

**MINUTES
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
NOVEMBER 10, 2014**

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES & ROLL CALL

The regular scheduled Work Session Meeting of the Monroe Township Council was called to order by **Council Vice-President, Rich DiLucia** at approximately **7:00 PM** in the Conference Room on the first floor of the Municipal Complex, located at 125 Virginia Avenue, Williamstown, New Jersey.

This meeting was advertised pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act (*NJSA 10:4-6 thru 10:4-21*). Notices were placed in the official publications for Monroe Township (i.e.: South Jersey Times, Courier Post and the Sentinel of Gloucester County). A copy of that notice has been posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex.

SALUTE TO OUR FLAG – **Cncl. Frank Caligiuri** led the Assembly in the Salute to Our Flag.

ROLL CALL OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Cncl. Walter Bryson	Present	
Cncl. Frank Caligiuri	Present	
Cncl. Marvin Dilks	Present	
Cncl. Richard DiLucia	Present	
Cncl. William Sebastian		Excused
Cncl. Daniel Teefy	Present	
Cncl. Pres., Ronald Garbowski		Excused
Mayor, Michael Gabbianelli	Present	(Arrived 7:30 PM)
Business Admin., Kevin Heydel	Present	
Solicitor, Charles Fiore	Present	
Engineer, Chris Rehmann	Present	
Dir. of Public Safety, Jim Smart	Present	
Dir. of Code Enforcement, George Reitz	Present	
Dir. of Public Works, Bob Avis	Present	
Municipal Clerk, Susan McCormick	Present	

B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- **Williamstown Fire Company Needs Assessment**

Robbie Conley of Robbie Conley Architects explained he was requested to prepare a needs assessment for the Williamstown Fire Company # 1 to find out their needs, look at the deficiencies, develop a report and come up with a couple different ideas for solutions. Mr. Conley presented the following three different schemes:

Scheme I would replace the floor in the truck bays, the overhead doors would be changed to three across the front, the engine bays would be saved and the majority of work would be done on the other side of the building. A second story addition would be built on a portion of the existing building. The entrance would be on the side with a lobby, elevator and stairs. The first floor would have the ready room and the radio room, which is basically all

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

the operations. The second floor would include bunk rooms, lockers and showers, a training room, kitchen area and administrative office space. He explained he has to figure out how to tie the existing roof in so water would not be running down the wall and it may be possible to install a cricket there but the worst case scenario is the roof would have to come off and turned the other way. That is something that can be discussed further down the line if there is enough money in the budget to do that. The project cost for a two story addition would be approximately \$2.489 to \$2.5 million and that includes the full cost of demolition and renovation. This design meets the minimum needs and is not much more than they currently have.

Scheme II is a three story addition that will meet more of their needs. It gives them a larger training room, more office space, storage for their archives and files, the bunk room and kitchen remains on the first floor and the engine bays are the same on both designs. The cost for this design is \$3.2 million.

Option III is a brand new building and that cost would be approximately \$3.6 million and that would include demolition of the existing building and building the new building. The problem with that is and what is not included in the budget for a new building would be temporary facilities to house the equipment while the new building is being constructed.

Mr. Conley noted during this study he was surprised when he found the cost between the renovations of \$3.2 million and building an entire new building for \$3.6 million.

Cncl. Bryson noted initially Council was under the impression they would get some number to make repairs to both buildings until we found out that the Cecil building is really in bad shape and now this presentation is all about additions to Williamstown Fire Company building. Mr. Conley noted he was under the impression that he was supposed to do the same thing that he did for Cecil, which was the needs assessment and the deficiencies to come up with solutions to meet their needs and to rectify their deficiencies; not just to do repairs. Cncl. Bryson noted the repairs were to include the roof work and the repair of the floor and that was pretty much it. He felt instead of putting on a second and third floor for a training room the fire company could use a portion of the Library for that. He added he is trying to save taxpayers money and the cost of these two proposals is almost six million dollars, which is quite a bit of money when we couldn't even finance \$500,000.00 without causing a burden on the taxpayers.

