

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

A Work Session Meeting of the Mount Laurel Township Council was held on Monday, April 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, Councilwoman Riley and Councilman Smith. Also present were Patricia Halbe, Municipal Clerk; Debra Fourre, Township Manager; and Christopher Norman, Esq., Township Solicitor. Councilwoman Bobo was absent.

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.

Develcom Presentation

Co-Counsel, Philip Haines, Esq. and Edward Sheehan, Esq. were present representing Mount Laurel Development in a joint venture with Develcom and Ark Properties for a 45 acre parcel at Route 73 and Fellowship Road.

Charles Gallub, President and CEO of Develcom, indicated that they are New Jersey based companies who focus on very difficult projects. The project area falls within several different zones, there are some environmental challenges and it is also a high profile site. The meeting is to open communications with the Township. When they bought the Chas Lounge 4 years ago they were told that the Township would like to see a complete solution to that area so they now own 45 acres and are ready to go forward with a completely assembled parcel. COAH is the real issue and they don't want to build a project that is a problem. It will be a COAH neutral project regardless of the legislation pending, as they would satisfy any COAH requirement. They have a concept for the rear of the property for Lifetime Fitness, which is a high-end mega health care facility. There are 7 acres of wetlands between the front and rear of the property and they are looking to segregate the sites. They have several approaches they could take.

Ed Sheen, Esq. stated that it is one of the most important parcels in Mount Laurel but there are problems with bringing development to the parcel. One is the wetlands and the other is the zoning on the project site. There are four zones within the project area, R1, Business, Business Development Overlay zone and Neighborhood Commercial.

They are asking for a solution to resolve the problem.

1. They could ask for use variances before the zoning board. The advantage is that the Township Council has to do nothing but Council would then have no control over the plan. It is most difficult to obtain a D variance and creates greatest risk of litigation.

2. The township could re-zone and create a new zone. It gives input into what is developed. The Township would need to amend the Master Plan and revise the zoning ordinance.

3. Creation of a redevelopment area provides numerous advantages to the Township and brings ratables to the municipality. It also qualifies projects for State funding. The Redevelopment process is laid out by the Statute and provides tremendous sense of control to the municipality.

Mr. Sheehan stated that this developer wants to bring a project that the community wants.

Mr. Gallub stated that there is a pending bill in the legislature that allows capture of some new taxes under the Economic Recovery Act of 2009. There may be a funding mechanism under that legislation for extended water and sewer lines beyond the developer's responsible area.

4-13-09

Mayor Keenan questioned if the Township would have a say in the type of building on a redevelopment plan. Mr. Gallup responded that architectural elements are allowed as part of a redevelopment plan.

Deputy Mayor McCaffrey stated that he would like to see a park-like setting there and as upscale as possible and it would go a long way toward getting an approval from Council. The Township is getting complaints from residents of that area about the boarded-up houses.

Mr. Gallup indicated that Lifetime Fitness uses pavers, finishes all four sides of their buildings equally, installs berms to buffer residents and does noise studies to insure that their facility does not impact adjacent neighbors.

Philip Haines, Esq. asked that Council authorize the solicitor to look into any legal issues. Mayor Keenan responded that Council needs to talk to the solicitor on the matter. They have heard from the Township Planner and when the next step is decided, we will let them know.

Special Events

The Manager stated she is working on setting up a Memorial Day morning ceremony with Karl Williams as guest speaker.

The Manager indicated that the Porch Light people were not available for Earth Day. Ms. Blumenthal reported that they could do it later as a Green Day as opposed to Earth Day.

Mayor Keenan reported that he is meeting with Mr. Giangiulio and the Manager for suggestions and options for the Fall Festival.

Geese Population Control

Ms. Blumenthal stated that she has been in contact with the USDA and the Humane Society as well as the vendor used by Moorestown concerning geese control. They have advised that we need to addle the geese eggs but it may be too late for this season. The USDA would like to come in September to talk to the Township about a program for next year. Council asked Ms. Blumenthal to reach out to Moorestown and Holiday Village East to work with them on a coordinated program.

Davis Trash Removal

Ms. Fourre stated that Mr. Basim, Public Works Director, did an analysis of costs for trash removal and it came to \$3.99 per week per household. He recommends picking up Tricia Meadows but not for Rogers Walk. The total estimate for revenue is \$90,000 and she would like to add an administrative fee. The Township could enter into a developer's agreement. The units in Tricia Meadows are registered as motor vehicles so they do not qualify for the MACCS program. Council was in agreement.

Vacation of Walnut Avenue

The Manager discussed the letter received from Norman Shabel, Esq. requesting the Township to vacate the remaining portion of Walnut Avenue. Council requested a copy of the tax map to review.

