

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION

October 8, 2008

8:07 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Baldorossi called the meeting to order.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

The Opening Statement was read: Notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice was published in the Burlington County Times on January 6, 2008; given to the Register News for information; posted on the municipal bulletin board.

ROLL CALL

Present: Bruce Garganio, Dennis O'Hara, Sean Ryan, Jerry Sandusky, Frank Baldorossi

Also Present: Mayor William Berry; Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator; Thomas Sahol, Assistant Municipal Administrator; Dante Guzzi, Township Engineer; Russell Trice, Township Water and Sewer Engineer; William John Kearns, Jr., Township Solicitor; Joy M. Weiler, Township Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Lotter, 3 Walnut Court, on behalf of a friend that was unable to attend this evening's meeting, asked if his friend would be notified before the lot behind the Broad Street stores was paved? Administrator Brook stated that Dan Guzzi, Township Engineer, was asked to prepare a conceptual plan and cost estimate for discussion this evening. Nothing is being decided this evening.

All residents having an opportunity to be heard, MOTION by O'Hara; seconded by Ryan to close the public portion of the meeting. All ayes - motion carried.

TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Parking Lot Discussion: Behind Broad Street Stores

Dan Guzzi, Township Engineer, prepared a conceptual plan for a parking lot behind the Broad Street stores to show what it is back there and where the municipal property is located. Most of the storeowners' property behind the stores is already paved. There are utilities that will have to be worked around. His plan would create approximately 38 parking spaces using municipal property attached to the storeowners parking lot. Discussion followed regarding using part of the stores' parking area, which would create a larger buffer between the municipal parking lot and the residential area. He did not do a detailed cost estimate but believes his plan would be in the range of \$50,000 to \$60,000. There could be a cost savings if some of the existing paving behind the stores is utilized.

Council Member Sandusky stated that he asked Administrator Brook to explore the possibility of putting in a small parking lot and explained that he has gone there on occasion and has seen a lot of cars parking on the grass. He felt that if township money was involved in putting in a parking lot, it may entice the storeowners to clean up the rear of their properties. Another concern of the storeowners is when it snows. It is usually a mess in front of the Broad Street stores after a heavy

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snowfall, so if there was a parking lot available, Broad Street could be posted for No Parking and the area could be plowed much more efficiently.

Council Vice President O'Hara knows that Boyd's Pharmacy and the liquor store have rear entrances and asked if any of the other facilities do? If not, the patrons would have to walk around to the front. Council Member Sandusky noted that there is a business across Broad Street, whose patrons sometimes park in front of the stores that also could utilize the parking lot and free up parking in front of the stores.

Administrator Brook stated that the conceptual plan is just a starting point to begin discussion. Suggestion was made to extend the existing paving 18 feet or so to have one cohesive parking lot, opposed to using all of the municipal property. The township could work with the property owners to improve the existing paving. Council Member Ryan would like administration to speak with the business owners to see if they believe there is a need for parking, and if they would like to partner with the township. With the state of the economy, the business owners may not be in a financial situation to contribute to the project. Before Mr. Guzzi moves forward with refining the plans, administration will see if there is interest on the business owners' part.

Shoppes at Mallard Creek: Bond Reduction Request

Mr. Guzzi reviewed and recommends the bond reduction request. A Resolution will be prepared for next week's meeting. Council Vice President O'Hara and Council Member Ryan stated that they have a conflict of interest and would abstain from voting on this matter next week.

Road Program: Current Estimate No. 2

Mr. Guzzi reviewed and recommends payment of Current Estimate No. 2. A Resolution will be prepared for next week's meeting.

Main Street Community Center: Current Estimate No. 2 and Change Order No. 1

Mr. Guzzi reviewed and recommends Change Order No. 1 and payment of Current Estimate No. 2. A Resolution will be prepared for next week's meeting. Mr. Guzzi stated that the building is coming along nicely and should be completed before the end of the year.

ASSISTANT MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Response to Petition Received Last Week

Assistant Administrator Sahol provided a draft letter for Mayor and Council to review in response to the petition received at last week's Council Meeting. Mayor and Council are in agreement to send out letter.

