

**MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MEETING
MARCH 23, 2009**

A Work Session Meeting of the Mount Laurel Township Council was held on Monday, March 23, 2009 in the Courtroom of the Mount Laurel Municipal Building. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Keenan at 8:06 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 Patricia Halbe, Municipal Clerk; Debra Fourre, Township Manager; 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.

UPDATE ON GREEN INITIATIVE

Ms. Blumenthal stated that she is asking that Council seek certification as a sustainable community which would need to be done by resolution. We would also need to create a "green team" with the Mayor or Council Member, staff and members of the community. That would allow the Township to apply for grants that others are not eligible for or would give a better chance of receiving. There is an incentive program that we would get points for doing different items. We need to receive 100 points before we would become a sustainable community. The energy audit that we already did would give us 30 points.

Mr. Holshue stated that there are several grants available after we get into the system, including \$250,000 in grants from Walmart. Ms. Blumenthal indicated that the Township cannot apply for the Walmart grant without participation in this program.

Mr. Holshue stated that the low bidder for the energy audit is about \$30,015. We could choose the buildings we want to do first and they would cost about \$16,000. He could move items around in his office to do those buildings and the township would get back 75%. When we get the money back, we would then do the remaining buildings. After rebates, the final costs would only be \$6504 to do the energy audits. There is also a program by the BPU, if signed by the Governor, to do one solar project and the State would pick up the costs. He spoke to Dan Kennedy from the County about Community Gardens and he would be willing to come in to speak about it. The biggest holdup is water and soil conditions. The Cuzzimano house and the police garage were removed from the energy audits since he was told we would not benefit from including these buildings. He believes it will take about 18 months to accumulate 100 points.

Jennifer Blumenthal stated that she understands that we would pay 25% of the audit and get the funding back when we implemented the suggestions.

Mayor Keenan felt that we also need to provide safe access and parking to any sites used for community gardens. He thought we could put down wildflowers so we do not have to cut grass in certain areas. Councilwoman Riley stated that the boy scouts have saplings that they want to plant and perhaps we could incorporate them into a program.

Deputy Mayor McCaffrey reminded Council that there was a tree preservation area put at the Cuzzimano property.

Council agreed that the resolution for the green initiative be reviewed by the Solicitor and placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Mayor Keenan asked that the information on the energy audits be given to all Council members since Councilwoman Bobo and Councilman Smith had not seen it previously.

March 23, 2009

PHEASANTMERE TRAFFIC STUDY – NOTIFICATION TO RESIDENTS

Ms. Fourre has prepared a letter to be sent to the residents of Pheasantmere. It lets them know what the results of the traffic study for Pheasant Drive was. She also has received a response letter from the County Engineer today about Mount Laurel Road. The County is recommending reducing the speed limit to 45 MPH along Mount Laurel Road from Canterbury Road to Union Mill Road. They are also going to order deer crossing signs for there. Mayor Keenan asked the Manager to thank the County for the traffic study and asking them to look into the striping problem in the no-passing zone. Councilwoman Riley felt that the change of speed limit on Mount Laurel Road should be included in the letter to the Pheasantmere residents. Councilwoman Bobo felt the letter should indicate that the second study was done when the football field was not in use, while the first study was done when the field was in operation.

MUA BUDGET REQUEST

Ms. Fourre reported that Pam Carolan informed her that the MUA had preliminarily discussed the request and they have several questions about the money being requested of them for the township 2009 budget. They are questioning how much the township is short, what would be do with the \$450,000 and if this is a one-time request or will it be asked annually. She will have a letter prepared this week. Pam Carolan has suggested that the Manager and a Council Member attend their April 2nd meeting to answer any questions.

Mayor Keenan felt it was important that the meeting be attended and to get the questions so that the Council can see them first.

UCC SHARED SERVICES

Ms. Fourre reported that Cherry Hill has indicated they are looking to get their own Construction Official but that they could share sub-code officials. Ms. Fourre is not sure our employees should be involved in their employment issues if it is their employees that they would report to.

Councilwoman Riley felt it could also expose the Township as well as our employees.

