

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION

March 9, 2011

8:00PM

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

Council President O'Hara called the meeting to order and led the Salute to the Flag.

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 2 and 16, 2011; given to the Register News for information; posted on the municipal bulletin board.

ROLL CALL

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Sean Ryan, Jerry Sandusky, David Woolston, Dennis O'Hara

Also Present: Mayor William Berry; Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator; Thomas Sahol, Assistant Municipal Administrator; Joy M. Weiler, Township Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENT

Don Kamienski, 10 McCay Drive, stated that at the February 9th meeting, Assistant Administrator Sahol indicated that he would be applying for a \$250,000 grant from Burlington County for the replacement of the floating dock. He asked the status of that grant application? Assistant Administrator Sahol explained that the application is due March 30th, next Wednesday. A Resolution authorizing him to move forward with the application will be on the Agenda for Council's approval. The grant will be discussed briefly this evening.

Bill Bott, 64 Riverbank Drive, stated that an application was coming before the Zoning Board for a solar field and asked if the township had an ordinance governing solar? Administrator Brook stated that there is no ordinance that covers ground mounted solar fields. He believed standards will be set in the future. In response to Mr. Bott, Solicitor Kearns advised that the Zoning Board should treat an application for a solar field as they would any other variance. The applicant will be seeking a use that is not currently a permitted use and if it is approved the Zoning Board will have to develop the standards and include them in the Resolution.

Mr. Bott questioned Item H (Mail Delivery: Riverbank Drive) on this evening's Agenda? Council Member Ryan stated that there have been concerns regarding passenger vehicles parking in front of the bank of mailboxes, making it difficult for the mail carrier to deliver the mail. Mr. Bott has witnessed vehicles parking in front of the mailboxes. Mayor Berry discussed moving the bank of mailboxes from the middle of the apron to one end or the other of the apron. That would create a parking spot.

Mike Sawka, 75 Riverbank Drive, suggested, instead of having to pour a cement pad to move the mailboxes, reconfiguring the mailboxes where the mail carrier would put the mail in the boxes from the sidewalk side. Solicitor Kearns explained that the design of mailboxes is designed by the United States Postal Service; the regulations state that if the carrier cannot pull right up to the box, they do not deliver the mail. The present carrier is going beyond what is required by getting out of their vehicle to deliver the mail. Mayor Berry believes Mr. Sawka had a good idea and would like to present his suggestion to the post office. Assistant Administrator Sahol will contact the Post Master to give a background of the residents' concerns.

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Council President O'Hara suggested that Administrator Brook, who is the Acting Zoning Officer, meet with the Zoning Board Planner prior to the Zoning Board meeting to go over the guidelines for solar fields. Administrator Brook explained that if it is a use variance, the applicant has to meet the conditions under the statute to be granted the use variance. He will speak with the Zoning Board Planner. Council Member Ryan knows that the solar panels are worth money and easily removed so he suggested that a method to secure the solar field be included in the application. Administrator Brook will discuss security with the planner.

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

SUSAN ESPOSITO, FOUNTAIN OF LIFE: COAH PROPOSAL, 220 FOUNDRY STREET

Administrator Brook stated that 220 Foundry Street has been in deplorable condition for years; it was so bad at one point, before Fountain of life owned it, that the township had to step in and deem the property unsafe for human habitation and everyone had to be moved out. Once Fountain of Life purchased the building, they cleaned up the property and secured; there is no longer a problem with vandalism. A few months ago Ms. Esposito, Esq., representing the church, approached Administrator Brook about doing something with this property, which is dormant, and they began discussing affordable housing. The township has an affordable housing requirement to comply with and the church is interested in exploring that idea so he arranged for them to meet with Mary Beth Lonagan, COAH Planner. The discussion peaked more interest for both Administrator Brook and Fountain of Life. Administrator Brook stated that if Council agrees, the township would work with Fountain of Life to create a subsidy payment out of the COAH Housing Trust Fund and a Pilot Payment but more importantly, it will provide affordable housing units under the township's COAH Plan in an existing building, five to six units that the township can use for its certification on its overall COAH obligation to the State of New Jersey. The funds are available in the COAH Trust Fund.