Clothing Bins

Assistant Administrator Sahol noted that clothing donation bins are appearing throughout town. He provided pictures for the governing body to review. Clothing donation bins were addressed by the New Jersey League of Municipalities, and there is a law that regulates clothing donation bins. Council Members are in agreement to move forward with an Ordinance.

Council Member Ryan questioned if the bins can be regulated on private property? Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that the town has regulated the bins through zoning in the past.

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Council Member Ryan questioned the status of Planet Aid that was discussed at a previous meeting? Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that it is still in its infancy. He spoke to the Burlington County Recycling Coordinator earlier this week and a lot of municipalities are waiting for the materials to be delivered to them. After investigating, Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that Good Will and Plant Aid's donation bins are non-profit.

Authorize to go to Bid for Pipe Fittings, Etc.

Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that a Resolution is needed in order to go out to bid for ductile iron pipe, fittings, valves and other materials for the Water and Sewer Department. A Resolution will be prepared for next week's meeting.

Community Development Block Grant (CBDG)

Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that the timeline for these grants is tightening up. The deadline for application is in December. He provided the following suggestions:

- Handicapped accessible ramps
- Removal of architectural barrier work
- Road and drainage improvements: in specific areas but not on cut through roads
- Install automatic handicap accessible front doors at the Florence Township Library

Assistant Administrator Sahol believes that the front doors at the library are a good project since the handicap restrooms were recently installed and it is a polling location.

Council President Baldorossi questioned the drainage at Seventh Avenue and Hornberger Avenue. Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that unfortunately that area is not included in the census tract for the grant.

Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that handicap accessible ramps are eligible anywhere in the community. Mr. Guzzi noted that there are approximately eight (8) ramps remaining in Roebling that could not be done with the last grant because the money was insufficient. Council Member Garganio would like to see that part of the project done so there is accessibility through the Village of Roebling. Council Member Ryan agrees.

The grant will be approximately \$70,000 - \$80,000. Estimates will be worked up for the handicap accessible ramps and the library doors. Assistant Administrator Sahol suggested that there may be enough left over to do the drainage improvements on James Street, since it is a small street.

Assistant Administrator Sahol will check on the grant deadline and time requirements for the Public Hearing.

Fence on Alden Avenue

Assistant Administrator Sahol discussed damage to the fence along Alden Avenue caused by people using that area as a shortcut. The wood fence belongs to the township; the chain link fence belongs to NJ Transit. The fence has been fixed numerous times. Besides the destruction of property, there is also the safety issue of people being on the railroad tracks. NJ Transit will be contacted to repair their fence and to patrol the area of their jurisdiction. The township will repair their fence and be proactive in enforcement in the area of our jurisdiction.

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Assistant Administrator Sahol noted that at the back end of the boat parking area two (2) trees have come down; two (2) – three (3) trees have to come down. They are posing a liability; they could crash down on a boat or the railroad tracks. When they come down, some of the buffering will be lost.

Traffic: County Suggestion

Assistant Administrator Sahol discussed the letter from Burlington County regarding their suggestion to have signs installed on Delaware Avenue alerting motorists that Station Road is available to access Route 130 South. He believes a resident contacted the County. Assistant Administrator Sahol does not agree with the suggestion because he does not want to burden Station Road. Those that live in town know that Station Road is available.

Council Member Ryan discussed the modification done to the traffic light at Route 130 and Delaware Avenue in the past few months to enhance the safety for people making left hand turns. He has seen first hand where traffic was backed up to the Delaware Avenue Fire House. The cycle of the light only allows traffic to go through a very short time; the cycle seems to be about 10 seconds. Council Member Ryan was contacted by a resident that stated he typically waits two (2) light cycles to cross Route 130. He would like a request to go to the appropriate authority to look at increasing the timing of the light.

