

Florence Township Council Regular Session 11/3/21

Florence, New Jersey
November 3, 2021

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 welcome to attend in person or to attend virtually 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: This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice was published in the Burlington County Times on January 10, 2021; placed on the Township website, and given to the Trenton Times for information.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Paul Ostrander, Jerry Sandusky, Dave Woolston, Bruce Garganio

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

Absent: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Session of October 13, 2021
- Regular Session of October 20, 2021

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Woolston to approve the minutes as submitted. Voice vote – all ayes.

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Woolston to receive and file the following reports. Voice vote – all ayes.

- Municipal Treasurer's Revised Revenue Report for September 2021
- Township Clerk's Monthly Report for October 2021

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to approve the **Treasurer's Bill List**.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

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REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Letter from Roebling Historical Society requesting permission for Community Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 11, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., Circle at Main Street and Fifth Avenue, Roebling
- B. Letter from St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church requesting parking restriction signs on Roland Street

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to approve the correspondence. Voice vote – all ayes.

APPLICATIONS

None at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Michael Muchowski, 1337 Maple Avenue, stated “on behalf of myself, my family and the community I want to thank you guys for everything you do. Specifically, I am here for Councilman Sandusky. I have had a lot of respect for you for a lot of years. You served this community and you taught me a lesson early in my career, that we are only on different teams one night a year. If I had any successes during my tenure, you were always a part of it. You are a straight shooter and I appreciate what you have done. Enjoy, you deserve the break.”

Councilman Sandusky thanked Mr. Muchowski for his sentiments.

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

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-202 Canceling taxes on Property Owned by a Disabled Veteran

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Resolution No. 2021-202.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-23 Amending and Supplementing Ch. 4 Regarding Hiring Police Officers (2nd Read, Public Hearing & Adopt)

Council President Garganio opened the meeting up to the public at this time. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was a Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to close the public comment portion.

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Ordinance No. 2021-23.

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Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-24

Establishing a Utility Easement Through Block 165.03, Lot 25 to connect Block 165.03, Lot 27 to the municipal sanitary sewer system

(Intro. & 1st Read) (2nd Read, Public Hearing & Adopt 12/1/21)

Mayor Wilkie explained that this is a small house just before the bridge on Old York Road near the Preserve. The house was not connected to the sewer system, and was approved years ago.

Motion of Woolston, seconded by Sandusky to approve Ordinance No. 2021-24.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Unanimous vote – Motion carried

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

Councilman Baldorossi congratulated Nick Haas, Jr. and Kristan Marter on their wins in the election.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Wilkie stated that last Friday a town hall meeting was held at the Duffy School with MEND and Conifer to discuss some issues. There have been communication issues with MEND and Conifer at Duffy, particularly through Covid. The agreement is that MEND and Conifer will have regular communications with the Association which meets monthly to try and help resolve some of their issues.

Thursday, November 11th is Veteran's Day. Post 194 will hold their services at 11:00 a.m. at the eagle monument at Broad and Front Streets and the township services will be at 11:30 a.m. at the Veteran's Memorial in front of the Municipal Building.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday, November 10th at 7 p.m.

Administrator

Administrator Fazekas stated that the CDC gave approval for pediatric Covid vaccines. The school district and Board of Health are holding a Pediatric Vaccination Clinic tomorrow, Thursday, November 4th at Riverfront School from 4-8pm in the gym for ages 5-11. He thanked the school district and the Board of Health for putting this together.

Administrator Fazekas said that he received notification from Civil Service on Monday that effective October 28, 2021, Albert Jacoby has officially been appointment to the rank of Captain of the Police Department. There will be a ceremonial swearing in at one of the December meetings.

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Florence Township has been awarded a grant in the sum of \$235,000 to go toward repaving Ninth Street. Sidewalks will be added from Ninth Street to Firehouse Lane as well as a pedestrian crossing or signal. Next week there will be a first reading for a bond ordinance for this project so we can start moving forward.

Administrator Fazekas said that the water tower on Cedar Lane is a project that was in the budget this year and it has been power washed and cleaned. On Potts Mill Road the work on Phase 2 and 3 are continuing. The sidewalks are in and the pedestrian bridges are going in. One of the issues is that we ordered the pipe for that project in the beginning of May and the piping did not come in until October. We are in the process of finalizing all of the work out there. If we pave in the next few weeks, the trenches for the piping won't have time to settle and the concern is if we mill and pave it, in a couple of months we are going to get areas that will start to sink. Administrator Fazekas said that he spoke to the engineer several times about this and his recommendation is to wait and make it the first project in the spring. Finish getting all of the water lines in, let everything settle, let the compaction happen and then we can mill and pave. The rest of the project should be completed by the end of this year.

Administrator Fazekas explained that a letter was sent to NJDOT and the Burlington County regarding the timing of the traffic signal at the intersection of Delaware Avenue, Florence-Columbus Road and Route 130. NJDOT asked for more information and they are looking to work on the timing there, especially during rush hour.

On East Front Street by Oak Street there was an erosion problem and some trees had fallen. The root system was encroaching on our force main sewer line, which is our main line coming down toward the sewer plant. A contract was awarded and that project is now completed and the embankment has been shored up.

We approved the funding a couple of months ago for the Pine Grove Erosion project. There was a pre-con meeting and that work will start within the next few weeks and notification will go out to residents.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Website Update

Mayor Wilkie explained that the website is on schedule for January and there is a test site that is up and running.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

BOARD OF HEALTH

None at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

Council President Garganio stated that Councilman Sandusky has been a regular on Council for a very long time and has done a lot of great things and it has been his pleasure to serve with him. As we move forward, we have two new Council persons that we are going to be seating. The newly elected officials will start getting packets starting next week so they will be able to be brought up to speed on what is happening and he will reach out next week to set up whatever can be done to assist to help make it a smooth transition.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Kristan Marter, 220 East Front Street, asked with regards to the NFI projects that are happening out on Florence-Columbus Road, where we stand with this project and why the Master Plan keeps getting put off? There had been discussions about trying to preserve the Wainwright farm and, in order for it to be farmland preserved, her understanding is that it has to be a farm which would mean the zoning would have to go to agricultural before it can be preserved. She asked Mayor Wilkie why the Master Plan was put off, knowing that these properties were sold to NFI putting us in a position where it is going to be very hard to stop this without being sued?

Mayor Wilkie stated that he has been advised not to speak to the applications because it can potentially be a legal issue. He pointed out that we have had a Master Plan since 1976 the required review was completed in 2018 and the Master Plan is in good standing. Since 2019 we have been working on getting rid of the original and all of the amendments over the years. When Covid hit, we stopped. Moving forward in 2021, the major application came in and the meeting it was scheduled for was cancelled. Instead of sitting through what could be a 2 or 3-hour planning application and trying and do the Master Plan, we did not move forward with the Master Plan. Unfortunately, those applications ended up withdrawing and not moving forward so the reason those Planning Board meetings did not talk about a Master Plan was because there were applications that were supposed to take the whole meeting and, when those applications decided to pull out, it was too late.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, it was a Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Woolston to close public comment. Voice vote – all ayes.

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Woolston to adjourn to Closed Session at 7:27 p.m. where no action will be taken. Voice vote – all ayes.

ADJOURNMENT

Council returned to the Regular meeting at 7:44 p.m. No action was taken. Motion of Sandusky seconded by Baldorossi to adjourn. Voice vote – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
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