

**Florence Township Council Executive Session 6/14/23**

Florence, New Jersey  
June 14, 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 Assistant

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 Haas to close the public comment portion. Voice vote – All ayes.

**BUSINESS**

- Projects Updates
  - A. Fuel Pump Relocation

Ted Lovenduski explained that construction won't start until it gets closer to the date when the tank is due to be delivered. It makes more sense to wait until we get a good solid date on the delivery of the tank. All that has been done so far is a mark out of the field and survey of the grade but they haven't gone any further at this point.

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### B. 2023 Road Program

Mr. Lovenduski explained that the bid opening for the 2023 Road Program is scheduled for June 22, 2023 and we are hoping for favorable results. We should be more than able to do what we had projected. Regarding the 2022 Road Program, the bicycle trail has to be completed. The issue was that they patched the bicycle trail and they didn't follow the grades correctly. The grade of the trail has been resurveyed and the existing trail will be overlaid and keyed in at the ends to make it level the way it was projected at the beginning of the project. They are going to have to do some of the grading with topsoil so it is going to look like dirt again for a little while. That work is supposed to start on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Wilkie asked Mr. Lovenduski to update the Press Release with this information for the public.

### C. Temporary Police Building and Recreation Center

Mr. Lovenduski explained that we have had 3-4 construction companies come out and do a site visit so they have a good idea about what the project is that they are bidding on. That bid is not due to be opened until July and these projects will be bundled so it will be the same contractor for both. Mayor Wilkie explained that the work was purposefully scheduled so that those folks right now will be working in schools so we won't be competing with that work. Start dates will be the second week in September which will cut down on competitive bids in the hopes that we get as many bids as we possibly can.

Mr. Lovenduski stated that there has been a Wifi issue at the township building and the IT company was out and they seemed to pinpoint the modems so Comcast is coming in to replace the modems and they are hoping there won't be anymore connectivity issues.

- Update from Park Planner, Steven Lennon
  - A. Splash Park
  - B. Tennis Courts
  - C. Playgrounds

Steven Lennon of Taylor Design gave a project update, explaining that they worked with Colliers to coordinate efforts on the trails. The parking lot at Wilkie Park has been rolled into the Road Program and they are also trying to figure out trail ends and some extensions and how that is going to tie into the overall networks so they are taking a look at the bigger picture there. They did some coordination with Burlington County with bringing in the Delaware Heritage Trail so that we are planning cohesively and not having to undo anything. They coordinated with Colliers regarding Wilkie Park where their scope stops and where Taylor Design's begins. Colliers will be doing the landscaping, a new sign, new receptacles and those sorts of things for the parking lot portion and the paving and striping.

He explained that they have prepared a base mapping on the park evaluation for all of the parks throughout the township. They have inspected about 2/3rds of the parks and have developed recommendations for 2 of them. The goal is to evaluate each park and put in a priority of repairs or upgrades that should be made. Code issues and safety concerns are a higher priority. These may be longer term goals as funding allows. He would like to get a good way through before releasing his findings and goals. Then Council can look at how much we need to spend to address all of the issues and their priority. We can also go back and look at the recreational needs assessment that had gone out and figure in the logistics. It is a very long term look at things but it is a lot of data to get together and it will help Council to plan ahead.

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Council President Garganio asked if a 10-year breakdown can be provided if needed to prioritize what can be done each year if Council wanted to commit dollars to park maintenance. Mr. Lennon said that you could assess immediate needs and then what would need to be done in 5 years or 10 years, etc. Most of the playgrounds seem to be about the same age so everything is coming due at one time and if we prioritize, we can maybe get a little more life out of some things here. Different grant funding opportunities are going to come available through the County or Green Acres, etc., and you will then be able to know what you have queued up and have a need for. Mr. Lennon said that he did not have a date of completion of the assessment just yet but said it should be completed in 3 months.

The next step is the park design standards. A package has been compiled of benches and picnic tables and all of those options that are sort of a cohesive group and those will have be available to within the next few days. The goal is to select furnishings or site amenities that work throughout the town whether it is in Roebing or in a newer developed portion of the township. It will be a standard that visually looks compatible in all settings as well as finding a price point where you get value and durability.

Mr. Lennon stated that he would like direction on that as soon as possible because he is going to wrap the selections into the Wilkie Park tennis courts and the playground and he would like to get that out to bid. He stated that, with regards to Wilkie Park we are looking at the tennis court and parking lot improvements. The courts will be designed in the exact same format and arrangement that they are now but they will have an adjustable height net for each court and they will be striped so they can also be used for Pickle Ball. They will serve a dual purpose. The courts are not in the correct solar orientation, they should be North/South for glare but they were originally designed as East/West so there is not an ability for us to fix that. If you turn it then you would lose a court and create a problem with the lights and what would work for daytime would not work for nighttime.