Susan Esposito, Esq. stated that when Fountain of Life came into possession, they wanted to do something with the building that would be an asset to the community. Part of Fountain of Life's philosophy is to be good citizens and an asset within the community.

Ms. Esposito stated that the building has been cleared out and taken down to the studs so the architect could see what they had to work with. The building is structurally sound. After being rehabilitated, it will be a beautiful building. There are two (2) apartments on the second floor and one (1) apartment on the third floor that will not be structurally changed but brought up to standards. Three (3) useable units can be put in on the lower floor where the bar was. There is parking that is part of the block and lot, so parking should not be an issue. Ms. Esposito is looking for encouragement from the governing body if that is what they would like to be done with the property.

Council President O'Hara is familiar with the history of the building; his wife's grandfather built the building along with his brother. Council President O'Hara lived in one of the second floor apartments in his early marriage and agreed with Ms. Esposito that it is a magnificent building. He questioned the use of the basement. Ms. Esposito explained that they just finished cleaning out the basement, which had become a storage area; the use of the basement has not been determined yet. Council President O'Hara asked if they planned to do anything with the exterior as far as the brick was concerned? Ms. Esposito stated that they have not gotten to that point yet; they are open to

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whatever is aesthetically appropriate for the neighborhood. She stated that there are existing openings where they would be able to put in the doorways for the additional apartments. She stated that they have not gotten that far with the architect; they are at the preliminary stage. Council President O'Hara asked that they retain the façade over the door where "Agustanelli" is inscribed and also suggested that they use Agustanelli (which was the name of the builder) in the name of the building.

Council President O'Hara stated his hope that Fountain of Life can turn the building into something that can benefit the community and low to moderate-income residents. Council Vice President Baldorossi agreed that it is a very good idea. Council Member Sandusky agreed but asked, if Council approved, the timeframe for rehabilitating the building, if the project would be worked on constantly until completion? He asked because the progress on the building on Norman Avenue that Fountain of Life owns is progressing very slowly. Ms. Esposito stated yes, as much as humanly possible, there are always things that come up to hinder the progress on a project.

Ms. Esposito introduced Ed Hedger, Project Manager. They have both been members of the church since 1971. Mr. Hedger is a project manager for a low to moderate-income builder and has experience. He has been volunteering his help with smaller rehabilitation projects and his expertise helps to keep them on track. Ms. Esposito stated that this is the first rehab of this size that she will be a part of and will be counting on Mr. Hedger's expertise. Ms. Esposito will also be looking for the township's input on the project.

Council Member Ryan stated that it is a great idea and is comfortable seeing the administrative meetings move forward to work out the details. He does share Council Member Sandusky's concern regarding the property on Norman Avenue.

Council Member Woolston thanked Ms. Esposito and stated that it is a great project that will help beautify the town.

Mayor Berry agreed that it is a nice idea and is willing to work with them.

Council Member Sandusky suggested that Council President O'Hara's mother-in-law cut the ribbon when the time comes.

ASSISTANT MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Recommendations for 2011 Burlington County Park Grant

Assistant Administrator Sahol provided a list of recreation improvements to add to the grant application for any money that would be left over after the boat ramp project, which is the primary project. He asked each of the recreation organizations to provide a list of things that would benefit in advancing their program or lessening some of the burden on the municipality to keep their program going. The list has items that are either safety related or expansion related and is in no particular order.

Regarding fitness/exercise equipment along Veterans path, Mayor Berry sits on the Advisory Board to the Burlington County YMCA and periodically they are looking into places to do this type of installation. They will be installing different exercise stations at the promenade in Burlington City. He suggested reaching out to the YMCA to see if it is a possibility to partner with the YMCA to get

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it done. Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that would actually help the township in scoring on the application.

Council President O'Hara asked how much of the \$250,000 grant, if the township is fortunate enough to receive, would be used on the boat ramp? Assistant Administrator Sahol stated about two-thirds of the grant. The balance will be used for the parks. He explained that this grant is only for parks.