John D'Acquisto, 7 Yockus Lane, stated that if you are behind a tractor-trailer or two (2) you can expect to sit through multiple lights. Another problem is with tractor-trailers turning off Route 130 North onto Florence-Columbus Road; the trucks hit the curb. Even though there is a set back for the vehicles waiting to make a left off Florence-Columbus Road, the trucks making the turn off Route 130 North come very close to the vehicles. Council Member Garganio explained that the problem was worse at one point. The township contacted that State and this is the repair they did. The State did not want to purchase any of the corner property.

Council Member Garganio has also encountered the traffic backup at the traffic light, especially coming into town from Florence-Columbus Road.

A letter to NJ DOT will be drafted on behalf of Mayor and Council asking that the timing of the light on both sides be looked at.

TOWNSHIP SOLICITOR

Towing Fees

Solicitor Kearns met with Chief of Police, Stephen Fazekas, who will be reviewing the Towing Ordinance and reporting back with his recommendations.

Letter from Bordentown Township: Shared Services

Solicitor Kearns noticed that in the packet there was a letter from the attorney for Bordentown Township proposing a shared services agreement with Florence Township and asking that the contract be signed. Solicitor Kearns stated that there have been no discussions between Bordentown Township and Florence Township. He does not recommend a Resolution to sign a contract where there have been no discussions. Solicitor Kearns will write a letter to Bordentown Township's attorney advising him that no discussions have taken place.

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RECESS: 9:09PM Motion made and seconded to hold a brief recess. Roll call vote – all ayes.

MEETING RESUMED: 9:12PM Motion made and seconded to return. Roll call vote – all ayes

MAYOR

Request that Meetings Start at 7:00 PM

Mayor Berry stated that the meeting times for the calendar have to be decided on this week and asked if Council would like to change the start time of the Council Meetings to 7:00PM or keep at 8:00PM. After further discussion, it was decided that the start time of the Council Meetings will remain 8:00PM.

Resolution: Future Street Name for Judge Sweeney

Mayor Berry requested that Judge Sweeney be invited to a Council Meeting in order to present him with the Resolution naming a future street in his honor; this will be discussed further at a future meeting.

2009 CALENDAR: VETERAN'S DAY, 11/11/09, CONFLICT

Joy Weiler, Township Clerk, stated that Veteran's Day in 2009 falls on a Council Meeting night. She asked if Council would like to meet the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, which would be the week after the New Jersey League of Municipalities Convention? Council Members are in agreement to advertise the meeting for Wednesday, November 25, 2009, and cancel if it is not needed.

TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATOR

Housing Inspection Fees

As discussed during the Budget Meetings, Administrator Brook provided a detailed report on what the municipal costs are versus what is charged, along with a proposal for an increase in the fees. The township's costs are anywhere from \$120 - \$130; the township currently charges \$35 for an initial housing inspection and \$20 for a follow up inspection. A breakdown of what other municipalities charge was provided to show where the township falls and to show how reasonable the township's fees are. The proposal is to increase the fee to \$75, which would automatically encompass a re-inspection, which is common. Over 80-85% of homes need a re-inspection. It would not impact senior citizens because there is no fee for senior citizens, which will not change. Council Member Garganio asked if \$75 would cover the township's expenses? Administrator Brook stated that it is under but would rather increase gradually. Council Vice President O'Hara questioned the \$100 fee for emergency or last minute inspections? Administrator Brook explained that usually inspections are scheduled a week or two in advance but there are times when a landlord or realtor will call and need an inspection right away. The extra fee is really to deter that from happening.

Council Member Garganio believes that the township should break even on the inspections; the fee should be the cost of the housing inspection. Council Vice President O'Hara agrees and stated that the other taxpayers of the municipality are absorbing the balance of the inspection fees.

Council Member Ryan asked if housing inspections are done as a service to the residents? Administrator Brook stated that it is a user fee type service. Solicitor Kearns explained that housing

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inspections are for code compliance; the homeowner cannot get a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) until they meet code. Administrator Brook stated that the overall goal of housing inspections is life safety and property maintenance.

Council Member Ryan agrees with the suggestion in the report Administrator Brook provided. Council Vice President O'Hara and Council Member Sandusky agree with Council Member Garganio to increase the housing inspection fee to \$120 to break even with the township's expense.