Knowing that the orientation is not the best, the idea is to get more service life out of the current courts and, in the interim, identify a new place that may be more appropriate where you could get new courts in the future. They are looking to put together a bid document that includes crack repair and recoating of the surface and you will get a certain amount of life out of those and that is the cheapest way you can get out of it. The alternate is to mill the existing asphalt surface, put an isolation mat down and repave over top of that. That helps delay the cracks from telegraphing through.

Council Representative Marter asked if there is any type of screening that can be put up to help prevent some of the lighting issues that would also let air through. Mr. Lovenduski explained that the screening presents a security problem. Council President Garganio asked Mr. Lennon if he could run numbers to make these things right, add the additional asphalt for another court and remove the lights for comparison. Mr. Lennon said if you wanted to do that, he would recommend going in a different location altogether. Mayor Wilkie stated that this was discussed with Rec and that is the reason the recommendation was to move forward with what he was talking about doing, it could get you a good 10 years there and, as he completes this study, Council can take a look at where the next priorities are going to be. Steven said that he would suggest putting it in Veteran's Park somewhere along the lines of where the basketball courts are located because you have restrooms and drinking fountains. You would be getting multiple uses out of the same facility. Council President Garganio asked for an estimate of what new courts would cost in a different location so we can compare. Mr. Lennon agreed to provide this.

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Mr. Lennon explained that they are looking to combine the two projects, the tennis courts and the Water Works playground. It is similar work so a similar contractor will do both and that is going to save two bidding rounds and make it easier administratively. The Water Works playground documents are nearly complete. He expects to have a draft of those ready with the exception of the site furniture selections. The playground equipment has already been designed and the color has been selected and that order is already in and we are in line for manufacturing. These playgrounds have had huge lead times of around 4 months. In order to make things happen, he went ahead and finalized the design with the manufacturer, and the manufacturer put this in their queue and as of right now the delivery date would be September 11<sup>th</sup>. If we were to wait to go to bid, get someone under bid and then have them get the submittals done and make the purchase, then we are 5 or 6 months before anything even shows up. This way we streamline that a little bit. The one thing that we will have to work with Mr. Lovenduski on is finalizing that purchase through State contract. He will have the manufacturer's rep reach out.

The manufacturer of the equipment is Landscape Structures and General Recreation is the supplier. They are very well known. There is a 90-day construction period on those projects so if we can turn around and get things out to bid quickly, maybe by the end of the month, we are looking at November 15<sup>th</sup> for completion. That is leaving a month of bidding and by the time we get under contract and some submittals going we may be able to still hit that date if we can squeeze that construction period. 90 days is tight to get anything done and we need to remind Colliers because they are going out to bid for the Road Program. We need that parking lot to be done before the contractor for this project will come in and do the remaining stuff around those edges. A little bit of a lag between the two is not necessarily a bad thing so we can make sure that the Road Program is complete. They will put their coordination into the documents with whomever the selected contractor is for the Road Program.

Council Representative Marter asked about the status of the splash park and whether or not it is a splash park or a splash pad. Mr. Lennon explained that the terms can be used interchangeably, spray ground, splash pad, splash park. The first thing would be to establish the need in looking at the big picture. In the recreational needs assessment, there was definitely some people that were interested. When asked what facilities people would travel outside of the township for, #2 and #3 were pool and splash pad with #1 being community festivals. When asked what facilities residents would use if available and a pool was at 13% with splash pad at 11%. #1 was nothing, which is basically saying we have what we need. Water park/spray park came in at #4 at 6% but river access/indoor rec/fitness stations were all higher than that. The other thing to consider is size, will it be a water park or is it just a place to cool off for a few dozen children. It is really only going to be used 3 months out of the year. In terms of location and design he suggests some distance from residential areas because there is a noise factor with kids and water. Putting it adjacent to houses would not be the best location. Having it adjacent to other support facilities is helpful, like restrooms, facilities that can service it, and other playgrounds so there is synergy between the two.

