

## **Florence Township Council Executive Session 5/10/23**

Florence, New Jersey  
May 10, 2023

The Florence Township Council held an executive session 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. followed by 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, Nicholas Haas, Kristin Marter, Paul Ostrander, Bruce Garganio

Also Present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie; Thomas J. Hastie, Jr., Esq., Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Acting Administrator/Township Clerk; Jenise Silinsky, Deputy Township Clerk, Ted Lovenduski, Administrative Assisstant

Absent: None

### **FIFTEEN (15) MINUTES OF PUBLIC COMMENT**

Council President Garganio opened the meeting to the public at this time. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, a Motion was made by Ostrander, seconded by Marter to close the public comment portion. Voice vote – All ayes.

### **BUSINESS**

#### A. Overview of Engineering Projects – Colliers Engineering

Township Engineer Bob Mullin gave a summary of the various road improvements throughout the township. The intent with the proposed 2023 road improvements, is to get the specifications prepared and out to bid in early June, take the bids later in June, and then make an award first thing in July and that will allow the contractor to get started early in August. We will specify in the contract that Pine Street near the school will be done first so that work will be completed before school starts in September.

They are trying to address some speed concerns on Front and Delaware. The county has already reduced the speed from 35mph to 30 mph on Delaware from Front Street to Hornberger Avenue. He showed the crosswalk that is being proposed on Front Street which will not be a raised crosswalk but will include flashing lights. The road will also narrow from about 30 feet to 22-23 feet wide there.

The Township Engineer shared a sketch of what the fishing pier in Roebling will look like. The height of the dock will leave room for any floating debris so it does not get stuck under there. It will be supported by timber piles of 30-40 feet, if not more so it is pretty sturdy and there shouldn't be any issues with ice floes. The stilts are 20 feet from each other and the dock will be ADA compliant.

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Engineer Mullin spoke about the Fifth Street bike path and putting a turn around there and Mayor Wilkie explained that a memo will be sent out to the residents who came out a few weeks ago inquiring about that area. Ted Lovenduski explained that the property there had been cleaned up and some dead trees were removed.

Engineer Mullin gave an update on the IPT Railroad Avenue basin and Turnpike Crossing West stating he met with the developer and they had some conversations about both projects and, as far as the basin is concerned on Railroad Avenue, they spoke about other options they are going to explore, with one being separating the roof runoff. That is a 350,000 sq. ft. warehouse so that is a lot of water coming off of the roof and flowing into the basin. Regulations allow that rooftop stormwater can go right back into the ground so it doesn't need to be pretreated and so we can separate that from what goes into the basin. And we can do that by redirecting the rooftop stormwater to drain into the landscaped area in front of the building. Retention swales would be added in the landscaped area in front of the building and that would dramatically reduce the amount of water going into that basin. It won't make the basin drain any faster necessarily but there will be less to drain.

Regarding Turnpike Crossing West, Engineer Mullin said he had a discussion with the developer about the bike path and the area in need of remediation closer to the river and the developer has agreed to improve that path and light it all the way to the area in need of remediation. There will be something on the west side of the street so that you can cross. They still can't do anything when you get into that portion of the property. They are working with the NJDEP and the EPA and the NJDEP wants to do some more testing and they have agreed to do that to the extent that the adjoining property allows.

He stated that there is also an issue with the drainage line that goes out to the river and it was part of the agreement with the developer to have a flapper valve installed and they are going to be held to that. There is a separate bond posted with Burlington County for that.

### B. Project Labor Agreement – Steel Mill Site

Township Solicitor Thomas Hastie explained that during the process of trying to find an interest in the steel mill site, there were unions and building trades that were approaching the town suggesting a project labor agreement would probably be wise to implement there. Economically if the town was serious about owning the property to lease it, it would then be public owned land and a prevailing wage project anyway and it would be incentive to put the project labor agreement on making it more expensive to develop. We solicited some ideas, took a look through a standard project labor agreement and got some suggested changes, got back to the union and they are looking at it. We are probably going to have a project labor agreement resolution next week that would be between building trades and the town and the town would make that part of the documents the next time we put out an RFP for the steel mill. Project labor agreements do two things; one, it states the union workers have to be on site and, two, it states that there will be no job actions or slowdowns due to disputes. That is only in effect if we maintain ownership and lease.

