

**MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MEETING
JULY 27, 2009**

A Work Session Meeting of the Mount Laurel Township Council was held on Monday, July 27, 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, 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. Deputy Mayor McCaffrey 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

Burlington County Bridge Commission

Gary LaVenia, Director of the Burlington County Bridge Commission Improvement Authority Operations was present. Ms. Blumenthal indicated that he was here to discuss the other services they offer. Mr. LaVenia indicated that he is also the chair of the Burlington County Shared Services group. He provided a brochure of their services and a copy of their newsletter. The Bridge Commission also does pooled lendings and pooled leases that provide savings to the municipality through lower interest rates, savings on bond insurance, prorated issuance costs and publication costs. This is not their only focus anymore. He also oversees the shared services forum and has expanded the scope. It is now the largest shared services forum in the State. They are willing to work with any municipality that wants their help. They have the ability to write grants and for every dollar spent have received back twenty-two dollars in grant funds. They only ask that a request letter be sent asking for help.

Councilwoman Riley questioned if there was any limitation and if they reach out to those towns that qualify for grants. Mr. LaVenia indicated that there was not a limitation and that they do reach out to those that they believe can participate in a grant application. For the EECBG grant, Mount Laurel was in a unique position because it was one of the only towns that qualified.

SHARED SERVICES WITH MOORESTOWN

Ms. Blumenthal stated that she had reached out to Moorestown about their court and they are doing a feasibility study with Maple Shade. We can be included if we want to be.

Mr. LaVenia stated that there would be a cash match required but it would be a negligible amount. Maple Shade and Moorestown are looking to combine courts if it is going to create an efficiency. When doing a shared service, it must be negotiated and the revenue shared and divided.

Councilwoman Riley stated that her thinking was for Mount Laurel to take on the court from Moorestown. Mr. LaVenia suggested that we reach out to someone who has done it and get their input. Mayor Keenan stated that we are looking to share employees hosting court.

Councilman Smith questioned if we have an idea of the estimate for the match. Ms. Blumenthal indicated that the Manager of Maple Shade had informed her that it will cost us nothing to participate. Mr. LaVenia indicated that he believed there would be some match required. Mayor Keenan asked that Ms. Blumenthal get the information in writing.

Ms. Blumenthal stated she is also meeting with the Manager of Moorestown to discuss shared services for geese control and animal control.

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Traffic Light at Larchmont Blvd and Union Mill Road

Ms. Blumenthal stated that she has found money in the capital to fund the project but we need to go out to bid. Mayor Keenan stated he is concerned regarding engineering fees that are not in the estimate. There was conduit installed in the prior phase for the lighting. It was broken down by line item and presented at a work session that Bill Long attended. Ms. Blumenthal will check into this and will put it on again for August 10th. She was told by Mr. Litwornia that we cannot have templates for traffic lights because each is a little different. She has asked him to find a grant for the project.

Councilwoman Riley questioned if there was a centralized place where we can get grant information since Mr. Litwornia would be charging us to look for a grant.

Holiday Village East – Storm System Payment Proposal

Ms. Blumenthal stated that she had questioned Mr. Long about the \$15,000 acceptance and he indicated that to install the piping would have cost \$30,000 and they are splitting the costs. Mayor Keenan question what the situation is that did not require the piping to be installed. Mr. Norman responded that the system was working. Mayor Keenan stated that Mr. Long has said in writing that it is not needed and he has no problem with it since Mr. Long recommended it.

Council had no objection with acceptance of the \$15,000 and release of the performance bond.

Spring Valley Estates

Ms. Blumenthal indicated that it was requested that a letter be prepared that a homeowners association be created to take over the trust fund. Mr. Norman stated that the homeowners would take over all future maintenance and the open space lots would need to be turned over to the homeowners association so we would have no liability.

Councilwoman Riley stated that this would require all the property owners to agree and questioned how many residents live there. It would only take one to day no for it not to happen. Mr. Norman responded that they can still form it with a majority vote but those that vote no cannot be forced to join.

