

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION

November 10, 2004

8:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Fratinardo called the meeting to order.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

The Township Clerk read the Opening Statement: 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 4, 2004; given to the Register News for information; posted on the municipal bulletin board.

ROLL CALL

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Bruce Garganio, Elizabeth Ryan, John Fratinardo

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Barbara Ungarini, 1023 Potts Mill Road, concerned about the no u-turn sign on Route 130 South between Potts Mill Road and Delaware Avenue. Assistant Administrator Sahol explained that the sign was installed in error and will be removed.

Mary Veras, Route 130, has heard many rumors about her property and asked for clarification. Administrator Brook explained that due to the future development of the Roebling Steel Mill site, the County approached the Township to see if they were interested in the County coordinating with the State to do a traffic study on Hornberger Avenue and Route 130. The conclusions from the study will be presented to the governing body for them to do what they want. The Township agreed to proceed with the traffic study and tonight DOT is here to present their findings. Administrator Brook stated that if the Roebling Steel Mill site were to become a viable property, with 2,000 or more jobs, the township has to ask how will the traffic get in and out of the site? Council felt that it was a good idea to look at Hornberger Avenue and Route 130, see what the potential problems are now and focus on the future.

Ms. Veras asked what rights the property owners have? Administrator Brook explained that these are conceptual ideas and should not be construed as definite plans. Mayor Muchowski asked Solicitor Kearns to provide Ms. Veras with an overview of a homeowner's rights if the Township were to acquire her property. Solicitor Kearns explained that in the worst-case scenario and they have to acquire a homeowner's property, the first step would be to negotiate with the property owner. If an agreement cannot be reached, a Declaration of Taking would be filed in court and heard before the Condemnation Commission. They issue a report on the value of the property, which neither the State or the property owner have to accept. If it is not accepted, it goes back into court for a trial to determine the fair value of the property.

Council Member Garganio explained that they are not even close to taking her property. Mayor Muchowski understands her concerns as a property owner and stated that is why she was invited

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to the presentation. He also stated that the governing body would weigh every possible alternative before taking someone's property.

Council President Fratinardo stated that he would give the public an opportunity to address DOT and Council.

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

NJ DOT TRAFFIC STUDY PRESENTATION

Mark Remsa, Burlington County Economic Development and Regional Planning Coordinator, gave an overview of the planning efforts, which started in 1995, for the Route 130 Corridor that runs from Florence Township to Cinnaminson. The purpose is to look at ways to revitalize the corridor.

Mr. Remsa discussed the redevelopment of the Roebling Steel Plant site and the problems that an increase in traffic would cause on the current infrastructure, which was designed many years ago. He explained that this evening is just the beginning of a very long process and it is still in the idea stage.

Abbas Hirya, NJ Department of Transportation Representative, thanked the governing body for allowing him the opportunity to present their ideas of how they think the area of Route 130 and Hornberger Avenue could be reshaped in the event that the Roebling Steel Mill site is redeveloped. He emphasized that these are not definite decisions but ideas; Florence Township is free to accept, modify or decline the suggestions. Mr. Hirya introduced Jeffrey Smithline, Traffic Consultant for Vollmer Associates, LLP, to present the findings of the study.

Mr. Smithline explained that the focus of the study was to determine the potential impact the development of the Roebling Steel Mill site might have. He reviewed the existing conditions, including traffic patterns and accident data, of the Route 130 and Hornberger Avenue area. They also looked at the growth potential in the future as far as traffic is concerned, with the assumption that the Roebling Steel Mill site would be a business park. He then presented two conceptual plans:

1) Realign Hornberger Avenue with Fairbrook Drive

Pros: Improves storage capacities onto and off Hornberger Avenue
Improves sight distance issues
Improves access for Fairbrook Drive/protects turning movements

Cons: Requires significant land takings
Eliminates access to gas station from Route 130 North
Four phase light
Rebuild Route 130 Bridge over Craft's Creek
Rebuild Hornberger Bridge over branch of Craft's Creek
No provision for U-turns

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2) Improve Existing Intersection

Pros: Improves storage capacities onto and off Hornberger Avenue
Lower construction cost
Three phase traffic light

Cons: Sight distance issues still exist
Gas station property will need to be acquired and cleaned
No protected movements at Fairbrook Drive
Rebuild Route 130 Bridge over Craft's Creek
Rebuild Hornberger Bridge over branch of Craft's Creek
No provision for U-turns

Mr. Smithline believes that the traffic capacity level on Route 130 is going to fail by the year 2014, with or without the development of the Roebling Steel Mill site.

