers who are at the most risk during this pandemic. She stressed that everyone should wear a face mask when out in public, as it will help protect others from them if they are COVID positive but asymptomatic. This will help keep our numbers down so that the frontline workers don’t get a virile load that they can’t handle and to help keep them from getting sick.

She was lucky to have three children graduate from Fair Lawn schools, two of whom have also graduated college, so she understands the importance of these rituals and events. She is truly saddened that the graduates this year won’t have that experience and will be missing out. Her heart goes out to the parents who have to work double time at home and at work. She acknowledged teachers, like Councilmember Cutrone, who are teaching their students along with their own children.

She reminded everyone that it was Giving Tuesday. She encouraged those who can to make a donation to the Borough’s Food Pantry. There are also food
pantries at St. Anne’s, Van Riper Church and Jewish Family and Children Services in need of donations.

She commended the Garden Committee, who has been out cleaning, weeding and planting. She thanked Jane Spindel for her leadership. The Tree Committee met and finalized the Arboretum’s five-year plan. The Community Garden is also up and functioning, with gardeners working on their individual plots while practicing proper social distancing.

The Green Team had to cancel its Green Weekend, which they were looking forward to. They had many great events scheduled to teach residents about sustainability. If they cannot reschedule for the fall they will try again next spring.

She concluded by reminding everyone to complete their Census form, as it is very important to do. The form can be completed online, by phone or by mail. The town needs the funding, the resources and the representation now more than ever.

Deputy Mayor Reinitz echoed everyone’s comments. He sent his condolences to the residents who have lost loved ones to COVID-19. He thanked the first responders and essential workers. He thanked Manager Van Kruiningen and his team who have worked around the clock to make sure that they haven’t compromised any services in town and are keeping the Borough employees healthy, which is important and necessary to keep the town running.

He thanked OEM Coordinator Alvarez for planning and making sure the Borough has sufficient supplies and protective gear for the first responders. The Borough did a great job last year of building up a sufficient supply of equipment.

He has been getting calls about Memorial Pool, Fourth of July Fireworks and all the events they look forward to. He knows they have some tough decisions ahead and they will be guided by the Executive orders that are in place. They will be discussing a change in the above ground pool ordinance to make it easier for residents who want to install a pool in their backyard. If any resident has an idea for helping the community, please reach out to the Council. They are listening.

He thanked the State representatives, who have been keeping them apprised on a continuous basis as to what is happening in Trenton and asking how they can be of assistance with issues such as unemployment.

He concluded by stating that last weekend was scary for officials because of the nice weather. He commended the residents for maintaining appropriate social distances. He didn’t hear of any issues despite the fact that residents were outside all weekend. If residents continue to follow guidelines it will allow
them to resume things sooner. He thanked everyone for trying to do their best and being kind to each other. They are going through a lot and dealing with their anxieties and their children’s anxieties.

Mayor Peluso echoed the Council’s comments. He thanked the first responders, the healthcare workers living in town, the Postal workers and the DPW crew. Everyone is doing a great job. A big thank you to all the educators, including Councilmember Cutrone and his wife, Linda, who are teaching from home. He gets to see firsthand how much extra work our teachers are putting in during these troubling times. He thanked them for their efforts.

He reminded residents that as the weather gets nicer, they should continue to practice social distancing, especially with children. He saw a couple of times at the parks that children were inching closer together. As parents, they need to please pull them back and keep reminding them to keep a safe distance. He urged adults to remember they are still practicing social distancing.

Fair Lawn saw a little bit of a dip compared to the prior week and they want to continue to see that type of result. They don’t want the numbers to begin to increase again. He wants to continue on a downward trajectory and get this over with.

He received a donation of 120 cloth face masks. If anyone needs a cloth face they should email him at Mayor@fairlawn.org. He will be more than happy to drop them off. First come, first served.

**FOOD ASSISTANCE**

Councilmember Cutrone stated many people have food insecurity issues all year long; not just during the pandemic. The number of people losing their jobs and needing assistance has increased, but they may not be not be aware of the help that is available. She noted that public schools are now providing a hot lunch for all students, not just those who are enrolled in the reduced lunch program. She suggested Human Services draft a flyer listing all available resources that can be given to the families picking up the hot lunches. Manager Van Kruijningen stated he did not have any issues with doing that. Councilmember Cutrone felt the same information should be given to people who file for unemployment, if she can find a way to retrieve that information from the County.