Councilwoman Riley said that a large percentage would be needed to move forward. She questioned whether the funds to send out the letters could come from the trust fund. Mr. Norman responded that he believed it could. The agreement is a very general agreement and he believes it would fit.

Mayor Keenan stated that after the trust fund was reviewed by Mr. Norman, it brought a different prospective to light. The money was given in lieu of litigation. He would rather use the money wisely. There are six or seven acres to maintain and a retention basin so he does not think building a bike path does the taxpayers any justice. If they are willing to form a homeowners association, we could turn the funds over to them or if not, they should be turned over to the general fund.

Councilwoman Bobo questioned if there is no response to a letter, how is that viewed. Mr. Norman responded that a non-response is viewed as a no vote.

Mayor Keenan was concerned that we may have spent the remainder already over the past years in costs to maintain the property. Mr. Norman responded that routine maintenance expenses were not charged to date and the township has been frugal in its use of the money.

Councilwoman Riley stated that \$224,000 was spent on the bridge and questioned why the residents were not asked. She asked if Ms. Halbe could shed any light on the matter. Ms. Halbe responded that the funds received were based on punch list costs from Mr. Long. The bridge repair money was not originally to be taken from the trust account but

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the agreement was general in nature and allowed the township to do so. It was decided by the former manager and CFO to use the trust funds for that purpose.

Councilwoman Bobo felt that Council needed to decide what the remainder of the funds will be used for if there is no homeowners association. Mayor Keenan feels that we need to give a final answer to the residents. He feels we need to hold the funds for future maintenance of the basin. It was decided that the letter will not be sent at this time.

Recycling Toters

Ms. Blumenthal reported that the recycling coordinator, Janice Husted has recommended that we move forward with 2000 more carts for paper recycling. The cost would be from the tonnage grants received from the State and payment to the County would be spread out over a number of years.

Councilman Smith stated that he thought it was a good thing but was not sure if we can also do the rewards program at this time. Mayor Keenan indicated that he had never received an answer regarding the rewards program about whether the cost was per cart being used or for all of the township and also about the number of years we would need to sign a contract for. Ms. Blumenthal will get information on the rewards program.

Mayor Keenan stated that if the toters are purchased from the grant money and it has been successful, he is in agreement to move forward. Council was in agreement.

Public Comment

Fred Braun – 104 Haines Road – Indicated that he was here speaking as an MUA board member. The MUA held a meeting and invited the residents who will be affected by the solar array project. 22 families were invited and 6 families attended and were happy with what they heard. They will be holding another meeting for anyone who lives within 200 feet. They will be installing a berm, fencing and 3 feet of trees as a buffer for the residents.

Mr. Braun also stated that someone would have to be crazy to join a homeowners association after seven years. They are off the hook.

Mr. Braun would like the head of zoning and Mr. Holshue to come to a Council meeting. He was told by Mr. Holshue that Ramblewood Gardens has never been to court. How could a deal have been struck between them and the zoning officer without the approval of Council and the zoning board? Mayor Keenan responded that they are waiting for transcripts from court to see if there was a settlement. Mr. Braun felt the Township needs to take responsibility for the problem.

Alan Kramer – He questioned the status of pursuing a traffic light or a stop sign at Union Mill Road and Academy. Councilwoman Riley stated that she had nearly been struck by another vehicle there the night after the last meeting. Mayor Keenan reported that they will have a new traffic study done in September when school is in session

Closed Session

The Clerk read resolution 09-R-206, authorizing Mount Laurel Township Council to go into closed session for discussion of Personnel Matters and Litigation Matters. A motion was made by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilwoman Bobo to adopt the resolution. All were in favor and Council went into closed session at 9 p.m.

Return to Open Session

A motion as made by Councilwoman Riley and seconded by Councilman Smith to return to Open Session. All were in favor and Council returned to open session at 11:15 p.m.

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Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilwoman Riley to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 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.

