

**MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MEETING
JULY 13, 2009**

A Work Session Meeting of the Mount Laurel Township Council was held on Monday, July 13, 2009 in the Courtroom of the Mount Laurel Municipal Building. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Keenan at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The members of Council present were Mayor Keenan, Deputy Mayor McCaffrey, Councilwomen Bobo and Riley and Councilman Smith. Also present were Acting Township Manager, Jennifer Blumenthal, Patricia Halbe, Municipal Clerk and Christopher Norman, Esq., Township Solicitor.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Public Announcement, which is required by the "Open Public Meetings Act" of the State of New Jersey and read at every meeting of the Township Council was read by the Municipal Clerk

Escrow Fee Ordinance

Ms. Blumenthal stated that the professional staff has been analyzing due to sub-accounts becoming deficient. They did a comparison of other municipalities and recommend doing some in-house changes. She is asking that Council review the recommendations and let her know if they have any concerns. Flat fees are being proposed for residents so they know the total fees for decks, fences, signs etc.

Mayor Keenan thought that the flat fee for residents was a great idea but would like to see more details. Deputy Mayor McCaffrey also felt he needed more information. Mayor Keenan wants to insure that our commercial fees are comparable to other communities.

Ms. Blumenthal stated that she sat in on the meetings regarding the escrow accounts and she believes the board secretaries should be more involved, not just the CFO. Mayor Keenan requested that the solicitor review the matter.

Clothing Bin Ordinance

Ms. Blumenthal stated that she worked with Mr. Norman and the Zoning Officer on the ordinance. Mayor Keenan felt that it had a nice description of the clothing uses.

Budget

Ms. Blumenthal reported that the budget hearing is next Monday. There is a severe cash flow. The budget does not capture what we are doing with a 2-3 year plan. She is looking at the needs of each department and reallocating assets and personnel. She wants to keep services while reducing costs. She will be recommending various incentives and fees. She may propose eliminating the Newsbreak, having more forms online and taking credit card payments.

Councilwoman Riley warned of the fees associates with credit card companies. Ms. Blumenthal responded that there is a local finance notice on the subject. Mayor Keenan said that the motor vehicles office charges a flat fee and we may want to look into that.

Mayor Keenan questioned if Ms. Blumenthal had any recommended changes to the department budgets. Ms. Blumenthal indicated that she did not.

Councilwoman Riley questioned whether we had heard back from the professionals on reducing their fees. Ms. Blumenthal will check into that. Mayor Keenan felt that we could have pre-approved designs for lights, inlets etc. and we may want to put flat fees into our RFP's as we could control our engineering costs in this way. He also thought we could have shared engineering services with the MUA and other entities.

Councilwoman Riley stated that Moorestown is talking to other towns about shared court and we should contact them again. Councilman Smith questioned if the Newsbreak was

07-13-09

in the budget. He felt that discontinuing it and closing the line of communications was not good in these times. Councilwoman Riley felt that the website has come along and also the MUA could advertise our website in their bills.

Council requested that a work session be held before the July 20th regular meeting to go over the budget one last time.

Stop Sign at Academy and Union Mill Road and Union Mill Terrace

Ms. Blumenthal stated that the request for a stop sign had been sent to Al Litwornia and he had recommended the signage. Deputy Mayor McCaffrey thinks Mr. Litwornia should look at four way stop signs. Mayor Keenan requested that Kurt Shepherd, traffic officer, look at the intersection.

Recommendation for Turnpike

Mr. Norman has a two-prong suggestion regarding the Turnpike issue concerning Timbercrest and Parkers Creek. He feels that a letter should be sent to Governor Corzine, Assemblyman Adler and other State representatives. We should also write a new noise ordinance.

Mayor Keenan stated he has no problem with us informing officials about the creation of the road and removing the buffer is what created the problem. He will sign a letter that the Turnpike Authority and PSE&G worked together to remove the trees.

Councilwoman Riley said she had read on their website about future expansion but cannot find it now. She questioned whether we would raise a red flag by sending a letter now when we are trying to get a meeting. She does not understand why we cannot get a basic sit down meeting with the Turnpike Authority.

Mayor Keenan asked that Ms. Blumenthal begin writing the letter and email it to Council. They will recommend changes, if any.