Upon roll call to increase the housing inspection fee to \$120 and the re-inspection fee as indicated in the report, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Garganio, O'Hara, Sandusky, Baldorossi

NOES: Ryan

ABSENT: None

4-1 Motion carries.

Delaware Avenue Water Main

Administrator Brook reported that David Lebak, Director of the Water and Sewer Department, stated that the Water and Sewer Department is able to do the work of replacing the old 4" dead end line that the homeowners are tied into on Delaware Avenue and looping the system. An easement would be needed from the homeowners; the only stumbling block would be if an easement cannot be obtained. Majority of the work will be done in-house. Administrator Brook explained that it is a significant job on a main artery through town that will have to be planned out in advance. The road will have to be closed and detours set up.

Administrator Brook explained that overall it will be better for the water system and the residents that are connected to the dead end line, but there is no guarantee about the condition of the Paul's water lateral that is 28 years old. The water laterals from the homes to the main are not being replaced.

Council Members are in favor of moving forward with replacing the dead end water main on Delaware Avenue.

Scamporino: Tax Abatement Request

Administrator Brook stated that Mr. Scamporino contacted him regarding the project on Harkins Drive. He will be applying for the permits and asked Administrator Brook to ask Council if they would allow him to apply for the Tax Abatement. It has to be done prior to the issuance of the issuance of a building permit. Mr. Scamporino acknowledges that he should have come in earlier to apply for the Tax Abatement. Council Members are in agreement to allow the Tax Abatement. Administrator Brook and Solicitor Kearns will prepare the Ordinance.

FOP (Fraternal Order of Police)

Council Vice President O'Hara asked the status of the FOP by Bung's Tavern on Route 130? Administrator Brook stated that he has not heard anything new.

Greenbriar Solar Lighting

Administrator Brook discussed solar lighting for Greenbriar. He has done some research and has found that solar lighting is usually in very sunny areas. He does not know enough to be conversing

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with the governing body that solar lighting, for street lighting, is refined enough yet. There is also the issue of contacting each homeowner, where the lights would go, to be sure there is no conflict. He has heard from residents that are interested and also homeowners who have said they do not want solar lighting under any circumstances. That is something Greenbriar's Homeowners Association will have to deal with. More research is needed on solar lighting, especially how well they will work in New Jersey. A significant battery backup may be needed also for cloudy days. Administrator Brook will research further and report back. He will also begin to isolate the locations for the lights and speak to the Homeowners Association.

ACTION

APPLICATIONS

- A. Raffle: Night at the Races, Florence Township Civic Association, November 14, 2008, 6:00PM
– 2:00AM, American Legion Post 194

It was on the MOTION of O'Hara, seconded by Ryan to approve the above application.

On the Question

Nothing at this time.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

YEAS: O'Hara, Ryan, Baldorossi

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: Garganio, Sandusky

Motion carries.

RECESS

10:15 PM MOTION by Garganio, seconded by Ryan to recess to Closed Session. Roll call vote - all ayes.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

11:00 PM MOTION by Ryan, seconded by Sandusky to adjourn Closed Session and return to Open Session. Roll call vote – all ayes.

TALL PINES: PHASE II

Administrator Brook reviewed the water and sewer debt service fund and the general account, which is the general account that pays for the township's bills through taxes. In the general fund there will be a break around the year 2010, where there will be a drop off in debt service. In water and sewer there is a significant amount of debt service that will not change until 2018. He provided a Water and Sewer Debt Service schedule, which he reviewed with the governing body.

NOTE: 11:05 PM Solicitor Kearns and Engineer Guzzi left the meeting.

Administrator Brook also provided and reviewed the Water and Sewer Assessment Trust Fund, which includes extension of water and sewer mains at the Tall Pines Development at \$1.3 million. That is the amount of notes outstanding now in the water and sewer department that the township

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will eventually have to go to permanent financing on. The other items on the report are construction of a new water well and replacement of water mains and service lines for a total of \$1,947,000. That means sometime over the next few years the township will have to go to permanent bonding, which gets included into the debt service schedule. Administrator Brook will then have to anticipate the impact on the rate schedule. The reason he brings up water and sewer is due to the Phase II job in the Tall Pines Development. The anticipated overall cost for Phase II is \$1.5 – \$1.6. Phase I has been completed and there is no timetable for Phase II. The only reimbursement the township will receive for Phase II is through the assessment, which will be 19 homes at \$15,000 a piece.

