

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION

SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

8:00PM

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

Council President Sandusky called the meeting to order and led the Salute to the Flag.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice was sent to the Register News for information on 1-5-12; posted on the municipal bulletin board on 1-5-12 & placed on the web-site; sent on 12-21-11 to the Burlington Co. Times for publication on 1-8-12, but due to the newspaper's error, the notice was not published until 1-11-12.

ROLL CALL

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Ted Lovenduski, Paul Ostrander, David Woolston, Jerry Sandusky

Also present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie; Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator; Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Administrator; Anthony Drollas, Jr., Township Solicitor; Russell Trice, Water & Sewer Engineer; Joy M. Weiler, Township Clerk.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Sandusky opened the meeting to the public. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was on the MOTION of Ostrander, seconded by Lovenduski to close the public portion. Roll call vote - all ayes. Motion carried.

BUSINESS

Water & Sewer Engineer

- Estates at Oak Mill, Phase II – Water and Sewer Bonds: Reduction
- Estates at Oak Mill, Phase I – Sanitary Sewer Pumping Station Bond

Engineer Trice said the two items are for reductions. He said he recommends both reductions for the maximum amount of 30% of the original bond. He said they are actually more complete than that but this is the maximum allowed.

Council Member Woolston said that due to a conflict, he will be abstaining from the vote.

It was on the MOTION of Baldorossi, seconded by Lovenduski to approve preparing the resolutions for the next meeting for the bond reductions. Roll call vote – all ayes and one abstention. Motion carried.

Waste Water Service Area Plan

Administrator Brook posted the plan for the public to see. He explained that in the past a municipality was responsible for its own Wastewater Management Plan. Florence Township has one of the most current plans in Burlington County, which is a good sign.

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He said it can take a long period of time to create a plan, which can hold up development and have an economic impact on the municipality. He said the county is now charged with creating county-wide wastewater service areas. A copy of the plan was sent to the township and then there was a revised plan reflecting the comments provided by the township. The only question with the plan is whether the area beyond the Turnpike on Florence-Columbus Road to the left, heading out of town, should be included. Presently it is not. He would not recommend including it now because the plan is current and reflects what the township has in place now. The Administrator said in the future if the township wants to develop that property, Mark Remsa, County Planner, recommends the first step be changing the State Planning Designation. He said it would help to lay the foundation for future development. Once there is an end user the township can revise the Wastewater Management Plan. The Administrator said it would be difficult to do everything at the same time. He said the Wastewater Management Plan is the key to controlling the kind of development that happens in the township. A resolution can be prepared for the next meeting. There is also always an opportunity to meet with Planner Remsa to discuss the area.

Engineer Trice said this plan mirrors the plan created a couple years ago that was changed to add the school on Cedar Lane. This was an easy process because the plan was already very good. Going forward if there is a possibility that the township wants to change the wastewater service area, the planning should start as early as possible. It takes an extended amount of time to get the changes approved by the Department of Environmental Protection. He said it is difficult to plan that far ahead but it is something to keep in mind.

Mayor Wilkie said this is one of the ways the township was able to stop the massive growth of housing developments. It would be too costly for a developer to run sewer to the area in question. He said if it is decided later to develop the area, the township will need to find a way. He asked that Council consider taking the step of changing the State Planning Designation to open up options.

Council President Sandusky said Council would like Administrator Brook to meet with Planner Remsa and would like to see the resolution on the next agenda.

Township Engineer

- Estates at Oak Mill, Pulte Homes: Bond Reduction Request, Phase 2 Paving, Site and Storm Sewer
- Estates at Oak Mill, Pulte Homes: Bond Reduction, Phase 1 D Landscaping
- Bung's Tavern Solar: Release Performance Bond w/ Maintenance Bond
- Thomas J. Fallon: Release Maintenance Bond

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Administrator Brook explained that the Township Engineer was excused for the evening so he will give the report. The Estates requests for reductions were reasonable and it is recommended they be approved. A letter from Engineer Dan Guzzi recommended the release of the bond for Bung's Tavern conditioned upon the posting of a maintenance bond. Engineer Guzzi also recommended releasing the bond for Thomas Fallon.