Due to its safety benefit, Mr. Smithline stated that Alternative 1 is the recommended concept at this time.

Mayor Muchowski asked what impact the development of the steel mill site would have at the grade crossing on Hornberger Avenue? Mr. Smithline believes in the initial stages of development, the two lanes would be adequate but at some point they would recommend that it be expanded to 4 lanes at the site.

Mayor Muchowski noted that Florence still has the grass medians on Route 130 and questioned DOT's long-term outlook on Route 130 from Florence Columbus Road up through Bordentown at Route 295. He asked if DOT has any plans on removing the grass medians and widening the highway? Mr. Hirya stated that there are several areas on Route 130 with grass medians that DOT is looking at. Mr. Smithline explained that the study looked at just the intersection and recommends a corridor study in this area.

Council Vice President Ryan asked Mr. Smithline to expand upon the property takings. Mr. Smithline explained that it would not take up the entire gas station site but enough that it would no longer be a usable site for a gas station. There would also be takings of the front of the properties on the east side of the highway.

Mr. Smithline stated that they did look at jug handles but does not recommend them. He reviewed the pros and cons.

A resident questioned the impact that the Eckerd Drug Store on the corner of Route 130 and Delaware Avenue would have on traffic once it is constructed. She feels that there are already traffic problems on Delaware Avenue. Mayor Muchowski explained that Eckerd had two traffic studies done and are in conversation with DOT to make that intersection more effective.

Ron Oros, 2129 Route 130, stated that years ago when the steel mill was opened, men had access to the back of the mill through Kincora. He asked if any consideration has been given to create access behind the mill? Mayor Muchowski explained that it is continually being looked at but would be a secondary access point because of the maneuvers that would be necessary. It would

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also be used for emergency access. Mr. Oros asked if Mansfield Township was putting limitations on accessing that road? Mr. Remsa explained that one of the limitations is that the road is overgrown and would have to be widened to bring to current standards. Widening would require permitting. Mr. Remsa feels that it an option that should be looked into.

Mr. Oros asked DOT if any consideration been given to raising the bridge? Mr. Hirya stated that there are plans to conduct a study for improvements of that bridge.

Mayor Muchowski explained the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife put restrictions on removing some trees by Roma Bank due to eagles that live on Newbolt Island since it may be an area where they eat. Therefore there may be limitations on what can be done to the bridge.

Discussion followed regarding raising the bridge.

Council Member Garganio asked what the next step would be? Mr. Hirya stated that they will leave the plans for the governing body to review and wait for their input. He advised them to take their time.

Mayor Muchowski thanked everyone for the presentation and stated that the governing body will review it and get back to them with any questions.

RECESS: 9:40 PM Motion made and seconded for a brief recess. All ayes.

MEETING RESUMED: 9:43 PM Motion made and seconded to return. All ayes.

REZONING REQUEST: WOODLAWN

Woodlawn Development: Griffin Pipe

Council Member Garganio does not feel that rezoning a property for single-family homes that could potentially be used for light commercial use would benefit the community. He would like to rezone the property to see if they could get a better use. Council President Fratinardo explained that a majority of the property is already zoned residential, and they are asking to rezone a small portion that is zoned Special Manufacturing, and switch with a small wooded parcel that is zoned Residential. Council Member Garganio would like to evaluate the zoning and consider changing the zoning for all of the property to Special Manufacturing.

Mayor Muchowski asked if any other Council Member had concerns? He stated that Council needs to discuss it and give their opinion to the Planning Board regarding the actions that Council would like to take.

Mayor Muchowski stated that the attorney representing the applicant at the Planning Board meeting cited case law where the SM portion could be utilized as an open space set off for the residential portion on a property that has split zoning within one property. Council Member Garganio asked if that prevents SM development in the future since it would be utilized as the open space? Mayor Muchowski that it would not because it is just a small section.

A representative of the developer stated that their portion of the property is 55 acres, all but 7 acres are zoned Residential. They are asking that the 7 acres be rezoned Residential.

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After a lengthy discussion it was on the MOTION of Garganio, seconded by Baldorossi to send back to Planning Board for Master Plan review to keep in mind what is best for the residents of Florence Township.