Mr. Conley distributed his report, which included the needs assessment and deficiencies and noted he would be happy to provide a price on the repairs if he could get a list of what needs to be repaired because that is not what he looked at. **Business Administrator, Kevin Heydel** advised that fire department would have to provide that. The purpose of this was to do a needs analysis because the fire department came and said the building is insufficient for their needs so we did the same thing for Williamstown Fire Department as we did for Cecil. Mr. Heydel questioned what the estimate was on the first proposal. Mr. Conley advised it was \$2.489 - \$2.5 and that included the cost of the building, the cost to renovate, redoing the shell, the roof, the demolition, some minor site work,

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

professional fees, legal reproduction and 10% contingency. Basically the numbers given are a projected cost and the numbers are based on the cost a year or two down the road, not the cost today. He explained this renovation would be in the same footprint or close to the same and then the second story would be added. The second option would include a third floor and steel would be run up through the existing shell of the building to carry the weight of the additional floors. That may also need to be done on the first option but that cost would be a lot less for one story than it would be to run it for two and that cost is included in the estimates. Mr. Conley explained at this point he looks at worst case scenarios to ensure the township would have enough money if it goes out for bond, as he would rather not spend the whole bond than try to go out for additional money. Council questioned what the difference in price would be if the building did not need the bearing walls. Mr. Conley explained something will need to be done with the outside walls because when the building was constructed there was not the seismic requirements of today. Now, all fire houses and emergency services buildings need to meet certain seismic requirements so no matter what, the outside walls will need to be beefed up. It just depends on whether the money will be spent within that wall to carry the second floor or whether steel will be run up to carry the second floor by itself and he felt it may be a good idea to size the steel so that it could carry a third floor in the future.

C.) PUBLIC PORTION

Cncl. Dilks made a motion to open the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Bryson** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Lisa Marrero was in attendance to request that a property owned by her mother, Ethel Marrero located at 160 Ettore Drive (Block 2003 Lot 30) be removed from the properties scheduled for tax sale on November 17th. She explained the taxes got behind due to her mother having problems handling her finances. Ms. Marrero explained it is not because her mother does not have the money, it's just that she has not handled it correctly. Ms. Marrero noted she has now taken over those finances and would like to request the property be removed from the tax sale and a payment plan be set up for the delinquent taxes. She felt that everything can be repaid, it is just a matter of management. Ms. Marrero apologized for being in this situation and noted she recently found out about this or would have taken action sooner. **Cncl. DiLucia** questioned whether the money was available to pay off the entire amount of taxes owed. Ms. Marrero explained she would like to set up a payment plan. Her mother's Social Security check of approximately \$800.00 was always supposed to be designated to pay her taxes to keep her current and pay the arrearages. **Cncl. DiLucia** questioned how much is owed in taxes. Ms. Marrero noted \$5,200.00 for 2013 and about the same for this year. This is a high amount but she does have the capability to pay it. **Cncl. DiLucia** questioned since she is a senior citizen did she ever apply for the Senior Citizen Rebate Program for people under a certain income. Ms. Marrero noted when she found out about this problem she tried to find out if there were any programs to assist her mother but she may not qualify because of her payment history. **Cncl. DiLucia** questioned whether Mr. Heydel knew exactly what amount of taxes were owed. Mr. Heydel indicated he did not he just knew that Ms. Marrero was coming to this meeting to speak to Council about the

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C.) PUBLIC PORTION (cont'd)

problem. Cncl. DiLucia questioned whether Ms. Marrero knew that this would be a four year payment plan. Ms. Marrero stated she was told it would be five years, but felt her mother could have it paid in four. Cncl. Teefy noted the property should be removed from the tax sale now and then at the next meeting the agreement could be presented to Council.

Cncl. Bryson made a motion to remove Block 2003, Lot 30 from the tax sale scheduled for November 17, 2014. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Caligiuri and unanimously approved by all members of council in attendance.

Ms. Marrero extended her appreciation to Council for removing the property from the tax sale and indicated she would meet with the tax collector to arrange a payment plan.