It was on the MOTION of Lovenduski, seconded by Woolston to approve the engineers' recommendations and have resolutions prepared for next week's approval. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried.

Assistant Administrator

- **Recommendation for Stop Sign**

Administrator Brook said there was a request for a stop sign at Yurcisin Street and Bennett Street. Assistant Administrator Sahol reviewed the situation and also sent the request to Police Chief Al Scully who agreed it was a good idea. There will be an ordinance prepared for the next meeting.

It was on the MOTION of Lovenduski, seconded by Woolston to approve preparation of an ordinance for a stop sign at the intersection of Yurcisin and Bennett Streets. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried.

Township Administrator

- **2012 Best Practices**

Administrator Brook explained the State of NJ requires municipalities to complete a Best Practices Checklist. Part of the requirement from the Department of Community Affairs is to discuss the checklist at a public meeting. He said there are 50 questions and the municipality completes the questionnaire and returns it to the state. The answers affect how much state aid the municipality will receive. He and the township's Chief Financial Officer went over the list and believe Florence will receive its entire amount of aid. He said there are points to review. One question asked if the township had any shared services agreements? The answer is yes, but the next question asked if the agreements were filed with the Department of Community Affairs and the answer is no. The township was not aware it was required to do so, and he feels many other municipalities were also unaware of this requirement. He said subsequently the agreements have been sent. Administrator Brook said Florence has been entering into shared service agreements for many years. When the water lines were installed on Route 130, the township entered into an agreement with Burlington. The township has loaned equipment to other municipalities and has used other's equipment. Administrator Brook mentioned the gas agreement with the Board of Education that has been in place for many years. He also noted that the Assistant Administrator has agreed, at no cost, to be the Certified Recycling Coordinator for Bordentown Township and Fieldsboro.

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Administrator Brook moved on to the “Pay to Play” section of the questionnaire. It regulates campaign contributions by those contracted with the township. The township has not adopted an ordinance that is stronger than what the State of NJ requires, but he said we do follow the state guidelines. He said there will be further discussion on the topic at a later date to see if it would be advantageous to create a stronger Pay to Play Ordinance. Solicitor Drollas explained that the township is not required to draft a tougher ordinance but he will take a look at the current ordinance and advise.

Administrator Brook referred to a question about auditing the telephone lines. He explained that Assistant Administrator Sahol audits them very frequently and does find some cost savings. He said that there are questions about actions that are required by the state and Florence complies with what is required. The Administrator gave some examples of these including budget requirements and checks and balances that are in place. The residents are very fortunate that Mayor and Council are extremely involved in the budget process. He chose a question on the survey inquiring if funds are set aside for snowplowing? The township does this and always looks at past years to see what is needed. Other municipalities may not do this and it could create an emergency. The state frowns upon this practice. For Florence, an emergency would be an unforeseen circumstance. He said the township does make available budget documents, salaries of personnel and other public information. As far as negative responses, there was a question about liability training for employers. Administrator Brook is working on this with the Township Solicitor and there will be a presentation. There are rules in place but the need is for a full employment manual to have all of the information in one place. He also stated that another question asked if there are regular inspections of municipal facilities? Administrator Brook said that not only are the buildings inspected, but also all of the playgrounds. There is a report filed every month. It protects the township, also. The checklist is a guide to municipalities. It is best to answer honestly and correctly. The checklist will be submitted and there is a certification that it was presented to the public.

Council President Sandusky opened the meeting to the public to comment about the checklist. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, the public hearing was closed. Motion made and seconded to close the public comments on the checklist. Roll call vote - all ayes. Motion carried.

