

**The September 15, 2025** Regular Session of the Borough Council of the Borough of Spring Lake Heights, Monmouth County, New Jersey was called to order by Mayor Campion at 7:00 p.m. in the Frank E. Adams Municipal Building with a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of 911 as well as public figure, Charlie Kirk, and victims of political violence and a salute to the flag.

## **ROLL CALL**

### Present:

Councilman Leonard Capristo  
Councilman John Casagrande  
Councilwoman Michele Degnan-Spang  
Councilman William Graetz  
Councilwoman Sara King  
Councilman Christopher Willms  
Mayor Christopher Campion

### Absent:

Councilman William Graetz

### Also attending:

John Barrett, Borough Administrator  
Michael Collins, Borough Attorney  
Janine Gillis, Borough Clerk  
Joseph May, Borough Engineer  
Charles Stewart, E2 Project Manager

Mayor Campion announced: Pursuant to the requirements of New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice filed in the Office of the Borough Clerk; posted on the Borough website and in the Municipal Building; published as a legal notice in the Coast Star newspaper; and mailed to those requesting notice and providing payment.

## **APPROVE AGENDA**

On a motion by Mr. Casagrande, seconded by Mr. Willms, the agenda was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms

Nays: None      Abstain: None      Absent: Mr. Graetz

## **PRESENTATIONS – Handicap Access Floating Kayak Launch**

Borough Engineer, Joseph May, recapped the history of the project. He introduced Mr. Charles Stewart who was hired to design the project as well as file permits with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Mr. Stewart described the initial project application and how wetlands affected the location of the ramp. He continued to explain proposed solutions to the initial plan with moving the location of the ramp and provided visuals.

Mr. Capristo stated he personally thinks the proposed solution was plausible. He commented that additional vegetation would be good to add to give more curb appeal to the local residents.

Mr. Casagrande explained the challenges with the NJDEP and the initial application issues were not foreseeable. He believes the compromise makes sense and also recapped how the project was scaled back from the first proposed project with a gazebo. He is in favor of residents being able to utilize our resources such as Wreck Pond.

Mrs. King stated her concerns regarding the residents affected by this project. She would like to see more discussion with the NJDEP and what additional options there are. Mrs. King is also concerned about contamination in Wreck Pond. Mr. Campion asked Mrs. King to explain more of what she is looking for. Mrs. King expanded on her concerns of contamination and conditions of the silt ground.

Mr. Willms agreed with Mr. Capristo that additional vegetation would be a good addition to the project.

Mrs. Degnan-Spang agreed that additional vegetation and landscaping would be a good addition. She also questioned the contamination and what is known.

Mr. Casagrande explained his participation with a local group of representatives and Senator Kim on a tour of coastal lakes. He stated a number of studies have been done including contamination. The largest challenge to the water quality is storm water runoff. The towns all along Wreck Pond all face the same concerns and challenges. He stated that dredging requires a tremendous amount of capital and possibly starting a commission.

Mayor Champion asked Mr. Stewart what is known about the NJ DEP concerns of contamination and silt. Mr. Stewart responded that neither topic was raised by the DEP.

Mayor Champion requested the public comment section be moved to allow resident input and be able to ask Mr. Stewart questions.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

On a motion by Mrs. King seconded by Mr. Casagrande, the public comment section was opened by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms  
Nays: None          Abstain: None          Absent: Mr. Graetz

Laura Beyer, 604 Shore Road, thanked the council for reviewing the project and questioned the process of the project. Ms. Beyers, referencing the initial application, questioned the location of the ramp, the practicality of the ramp completely and why other locations were not proposed. Mr. Stewart responded to Ms. Beyers regarding the location selected. Mayor Champion requested orderly conversation. Mr. Casagrande explained the application steps that were taken and how the application was changed based on all feedback. Mr. Stewart responded to Ms. Beyers question as well.

Pattie Perry, 618 Shore Road, stated her concern with water quality of Wreck Pond as a health hazard as well as the liability the Borough would have with offering a kayak launch on the pond. She is glad to see the area being taken care of and was happy when some of the area was cleared. She continued to state that she would like to see some vegetation added with the kayak ramp as well as more clearing of the area. Ms. Perry shared her biggest concern is the borough being sued.