Municipal Alliance

The Manager discussed the letter received previously from the County Solicitor requesting that a single audit be done by the Township.

Mayor Keenan felt that a letter should be sent from the Mayor to the Director of Freeholders asking them to look at the County Solicitor's response. Council was in agreement.

04-13-09

Grants

Sunnyside Farm - Deputy Manager, Ms. Blumenthal, stated that she has been looking into eligibility for historic design grant for Sunnyside Farm. We have an opportunity for a Garden State management grant. We need a certification of eligibility, which she has applied for and sent a letter of intent to apply for grant. We will need a consultant to do a feasibility study. RFP's for a consultant is needed which would be covered by the grant.

NJDOT – Municipal Aid and Bikeways grant – Ms. Blumenthal stated that she has spoken with Bill Long and we could do about a mile of bikeway but it would need \$30,000 of engineering fees. Larchmont Blvd. is wide enough but Union Mill Road is not.

Recognitions

Ms. Fourre indicated that Chief Pagurek had requested a proclamation for the Virtua Paramedics who placed third in a nation-wide competition. They serve Mt. Laurel residents. Council agreed and they will be asked to attend a meeting on May 18th.

Police Awards – Ms. Fourre indicated that Chief Lehmann would like to have the police awards presentations at a Council Meeting. Council agreed to have the awards on May 18th.

Lenape Basketball and Lenape Deborah Heart Team winners – Council agreed to do proclamations on May 4th.

Walton Avenue Update

Ms. Fourre reported that Mr. Litwornia, Traffic Engineer, met with the Traffic Engineer for Hovnanian & Sons to address the Walton Avenue issue and has two proposals. One is for 2 cul-de-sacs and one is to move the roadway around Sunrise. Council asked that the Manager send a letter to Mr. Litwornia asking for an explanation of the discrepancy of Arnold Groncyk's previous report that said that Marter Avenue would fail if we did that.

Consideration of Bach's Proposal for Vacant Land Adjustment

Ms. Fourre indicated that Bach is asking for up to \$10,000 to do the study. Mr. Norman stated that this new planning report is needed to get our new open space adjustment number down. COAH requires \$160,000 per unit and we are talking over 900 units. Also, much of the work will be used for the COAH Round III report due in December, 2009.

Councilwoman Riley felt that Bach Associates should be able to give a more definitive cost. Mayor Keenan suggested that if the number can be capped at \$10,000 or less, they do not need to come in before Council, but if the number cannot be capped, they will need to come before Council to explain why.

School Custodian

Ms. Fourre distributed a draft of a letter that would go out to sports organizations about scheduling use of school property. Council felt that the Manager needed to talk with Dr. Rath and Mr. Wachter first. We need to work together due to tough economic times and the school board may want to handle it differently rather than a letter being sent.

Public Comment

Steve Hassett – 345 Walton Avenue – Stated that on June 9, 2008, Arnold Gronczyk sat in for Al Litwornia at a Council meeting and made recommendations of 3 options about Walton Avenue. He also suggested that the Police Expo could be combined with the Fall Festival. He also suggested that the geese addling might be able to be done as an Eagle Scout project.

04-13-09

Joyce James – 129 Dorchester Road – Indicated she had sent letter to Mayor Drinkard, Manager and Clerk about problem at polling place in Nov, 2008 and has not received a response. She was told that the poll worker was a municipal employee for the day. The Municipal Clerk advised that since they were just copied on the letter, they did not realize a response was being looked for. Ms. Halbe had witnessed the incident and asked the County Board of Elections to remove the person from working the polls, which was eventually done. She advised that the poll workers are hired by the County Board of Elections in consultation with the two political parties they represent. She will provide information to Mrs. James about the proper person for her to send her complaint to.

Fred Braun – 104 Haines Road – Stated that the Municipal Alliance is not running right and well. He sees no benefit in spending money to hire an auditor for a special audit. He complained that the sidewalks on Church Street are in deplorable shape and questions whom they belong to.

Mayor he believed that they are owned by the residents who live there but are along the County right-of-way.

Closed Session

The Clerk read resolution 09-R-108, authorizing Mount Laurel Township Council to go into closed session for discussion of personnel matters, contract negotiation matters and Litigation Matters. A motion was made by Councilwoman Riley and seconded by Councilman Smith to go into closed session. All were in favor and Council went into closed session at 9:38 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 10:10 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilwoman Riley to Adjourn the Meeting. All were in favor and Council adjourned the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by
Patricia Halbe

Patricia Halbe, RMC
Municipal Clerk

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

