

## **Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23**

Florence, New Jersey  
September 20, 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, Nicholas Haas, Kristan Marter, Paul Ostrander, Bruce Garganio

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

Absent: None

### **OATH OF OFFICE**

- Jason Shafer – Police Sergeant

Police Sergeant Jason Shafer was sworn in by Mayor Wilkie while his wife and kids held the Bible for him. Sergeant Shafer thanked Command Staff for the opportunity to further his career and also the men and women that he works with every day, stating he is blessed to have them and it would not be possible without them. He also thanked his wife and kids for their support as well as his parents.

**Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23**

- Jennifer Czepiel – Police Officer

Police Officer Jennifer Czepiel was sworn in by Mayor Wilkie while her husband and children held the Bible for her. Officer Czepiel thanked Command Staff for the opportunity to join the Florence Township Police Department stating that it has been her lifelong dream. She thanked Mayor and Council, all of the Officers, Sergeants and Corporals and said that everyone has been amazing in helping her along the way and she appreciates it. She also thanked her family, her husband and her parents stating that she could not have done it without their support.

Chief Boldizar thanked Mayor and Council for allowing them to fill the open spots. He stated that they got really lucky with both of the officers. Sergeant Shafer took the SRO program and built it into what it is today, he handles National Night Out and he does an excellent job and the younger officers should look up to him. He also stated that they got really lucky with Jennifer, she came with experience from the Sheriff’s Department and both officers really care about the community.

Mayor Wilkie thanked everyone for coming out, congratulated the two officers and thanked the Police Department for all that they do and all of the support they give to Florence Township.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Closed Session of September 6, 2023

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Marter to approve the minutes as submitted. Voice vote – All ayes.

**FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE**

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

- Township Clerk’s Monthly Report for August 2023
- Court Administrator’s Monthly Report for August 2023
- Tax Collector’s Monthly Water & Sewer Monthly Report for August 2023
- Treasurer’s Bill List for Approval

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**REGULAR CORRSPONDENCE**

- A. Police Chief’s Monthly Report for June 2023

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Baldorossi to receive and file the correspondence.

**Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23**

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**APPLICATIONS**

- A. Block Party Application, Tall Timber Lane/Evergreen Lane between #14 and #19 on Saturday, September 30, 2023 from 12 noon to 6 p.m.

Motion of Haas, seconded by Marter to approve the applications.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-184  
Renew ABC License Punam Corporation**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-185  
Approve Change Order No. 1 and Final Payment No. 2 for Ninth St. Improvements**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-186  
Deny Release of Water and Sewer Performance Bonds, 2039 Rt. 130 LLC**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-187  
Reject Bids for Waterworks Playground & Wilkie Park Improvements**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-188  
Approve Change Order #2 for Sewer Treatment Plant Screw Press Upgrade**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-189  
Chapter 159, Opioid Settlement Agreement**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-190  
Award Contract for Certified Lead Based Paint Inspector/Risk Assessor**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-191  
Authorize Lien for Property Maintenance Violations, Block 36, Lot 18**

**Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-192  
Award Contract Hornberger Avenue Pump Station**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-193  
Approve Proposed Street Names for Project Freedom at Historic Roebling**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-194  
Approve Partial Payment No. 1 for 2023 Road Program**

Motion of Haas, seconded by Ostrander to approve Resolution Nos. 2023-184 through 2023-194.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**ORDINANCES**

None at this time.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS**

None at this time.

**REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION**

**Mayor**

Mayor Wilkie explained that he received the Community Solar application and shared it with Council. Council Representative Marter asked about this being a different company than the one that we had spoken to. She asked Ted Lovenduski if we had heard anything back from them. Mr. Lovenduski stated that it is the same organization. Council Representative Marter pointed out that the new company is Solar Landscape and the other company was called Dimension Renewal Energy and that they are different companies. Mr. Lovenduski stated that he was under the impression that it was the same group but just a different name. He said it is the same basic premise. Council Representative Marter asked how we can use a different company and make sure that the residents get the benefits because each one has to provide 51% of their energy to the town. Mr. Lovenduski stated that we need to ask those questions and to make sure we have room on the grid to be able to back feed. She stated that the big question is can we have two of these community solar projects in one town if their responsibility is to provide 51% of all of the energy they produce to the residents of low or moderate income. We need to make sure we can endorse more than one company.

