

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

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES & ROLL CALL

The regular scheduled Work Session Meeting of the Monroe Township Council was called to order by **Council President, Ronald Garbowski** 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. Marvin Dilks led the Assembly in the Salute to Our Flag.

ROLL CALL OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Cncl. Walter Bryson	Present	
Cncl. Frank Caligiuri		Excused
Cncl. Marvin Dilks	Present	
Cncl. Richard DiLucia	Present	
Cncl. William Sebastian	Present	
Cncl. Daniel Teefy	Present	
Cncl. Pres., Ronald Garbowski	Present	
Mayor, Michael Gabbianelli	Present	
Business Admin., Kevin Heydel	Present	
Solicitor, Charles Fiore	Present	(Arrived 7:25PM)
Engineer, Chris Rehmann, ARH	Present	
Dir. of Finance, Jeff Coles	Present	
Dir. of Public Safety, Jim Smart	Present	(Arrived 7:25PM)
Dir. of Code Enforcement, George Reitz	Present	
Dir. of Public Works, Bob Avis	Present	
Municipal Clerk, Susan McCormick	Present	

B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

• **Stockton Run**

A brief discussion took place with regard to Stockton Run. It was noted this matter would be discussed further upon the arrival of the solicitor. The Mayor noted that Public Works has been working long hours with all the snow. He also advised of an on-going problem with the gas company and the issuance of street opening permits. He noted they (*gas company contractor*) screwed up Winslow Road and screwed up many developments, he referred to a report submitted by the engineer and in speaking with Mike Calvello, Supervisor of Roads, we are not issuing permits. We have been going around and around

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

with this and he was sure that Mr. Calvello has been on top of the situation. The Mayor did note one problem as it relates to the street opening permits is that Crown Pipe is the main subcontractor for the gas company. He then noted he has requested, many times, that the Ordinance Committee look into the concrete pipe (*RCCP*) issue adding that we must amend our ordinance, we have to protect the township. Mayor Gabbianelli went on to speak of the costs associated to fix a problem in the Preserves development. He did explain that the state allows the use of the High Density Polyethylene Pipe; however, we can say it is *not* OK and amend the Land Use Ordinance with respect to it. The mayor noted when someone comes before the Planning Board he has been advising that if they intend to use the plastic pipe you will need an inspector there 24/7 as they are not backfilling it correctly. He also mentioned it is much cheaper for the developers to use the HDP pipe. **Cncl. Sebastian** did advise that he did have an email conversation with Chris Rehmann about setting up a meeting to find out specifics on what must be changed in the existing ordinance as it relates to the concrete/plastic pipe. There was mention again of Stockton Run and the Mayor advised a report, in some form, would be forthcoming.

• **Plenary Retail Distribution License – New Issuance Procedure**

Cncl. Pres., Garbowski noted there has been some discussion regarding the possibility of council issuing a new Plenary Retail *Distribution* License and the procedures involved with going out to bid. The clerk advised she had conducted a survey of the municipalities throughout Gloucester County and the most recent license that sold was in Mantua Township in 2013. The bid received was in the amount of \$610,000.00 with the minimum bid set at \$400,000.00. In this case, there was particular interest with two bidders; that is how the bid amount came in much higher. Discussion ensued on various items one being a resolution of the council authorizing the bid, what must be included in the public notice, setting a minimum bid amount, possible location, and whatever specifics council (*by law*) could incorporate into the bid process.

C.) PUBLIC PORTION

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

Lawrence Lewis – Glassboro Road posed a question with regard to his real estate taxes and why he as a 65-year-old resident has to continue paying the maximum amount of school taxes when his kids are grown and out of school. He questioned if there could be a discount of some kind. Mr. Lewis continued and noted this state is heavily populated with homes and he did not understand why New Jersey has to be taxing everyone all this big money.

Mayor Gabbianelli responded there are approximately 600 school districts within the State of New Jersey and this is the problem. He explained we got screwed when we consolidated with the county on the tax assessor program. They want shared

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C.) PUBLIC PORTION (cont'd)

services however, they are not forcing the schools to share services and we are paying big bucks for schools. Right here in town we have a superintendent, an assistant superintendent that is retired, and collecting a pension from another district.

