Baristanet

Montclair Township Council: Cabaret Licenses, Bonsal Preserve Sewer Line, Landscapers

By **Steven Maginnis** - November 29, 2017

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The Montclair Township Council's November 28 meeting was relatively quick, with most of the business restricted to voting on ordinances and resolutions. But a routing vote on a first-reading ordinance amending regulations on alcoholic beverages hit a snag over an archaic section embedded in the text.

the Montclair Township Council

Councilor-at-Large Rich McMahon asked about the section prohibiting dancing without a cabaret license, asking if it could be dropped. He noted that New York City had just gotten rid of a similar restriction, and he added that Montclair should do the same. Councilor-at-Large Robert Russo and Fourth Ward Councilor Renée Baskerville both agreed, but Mayor Robert Jackson wanted to get feedback from bar owners and the Montclair Business Improvement District on the matter first. The mayor confessed that he didn't even know if any venue in Montclair had a cabaret license.

Township Clerk Linda Wanat explained that a cabaret license was required for any establishment that had food and entertainment, not necessarily dancing as entertainment. Some places served alcohol, and some didn't. The mayor, going over the ordinance up for a vote, said he understood that the ordinance only applied to places that served alcohol, and not to a venue like Terry's Serendipity Café, which has food and entertainment but not alcoholic beverages. The cabaret license is $600 a year.

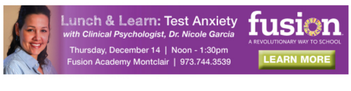
Rather than excise the section from the first-reading ordinance, the council voted on the whole draft and passed it 7-0. Mayor Jackson said that the council would look into the cabaret license issue. The other ordinances all passed 7-0 on first reading, were salary ordinances for municipal salaries. Among the resolutions passed, all unanimously and through ha consent agenda, were a resolution bagging meters for the holiday shopping season, a resolution for the purchase of three new police vehicles, and a resolution designating One Bay Urban Renewal LLC as the redeveloper in the plan for the Hackensack UMC/Mountainside project. A resolution adopting guidelines for community gardens was tabled because Third Ward Councilor Sean Spiller had noted that the wording of the resolution had been changed and he warned to go over it first.

In public comment, resident Sandy Sorkin discussed the work on the sewer line being installed by Clifton in the Bonsal Preserve, noting that the water company was planning to clear trees 15 feet of either side of the line going through the preserve. Sorkin had asked Acting Township Manager Tim Stafford in advance if this was necessary, and he said he understood, having received an answer to his question before the meeting, that it was the result of an engineering study. But he added that the township should see if the water company has the responsibility to replace the trees and is planning to do so and whether it should get permission to do this from Green Acres and the Department of Environmental Protection. Sorkin added the township has had difficulty getting information from Clifton on the scheduling of the installation of the pipe and what trees could be cut down.

First Ward Councilor William Hurlock took the opportunity to say that he has been in constant contact with Clifton, talking to Clifton Councilman Ray Grabowski on getting the process moving on this issue. He said he got a commitment from Councilman Grabowski to a meeting with him and the group Friends of the Bonsal Preserve, and he said one problem has been getting access to the project on the Clifton side due to a private-property issue.

Also, residents continued their complaints against leaf blowers, and local environmentalist Pat Kenschaft cited the township's own use of leaf blowers as adding to Montclair's carbon footprint. She suggested that the discontinuation of leaf blowers, as well as the use of solar panels to produce energy for township facilities, the use of smaller police cars, and curbs on police-car idling, would help reduce the town's carbon emissions and help address the problem with climate change. Her husband Fred Chichester spoke out not just on the issue with unregistered landscapers operating illegally, many of them rogue fly-by-night operations. He said landscapers who did not register with the town were undermining the legitimate landscapers who abided by the law. Many of them, he said, have been using vehicles that do not have license plates and lack properly maintenance.

Chichester suggested the town fine property owners who hire landscapers who are either not properly registered with the town or with the state as home improvement contractors. Councilor Russo said a bigger problem was that many landscapers are not properly licensed, as opposed to being registered. He said he had worked in the state Consumer Affairs Department and had fought for licensing, but the effort never succeeded. Chichester said he still thought something could be done.



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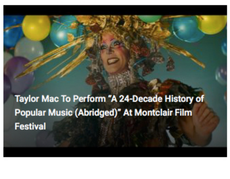

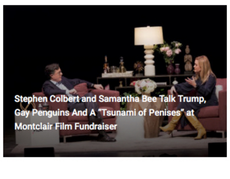

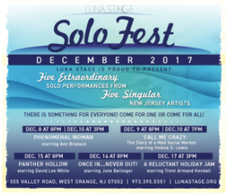

UPCOMING EVENTS

MON 04 — **Charles E. Burchfield: Weather Event September 16–January 7, 2018**
September 16, 2017 @ 8:00 am - January 7, 2018 @ 5:00 pm

MON 04 — **Philemona Williamson: Metaphorical Narratives September 16–January 7 2018**
September 16, 2017 @ 12:00 pm - January 7, 2018 @ 5:00 pm

TUE 05 — **St. James Thrift Shop**
December 5 @ 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

WED 06 — **Artful Outing – CREATIVE AGING INITIATIVE 1st Wednesday of the month, 2–3 p.m.**
December 6 @ 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

THU 07 — **Free First Thursday Nights at MAM 1st Thursday of the Month (October-June) 5-9pm**
December 7 @ 5:00 pm - 8:30 pm

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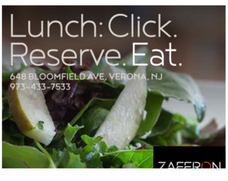

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