Administrator Brook suggested authorizing Alaimo to move forward with preparing the bids and specifications and apply for the permits. At least the township would be moving forward with costs that can be absorbed on a cash basis through the budget. That process would take six to nine months. At that time, Administrator Brook would come back before the governing body and re-evaluate whether to keep the project on hold, look to go through the Environmental Infrastructure Trust Loan program or the possibility of going out for permanent bonding.

Discussion followed regarding if residents want to tie-in or not to the water and sewer lines. Administrator Brook explained that there was a survey done and noted that not all of the residents that said they would tie-in when Phase I was completed have tied-in. Concerns were raised that due to the state of the economy the residents may not be in the financial position to tie-in as they were a few years ago when the original survey was done. Council Member Ryan would like to hear from the residents to see if they want to see Phase II move forward. Council Member Sandusky agrees.

Mr. Trice will prepare an estimate for Alaimo's services; Administrator Brook will prepare a draft survey letter for discussion at a future meeting.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING EXPANSION

Administrator Brook reviewed the Current Fund Debt Service. He explained that the debt service is going to stay steady through the year 2009; in 2010 it will drop approximately \$560,000, which was done as a safety valve because there is other debt service out there that is going to have to be financed or if there was ever a true emergency the township would have the ability to use. The debt service goes back up and stays stable from the year 2011 – 2015. At the end of 2015 the township is basically done with most of the permanent debt service aside from what is in note. It drops off by well over \$700,000. The township has \$2,413,000 in outstanding notes that are going to have to be financed through permanent bonding one way or another. In addition, there are these Bond Ordinances that the township has not gone to financing on that they are debating whether to try to go to financing for short term money this year or wait for next year. Bond Counsel advised Administrator Brook that they went out to borrow money with several other towns over the past couple of weeks and quite a few towns are getting no bidders, which means no one is buying up the notes. That creates a potentially serious problem. When you add everything up the township has approximately \$4,218,500 in permanent financing that they will have to go out and borrow on the market one day. The time is coming and the question is going to be the timing to get the best rate as possible. That also means bringing in a financial advisor; he recommends Dave Thompson who has sat down with Administrator Brook, at no fee, to look at the debt service.

Administrator Brook stated that the municipal building has outgrown itself and has been outgrown for years. He believes the best idea is to expand the existing building and make improvements to the existing building.

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Administrator Brook met with Sandra Blacker, CFO, and Mr. Thompson to go over some different scenarios of how to finance if the \$4,218,500 figure was brought up to \$7,000,000; and how it could be done so you get into the year 2010 and make a payment on the debt service. He feels that the township is in an ideal position; Florence Township is getting to the point where they could go out to borrow the money in 2009 or 2010, alter the debt service schedule so the township would only make very minimal or no principal payments between 2011 and 2015 while the debt service is steady. The payments would be phased in, where primarily interest is being paid; then in the year 2016 when the debt service drops off, principal and interest would be put in place, without increasing the debt service. Administrator Brook believes that it is feasible that it can be done without much noticeable impact on the tax rate.

Administrator Brook stated that utilizing the Florence Emergency Squad building for the Police Department, as discussed at a previous meeting, would be a temporary fix. Expanding the municipal building would be a permanent solution.

Council Vice President O'Hara asked if the core building would be utilized during construction of the expansion? Administrator Brook stated that the core would be utilized during construction.

Discussion followed regarding plans for the expansion that were drawn up. They will be copied for the governing body.

Council Members in agreement for Administrator Brook to research further and refine the report.

11:55 PM MOTION by Ryan, seconded by Garganio to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote - all ayes.

ADJOURNMENT

11:55 PM Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

JOY M. WEILER, RMC/MMC
Township Clerk

/mab