Carol Stevenson, 921 Lois Drive noted she is very happy that the first portion of the West Lois Drive drainage project is completed and just landscaping is left to be done. She felt what was done in her area will help with the drainage but it will not help East Lois and Lois where they intersect because during the last storm that area clogged up. She felt the basin is still needed and requested money be included in the 2015 budget for that. Mrs. Stevenson spoke of being concerned after listening to the last meeting that a rescue truck would be purchased but the mayor informed her tonight that was not going through and she was happy about that. She noted the town needs to get back to serving the people with necessity things such as trash and leave pickup. Bulk trash and leaves were previously picked up the day after the weekly trash day but that was changed to every two weeks and the fourth week. People do not abide by that and when you drive through town you see mattresses, chairs and other debris all over the sidewalks. Mrs. Stevenson noted she knows men who retired from the Public Works Department were not replaced causing that department to be short on manpower and she is hoping the new council will address that issue to build up that department. Every year her daughter, who lives on a court in Newbury Farms must call for leaf pick-up because her court is missed and the reason they give for missing that area is because they don't have the manpower. She noted the Public Works Department does not have manpower but yet new equipment is always being bought and we have the best fire trucks and ambulances, which are needed, but do we really have to have the best when we don't get necessities such as trash pick-up. She added the Road Department does a good job and snow removal is great but some of that is contracted out. Council advised snow removal is not contracted out it is done by the Public Works Department. Mrs. Stevenson spoke of going to the Pfeiffer Center to donate clothing and saw how that building is the same as it was thirty years ago when her Brownie Troup met there. She added there again we can get new trucks and equipment but we can't spruce up that building for the seniors. She felt we need to step back and service the town, not have all this glorified equipment. Mrs. Stevenson also questioned when a sign that included official's names and the grant used for the Lois Drive project would be removed from the easement between her and her neighbor's properties. Mr. Heydel advised the County put up that sign to comply with the CDBG Program requirement for the funding. He didn't know how long it would be there but advised he would find out.

With no one else wishing to speak Cncl. Teefy made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Bryson and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

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D.) NEW BUSINESS

Cncl. Bryson noted there is an issue coming before the Zoning Board of Adjustment. **Solicitor Fiore** interrupted Cncl. Bryson and questioned whether everyone received his email, which stated no one should comment on this issue because of the fact that it is a use variance and if it is denied, or approved that decision can be appealed and that appeal goes before the township council. Council should not comment or discuss this matter formally or informally because you may preclude yourself from voting in the future if you comment about it.

Cncl. Bryson corrected his comment; noting it was the Planning Board, not the Zoning Board that sent notice that a public hearing would be held to hear an appeal for a variance from Blaze Mill Development Group LLC. Cncl. Bryson expressed concern that the variance included just about everything in the agreement between Council, Blaze Mill, the court system and COAH. We decided how we wanted the development built, the size and how far back the townhouses would go, what would go on the corner, the amount of square feet to be used for commercial and now they included almost every one of those items that were included in the agreement approved by Council, the judge and COAH in their application for a variance. Cncl. Bryson suggested Council make a recommendation to the Planning Board that they not accept this variance application because of that agreement signed by the township with this COAH provider. **Solicitor Fiore** noted he has not seen their application but as he understands it they are asking for a variance to decrease the size of commercial from 15 acres to 13.9. The agreement is for 130,000 square feet of retail and 13.9 acres can still yield 130,000 square feet of commercial space. The number of units have not changed and they are still listing a 15 foot buffer. Mr. Fiore noted Council can individually attend the meeting and speak during the public portion or can send a letter if they can't make the meeting. It is highly unusual and he would not recommend that Council send a recommendation formally to the Planning Board who is aware of what the agreement says. They will have to vote in good conscious on whether or not it is in violation of the agreement. The entire matter was always contingent upon Planning Board approval with certain conditions that were in the original court settlement agreement. Their presentation is going to deal with the issue that the 13.9 acres is still going to yield the 130,000 square feet of retail, they will still have the fifteen acre buffer between Hunter Woods and the project. Other than that he was unaware of any other variances they were asking for. **Cncl. Caligiuri** questioned whether they were asking for any more residential. Mr. Fiore replied no, it is the same number of units and the same square footage of commercial it is just decreasing the acres to 13.9. They do want to move some of it around but they are still maintaining the fifteen acre buffer and they want to tie in the bike path. Mr. Fiore suggested that Cncl. Bryson go to the Planning Board office to look at their plan. Cncl. Bryson explained the way he is looking at it is that Council expended a lot of money in legal fees, time in meetings and other things only to have the same things appear again. Mr. Fiore noted we did spend a lot of money but we have to also remember that we received approval from the COAH Plan, we received accolades from the court that our COAH Plan was great and as a matter of fact we ended up getting bonus units for the next round if it is ever verified by the court. Cncl. Bryson noted he will appear if he can and if he can't he'll write a letter. **Solicitor Fiore** noted the Planning Board will review this and may not approve it if they feel