Frank Cavalieri, 16 Rosewood Court, questioned why the canoes had to be moved off the property. Mayor Champion responded. Mr. Cavalieri also questioned the current boat registration permit process and received an answer that the permits will be back in place. Mr. Cavalieri further shared his concern about Wreck Pond's water quality. He volunteered to be involved if a commission was established for Wreck Pond's water shed. Mayor Champion asked the council if they were interested in that. Mr. Casagrande said he is already involved in one.

Frank Kraus, 635 Beacon Blvd Sea Girt, stated his surprise that it has taken so long for the water quality of Wreck Pond to be questioned and addressed. He brought up the Nature Preserve on Wreck Pond that was created and thinks the collaborative effort of all the towns should continue with addressing the water quality. He further stated that any vegetation added should be native to the area and questioned if there would be lighting at the location. Mr. Capristo responded that it is only dawn to dusk, and no lighting will be added.

Frank Ciufu, 506 7th Avenue, stated that the curbs at Monmouth Avenue and 7th Avenue are not painted yellow to indicate no parking. DPW Director Mr. May took note to address this.

Joseph Schmidt, 559 Prospect Avenue, thanked the council for listening to concerns at the last meeting. He wanted to address Airbnb's in town again. He detailed services that should be addressed in the ordinance regarding the short-term rentals. The Airbnb's advertise that other services could be provided. Ex: massage, hair, chef. Mayor Campion asked Mrs. King for an update on moving forward with an ordinance. Mrs. King provided an update on the ordinance with the research and details that are being worked on.

Gil Gardini, 553 Prospect Avenue, detailed his experience with an Airbnb near his property. Mr. Capristo thanked Mr. Bardini for coming out to speak on the topic. He reassured Mr. Bardini that the issue is being worked on. Ms. Degnan-Spang further explained that Spring Lake Heights will be comparable with other local municipalities on short-term rental requirements. All council members agreed that the ordinance should be in place as soon as possible. Mr. Bardini also addressed Wreck Pond's water quality and how tidal water can help the water quality. There is a pipe, Spring Lake has control of that maybe the council can work with to have opened more.

Amber Burke, 600 Shore Road, expressed concerns about parking on Shore Road as well as if the dock came loose during a storm and would become a threat to her property. Ms. Burke said she would not use the kayak ramp and does enjoy the natural entrance. She is in favor of the ramp being moved more east away from her property.

Karen Burke, 606 Shore Road, expressed her discontentment with the kayak ramp and the state of the vegetation of the location. She asked for the kayak launch to be moved, for parking on Shore Road to be addressed, and for more communication with residents. Ms. Burke continued to express her resentment. Mr. Capristo implored the residents to not engage with Facebook posts and to come directly to the Borough for information. He asked if there is a common ground among the residents for a relative solution through a committee. Mr. Capristo thanked all residents for coming out and being involved and wants to come to a solution that is good for everyone. Ms. Burke presented her property deed that has information on her rights to Wreck Pond. The document was given to the Borough Attorney.

Christine Weiss, 616 Shore Road, expressed her concern for the kayak dock being a threat to property in bad weather. Mr. Capristo asked Mr. May if there was an emergency plan. Mr. May explained the dock is of modular construction and could be removed in an emergency. However, it could withstand a 500-year flood.

Mrs. King recommended the Borough obtain a third party to review the project. Mrs. King further made a motion to hire a third-party engineering professional to review. Mayor Campion agreed that another expert would be beneficial to review the project.

Karen Burke, 606 Shore Road, stated she would join a Wreck Pond commission if established and encouraged the Council to work with surrounding towns to clean up the pond.

On a motion by Mrs. King, seconded by Mrs. Degnan-Spang, the resolution to hire additional third party engineering services to review the kayak launch project was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms

Nays: None          Abstain: None          Absent: Mr. Graetz

Karen Burke, 606 Shore Road, pointed out the deed she provided mentioned “no piers”. Kerry Murray, 710 Shore Road, would like more communication with the Council and Administration. Ms. Murray said she was part of the initial grant application in 2019 and questioned how the grant application changed from the initial scope to what it is now. She feels deceived by the process and how the grant was received and used.

