

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION

May 11, 2016

7:00PM

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

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

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice of this meeting was advertised in the Burlington County Times on Sunday, May 8, 2016; sent to the Trenton Times for information on May 5, 2016; posted on the municipal bulletin board and the Florence Township website on May 5, 2016.

ROLL CALL

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

Also present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie; Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator; Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Municipal Administrator; Kelly Grant, Esq., Township Attorney; Joy M. Weiler, Township Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was the Motion of Woolston and seconded by Sandusky to close the public comments. Roll call votes - all ayes.

BUSINESS

A. SERV Behavioral Health System, Inc.: Marilyn Ticktin & Keith Hamilton Affordable Housing

Mr. Hamilton presented the Mayor and members of Council with information about his group and what they do. It included a calendar and brochures on the organization. He said they are interested in a property on Fourth Street in Florence.

Administrator Brook said the township is working to acquire the property. The administration looked into what SERV does and how they are in other communities. He contacted communities and SERV was highly recommended. The township is very willing to work with SERV and acquire a property that is suitable and be a partner with SERV. At this point he did not want to limit the discussions to a specific property.

Mr. Hamilton said any property they were able to partner with would be a good opportunity. The group recently acquired a property in Springfield and will soon be building a 2400 square foot ranch style house with four bedrooms; two bedrooms would be handicapped accessible.

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He said SERV has been around for forty four years and has grown from two group homes to sixty-five group homes. It now has over seven hundred fifty people in its residential programs. There are two day programs and an outpatient clinic also. The funding comes from different sources. They are very familiar with HMFA, the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York and others. They plan to use the Florence property for the developmentally disabled. SERV may be getting into a program with the Division of Children and Families. If it came to fruition, they might look to use the site for that.

Council Member Sandusky asked if there were people in the homes taking care of the residents or were they just there themselves. Mr. Hamilton said the programs range from around the clock care to being self-sufficient. Most likely the program that might be brought to Florence would be a 24/7 operation. One of the larger programs is in Jamesburg with fifteen consumers in a home built specifically for a population who are mentally ill and developmentally disabled. There is more staff there because there is more need. There is also overnight wake staff. They receive a phone call every hour and if they don't respond with the correct code someone is sent to check on the house and those inside. When it was first implemented some of the staff didn't like it but it is an important practice.

Administrator Brook said SERV has a very good reputation and they are going to be in a nearby community. The township would work with them on finding a property that suited their needs and that gives them a competitive edge with finding. It would be a great benefit to the town. The clients are individuals who need a helping hand and that is what SERV does.

Mr. Hamilton said SERV has facilities in Robbinsville, Hamilton Township, Lawrence, Ewing, Princeton and other municipalities. Administrator Brook said SERV's expertise is to take a property and to build new rather than renovate. Mr. Hamilton said they have done both but there has been a recent change in the housing requirements from the Division of Developmental Disabilities requiring two bedrooms that are in excess of 120 square feet. There aren't many houses on the market that fit that requirement. That was what drove them into doing more of the new construction of homes.

In Ewing SERV converted the old Odd Fellows Home on Pennington Road. It was a mix of renovation and new construction. It has fifty-two units. Mayor Wilkie asked how the number of units was determined for a particular site? Mr. Hamilton said that because of the new requirements, there can't be more than four consumers. The only caveat of that is when there are emergencies such as Superstorm Sandy, sometimes people are placed in different homes temporarily. For the most part there would be no more than four people in a group home.

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Administrator Brook asked how large the house being built in Springfield Township is? Mr. Hamilton said it is 2400 square feet. One bedroom is 144 square feet and another is 150 square feet. Those rooms would be for people who have a hard time getting around and getting in and out of bed. There is a modular home they built eight years ago in Delran. They are getting ready to do some renovations because they will be bringing more handicapped people in. They will be installing doors going directly from two of the bedrooms to the outside to meet certain fire codes. The new properties they build will also have this feature. He said Springfield donated the property two years ago and he has been working to get a population put at the site. They finally have the permission and will begin looking for the tenants shortly.

Administrator Brook said he hoped Mayor Wilkie and Council agreed and that they look forward to working with SERV. The Mayor and Council were in agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Lovenduski opened the meeting to the public.

Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was the Motion of Woolston and seconded by Sandusky to close public comments. Roll call vote - all ayes.

ADJOURNMENT

7:25 PM MOTION of Sandusky; seconded by Ostrander to adjourn. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy M. Weiler, RMC/MMC
Township Clerk
/aek