

Florence Township Council Regular Session 4/19/23

Florence, New Jersey
April 19, 2023

The Florence Township Council held a regular meeting on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting in person or electronically via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order by Council President Garganio at 7:00 p.m. Council President Garganio led the Salute to the Flag.

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice was posted on the municipal bulletin board on January 8, 2023; published in the Burlington County Times on January 8, 2023, placed on the Township website and given to the Trenton Times for information on January 10, 2023.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Bruce Garganio, Nicholas Haas, Kristin Marter, Paul Ostrander

Also Present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie; Stephen Fazekas, Township Administrator; Thomas J. Hastie, Jr., Esq., Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Township Clerk; Jenise Silinsky, Deputy Township Clerk

Absent: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None at this time.

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Marter to approve the following correspondence.

- Tax Collector’s Monthly Tax Report and Water & Sewer Report for March 2023
- Annual Report of Taxes Not Collectible
- Treasurer’s Bill List

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Haas, Marter, Ostrander, Garganio
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

REGULAR CORRSPONDENCE

None at this time.

APPLICATIONS

None at this time.

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PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF 2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Administrator Fazekas explained that the budget is under State review and has not yet been approved so adoption will not be going through at this time. The budget and two resolutions will have to be held until the May 3rd meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Garganio opened the meeting to the public at this time.

Darhonda Roberts, 10 West Fifth Street, stated that in her opinion the walking path on West Fifth Street is a hazard. She has seen delivery drivers and residents making U-turns in the middle of the road and she feels as though it is very unsafe for anyone walking. She also asked Council to add additional speed bumps along West Fifth Street. Mayor Wilkie explained that the work in that area has not yet been completed to include the crossing at Broad Street. He will report back on where that project is at the next workshop meeting.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, it was a Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Baldorossi to close the public comment portion. Voice vote – All ayes.

RESOLUTIONS

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-78
Adopt Municipal Budget
(HOLD UNTIL 5/3/23)**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-79
Read Budget by Title Only
(HOLD UNTIL 5/3/23)**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-80
Fixing the Compensation of Certain Officials and Employees for 2023**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-81
Agreement for Resale of Gasoline and Diesel Fuel with Board of Education**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-82
Agreement with Board of Education for 3 School Resource Officers for 2023/2024**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-83
Authorize Filing of Recycling Tonnage Grant**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-84
Approve complete Green Streets for All Policy**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-85
Appoint Acting Business Administrator**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-86
Deny Release of Performance Bonds Shoppes at Florence, 2111 Rte. 130 South**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-87
Refund RV Lot Permit Fee**

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-88
Requesting Review & Approval of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund Spending
Plan Amendment for Emergent Affordable Housing Site**

There will be no action taken on Resolution Nos. 2023-78 and 2023-79 this evening. Motion of Haas, seconded by Marter to approve Resolution Nos. 2023-80 through 2023-88.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Haas, Marter, Ostrander, Garganio
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCES

**ORDINANCE NO. 2023-08
Amending and Supplementing Chapter 64, Section 3**

**(Fees – Report of Construction Code Official) of the Township Code
of the Township of Florence to clarify the Applicable Construction Fee
for Residential Construction on Farm Properties
(2nd Read, Public Hearing & Adoption)**

Council President Garganio opened the meeting up for the public hearing. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was a Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Haas to close the public comment. Voice vote – All ayes.

Motion of Haas, seconded by Marter to approve Resolution No. 2023-08.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Haas, Marter, Ostrander, Garganio
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

**ORDINANCE NO. 2023-09
Amending & Supplementing Chapter 134, Section 38 (Schedule VI: Public Parking)
of the Township Code of the Township of Florence to Remove Application Process
for Personalized Handicapped Parking Spaces
and to Grandfather Existing Personalized Handicapped Parking Spaces
(2nd Read, Public Hearing & Adoption)**

Council President Garganio opened the meeting up for the public hearing. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was a Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Haas to close the public comment. Voice vote – All ayes.