Council Representative Haas asked if that also includes any Economic Opportunity Program (EOP) requirements or minority/women companies, etc.? Solicitor Hastie explained that there is some standard language in project labor agreements for minority contractors or EOP contractors and they also have internship apprentice programs, local, women, minority, economically disadvantaged, etc. language which is fairly standard.

### ACTION

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None at this time.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF 2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET**

No action. No approvals have been received from the state yet. Mayor Wilkie recommended the public attend the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting if there are any questions about the budget.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-98  
APPROVE ABC LICENSE PERSON-TO-PERON TRANSFER –  
TINA’S TACOS INC. TO JJC RESTAURANT GROUP, LLC d/b/a/ B-UNOS**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-99  
AUTHORIZING A LIEN AGAINST PROPERTY  
(BLOCK 127, LOT 32 aka 158 8<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE)  
TO COVER THE COSTS OF SECURING AN UNSAFE STRUCTURE**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-100  
ADOPT MUNICIPAL BUDGET  
(HOLD UNTIL 5/17/23)**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-101  
READ BUDGET BY TITLE ONLY  
(HOLD UNTIL 5/17/23)**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-102  
APPROVAL TO SUBMIT A NJDOT GRANT APPLICATION FOR ROADWAY  
AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS TO  
RAILROAD AVE., PEACE ST., AND AMBOY AVE.**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-104  
EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS**

It was a Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Haas to approve Resolution Nos. 2023-98 and 2023-99 and Resolution Nos. 2023-102 and 2023-104.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Council President Garganio opened the meeting up to the public at this time on a Motion by Haas, seconded by Baldorossi. Voice vote – All ayes.

Albert A. Jacoby, 911 Wallace Avenue, stated that the lights have been out along the walking path at Cedar Lane and Bustleton Road and he thinks it is time they be turned back on. The trees that were planted to help to provide a buffer have grown up enough now so the light should not bother the neighboring houses. In his opinion, they should never have been turned off and he presented Council with a petition signed by area residents to have those lights turned back on.

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Mr. Jacoby also stated that there has been a snowplow sitting on a trailer for 3 years at the intersection of Hornberger and Delaware Avenues and it blocks the line of sight causing a safety concern. He is asking Council to address these items along with the repainting of the traffic lines at the intersection of Route 130 and Delaware Avenue. He observed cars pulling out too far and tractor trailers not being able to make the turn there.

Mayor Wilkie explained that we will reach out to NJDOT regarding Route 130. We will also look into addressing the trailer parked on Delaware Avenue. As far as the path, he explained that those lights were disabled a few years ago because the residents complained. Council Representative Marter explained that at an Environmental Commission meeting they had a discussion about the bulbs to see if there was any way to have the light cast down instead of out or to change the bulbs or add something to shield the light. Mayor Wilkie explained that there is nothing that can be done to those bulbs, Public Service said that it would have to be a completely different type of light. Ted Lovenduski explained that they are the same light fixtures that go down Fifth Avenue in Roebling and the residents there have not complained.

Don Kamienski, 10 McCay Drive, stated that he did not see an icebreaker when the engineer was discussing the new fishing pier. He said that towns up the river dump their ice and snow illegally into the river and all of that ice comes down into Florence Township. He is asking the township engineer what the longevity of the pier will be without an ice breaker since the ice floes have been taking out the piers and docks in Trenton.

The township engineer explained that the piles are spaced 20 feet apart and they are not anticipating the velocity of any ice breaks to be that catastrophic but that is something they will look into.

Talaya Loftin, 1005 West Fourth Street, asked about the splash park not being viable at the location originally discussed and she asked Council if there is a plan to move it to another location like Woodlawn? There are so many kids in that ward and they can't get a permit to have a pool in their yard because they do not meet the parameters of the township and now that they are completely surrounded by warehouses, there is no airflow. Ms. Loftin asked if there can be a destination location in that area. Mayor Wilkie explained that he was told by the park planner that a splash park is something that should be in a destination location with plenty of parking. He also explained that the splash park was not something that was high on the priority list when the survey was completed by the public. Ms. Loftin explained that the township has never made it a priority to do anything in the third ward and she is asking if it is going to be a priority of the township.