Assistant Administrator Sahol explained that applications are rated on a point system and he stated that the boat ramp for the township makes a good application because Florence Township is one of the few waterfront communities that has a public boat dock that is not privately administered. It is already a deed restricted green acres location; Florence is on the Heritage Trail and Florence Township has a very good track record of maintaining the boat dock. All of these things combined gives the application a good chance of being approved.

Assistant Administrator Sahol will prepare a Resolution authorizing him to proceed with the application for Council's approval next week.

Earth Day Clean Up Event

Assistant Administrator Sahol had been contacted by a resident that would like to volunteer to run a community wide Earth Day Clean Up Event on April 23, 2011. She would seek sponsors for t-shirts and would like to focus on the children; she is looking into a parent/child type of a program. She would like to begin at the Roebling Museum and fan out from there into the community to clean up some of the streets and parks. Mr. Kamienski, who voluntarily headed a Spruce Up Team last summer, will share the information as to how he began and ran the program. Assistant Administrator Sahol noted that there are funds available through the Clean Communities Grant to help with this project. Mayor and Council are in favor of this project.

Slag Area

Council President O'Hara questioned that progress of the slag area in Roebling. Administrator Brook stated that they have made tremendous progress. They took out the pipe that was misaligned, completely replaced it and coordinated all of the inspections through the township engineer's office. They will be replacing a couple of manholes on Riverside Avenue to help improve the flow at their cost. They will be coordinating with the Chief of Police because the road will be shut down during the day but be reopened at night.

Council President O'Hara noted that there have been no complaints of odors but there have been complaints of the dirt blowing onto the homes and vehicles on Riverside Avenue. Assistant Administrator Sahol will look into.

TOWNSHIP SOLICITOR

Landlord/Rental Units

Solicitor Kearns stated that this will be discussed further in April.

Permit Parking Restrictions

Solicitor Kearns stated that Council Vice President Baldorossi asked him to get together language to be used for permit parking restrictions to be used on Second Avenue, which was provided in the packet. After Solicitor Kearns provided the draft, he did have some additional thoughts. Is it two (2)

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permits per house whether they have one (1) or two (2) cars; can they loan an extra permit to a neighbor or someone that is visiting or do they have to have a car registered at that address to receive a permit? Council Vice President Baldorossi's thought was that the vehicle must be registered at that address to receive a permit. He also suggested that permit parking be in effect 24 hours a day opposed to certain hours of the day. Administrator Brook noted that the administrative costs would not be much and does not believe there is a need to charge a fee for the permits. He would advise the governing body if it was going to be an administrative burden. Solicitor Kearns stated that the ordinance can be amended after it is adopted, if necessary.

Council Member Sandusky expressed concern that this is going to filter onto the other avenues and those residents are going to want the same. He also expresses concern if a resident has a party, none of the guests are going to be able to park on Second Avenue. It may cause problems if guests park on the other avenues. It is something that needs to be thought over.

Council President O'Hara suggested that Solicitor Kearns make the revisions that were discussed this evening and show the revised draft to the residents for their input. The residents can be questioned on Council Member Sandusky's concern.

Solicitor Kearns explained that the permit parking will not be for a specific parking space but on a space available basis on the street.

It was on the MOTION of Ryan, seconded by Sandusky to reopen Public Comment. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carries.

Joe Csik, 45 E. Fifth Street, stated that he believes that permit parking will make matters worse and will spread to the other avenues. Discussion followed regarding parking when the steel mill was in operation but there were not as many vehicles at that time. Times have changed and there are many vehicles now. Council President O'Hara explained that Council Vice President Baldorossi represents the Ward which includes the Village of Roebing and received many phone calls regarding the parking situation; other members of the governing body have also received calls. He believed it is worth bringing the revised draft to the residents to get their feedback. Solicitor Kearns suggested making the revisions and inviting the residents to the April Worksession meeting to discuss before the governing body takes action. Council Vice President Baldorossi agreed.