On the Question

Council President Fratinardo stated the application is now being reviewed and asked if the Master Plan can be reviewed and zoning changed while an application is pending? Solicitor Kearns stated yes.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi and Garganio

NOES: Ryan and Fratinardo

ABSENT: Sandusky

Motion does not carry: 2-2.

Solicitor Kearns will review case law and advise Council.

Lounsberry

Mayor Muchowski reviewed the history of the parcel. The property owner is concerned regarding an application for the adjacent property. Discussion regarding the zoning of the property took place. Administrator Brook will advise the property owner that it will remain an SM zone.

TOWNSHIP WATER AND SEWER ENGINEER

Water Allocation

Russell Trice, Township Water and Sewer Engineer, stated that the water Allocation permit application is at the State for review. The Section Chief will be reviewing it. If there are no major obstacles she expects the staff report to be finalized and issued around the beginning of December. The staff report is a draft permit. The Township will have 2 weeks to comment on it and return to DEP before it goes into the 30 day public notice period.

Tall Pines Water and Sewer

Mr. Trice asked if the governing body wanted him to look at what the cost would be to extend the water and sewer to where the two residents are interested? Will advise Mr. Trice at a later date.

Administrator Brook stated that he spoke with Bruce Benedetti, School Board Business Administrator, regarding the Water and Sewer agreement. He is fine with it but would like to have an attorney review it, which will be done on Monday. Since Council does not meet again until December 1, he asked if Council would like to approve the application this evening conditioned on no major changes. Council in agreement to approve this evening.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

CDBG Project

Discussion followed regarding handicapped ramps and curb cuts. Council Member Garganio suggested accessibility paths to the existing fields for persons in wheelchairs. Assistant

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Administrator Sahol explained that is not an eligible project and reviewed the limitations with the grant. He stated that a road could be done but it must begin and end in a low to moderate income area.

National Trails Grant

Assistant Administrator Sahol explained that the grant has a \$25,000 maximum with 20% match. He suggested renovating the paths in the Riverside Avenue Park between Second Avenue and Eighth Avenue. Council in agreement for Assistant Administrator Sahol to proceed with application for grant.

Council Vice President Ryan questioned the location of the Delaware Heritage Trail. Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that it starts under the bridge, comes up Front Street to Hornberger Avenue, to Main Street, to Riverside Avenue, up Second Avenue and along the mill site to Hornberger Avenue.

REORGANIZATION PACKET: 2005 MEETING DATES, AGENDA, RESOLUTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

The Mayor and Members of Council received the packet of information for the 2005 Reorganization. The information was briefly reviewed.

Council Vice President Ryan noted that Council did agree to hold the reorganization meeting in Roebing at the Roebing Firehouse. Light hors d'oeuvres will be served and the Centennial Committee will have a display.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION – REEDER PROPERTY

Administrator Brook explained that this goes back to August of 2003 when Council initially gave preliminary approval to put these properties into the Farmland Preservation Program as long as there were no municipal costs. The County is now asking for formal approval. This would be a permanent approval. The County requires a formal response by December 1st.

ROADWORK: CEDAR LANE EXT.

Assistant Administrator Sahol, on behalf of the County, asked the governing body about having a portion of Cedar Lane Ext. fixed. Council in agreement to grant permission for the County to mill and fix the road.

WATER AND SEWER RATE

Discussion held until December.

SIXTH GRADE CLASS: STENCILING

Mayor Muchowski reported that a teacher contacted him regarding a project the sixth grade class is working on. They are working with the Delaware Estuary Society on obtaining a grant to provide stenciling at inlets that drain to the river advising people not to dump. He feels it is a worthwhile project. Council in agreement to allow the project.

COAH

Administrator Brook reported that Wednesday's are difficult for the Township Planner, Carl Hintz, to meet with the governing body. He is asking that they meet with him on a different night. Solicitor Kearns stated that would be a Closed Session item. Council Members prefer

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Wednesdays. Administrator Brook will see if Mr. Hintz can come in early on a Wednesday evening.

LETTER FROM MR. CARTY

Administrator Brook asked the governing body if they would like him to respond to the letter from Mr. Carty informing him that he should be approaching the School Board not the Township Council? Council Members in agreement for Administrator Brook to respond.

ADJOURNMENT

11:05 PM Motion made by Ryan; seconded by Baldorossi to adjourn meeting. Roll call vote – all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

JOY M. WEILER
Township Clerk

/mab