Motion of Haas, seconded by Marter to approve Resolution No. 2023-09.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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- YEAS: Baldorossi, Haas, Marter, Ostrander, Garganio
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: None Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-10

**Providing for Acquisition of Police Vehicles for Township to Finance Same
(Intro. & 1st Read)(2nd Read, Public Hearing and Adopt 5/3/2023)**

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-11

**Providing for Improvements to the Township’s Water and Sewer Systems
in and for the Township, Appropriating \$2,300,000 Therefor, and Authorizing the Issuance of
\$2,185,000 in Water and Sewer Utility Bonds or Notes of the Township to Finance the Same
(Intro. & 1st Read)(2nd Read, Public Hearing and Adopt 5/3/2023)**

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Haas to approve Ordinance Nos. 2023-10 and 2023-11.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Haas, Marter, Ostrander, Garganio
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: None Unanimous vote – Motion carried

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

Council Representative Haas congratulated Darien Woody for breaking the high school triple jump record. He also commended Dominic Musso and Andrew Piotrowski on their work to try to get a high school golf team together.

Council Representative Marter stated that she emailed Mary Cecilia Dougherty, an intergovernmental affairs lead at the state, to see if there are any kind of grants available and to have her put us in touch with anyone that has grants available for the lead pipe issue as well as PFOA filtration to see if there is anything out that we can apply for.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Wilkie stated that there was a Little Library dedication in front of the municipal building prior to the meeting. The Florence Township Library Association purchased a Little Library that has been installed and anyone can bring a book or take a book. There is already one on McCay Drive and the museum is looking into having one installed. This is tied to a national network and there are 150,000 nation-wide. It is the dedication of the volunteers and the leadership of the library that makes this so special and separates us from a lot of communities because we have a library.

Mayor Wilkie reminded Council that the Blue/Gold Banquet is this Saturday at 3pm at the Community Center. Then they are hosting a Court of Honor for the Eagle Scout who did the renovation work to the benches by the tennis courts. He stated that Sunday, April 22nd is the Open House at the Florence Historical Society at the West Third Street Firehouse from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Roebling Museum Car Show is on April 29 at the museum and the next Council meeting will not be until May 3, 2023.

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Division of Law

Township Solicitor Tom Hastie addressed Council Representative Marter stating that the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank is starting a PILOT program for PFOAs. It is a loan program but there is a component of principle forgiveness. If the Township were to borrow \$10 million the payback would be \$8 million so it's a grant back but it comes with other authorizations.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2023 Road Program

Mayor Wilkie shared a list with Council of work proposed for 2023. There is a bond ordinance approved for the tennis courts at Wilkie Park, the playground at the Waterworks and the fishing pier at the Roebbling Park. The road program this year is a little light so we can concentrate on these other items.

He also shared projects for 2023 to include the bike path on East Fifth Street from Walnut to Pine; paving and curbs and sidewalks for East Fifth Street; Pine Street from Front to Third Street which actually goes to the alleyway between Fourth and Fifth Streets; the bicycle path from Eyre to Front Street and then from Walnut to Spruce, the engineers and architect put a design together for that. The library commission requested that the parking lot be addressed. He asked the Engineer and the planner to really look at it to make sure everything is done to modernize that. There is a dirt road behind the gas station in Roebbling that they are looking to make part of the paving project. Project Freedom and the residents will want to use that but it could not be a part of their program because of where it was so we are including that in our road program. At Wilkie Park, in addition to the tennis courts, we are also going to make sure those courts can also be used for Pickle Ball. And the park planner and engineer looked at the existing parking lot at Wilkie Park and, with slight adjustments, the number of parking spaces will almost double.

The Hornberger Avenue project, which we received state funding for last fall and was proposed to be done this year, is not being scheduled to be done until the Spring of 2024 now. The ordinance to do the forced main from the Norman Avenue pump station to the Hornberger Avenue pump station was introduced so we are going to make that change. It used to go from Hornberger Avenue down by the creek up to Norman Avenue but now we are going to pump Norman Avenue back to Hornberger Avenue and out to Route 130.

Mayor Wilkie showed the roads near Hornberger Avenue that have not yet been paved including Railroad Avenue, Amboy Avenue, Peace and Pond Streets and Norman Avenue. These roads were done around 1988-1989. Railroad and Amboy water lines were all done so they will not have to be checked for lead tails but Norman will have to have to be checked. He asked the planner and engineer to take into consideration that we have recycling buckets now at these row homes and to try and do something there to help residents with parking. He stated that the trash removal contract we currently have expires this November and the concern is that the company that we currently have may not be able to continue and we may not be able to get a contractor to go into the alleys. We need to at least have that forethought put in place so if we have to have trash collection in the front we are equipped to do so. Those projects should be bid at the same time as the Hornberger Avenue project is being bid so hopefully we can get the same contractor and get that work completed at the same time.