Council Representative Marter stated that there was an issue with the Railroad Avenue site due to the zoning. Mr. Lovenduski explained that there was stormwater issues and they don't have their Certificate of Occupancy.

## Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23

Mayor Wilkie stated that we are not going to sign off until we get information back. If it comes back and will help the taxpayers of Florence and Roebling then it is a homerun and we also want to be sure there is enough head room on the grid. Council Representative Marter stated that the grid will have to be upgraded to be able to do that.

Mayor Wilkie mentioned that the Historical Society would be hosting an Open House Saturday September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the West Third Street Firehouse. The Museum has a program being planned on October 21<sup>st</sup> called "Touch the Truck" and they are doing a ribbon cutting for the signs through the mill yard. He stated that he had been working with local historian Mr. Louis Borbi a few years ago when the Heritage Trail was coming through and he thought it was a good idea to have signs put up on the Heritage Trail. They were dealing with the County but the contact person at the County left and the project got dropped. He met with Mr. Borbi and had him meet with Taylor Design to see how it works and Taylor Design gave him an estimate around \$3,000 for two signs. Mr. Borbi will work with them and we will get permission from the County to put those along the Heritage Trail. Mark Remsa spoke to the County and they said they will give them permission but that they do not have any money. His goal is to move forward unless there is any objections from Council.

Mayor Wilkie stated that he had to make a correction to the list of street names. He needs to remove George Opre, who the VFW was named after as he was not killed in action in WWII so it was not appropriate for him to be included on that list.

Mayor Wilkie said that he put together and posted "Council Meeting Notes" which is a synopsis of the meeting agenda and it is being posted as another resource for the public to know what is going on.

### Administrator

Administrator Muchowski stated that the Public Works Department put in a lot of man hours getting the Roebling Park and the area ready for the tree planting event for Mr. George Lengel and it really looked good. He also had them going in to some areas that needed a little more attention. In the meantime, some areas may be put off a little bit and the grass may be getting a little higher. Public Works also did some major clean up in the Union Street Park and the Shade Tree Commission will be doing some plantings there.

The Water and Sewer Department started the in-house project of laying the force main prior to them putting down the base paving. We had a number of \$70,000-90,000 of material from the contractor and it will probably end up under \$40,000 counting manpower and labor hours. It is a good project and they brought in the younger guys as well so our experienced crew is showing the younger workers some of the bigger things that they actually do. We are well ahead of schedule and now we are working in conjunction with the site superintendent and their piping contractor because they are putting in gravity as we are putting in forced main so we are working parallel with each other.

Council Representative Garganio asked when we do our remote programs in the future if we could possibly use some of our people to replace some small pieces of mains. That could save a ton of money and also give us the ability to deal with the water lines and things like that in a

## **Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23**

much more reasonable time. It is good to have a well-trained department that can do that type of work.

### **Division of Engineering**

Council Representative Marter asked for clarification on the Engineer's Project Updates dated September 18, 2023 and what the "scenic outlook and water access grants for Railroad Avenue" is? Mayor Wilkie explained that this is land we own at the end of Railroad and Amboy Avenues in Roebling which goes down to the other side of the tracks and, in the Master Plan, there was a water access and they are looking at different types of things they may be able to develop into a recreational use in the future with grants so you could have access there.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### A. Presentation of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Roebling Mill Site Study

Derek Lombardi and Andrew Svekla, planners with the DVRPC, explained a little about regional planning designed to help the Greater Philadelphia region and how it can grow and coordinate land use and development. They spoke about the Roebling mill site and the potential redevelopment of that site and, more broadly, how they think about the future of that site, about accessing transportation to that site, redevelopment of a former brown field, historic or even cultural preservation of the township's past and how they think about that as an asset going forward.