**STATE TAX COURT SETTLEMENTS**

Manager Van Kruijningen referenced his email dated April 30th with a detailed memorandum from Tax Assessor Henderson regarding tax court settlements.
There are no appropriations for these settlements, so any approved refunds will be expended directly from the general fund or surplus.

There was a unanimous consensus to approve the tax court settlements referenced above.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LIAISONS

Municipal Clerk Bojanowski stated that they have to notify the County as to who will be the Community Development liaisons by June 30. Currently, Manager Van Kruiningen and Mayor Peluso are serving.

There was a unanimous consensus to have Manager Van Kruiningen and Mayor Peluso continue to serve as the Community Development liaisons.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Manager Van Kruiningen reminded the public that if they are going to be calling in from their phone to ask a question, they should call 201-564-6185. A question can also be submitted through the webinar.

Chief of Staff/Veterans Director Magarelli announced that he did not receive any public comments.

There was a unanimous consensus to close the time for public comments.

Mayor Peluso stated there was one additional item he would like to add with the Council’s permission.

He stated that he and Deputy Mayor Reinitz have received a few requests from residents who are considering installing above ground pools. With the unknown factor of whether or not public pools, oceans and lakes will be able to open for the summer, many residents are looking into ways to keep cool this summer. He spoke to the Construction Official, who recommended leaving the side set back recommendations as is but eliminating the rear yard setback recommendations. This will give more ability for residents to install above ground pools. This change would pertain only to above ground pools, not in-ground pools.

Manager Van Kruiningen stated that if there was going to be any type of revision, the pool cannot be set directly on the property line. There would need to be some sort of setback. He will ask Construction Official Bolan to provide his recommendation regarding the rear yard.

Councilmember Cutrone thought it was a great idea.
Deputy Mayor Reinitz asked if the Council would have to vote on the change at the next Council meeting and then do a second reading at the June Work Session.

Manager Van Kruiningen stated that was correct. He will provide the Council, prior to the next meeting, with a draft of the change for their review. If there are no questions or comments, he will place it on the agenda for an introduction on May 19 with adoption at the June meeting.

Deputy Mayor Reinitz stated that if they could, he would like to do the adoption at the June Work Session rather than wait until the end of June. Manager Van Kruiningen did not have an issue with that. He asked Attorney Verrone if this change have to go before any of the Boards since it will change the setback on just above ground pools. Attorney Verrone stated the draft would have to go before the Planning Board since it was in their Land Use. Deputy Mayor Rottenstrich stated there was a Planning Board meeting on May 18th and tentatively one on June 9th.

Deputy Mayor Reinitz stated that if the Planning Board is okay with the revision they could go forward on May 19th to introduce the amended ordinance. Attorney Verrone suggested they let the Planning Board Chairperson know that they were trying to expedite this. It will be a simple ordinance. Manager Van Kruiningen stated he did not have any issues doing that.

There was a unanimous consensus to allow a change in the rear yard setback for above ground pools only.

**CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTION**

Upon motion by Deputy Mayor Rottenstrich and a second by Deputy Mayor Reinitz, the following closed session resolution was unanimously adopted at 8:15 p.m.

WHEREAS; the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey permits the public to be excluded from certain matters to be discussed by the Governing Body; and

WHEREAS; the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Fair Lawn desire to discuss Attorney Client Privilege – Emergency Measures and Personnel – COVID-19, Officer of Emergency Management Coordinator; and

WHEREAS; these matters are ones which permit the exclusion of the public from such discussions; and
WHEREAS: minutes will be taken during this closed session and once the need for confidentiality no longer exists the minutes will be available to the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Fair Lawn that the public be excluded since these matters as set forth above are ones which permit the exclusion of the public from such discussions.

RESOLUTION NO. 191-2020 – EXTENDING THE GRACE PERIOD TO JUNE 1, 2020 FOR PAYMENT OF SECOND QUARTER REAL PROPERTY TAXES PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 130

There being no discussion, upon motion by Councilmember Cutrone and a second by Deputy Mayor Rottenstrich, Resolution No. 191-2020 was unanimously passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Deputy Mayor Reinitz and a second by Councilmember Krause, the Work Session was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn B. Bojanowski
Marilyn B. Bojanowski, RMC
Municipal Clerk

The undersigned have read and approve the foregoing minutes.

Mayor Kurt Peluso

Deputy Mayor Josh Reinitz
Councilmember Cristina Cutrone
Deputy Mayor Gail Rottenstrich
Councilmember Kris Krause