Bill Bott, 64 Riverbank Drive, stated that he understands what was being done but his only concern is that the same problem exists on the other avenues and once those residents see that Second Avenue has permit parking, they will want the same thing. Council Vice President Baldorossi stated that permit parking cannot be done on some of the other avenues because there are 60 houses but only 43 parking spaces. Council Member Ryan noted that when Second Avenue was striped residents from other avenues came in wanting the same thing, but realized that striping would not work because of the parking crunch and the loss of parking spaces.

Council Member Sandusky stated that he lived in Roebing at one time and parking was at a premium then. He believed it would trickle down to the other avenues where those residents are going to want permit parking. He noted that the governing body has had overflow parking lots installed in the Village of Roebing.

Council President O'Hara stated that this will not address that each resident will have a parking space in front of their home but instead will alleviate the problems caused by residents that have

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three or more vehicles where they can only park two vehicles on the street. Council Vice President Baldorossi explained that a majority of the problem is the upper 100 block, which is closer to the municipal lot at the end of Third Avenue.

Mr. Kamienski asked if the ordinance could be amended if they find that changes are needed after it is in effect? Solicitor Kearns stated that the governing body can amend any ordinance at any time.

Solicitor Kearns will email the revised draft ordinance to the Township Clerk and the governing body. Administrator Brook stated that the draft ordinance can be hand delivered to each home on the 100 block of Second Avenue advising them that it will be discussed at the April 13th Council Meeting.

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

FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET

Council President O'Hara noted that the voters defeated the Fire District Budget and it is up to the governing body to review the budget. A subcommittee performed that task. Administrator Brook stated that the subcommittee was made up of Mayor Berry, Council Member Sandusky and Council Member Ryan; they met with a subcommittee of the Fire Commissioners (Arnold Miller and John Dulo). Administrator Brook stated that the rate was not increased, so the subcommittees had a conceptual discussion on how to make a reduction in the Fire District Budget without hurting their ability to provide services. Administrator Brook stated that from 2009 to 2010 the Fire Districts overall call volume increased approximately 30 – 36%. After the discussion, both sides were all in favor of cutting \$20,000 in expenditures. This provides for a reasonable cut in their appropriations, which will reduce their levy without putting too much difficulty on their overall ability to operate and provide services to the community. Council Member Ryan, Council Member Sandusky and Mayor Berry are comfortable with the recommendation of cutting \$20,000. Administrator Brook explained the process to move forward. Council Members are in agreement to move forward. A Public Hearing will be held and a Resolution will be prepared for next week's meeting.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH: REQUEST TO CLOSE STREET

A request was received from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church to close W. Second Street between Broad Street and Spring Street for Father Appreciation Day on June 11, 2011 from 1:00PM – 4:00PM. Sgt. Boldizar provided a diagram with his recommendation. Assistant Administrator Sahol spoke with and reviewed the diagram with a representative of the church, Mr. Stephens. Mr. Stephens was thankful for the police officer's recommendation and the safety measures that are required. The church agreed to the recommendations completely. The residents that will be impacted by the road closure will be notified.

It was on the MOTION of Baldorossi, seconded by Ryan to approve the street closure on W. Second Street from Broad Street to Spring Street on June 11, 2011 from 1:00PM – 4:00PM for Father Appreciation Day as detailed in Sgt. Boldizar's diagram and report.

On the Question: Nothing at this time.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ryan, Sandusky, Woolston, O'Hara
NOES: None ABSENT: None Unanimous approval.

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MAIL DELIVERY: RIVERBANK DRIVE

Administrator Brook clarified the decision made when discussed earlier in the meeting. The Assistant Administrator Sahol will approach the Post Office regarding a single sided box concept or turning the present box 90° so the postal carrier can stand on one side off the street to deliver. Council President O'Hara liked the idea of turning the present box. Assistant Administrator Sahol will discuss the situation with the Post Master and report back.