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Mr. Lennon explained that you can have a recirculating system but you will have to treat that water and conform with the New Jersey State Bathing Code and everything that goes along with that, which is pretty substantial. The water needs to get tested every two hours, you need to have staff present and they would have to be trained in CPR and first aid. He confirmed with the Burlington County Health Department that, if you take the circulation out, you don't have to do a thing. Spray grounds are sort of in between, it's not a pool, but it's not a water park. They were clear, if you recirculate, you are on the hook for complying with all of this. If you do not recirculate, then you are fine. He explained that he had designed a few spray grounds in the past, he has done one that does not recirculate and that goes to drain. Another one he designed is recirculated. The one that recirculates is in Trenton and they did it that way because they already operate a series of pools. Even with that, that spray ground was not immediately adjacent to a pool but it did not receive all of the maintenance that it probably should have gotten. That was a prefabricated kit that was pretty straightforward. Also, if you decide to recirculate, you need to have a building or structure to house all of the chemicals and the panel and you would not want that open to the public.

Council President Garganio asked if we want the one that is just going to drain how many gallons are we pumping into the ground? Steven explained that he looked into a 40 foot diameter circle for the splash pad. If you are going to go with recirculation, there is really no limit. If you are going to go without recirculation you are then limited to how many features you can operate because you are basically working off of water pressure. He worked with premanufactured and, preliminarily, a 2" water service would be required and basically there is nothing else required other than a 9-volt battery. Their design could put out 60 gallons depending on the exact features that you put on it. But they are all activated by an activation button. They push the button, the features will turn on and it will cycle for 90 seconds or the time that it is set for, and then it shuts off. When it is not in use it is not using any water. He ran calculations based on 6 hours of use per day and for a 90-day season and each day it would be 2,100 gallons of water. Over a year at your current water rates, the dollar figure is about \$8,500/year. That would get you the price difference and that would probably be the upcharge to go to recirculating. You could probably buy 15 years of water before you get to a break even. It is probably a much larger expense though because there are electric costs, chemicals, testing, etc.

There is also another option where you can recapture that water and use it for irrigation. Just assume you set the timer for 6 hours and it is running nonstop. Now you need to hold that water so you install a 55-foot-long tank of about 9-feet in diameter in the ground. You could irrigate a fair amount but now you have to run electricity and pump that out of there. There is some infrastructure that goes with that and that water can be counted on daily, depending on weather, etc. Whatever lands on the splash pad would drain into that drain and, no matter what, you are going to need an overflow and there is going to be some tie in to some drain. You could also tie it into an existing sprinkler system but there is a risk there because if something were to get into that water, you would be spreading it all over your fields.

Council Vice President Haas asked if the splash park would also take on EPA regulations of stormwater as if it were a building? Steven said that other than stormwater requirements for that sized area he would have to look at it but for permitting it depends on how big you go with it. You could recover some and irrigate some low areas but you still need an overflow and thought would have to go to drain. In the past he has made them where they are flush in the ground so that area takes on another purpose during the off season. It can be used as a little plaza, you can put picnic tables on it, etc. The idea of using it for something other than just a spray ground is very valid and he recommends doing so. He likes to pair it with a playground to serve a dual purpose.

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In order of magnitude, dollarwise, for treatment and recirculation he would say that the budget would be between \$350,000-450,000. If you are going to use and recover, it would be between \$250,000-\$325,000 and if you were to just do the use and drain you could probably do that for \$150,000-225,000. The manufacturer’s estimates are lower than these but that does not include the building, the filter, etc.

Mr. Lovenduski asked how much maintenance is required. Mr. Lennon explained that on the direct to waste there is no maintenance other than replacing a 9-volt battery and winterizing. It is a glorified sprinkler system. But if you wanted to go with just dumping the water you would want to try and reuse some of it for landscape beds to get some value out of it but the rest, he thinks should be run in a line to a storm drain. But maybe that would even be perforated pipe and that trench could be a filtration trench so you are actually getting water back into the ground.

**ACTION**

A. Resolutions

2023-125, Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to Enter into a Non-Fair and Open Contract for Professional Services with the Law Firm of Baron and Budd, P.C. and Cossich, Sumich, Parsiola & Taylor for the Purpose of Seeking Damages for PFAS Contamination

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Marter to approve Resolution No. 2023-125.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

Michael Muchowski, 1337 Maple Avenue, asked about the timing of the installation of the park equipment and whether or not it is worth installing it in November and letting it sit through the winter? Mayor Wilkie explained that November is the latest end date we are just trying to get it done.

Council President Garganio asked, in regards to having a playground near the splash park, is the plan to put the splash park near the existing park or build a new playground near the splash park in a different location at Veteran’s Park? Mayor Wilkie explained that it would be a new playground built near the splash park.

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

**ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION**

Resolution 2023-126 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:

Litigation – NFI & Turnpike Crossing VII

It was a Motion of Marter, seconded by Haas to adjourn to Closed Session at 8:02 p.m. where no action will be taken. Voice vote – All ayes.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Council returned to the Regular meeting at 8:36 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 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC  
Township Clerk  
/js