

REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2002

Mayor Ganz opened the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Assistant Municipal Clerk Bojanowski read the following statement of compliance:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, annual notice of all meetings of the Borough of Fair Lawn was published in "The Record" issue of January 26, 2002. Notices were also posted on the Bulletin Board located on the First Floor of the Municipal Building and at the Maurice Pine Free Public Library, copies mailed to The North Jersey Herald and News and The Shopper. The Annual Notice identified the meeting location and the time of the Council Meetings and Work Sessions.

PRESENT: Mayor Ganz, Deputy Mayors Etlar and Weinstein, Councilmembers Amato and Caan.

ALSO PRESENT: Acting Manager/Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski, Assistant Municipal Clerk Bojanowski and Attorney Lustgarten.

Mayor Ganz stated they have before them this evening Resolution 300-2002 commemorating the first anniversary of the terrorist attack on America. Before he asks for a motion to read the resolution he wanted to point out that they had two items on the dias, two boots and a heavy piece of metal. All three of these items come from the World Trade Center. They were given to us for display purposes by an emergency services volunteer from Fair Lawn who was at Ground Zero on September 11 of last year.

RESOLUTION NO. 300-2002 COMMEMORATING THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON AMERICA

Upon motion by Deputy Mayor Etlar and a second by Deputy Mayor Weinstein, Resolution No. 300-2002 was unanimously adopted.

REMARKS BY MAYOR GANZ:

A year ago tomorrow marks a day of infamy. Just as my generation knew where they were when President Kennedy was assassinated, and my father's generation recalled where they were when Pearl Harbor was attacked, a whole new generation - and two older one - will never forget where we were when we learned of the horrific carnage of last September 11.

I spoke from this podium two days later and told you that "terrorists declared war on America. They have attacked us just as surely as a foreign power did on December 7, 1941. In the face of this unparalleled assault, we know that there will be casualties right here in our community, and indeed, throughout Bergen County."

This evening, we pause from our everyday lives to reflect on the events of last September.

Some of us will want to speak about the people who we knew who perished when the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked, and four airplanes senselessly hijacked. Others of us will want to recall, with awe and gratitude, the response of our emergency volunteers who helped to save lives. Still others will no doubt offer personal reflection. I encourage all of this, because it is part of a national self-healing process.

Last year, I spoke of the pride that all of us have, as Fair Lawn residents, for the generosity of our volunteers, who immediately went to Ground Zero and the surrounding area. Our Heavy Rescue and Hazmat went right into Manhattan. Our own O.E.M. coordinator, Tom Metzler, saved lives by ordering a pull back before the secondary building collapse. Ambulance Corps members and Fire Department personnel were in Manhattan and at the Liberty State Park triage center.

We are grateful for the sacrifice that each of them gave, of their time, their effort, and their disregard for their personal circumstances and safety.

Last year, in a community worship service, Father Ron Pecce of St. Ann's Parish spoke in his homily of the people who did the awful deeds as being pure Evil. There truly were - and are - but as I said last year, and as I reiterate this evening, as long as Fair Lawn can come together as a community - as long as we can come together as a nation - they shall never win.

This is an unusual meeting of our Council. It is being conducted for specific purpose, and with the specific topic, of the events of last September 11 and placing them in perspective. All other business is being postponed for a week. I will now ask our Council Members for their comments.

At the conclusion, before we open the floor to public comments - which we invite - I would like to ask for a moment of silence in the memory of those who are no more.

When we rise, the that moment of silence, I ask that you reflect on those whom we lost, but also on the values that we gained.

American Democracy indeed has been on trial. We have won.

I would like to remind you that tomorrow night we have a candle light vigil here at Borough Hall, on the steps outside, led by our Borough's interfaith clergy at 8:00 p.m.

I now call on Deputy Mayor Etler for his remarks, to be followed by Councilmembers Amato and Caan and then Deputy Mayor Weinstein.

REMARKS BY COUNCIL:

Deputy Mayor Etler:

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I was listening to WQXR who interrupted their programming to say a light aircraft has hit one of the World Trade Centers. It was not long before the full account of what had happened was fully broadcast.

As that point I went to Borough Hall, where our Emergency Management Office was already set up and running by Tom Metzler and Ira Marks, our Emergency Management Coordinators. I offered my services in any way they could use me, and they set me to work on the telephones.

There was an immediate out pouring of Fair Lawn citizens wanting to do anything to help that included blood, food supplies and donations.

At about 12:00 a.m., I finally left the office and drove up to the railroad parking lot on Fair Lawn Avenue and Route 208. It was there I saw the Police trying to trace the license plates of all those who could not make it back from New York, and relatives who were leaving notes under the windshield wipers in the hope they could make contact with their loved ones.

It was then that I understood the enormity of what had happened. I was filled with shock and anger. Let it be understood, we as Americans are forgiving but we also remember. As December 7, 1941, has been etched in the historical archives of our County, now September 11, 2001, will take its place as another day of infamy.

What is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents. Our Country has faced adversities since 1774, and we will face many more, but we will endure.