COAH: 340 ALDEN AVENUE

Administrator Brook stated that this is a project that is ready to start; they have submitted their construction plans. The property owner, an affordable housing group, had agreed to donate the units to the township at no cost. They then came in and asked for a small bridge loan since the financing for residential construction has been very difficult to get over the past few years. The loan would come out of the COAH Trust Fund, not out of tax dollars, that would be paid back at the time a CO is issued. Administrator Brook stated that this is a very common agreement. He was then asked to approach the governing body about a Pilot Program for the property. Kent Pipes of Salt and Light asked if the township would consider making a \$100,000 contribution out of the COAH Trust Fund that they would utilize for energy saving measures by installing solar energy. If the township was able to provide that contribution, Mr. Pipes would work out an agreement on a Pilot where they would pay \$3,000 to \$3,500 a year to the municipality. Administrator Brook believes it is a good suggestion and helps both sides. Council Members were in agreement to move forward. Administrator Brook will report back with a formal agreement once it is prepared.

RESERVE FOR UNCOLLECTED TAXES

Administrator Brook explained that all municipalities are required to collect taxes; the municipality collects for all entities: school, fire district and county. The municipality collects the taxes and pays out to the proper entity. If the township is unable to collect 100%, they have to set aside money, it is called a Reserve for Uncollected Taxes Fund. The taxes have to be paid to proper entities, whether the municipality collects the taxes or not. If the township does not have enough money in the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes, they have to borrow the money. The State of New Jersey has included the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes in the 2% tax cap levy, which eats away at the township's ability to raise the tax rate if they have to. The NJ League of Municipalities is asking for the municipalities of the State for their support by approving a Resolution asking the Legislature to consider putting the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes outside of the Tax Cap Levy and for consideration in providing a levy cap exception for the impact of tax appeals on local operations. The state and the counties are pushing all municipalities to do reassessments. Municipalities will feel the impact of reassessments for two – three years. Council Members were in agreement to approve the Resolution, which will be on next week's Agenda.

MEMORIAL FOR POLICE OFFICER KOTCH

The Florence Township Police Detectives would like to hold a Memorial for fallen Florence Township Police Officer Kotch, who was killed in the line of duty. Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that the department would like to move the location of the present memorial closer to the police department and out of the area where the Christmas tree lighting takes place, where it can get walked on. Also, the police officers will see the memorial each day as they come and go from their shifts. Council Members were in agreement to move the memorial. Assistant Administrator Sahol will work with the police department.

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WHITESSELL PROPOSAL

Administrator Brook emailed the governing body Whitesell's proposal and asked if they have an interest in discussing with Whitesell as a subcommittee. Whitesell is looking for options and if the governing body does not have an interest, they will not explore any further. A subcommittee including Mayor Berry, Council President O'Hara and Council Member Woolston will meet with Whitesell.

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP POLICE DETECTIVES JAMES FORD AND ALBERT JACOBY TO BE HONORED

Council President O'Hara noted the letter from Florence Township Police Chief, Stephen Fazekas, advising that Florence Township Police Detectives James Ford and Albert Jacoby will be honored on July 16, 2011 for the outstanding effort they put in on a major narcotic investigation. A letter from Mayor and Council will be sent thanking them for their efforts.

BURLINGTON COUNTY MUNICIPAL JOINT INSURANCE FUND

Council President O'Hara stated that because of the outstanding safety programs that have been implemented, the township has earned \$1,950 as a result of an outstanding performance in the 2010 Burlington County JIF Safety Incentive Program. A memo will be sent congratulating and thanking them for being safe on the job.

PLANNING BOARD

Mayor Berry noted that for the second month in a row, this month's Planning Board meeting has been canceled because there were no applications to be heard.

VOLUNTEER BADGES-REQUIRED

Council Member Woolston noted that he spoke with Tim Lutz, Recreation Chairperson, who will get the message out to all of the recreation coaches to wear their volunteer badges as required.

2011 BUDGET

Council President O'Hara asked if another meeting to review the 2011 Budget was needed? Administrator Brook stated that it is a good idea. Council Members were in agreement to meet on March 16th at 6:00PM.

9:45PM MOTION by Ryan, seconded by Woolston to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote – all ayes.

ADJOURNMENT

9:45PM: Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

JOY M. WEILER, RMC/MMC
Township Clerk

/mab