On a motion by Mrs. King, seconded by Mr. Casagrande, the public comment section was closed by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms  
Nays: None            Abstain: None            Absent: Mr. Graetz

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS – None**

## **MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilwoman Degnan-Spang – Mrs. Degnan-Spang reminded that hydrant flushing is starting for the next few weeks and to run cold water in the tub if water is discolored.

Councilman Willms – No report

Councilwoman King – Mrs. King stated her focus is working on short-term rental primarily AirBnB regulations.

Councilman Casagrande – Mr. Casagrande reviewed the bond ordinance on the agenda.

Councilman Capristo - Mr. Capristo provided reminders on fall leagues and gave an update on Joseph E. Robertson Park. He asked Mr. May to confirm the park will be reopened in the next few weeks weather permitting. Mr. May confirmed.

Mayor Campion - Mr. Campion asked Borough Clerk Gillis to review details of the upcoming Fall Festival. Mrs. Gillis detailed the timeline, vendors, and dates of the Spring Lake Heights Fall Festival.

## **SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- **Ordinance 2025-15**, Bond Ordinance providing various 2025 capital improvements, by and in the Borough of Spring Lake Heights, in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey; appropriating \$1,000,000 therefor and authorizing the issuance of \$950,000 bonds or notes of the borough to finance part of the cost thereof

On a motion by Mr. Casagrande, seconded by Mr. Willms, the public hearing for Ordinance 2025-15 was opened by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms  
Nays: None            Abstain: None            Absent: Mr. Graetz

Elizabeth Kelsey, 624 Jersey Avenue, questioned the playground location for kids to play. Mr. Capristo and Mr. Casagrande responded to Ms. Kelsey’s questions.

Karen Burke, 606 Shore Road, questioned if there are any plans for a “play yard” at Shore Road. Mayor Campion responded that this ordinance has nothing to do with Shore Road and there are no plans for that location.

On a motion by Mr. Casagrande, seconded Mr. Willms, the public hearing was closed by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms  
Nays: None            Abstain: None            Absent: Mr. Graetz

On a motion by Mr. Casagrande, seconded Mr. Capristo, Ordinance 2025-15 was adopted by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Mr. Graetz

**REPORTS, NOTICES & CORRESPONDENCE**

- Spring Lake Heights Zoning Violation List - July 2025
- Spring Lake First Aid Squad Monthly Report – August 2025  
Mayor Campion reminded that the squad is made up of only volunteers and they are always looking for additional members. Please consider volunteering
- Independent Fire Co. No. 1 Monthly Report – August 2025
- Spring Lake Heights Police Monthly Report – August 2025
- Township of Wall Public Notice 09/24/2025 Re: Ord. 18-2025 Land Use Accessory Structures

**ORDINANCE INTRODUCTIONS - None**

**CONSENT AGENDA Resolutions R2025-162 to R2025-163**

*Consent Agenda items are considered routine and will be enacted with a single motion; any items requiring expenditure are supported by a Certification of Availability of Funds; any item requiring discussion will be removed from the Consent Agenda; all Consent Agenda items will be reflected in full in the minutes.*

- **R2025-162**, Approving outdoor music permit – The Mill Lakeside Manor
- **R2025-163**, Approving designated membership in Independent Fire Co. No. 1; Owen Quigley & Kaeleigh Jones (Junior Membership)

On a motion by Mrs. King, seconded by Mr. Willms, the consent agenda was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Mr. Graetz

**RESOLUTIONS**

- **R2025-164**, Approving the payment of the itemized claims as set forth on the September 12, 2025 bills list

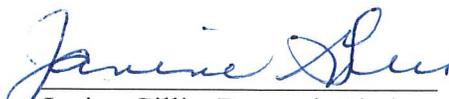
On a motion by Mr. Casagrande, seconded by Mr. Willms, Resolution No. R2025-164 was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Mr. Capristo, Mr. Casagrande, Mrs. Degnan-Spang, Mrs. King, Mr. Willms

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Mr. Graetz

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, on a motion by Mrs. King, seconded by Mr. Capristo, the meeting was adjourned without objection at 8:46 p.m.

  
Janine Gillis, Borough Clerk

Approved: October 20, 2025