Department of Transportation Grants

Assistant Administrator Sahol explained that there is an application for municipal aid he has submitted for Boulevard reconstruction. There is also an application for aid through the Safe Streets to Transit. It provides funds for improving sidewalks. He hopes that he can also fix some side streets on the way to bus stops. There will be a resolution prepared for next week.

Councilman Ostrander asked if there is a way to receive funding to create a safe way to walk to the Florence Light Rail station? Assistant Administrator Sahol explained that the difficulty is to get to the Route 130 Corridor. There's no sidewalk potential on Cedar Lane and on the whirlybird. He noted also that it involves private property.

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Mayor Wilkie said the long range plan is to get from the light rail into Florence. He said that Redi Pac is running a bus to and from the light rail, but there is a lot of foot traffic along the tracks and on streets near there. There is a spur near the Whitesell property and it is expensive to cross over railroad tracks. Assistant Administrator Sahol said that as soon as an opportunity presents itself, the township will pursue it immediately.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said that for the future, he is looking for grant funds for Potts Mill Road, Hornberger Avenue, and others that are showing wear and tear. He said the work will most likely be done in stages. Council President Sandusky said he appreciates all of the grant funds Assistant Administrator has secured for the township.

Administrator Brook explained that the township has upgraded its tax software to be the most current possible. He said the township is also looking at the Finance Department software. The current program is a DOS program that goes back to the time when there were terminals. The Chief Financial Officer continues to try and work with it. There have been some significant demonstrations from Edmonds and he has reached out to other communities that use the Edmonds software and it is a highly rated program. Now is the time to make the switch. It is a large initial investment that would come out of surplus funds. Administrator Brook said there are restrictions on how these funds can be used. There are now only two people in the finance office and this program will help the office run more efficiently. He said if the software is not upgraded, there is risk that the office will not be able to be maintained. Florence Township needs to keep up to date.

Mayor Wilkie said this will bring all of the technology up to date and make the offices run more efficiently. It shows things are moving forward.

Administrator Brook said the tax bills will be going out this week. There are notices included with the due date and the information has been posted and is on the township website.

Administrator Brook said the township usually purchases two police vehicles each year. He said he is looking ahead to 2013. The vehicles will be purchased with the capital surplus funds. There will be an ordinance for the next meeting. It will be adopted in October. Right now the order is for one Tahoe. He said the town needs to wait and see how next year's budget looks before a second one could be purchased. The fleet is not being diminished.

Mayor Wilkie said a new policy in the police department of not running a vehicle for all shifts has cut down on wear and tear and the vehicles are lasting longer.

Mayor Wilkie said he has been reviewing and looking at the Recreation Department. At the last Recreation Committee meeting there were a number of items that need to be addressed. Assistant Administrator Sahol needs to be able to focus on other areas of work. To ease the burden on him, Mayor Wilkie would prefer to hire someone part time. He said he would like to go in a new direction with Recreation.

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Mayor Wilkie is working on a job description and there are funds in the budget. Participation is up, so he would like someone to be able to concentrate on Recreation. The reality is that the town needs to do more with less. He noted that the township offices are down six employees and looking at the budgets, there will not be any full time hires for quite some time.

President Sandusky opened the meeting to public at this time.

William Bott, 64 Riverbank Drive, asked what the speed limit is in his development? He said there is a sign that says 15 MPH. People are driving quickly. Assistant Administrator Sahol said the actual speed limit is 25 MPH because it is a local road. Mr. Bott said drivers are also not stopping at the stop sign.

Council President Sandusky asked about traffic coming into town on Hornberger Avenue from Route 130. He said there is a solid line and cars should not turn on red into town. Mayor Wilkie said that the new road work will clean up the area.

It was on the MOTION of Baldorossi, seconded by Ostrander to adjourn.
Roll Call vote - All ayes – motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

8:55 PM: Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

JOY M. WEILER, RMC/MMC
Township Clerk

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