Councilmember Amato:

Last year at this time I was not able to be here with you because my wife and I were on what should have been a pleasant tour of some Californian parks. After the attack, with planes grounded, all we could do is make frantic phone calls, drive our rented car listening to news radio and watch television images at the end of each day. But that vacation may have very well saved my wife's life. She would have been at work on the 60th floor of 2 World Trade Center at 7:15 a.m. on September 11. So when we did get home, we drove straight for Jersey City and looked across the river to see a big hole in the sky; and we became sick.

Little I say can adequately describe how I feel about that human tragedy; the physical and mental suffering of that event. American and non-American civilians, along with rescuing emergency service workers thrown into a world of hell. Some literally tortured to death.

Please never forget those lost in the horror. And never forget, too, their surviving kin and close friends. Never forget them.

Councilmember Caan:

I believe last September the United States found itself at a monumental crossroad in our history. We as a nation had a choice to withdraw and turn inward and go into a shell, or do what we have always done in the past, which is rise above whoever or whatever did an injustice to us and use it to lift us up to a higher level.

Those who attacked us felt that we would go into that shell. They saw how we argued about the smallest differences in our society. How we hesitated to go into battle because we weren't willing to accept the casualties that come with conflicts. I believe they felt, we would and could do nothing except make some token response.

The fact is all they proved was that they did not understand us at all. From the moment of the attack, this nation became focused like in no other time of my life. There were only two things that mattered. Helping the victims of the attacks and making sure this

will not happen again. People who never gave living in the United States and what that meant a second thought, now had a new appreciation of what it means to live here and how lucky we are. All our petty differences were put aside and we all worked together the way we knew we could, to get the job done.

We heard many stories of the firefighters who rushed into the World Trade Center and were seen going up higher into the towers as everyone else was going down the stairs to get out. The story of the man who wouldn't leave his friend who was in a wheelchair, he made the choice to stay with him rather than leave his side even though he knew he would not survive. The passengers of Flight 93, who once they heard what was happening in New York, took matters into their own hands and probably saved hundreds of more lives in Washington.

Fair Lawn as a community did its part as well. As the first calls came in, members of our Fire Department and Rescue Squad went to Manhattan and did whatever was needed. Our Ambulance Corp. was dispatched to Jersey City where survivors were being taken.

That very weekend, many of our high school students, Borough employees, and citizens collected donations for the families and emergency workers who were on the job. Our effort was so organized, that instead of our donations going to the distribution center, our truck loads of bottled water, gloves, socks, baby wipes and much, much more went directly to ground zero for immediate use.

It is now one year later, and we have made small sacrifices to keep our nation secure. But the lesson we need to remember is, who we are and what this country represents. The chance for people to live their lives as they wish, as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others. In other words, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In closing, however, we cannot forget all of those families who suffered a deep, personal loss as a result of the terrorist's criminal acts. To each one of those grieving families, I hope that our prayers will offer some comfort and the memories of their lost loved ones will forever be enshrined in our individual and collective memories.

Deputy Mayor Weinstein:

Thank you Mayor and good evening ladies and gentlemen on this somber occasion. It has been a year now since that infamous day - September 11, 2001 - I still remember making numerous phone calls that day trying to reach family and friends from here down to Washington, D.C. and going home that evening and as usual kissing and hugging my wife and children, but, this day a lot longer.

My children cried they took away our New York City and we need Superman to save us. My wife and I reassured our children that our city still stands and that our supermen are our fire, police and other emergency management people.

For a year now as in the Jewish religion we have mourned our losses. The survivors directly affected are continually interviewed and admired for their strength - but they will and should never forget. None of us should forget!

In the last year we have also started to rebuild and retool. Memorials are being planned and internally we have learned not to take our enemies for granted.

We have also continued to celebrate our national heritage - Memorial Day, July 4th, etc. We must remain strong and show our enemies that we will not run - we are prepared! We must remain resolved that the good that is America will still be a beacon for the world.

And, finally, to all those who lost a loved one, a friend, or an acquaintance, your grief is our grief and you will be in our thoughts and prayers for a very long time. May you find some comfort and peace in the days ahead.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Upon motion by Deputy Mayor Etlar and a second by Councilmember Caan, it was unanimously agreed to open the time for public comments.