Mayor Wilkie said that the priorities this year are the tennis courts, the playground at the Water Works field, the fishing pier in Roebling, in addition to the bike path that is running from West Front Street to Spruce Street, which had been done this year. The road improvements are being discussed for next year to include Richardson Street and Park Street and to create parking for residents in those areas. Council will be making those decisions in the future as they look at the park planner's priorities and identify the needs.

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Council Representative Marter stated that in the July 13<sup>th</sup> minutes from last year it was brought up that the triangle was not the appropriate location for a splash park and, at that time, Council President Garganio had mentioned looking at other locations and the engineers would look into a different location. And then nothing happened. And then in the Master Plan a splash park was included. So, in July, because it wasn't going to go in the triangle it looks like we were looking for another place for it to go and that it was going to go back to the engineers to find that place and then it just got dropped. She said that Mayor Wilkie stated that it wasn't as big as a priority but when you look at the park survey that was done last year 15% of residents who responded wanted a pool, 11% wanted a splash park, pickleball was 9%, a path or trail/walkway was at an even lower percentage and all of the other things that were behind the splash pad are on the list to be done but yet it had a higher priority. And in July of last year, we were told that it wasn't the right location and we were going to look for another place and then it was dropped. And it came up again in the Master Plan and again in the parks so it doesn't sound like it is something we don't want but that it was forgotten.

Mayor Wilkie stated that it was not forgotten, the Recreation Committee agreed that before we go adding new things, we should update what we currently have. And that is the reason the Water Works Park and the tennis courts at Wilkie Park are being updated because those are existing sites in need of upgrades. It takes time and designs to put money in place. We started the survey and then brought in a park planner to evaluate what needs to be done specifically with our existing facilities. The survey was out in the fall and was just intended to be a guide. The fishing pier was first discussed in 2016. Mayor Wilkie explained that he was the one who brought up the idea of the splash park but he was told by the planner and some of the residents in the area that they don't want it there. Council Representative Garganio recommended putting it at Veterans Park, and if that is what Council wants to do, then Council needs to make it a priority, get it designed and find the funding to move forward.

Council Representative Marter stated that the issue, as she sees it, is that there is no transparency, no follow up and we don't get back to people. And if the Recreation Committee said that the location was not viable and we need to look for another location it was not conveyed to the public. There is information that not everyone is getting.

Ms. Loftin stated that she has no confidence in the township and things getting completed where she lives. There is no follow through, she still has yet to hear anything about the community gardens, whose plots belong to whom and she has seedlings that need to be in the ground. She stated that Veteran's Park and Wilkie Park are both beautiful but there is still a broken slide at the park on Railroad Avenue and the township barely remembers to clean up the Tot Lot. She said that the mayor stated that we need to maintain the parks that we have but we have not been maintaining them or they wouldn't be in the condition that they are. She is asking that something be done for the children in her area, there is no airflow due to the warehouses and the yards are not big enough for swimming pools in her neighborhood.

Bryan Hewitt, 1080 Grove Street, asked to get a photo of the plans shared regarding the fishing pier.

Seeing no one else wishing to comment, Motion was made by Ostrander, seconded by Marter to close the public comment portion. Voice vote – All ayes.

### **ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION**

Resolution 2023-103 Resolution Authorizing the Mayor, Township Council and Support Staff to meet on Closed Session and Authorizing the Exclusion of the Public from that Portion of the Meeting Dealing with Specific Issues Requiring Non-Public Discussions:

Personnel – Administration

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It was a Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Haas to adjourn to Closed Session at 7:42 p.m. where no action will be taken. Voice vote – All ayes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Council returned to the Regular meeting at 7:47 p.m. on a Motion by Marter, seconded by Haas. Voice Vote – All ayes. No action was taken. Motion of Marter seconded by Haas to Adjourn. Voice vote – All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC  
Township Clerk  
/js