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D.) NEW BUSINESS *cont'd*

it is not a viable option or alternative. Mr. Fiore added they are also asking for an exception or a waiver from the parking requirements as set forth in the New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards Act. He noted he cannot comment on behalf of the Planning Board but we are still receiving a lot of complaints about Amberleigh, which was built according to the RSI and this is asking for a waiver or exception to that. He cautioned that Planning Board members should be mindful of that. **Mayor Gabbianelli** noted the Planning Board does try to use their heads and that is why last week he vetoed an Ordinance the board was not in favor of. He added the Board is not a political board. Mr. Fiore explained that if the agreement needs to be modified it would have to come back to Council. **Cncl. Teefy** noted the settlement was done, it was signed off so it is done. Mr. Fiore noted it was a court order and it is coming under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board through their attorney whether they feel that it can be modified. He added Leonard Schwartz was involved in the process and they did have to get the approval of the board. **Cncl. DiLucia** noted they have the legal right to go before the Planning Board and if the Board agrees to some of the modifications Council can still stand on the agreement and say they had no right to ask for a variance because there is a legal settlement that involved COAH. Mr. Fiore advised the applicants can go before the Planning Board who will then be confronted with that issue. **Cncl. DiLucia** noted let it go before the Planning Board and hopefully they will do what we think is the right thing and if they don't and it comes back to Council we can deal with it then. Mr. Fiore added who knows it may be a better plan or better layout than the concept plan that was first presented.

Cncl. Caligiuri noted the Open Space Advisory Board asked him as their liaison to bring before Council two issues, one if Council could respond to the recommendations the Open Space Advisory Board presented to Council last year and also if Council would give them some direction as to what we think they should be doing with their time moving forward. **Cncl. DiLucia** questioned whether the Clerk had a copy of those recommendations and if so would she distribute them to Council prior to the next Council meeting. The Clerk indicated she would do that. **Mr. Rehmann** added if there are any recommendations for purchasing he might be able to find some funding. **Mayor Gabbianelli** noted remember not to go into a partnership with the County because the ground will be worthless; all it will be is open space, we would never be able to build a park or any recreation facilities on it.

E.) OLD BUSINESS – None

F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS

Cncl. Bryson reported the Historical Society is planning to have another British Car Show and tea garden this year during the second week in May and would also like to include this year a craft fair to bring some attention to Main Street. He also noted the Economic Development Committee has decided to put up some banners along Main Street so the ones in front of the Ireland Hofer House which are smaller will be replaced.

G.) QUESTIONS REGARDING RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED – 11/10/14

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H.) QUESTIONS REGARDING ORDINANCES SCHEDULED – 11/10/14

I.) ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further for discussion, **Cncl. Caligiuri** made a motion to adjourn the Council Work Session of November 10, 2014. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Dilks** and was unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,



**Susan McCormick, RMC
Municipal Clerk**



Presiding Officer

These minutes were prepared from the tape-recorded proceedings and the hand written notes of the Council Work Session of November 10, 2014 and serves only as a synopsis of the proceedings. Portions of the official tape may be heard in the Office of the Township Clerk upon proper notification pursuant to the Open Public Records Law.

Approved as submitted _____  _____ Date 11/24/14
Approved as corrected _____ Date _____