Mayor Keenan asked if she had distributed the template of the proposal in writing. Ms. Fourre responded that she has an e-mail that she can provide to Council. She does not recommend participating if we do not have control of the situation. She also indicated that Burlington City is laying off employees in housing and code enforcement and was interested in entering into a shared service but she does not recommend participation in this program either.

Deputy Mayor McCaffrey indicated he does not want to see our employees traveling that far to Burlington City and he does not think we should be involved in the Cherry Hill situation.

Mayor Keenan questioned if we could have temporary inspectors in Mount Laurel and let them get part-time jobs in other towns. If we can lose employees to Cherry Hill for 60 days, do we need them full time? We may be able to have them do several part-time jobs rather than have them lose their jobs fully. Mr. Holshue responded that if the office picks up later in the year, he may be at a loss for personnel, but he can look into it. Ms. Fourre stated she will also need to look into DOP rules about reducing employees hours.

CLOTHING BIN ORDINANCE

Mr. Norman reported that he has prepared a draft ordinance for Charitable Clothing Bins. It is to regulate were they are to be placed for consumer protection and safety issues.

Mayor Keenan indicated that municipalities were directed by the State to pass this ordinance. He questioned if we want to incorporate the words “other apparel” into the ordinance since he has seen shoes included. Mr. Norman will look into that also.

March 23, 2009

SPECIAL EVENTS

Ms. Blumenthal stated that the Fall Festival costs \$30,000 in other expenses, not including \$7,000 for police salaries and \$4500 for Public Works and Parks. We have a trust fund that governs that. Letters will be sent out tomorrow to see what kind of response we get for sponsorships. The estimated cost for the Police Expo which is about \$3,000 in police salaries. The Flag Day and Memorial Day celebrations cost \$1000 or less each. Earth Day is new this year and estimated salary costs would be \$5000 and other expenses would be \$6000 which would be paid from Clean Communities funding. Due to the economy, it may not be the best year to start.

Councilman Smith asked for the plans for the Earth Day. Ms. Blumenthal stated that the costs would be overtime costs for Police, EMS and Public Works. Clean Communities funds would pay for shopping bags, coloring books, a vaudeville act and puppeteers. The County and MUA also agreed to work with us about composting and water. She is waiting to hear back from the schools and the cub scouts and boy scouts are also willing to participate.

Mayor Keenan felt that the overtime costs for the Parks are heavy on the weekends. He questioned if the work-week could be re-allocated so employees are scheduled to work on the weekends. The Manager indicated that Parks & Rec. is having a hard time finding part-time employees.

Ms. Blumenthal stated she does not have an estimated cost for Bring Your Child to Work day. Councilwoman Riley offered that Riley & Riley will sponsor the pizza for the children that day.

The Manager reported that the Summer Concert series was not well-received but those that came enjoyed it. She will try to get sponsorships for it.

Mr. Holshue stated that he hopes to have 5000 people for the Earth Day event. Mayor Keenan thought that they could give out the fluorescent light bulbs at Trotters Crossing.

Mayor Keenan asked the Manager if we could just let ride vendors rent a space at the Fall Festival and put their rides up and charge directly. Ms. Fourre felt it might not be popular with the parents and whether the cost per ride could be capped. She will look into it further.

FEE ORDINANCE

Ms. Fourre stated that Ms. Blumenthal had provided recommended new fee ordinances. One is for the construction code uniform fees and one is for other fee ordinance 2009. The Manager stated that the departments have made several recommendations for increases. Ms. Blumenthal has also done an analysis of what additional revenue would be generated.

Mr. Holshue indicated that it is not a tax, it is a user fee. The Spa and pool fees are for commercial annual certification only, not residential pools. It is also for annual inspections of commercial backflow preventors.

Councilman Smith questioned how long the inspections typically take. Mr. Holshue indicated that the average inspection would take about an hour. He would not need additional staffing.

Deputy Mayor McCaffrey questioned the inspection of the water park. Mr. Holshue indicated that it is inspected by the Department of Community Affairs and he is given a copy if they find any problems.