He stated that some roads near Woodlawn were on the list for the last few years but we held off because we will be doing improvements around Woodlawn with the athletic field to include Park Street, West Sixth Street, Richardson Street, Woodlawn Avenue and West Fourth Street. This way our park planner, who has already looked at Woodlawn and RD Wood, can work with the engineer in creating more parking for the density that is there.

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Council Representative Baldorossi stated that the end of Railroad Avenue it is getting beat up. Also, Roland Street, between Alden and Norman Avenues is not on the list the mayor provided and that needs to be completed as well. He asked about the access road to Project Freedom and whether or not they are accessing on Hornberger Avenue. He wanted to confirm that they are going to be able to go in from Hornberger but they will not be able come back out on Hornberger. Mayor Wilkie stated that their access will be off of Route 130 but this access road will allow for residents living in there a pathway for walking as well as serve as fire access into the facility.

Council Representative Marter voiced her continuing concerns about flooding with water running down onto Hornberger Avenue and drainage and flooding that we already get now when we have some of these quick downpours and overflowing of Craft's Creek. She worries about the residents close to the creek. Mayor Wilkie stated that the engineer will take all of that into consideration. Council President Garganio stated that when they go through their engineering, they are not allowed to take water off of the site so that water, whatever is on that road, will have to go back into the basins there that will be part of that site so they should not be draining onto the public street. Council Representative Marter wanted it on the record that she is concerned about flooding and additional water going into Craft's Creek because we also have a brand-new warehouse that is opening in Mansfield where Craft's Creek runs up close to that and we have no idea what the impact will be.

Mayor Wilkie shared the design for East Fifth Street. There will be a crosswalk at East Fifth and Walnut Street and a clearly marked crossing on the path. There is a proposed circle on the empty lot for walkers/bikers so they can turn around there if they wish. There are no major improvements to that area, just paving and some plantings to make it nicer. He wanted Council to see this before he shared it with the public to make sure they are comfortable with it. There will also be sidewalks installed on the odd side of the street where they do not already have sidewalks.

Council Representative Marter stated that it is a nice option to have if you are riding a bike because you can turn around and go back and it isn't just dumping you into the street. Mayor Wilkie asked Council if they are comfortable moving forward. He would like to share this with the residents and the plan would be to introduce a bond ordinance at the first meeting in May so it is in place and adopted two weeks later so it can go out to bid and be completed. It is a small project but Pine Street needs to be done before school opens.

Council Representative Marter asked about the trail, she agrees that it is easy for people to just drive across it and she knows that it is not finished yet, with possibly either some shrubbery or landscaping but something is needed to delineate that it is part of the trail. She also inquired about something at Fifth and Broad Streets, which could help with the speeding in that area as well as possibly adding additional speedbumps along Fifth Street. Mayor Wilkie stated that there is a plan for a flashing crossing light but things that have been delayed because of supply chain. There are improvements planned and we will have Colliers here at the workshop meeting to show what is proposed.

Mayor Wilkie showed the bike path at Front Street, where there are islands proposed which will narrow the street. If the County does not agree to that, which is similar to what they did in Burlington City, then we will ask about a raised crosswalk. The representatives from the Heritage Trail are advocating for these types of improvements because this would be part of the trail system eventually. We are hoping for that advocacy. He also showed how the trail is going to connect to the sidewalk at Bodine Street along with other improvements to the trail in that area with crossings. He wanted to make sure Council was comfortable with everything going on there so we can get the bond ordinance in place at the May meeting and take it from there.

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NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

BOARD OF HEALTH

None at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

Council President Garganio thanked Administrator Fazekas for his service and guiding us through COVID and all of the things that no one has ever had to guide a community through. He said that Council is very happy with what he did and the service that he provided.

Administrator Fazekas thanked Council President Garganio and Mayor and Council stating that it had been a pleasure working with everyone.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Garganio opened the meeting to the public at this time.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, it was a motion of Haas, seconded by Ostrander to close the public comment portion of the meeting. Voice vote – All ayes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Wilkie echoed the sentiments about Administrator Fazekas. He started on a Monday and on Thursday COVID hit and he had to shut the town down. With his experience and background in emergency management he guided us well. He had a can-do, get things done attitude that was very much appreciated.

Motion of Marter seconded by Baldorossi to Adjourn. Voice vote – All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
/js