The project of Roebling and Florence Township was part of their work program in fiscal year 2023 that was proposed by their Burlington County Planning Partners. They thought their office was a good fit for a project looking at the Roebling Steel Site because, as the Office of Smart Growth, they are looking at publicly owned land that can hopefully be put into successful reuse adjacent to a compact existing developed village, leveraging the waterfront location and other amenities like the transit station, the Delaware River Heritage Trail and existing services in town.

They jumped into this process at the launch of the RFP/RFQ for the site in the middle of last fall. The RFP/RFQ showcased a desire for a mix of different types of land uses which they are always in favor of. This includes water dependent uses, making use of the transit station, the potential with residential units over commercial land uses and other types of passive recreational uses on that large 100-acre site. They are happy to see the notion of maintaining public access with the trail running through the site. And, of course acknowledging the history and the legacy of industry on that site as well as maintaining uses that don't add more truck trips to the area.

In close to a year of work they provided a large 90-page market analysis document which is posted on the website as well as some case studies that were written up and featured in an interactive online map. And a short round up of planning resources and best practices that can hopefully be interluded into the selection process for any future developer of the site as well as any kind of evolution of the concept that is developed there.

## Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23

He explained the market analysis document and how it is outlined. The main sections include an overview, fundamental data like demographics, nonresidential real estate market, the residential market conditions and a SWOT analysis, the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats on the site. They compiled this data using two sources, Esri Business Analyst which is GIS software primarily online and the CoStar Commercial Real Estate database which helped them get a sense of the existing development context around this site and in the larger market area. They used a uniquely defined market area for this analysis and then compared it to benchmarks at the township, county and regional level.

They thanked Mayor and Council for the assistance in steering this project last year. They collaborated with the planning partners from NJ Transit, the NJ Institute of Technology Brownfields Assistance Center and the EPA. They have all been willing to collaborate going forward as this project continues to evolve and they are excited to have it online and they encourage Council to review it and touch base if there are other things they can support with as the project moves forward.

Council Representative Marter asked about the threat of climate change and increased concerns with flooding and things of that nature and asked if they had an idea what the height of the property is in relation to high tide? Mr. Lombardi explained that was one of the things that was added to the list of potential threats without necessarily knowing all of the exact details of the high water line.

Tony Hagen, 204 Boulevard Street, stated that he read through the report online and he estimated that it is a 12-16 foot drop at low tide and he is thinking it will be difficult to put a marina in there because there is practically nothing there at low tide. He also does not want to see the Heritage Trail ripped up to make room for it, and he is concerned about the beauty of that area and the fact that nature is coming back in a big way. There are bald eagles and other bird life and he is concerned about what will happen if a lot of development takes place down there. He stated that it is a beautiful asset down there now and, in his opinion, his preference would be passive recreation and a wide buffer of landscape leaving room for wildlife to proliferate and for people to enjoy that area.

He also suggested maybe solar development on the site. He thinks that a solar field could be put on the slope going up to the museum and that energy could be sold to residents of Roebling and other residents who don't have access to clean energy and can't participate in real energy revolution.

Mr. Lombardi explained that if that river ever rises it could go up 5 feet. He has read Rutgers reports on flooding on the Delaware projected into the future and the river could rise over 5 feet along these banks so that could be a factor.

Council Representative Garganio stated that this is just a tool for us right now and Mayor and Council will be reviewing it and we will then make a decision on which direction we will go. These are recommendations with a whole lot of detail that is great to have but it is not the final document or any direction that we have decided exactly where we are going at this point.

## Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23

Mr. Lombardi explained that their objective was trying to use the tools available to them to understand marking conditions that might influence the potential development of this site and to present a neutral and honest assessment of what we thought the strengths and weaknesses and opportunities on this site were in the current economic conditions to be used internally by the township to help evaluate potential responses and think about the future of this site.

