

## City Attorney Statement Regarding Council Sessions

Based on the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 virus, the State of New Jersey and the City of Lambertville have taken necessary action to ensure the continued regular operation of government. Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, formal action by the Governing Body must be taken in public, at a meeting that is adequately noticed to invite public participation and maximum transparency. **Such requirements are not set aside during times of emergency, and therefore the City and its Governing Body MUST proceed with conducting these necessary meetings, in accordance with State law, and in a manner that ensures optimum transparency.**

Despite recent amendments to OPMA providing for electronic notice of any meeting, the City will continue to provide the standard statutory notice for its meetings by posting such notice in City Hall and publishing notice with The Trenton Times and Hunterdon County Democrat.

We would like to note the following, as the City has formulated a specific plan as to how to proceed with Governing Body meetings for the foreseeable future:

The OPMA, as amended, authorizes governing bodies to conduct public meetings through use of streaming services and other online meeting platforms. The City will utilize Zoom video conferencing, which also provides a dial-in feature if residents would prefer to participate by phone rather than video, as well as teleconferencing for those who wish to connect by phone only.

The City will continue to rely on the procedures currently in place for public comments directed to City officials during all meetings. **There will be no change to the City's public comment policy for virtual meetings.**

The City, at all times, will act within the requirements of the OPMA for meetings conducted during this public health emergency so that the City government can continue to provide services to the community, and the public can continue to participate and provide comments, without interruption.