Assemblyman Matt Ahearn thanked the Council for the opportunity, as a member of the public, to discuss some thoughts and feelings on this first anniversary on this war that was thrust upon us that we did not seek. Yesterday in Trenton he had the honor of unveiling a plaque in memory of the six hundred and ninety-one New Jersey residents that were lost that day in the Trade Center and the Pentagon and in the field in Pennsylvania. He heard a comment in the discussions that the people we lost merely got up and went to work, like they did any day, and that cost them their life. As true as that statement was, there was just something about it that stuck with him and has bothered him. He is just beginning to grasp what it is. People that go to work in the Pentagon

are conceivably a bonafide military target but the people that went to work in the World Trade Center did more than just go in to work like anyone else they worked in a place that was a symbol of a dream and a dream of a world where nations' states could get along in peace. Trade not only goods and services but ideas and information and share cultures and become tolerant of one another. It is an age-old dream that predates our country and has been around since men and women have walked the earth. That building was a symbol of that and those people that worked there were part of it. He lost a friend from law school who was practicing international law. He said she believed that the work done in her area was really part of a movement of a world that could be in peace. That is what our enemies attacked. They attacked a symbol of a culture that they cannot live with because we strive for tolerance, understanding, compassion, all the things that we hold dear as a civilization which runs counter to the political dreams and the power dreams of some individuals in this world. He stated that he thought also about the men and women on Flight 93 that rose up and challenged the hijackers. At that point they knew what had happened, what had happened in New York and at the Pentagon. They each made a choice and realized what this war really is about that there are some situations where there is a call for something greater and the people on that plane recognized it. They did what they could to minimize casualties they knew they were going to die and that was in effect our first victory in this war. I think that is a spirit that we need to remember today because as much as we want to move on and we do so by going to work and doing the things we normally do but not forgetting the new situation that we find our selves in and being alert. Among the lessons we learned that horrible day is that the people that brought this war to us have a lack of compassion and civilization. For many centuries nations have fought very bloody wars and have always recognized the need for compassion and protecting to whatever extent they could those emergency workers, who go out to serve and to save the wounded, injured and the dying. That compassion was recognized but the enemies in this war did not see that compassion. We have a situation where they will initially create an event, a bomb, wait for emergency workers to show up and then target the site again intending to go out after the very people we count on and rely on for our safety. That is one of their biggest weapons. He thought that was why on this day we also need to pause and remember those we lost but thank the members of our community that serve us today, the Police, the Fire, the Ambulance Corps because the enemies that we face have put those people in the front lines of the battle. We should remember and thank them when we see them.

In closing he remarked that someone mentioned that gaping hole in the New York skyline that ache that we all feel when we drive down the turnpike. In his job he gets to do it a couple of times a week and is drawn to that view. He has been looking for a year to fill that void and for what it is worth, this last weekend he took his family to see the Imax movie of the space station. Part of the movie discussed the very same dream that the World Trade Center was all about. A permanent, non national, every nation, America, Russian, Japan, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, all will have astronauts in that international symbol that now orbits permanently. The intent is to always have a human in space. To him, when he thinks of that gaping hole in New York, he simply replaces it with that international symbol of world trade, world cooperation, the exchange of ideas, the tolerance, the very things that our enemies have tried to take away from us and to which they never will be able, no matter how they attack us or how often they attack us. The American spirit which was born of a movement out of the dark ages, that compassion, that tolerance to make us great are now a world dream and we are as they have said it before the last, best hope for mankind and we just have to pick up the pieces. Remember those we lost and never stop doing that which we do and what we do best is build to fulfill the dreams of the past.

Leon Wender, 7-22 Manor Avenue, stated he comes before the Mayor and Council on this very sad occasion but it hurts him how quickly we forget. We will be reminded all day tomorrow. Let us not forget again. Let it be understood that we are all minorities in this great country especially in these trying times we should make a concerted effort at solidarity. In many cases the converse is true. Neighbors are still at each others throat. There is general an unsettling feeling. We have memorial services for the victims and those who heroically died trying to save lives and salvage what was left. We have been aware of Bin Laden's terrorism since 1993 the first attack on the World Trade Center, 1995 the Oklahoma building and 2001 the demolition of the World Trade Center. When will Bin Laden be brought to justice? We must not let our people die in vain. We Americans must restore justice and peace so that all people can walk together hand in hand.

Richard Lustgarten, 12-28 Burbank Street, stated that he wanted to speak as part of the public. Last weekend when he attended religious services in another community the Rabbi was trying to explain how people get through tragic events and one of the things he related to the Congregation was from a book written by a woman that was in a concentration camp in Asia during World War II and at the end of the war about 80 percent of the internees had perished under terrible conditions lack of food, lack of sanitary conditions, and actually the brutality of the guards. She wrote in the book that the way she survived was to see something beautiful in every day. The Rabbi expanded that either her daughter or others commented on that further to say that not only should you see something beautiful, you should hear something beautiful, say something beautiful, and most importantly do something beautiful. That may be a way of for all of those who have been affected to get through the times of remembrance. He hoped that the beauty of the lives of those who perished will be an enduring memorial to the strength of America. At some time in the distant future we may say we forgive, we may, but we will never forget. But let us always say never again.

There being no further comments from the public, upon motion by Deputy Mayor Etlar and a second by Councilmember Caan, the time for public comments was unanimously closed.

Mayor Ganz thanked everyone for joining us this evening for this very special Council meeting on the events of last September 11th and of course our Nation's future. He invited everyone to join them tomorrow evening on the steps of Borough Hall for an interfaith service starting at 8:00 p.m..

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon motion by Deputy Mayor Etlar and a second by Deputy Mayor Weinstein, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn B. Bojanowski, RMC
Assistant Municipal Clerk