HVE Hovnanian Storm System Payment Proposal

Ms. Blumenthal stated that the punch list for the bond for pond 5 required that additional storm piping be installed. There have been no issues since 1995. She sent the proposal to Mr. Norman and he concurs.

Mr. Norman stated that Hovnanian's position is that the improvement is not needed. It has been functioning since 1995. They are willing to pay \$15,000 to close out the punch list.

Mayor Keenan asked Ms. Blumenthal to check with Mr. Long on the matter.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Grant

Ms. Blumenthal stated that she is working with Mr. Holshue on this grant. The preliminary application is due on July 31, 2009. If approved, the regular application will be due in November. They are looking at solar panels for lights but they may have to change that to be more competitive. Mayor Keenan questioned if they were looking at hybrid cars.

Public Comment

Robert Bohinski – 41 Broadacre Drive – He is providing photos regarding the walkways at Spring Valley Manor. He would like the engineer to review the slope to the bridge.

Mr. Norman stated that he had met with Ms. Blumenthal and reviewed the subdivision plans and did not see any inconsistency with the Planning Board resolution. The pedestrian easement was between sections one and two and the others were access easements.

07-13-09

Mr.. Bohinski – stated that the lots were designated as open space in the resolution of approval.

Mr. Norman said that the plans are on file in the Planning Board office. Council does not dispute that one pedestrian walkway was to be built but was not due to bankruptcy. Also, a homeowners association was to be created.

Mayor Keenan feels Council should discuss this in closed session first.

Mr. Bohinski said that \$400,000 was set aside and questioned what the \$57,000 bill was for. Ms. Blumenthal responded that it was for payment of outstanding escrow bills and was approved by Ms. Halbe when she was Manager.

Mr. Bohinski commented that there are still 24 police cars in the parking lot. Councilwoman Riley responded that they went over every vehicle and every one is justified and has increasing mileage. Deputy Mayor McCaffrey said that the police cars need to be safe and the cars are rotated.

Randy Lahn – Funplex – He is here regarding skill-based redemption. Mr. Norman responded that if we adopt an ordinance allowing skill-based redemption for amusement parks, are we compromising our ordinance. Mr. Lahn replied that he has contact the State and they will allow a different interpretation and not call it an amusement park but deem it a resort location. The State gave verbal approval only. It would be confined to inside only.

Mayor Keenan asked for an opinion from Mr. Norman by the end of the week. He asked how the State defines a resort location.

Dave Wohlman, attorney for the Funplex – stated that a resort is considered a place providing entertainment or amusement. He commented that the township has a lot of authority and it can be done with no impact on the zoning. It would stay as a permitted use in the Industrial Zone.

Alan Kramer – 68 Southgate Drive – State his back yard backs up to the intersection at Academy and Union Mill. Not enough traffic is turning left from Academy to warrant a light. The site view is blocked due to the bushes. He received this information from Mr. Litwornia.

Mayor Keenan asked the Acting Manager to ask Mr. Litwornia for the prior report.

Gary Cogan – 112 Yorktown Drive – Asked for an update on the Fall Festival.

Mayor Keenan replied that it will be on September 26th and will be a patriotic theme. The Township has received enough money from vendors and sponsors to pay for any overtime.

Jim Stewart – 11 Camelia Lane - Commented that at Pleasant Valley Avenue and South Church Street there are a large number of vehicles parked on the corner on the grass. He thinks a speed limit study is needed on Pleasant Valley Avenue.

Mayor Keenan asked Ms. Blumenthal to have Kurt Shepherd, Traffic Officer, look into it.

Jeff Shapiro – 433 Kelham Court – Stated that there is trash sitting on the 200 block of Hartford Road that has not been picked up.

07-13-09

Closed Session

The Clerk read resolution 09-R-196, Authorizing Mount Laurel Township Council to go into closed session for discussion of Personnel Matters and Litigation Matters. A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McCaffrey and seconded by Councilman Smith. All were in favor and Council went into closed session at 9:11 p.m.

Return to Open Session

A motion was made by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilwoman Riley to return to open session. All were in favor and Council returned to open session at 10:19 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McCaffrey and seconded by Councilman Smith to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Halbe, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Transcribed by
Patricia Halbe

The minutes of this meeting are summary minutes. A copy of the tape recording of this meeting will be available in the office of the Municipal Clerk for four years.