### B. Proposed Lighting Ordinance Revised September 5, 2023

Mayor Wilkie explained that there were concerns at the Planning Board meeting about residential and, at his meeting with the engineer he asked if we need to include residential standards and the engineer said no. So this is all non-residential requirements which is what the intent was, to take out the residential and put in place non-residential locations, not only by zone but by use.

Council Representative Marter asked about changing the head on the lights on Cedar Lane and Bustleton Road, stating that they either need to be shielded or down lights and it will have to go through the Environmental Commission in order to see if what we are planning to do will meet that requirement. Mayor Wilkie stated that it is whatever PSE&G offers and we may not be wanting to do something if they don't have an option for that. Council Representative Marter asked if we put an ordinance in place would PSE&G not have to abide by it? And, if they can't replace them with something then we can't replace them? Mayor Wilkie confirmed.

Council President Garganio stated that he thinks this is a step in the right direction and we could kick it back to the Environmental Commission and take another look and then then it would have to go back to planning? He stated that his only recommendation is if we have a list of light fixtures that are part of the ordinance and there are examples of it, we should make sure that PSE&G offers that head so it will match something that someone can purchase. Mayor Wilkie stated that in his opinion this would not be regulating street lights because they are on public property

Mayor Wilkie stated that we will have PSE&G review this, get their opinions and, as a courtesy we should turn it back to the Environmental Commission and confirm that they agree with what has been put in place. If they agree, it would come to Council and it would be introduced on first reading, which would probably be the end of October because the next Environmental Commission meeting will be the first Thursday. Once introduced, it will get referred to the Planning Board for consistency so if it doesn't make their October meeting it will have to make their November meeting because their December meeting will be after our last Council meeting and an ordinance cannot be carried over to 2024. Timing is of the essence if we want to get it done this year.

Council Representative Marter stated that she met with Chief Boldizar regarding Third and Spruce Streets and the issues with the crossing there and the Chief came back with a letter that stated that in order to put a four-way stop in it would require an engineering study and he gave a cost of \$2,900. He made another suggestion for that location which is a sign that says "stop here" in thinking that it will at least alert in the interim until Council can decide what else can be done there. She also asked whether striping can be added to the street there similar to the raised



## **Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23**

crosswalks. She stated that at the intersection at Maple Avenue and Bennett Street, it is being asked to swap which direction the stop sign is facing. The speed is more the concern there and not the volume of traffic. Council Representative Baldorossi asked if one side of Maple is no parking and Ted Lovenduski stated that there are supposed to be No Parking signs there.

Council Representative Garganio stated that we should find out what is going on there and if there is no parking that is supposed to be posted then it should be posted and that will alleviate some of the site angles that a lot of this traffic that rolls through is dealing with. He has concerns about flipping stop signs because there is a consistency and one side is usually in one direction. He stated it is worth looking into but we should make sure everything is being done by ordinance at this point out there and if signs need to be posted, we should post them.

Council Representative Garganio asked Council if they have a problem with having the signs posted on Third and Spruce Streets and have the striping added to the street. He stated that he prefers to try this first. Council agreed.

Administrator Muchowski stated that they are working on some of that signage. He spoke to the Public Works Department about bringing some of that striping back in-house and getting a better machine so that we can get back to doing some of this type of work in these areas versus farming it out. We may be able to do more and save money at the same time. Administrator Muchowski mentioned that in the short term he will have them put down two stripes to get something down there.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None at this time.

### **BOARD OF HEALTH**

None at this time.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

None at this time.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

### **ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION**

Resolution 2023-195 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  
Developer Negotiations – Weiss

It was a Motion of Haas, seconded by Marter to adjourn to Closed Session at 8:18 p.m. where no action will be taken. Voice vote – All ayes.

**Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/20/23**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Council returned to the Regular Meeting at 8:57 p.m. on a Motion by Ostrander, seconded by Marter. Voice vote – All ayes. No action was taken. Motion of Marter seconded by Haas to adjourn. Voice vote – All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC  
Township Clerk  
/js