Mayor Keenan asked if the fees are on the moderate site or on the high-end. Mr. Holshue responded that they are on the high-end because they have not been adjusted for some time and his department's costs continue to rise.

March 23, 2009

Ms. Fourre would also like to look into renting the Senior Meeting Facility on weekends and the pavilion costs at Laurel Acres.

Councilwoman Bobo asked if the township would have the manpower to inspect hotels as he had previously indicated. Mr. Holshue reported that every inspector in his department is fully licensed to do this. He may occasionally need some additional support staff.

QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVE

Ms. Fourre reported that the Chief is ready to move forward with the program. Also, the Township can look at rental registration program to do an annual inspection when there is a change of occupancy. We may also want to require rental registration for people staying in hotels for more than 30 days.

Mayor Keenan questioned if we fine when we find people not in compliance. Mr. Holshue stated that they are very liberal with not fining people. They do send letters out and 99% of the time they do not have to take them to court. Mayor Keenan stated he does not understand why we do not issue fines. He feels we should fine for non-compliant commercial properties. Mr. Holshue stated that there is no ordinance to support fines for violations of land use regulations. Mayor Keenan felt the Manager should look into it.

Councilwoman Riley felt the record should reflect that Mr. Braun is smiling from ear to ear.

The Manager questioned if Council would like to have a graffiti ordinance. Council indicated that they would. Mayor Keenan asked that the Manager provide a list of all things that have been suggested before. The Manager has a draft Boat & RV ordinance. Councilwoman Bobo asked for an ordinance for radio booming. Mr. Norman stated that if we have a provision that it is annoying to a reasonable person's standard. He has been upheld in the court. There is a difference between the noise control act and general nuisance enforcement.

Mr. Holshue stated that many of our ordinances do not have a designated person for enforcement. Mayor Keenan asked that Mr. Norman look at the existing ordinance.

Chief Lehmann stated he would like to move forward with the specific area of concern, Willow Turn, and go into it from a community-wide basis. It would entail getting all the departments together and identify the issues, then schedule a community meeting and have the residents identify the issues. There are retail issues from CVS that spill onto Willow Turn. They have had gunfire and drug enforcement in the winter and they need to step up enforcement in the warmer months. A report was prepared by Lieutenant Modugno with suggestions and if it is successful, we can move the template to other areas. This area was triggered by a complaint by a resident.

Mayor Keenan stated that we have different neighborhoods with different needs. He thinks the Larchmont School is a good place to have the meeting. He asked if the Police Department could have the Public Works Department be trained in what to look for. Chief Lehmann indicated that they would then become an agent of the police department and they would have to be careful with legalities. He would like to create a better dialogue with NJDOT, PSE&G and other outside agencies and bring them in for a pre-meeting first.

Councilwoman Riley asked the Manager for her position.

The Manager stated that we could set up a meeting soon and have all the department heads attend. Council was in agreement.

March 23, 2009

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gary Cogan – 110 Yorktown Drive – Stated that the Township is being inundated with Lenape Craft Show signs and he feels that they are not in the letter or spirit of the law for the anti-sign ordinance that was passed.

Mayor Keenan stated Council did not pass a anti-sign ordinance but that the solicitor reviewed and amended our sign ordinance and the Manager is having personnel enforce the sign ordinance. Mr. Holshue stated that there is a clause in the ordinance that allows them to do so as long as it is not on our property. Our Zoning Officer is very aggressive on picking up signs if they are not compliant.

Fred Braun – 104 Haines Road – Stated that last Wednesday there was a political rally in a township building. He does not feel it should be allowed unless they paid rent.

Mayor Keenan stated that the library has to allow it because the library takes state funds.

CLOSED SESSION

The Clerk read resolution 09-R-91, authorizing Mount Laurel Township Council to go into closed session for discussion of labor negotiation matters, litigation matters and personnel matters.

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McCaffrey and seconded by Councilwoman Riley to adopt the resolution. All were in favor and Council went into closed session at 10:00 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

A motion was made by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilwoman Riley. All were in favor and Council went into closed session at 11:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Halbe, RMC
Municipal Clerk

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.