Cncl. Walter Bryson then noted problems with the school districts in New Jersey over the years and although they are excellent school districts they are no longer number one or two in the country. If you look at other states, adding he has property in South Carolina, where when you become age 65 (*and are a full time resident*) you pay nothing in school taxes. Some of the extra revenue to fund this comes from the out-of-state residents. South Carolina charges an out of state resident a real estate tax of .6% of your assessed value. If you are a full-time resident, you pay .4% of your assessed value. In addition, an out of state person pays all of the taxes, including school taxes. **Cncl. Bryson** then noted the State of New Jersey does not even look at the alternatives. He then stressed the school districts in New Jersey either need to consolidate or they need to share more services.

Business Administrator, Kevin Heydel advised Mr. Lewis that he was entitled to apply for a tax freeze and those forms (*Property Tax Reimbursement PTR form/booklet*) were available in the Tax Collector's Office. Mr. Lewis then posed a question with regard to those living in apartment complexes and if school taxes were imposed on them. The Mayor explained, yes the apartment complex itself is taxed. About five or six years ago we went around with Nationwide/Colonial Estates for the actual number of children residing in the park. Now, it is the state that comes up with a dollar figure on how much we can tax. He elaborated on this, saying this is one of the biggest issues we deal with, why can't they tax people fairly.

Cncl. William Sebastian made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Rich DiLucia** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

D.) NEW BUSINESS - None

E.) OLD BUSINESS

Cncl. Walt Bryson spoke with regard to the five-year plan submitted by Mr. Heydel and noted if any council member had suggestions or changes to contact him on this. Mr. Heydel explained we have always had a five-year plan in place; it has been just in the last few years we really could not look at it because we could not afford to do anything with it. Actually, we did fulfill many requests even through the years of economic recession. For example, three (3) fire trucks were purchased, we moved money around to purchase equipment but not at the level that really, truly supports a township of this size and to keep on a schedule in order to replace our everyday equipment. Now we are down to crunch time and we really need to have council prioritizing the requests as to

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E.) OLD BUSINESS (cont'd)

what is necessary, what is needed and what is required. Mr. Heydel then noted the biggest project to be undertaken is the infrastructure.

Mayor Gabbianelli then advised there would be no leaf collection in the month of April, this announcement has been placed on the township website. April will be "pothole" month. Leaf collection will take place in May. Mr. Lewis then posed a question on the condition of the trees along Glassboro Road as there are trees leaning on many of the wires along the roadway. Mayor Gabbianelli advised this was not our responsibility; the state will do it, as this is a state highway. The utility companies are responsible if it encroaches on their property. Mr. Lewis felt this was a serious safety problem.

Cncl. Rich DiLucia spoke with regard to an agenda matter concerning Brookdale of Monroe noting this was in reference to safety conditions within the development. At the ordinance meeting there was discussion on this and council was in agreement that we would have Engineer, Chris Rehmann follow up on this and make some suggestions in terms of trying to address traffic within the confines of reasonable costs. Mr. Rehmann noted he would address this and have a report back to council.

At this time, **Cncl. Pres., Garbowski** referred back to "Matters for Discussion" as he wanted the solicitor's input on the **Stockton Run** matter. **Solicitor, Charles Fiore** indicated that he is waiting on a report back from Mike Calvello, Supervisor of Roads as he forwarded all the information to him. **Director of Public Works, Bob Avis** advised that he spoke with Mike on this and we feel that we (*township*) should not go in there and do that, the developer should be the one to do the repairs. The Mayor noted the problem is if we are going to have to do these repairs, they are afraid it (*the work*) may mushroom or snowball. **Mr. Avis** noted basically you are opening Pandora's Box, if the township takes on the repair work.

Solicitor Fiore then spoke on the liquor license procedures, adding that the market is going to dictate the minimum price. It was noted the minimum price would probably be set at \$400,000.00 (*with a location/site*). The solicitor/clerk will research further and have a draft resolution available for review at a future work session.

F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS

Cncl. Richard DiLucia reported on his attendance at the school board meeting on Thursday, March 6th. There was discussion on the budget and one item brought up that shows an example of waste was they were going to be required to place \$1.2 million into the budget to prepare for a new testing procedure that the federal government mandates, with a life span of approximately two (2) years. It sounded, before the board adjourned into closed session, they wanted to defy the law and not do it and spend the dollar figure. At this point, he did not know what the outcome would be because their solicitor advised it was federally mandated. This just goes to show you, that this dollar figure represents 4 cents on the tax rate.

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F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS (cont'd)

Cncl. William Sebastian commented on the towing ordinance that is currently under review. If anyone would like to see any changes or comments please get those to Sharon or to the Clerk's Office by March 17th so that the towing committee can review the materials prior to discussion at the April Ordinance Committee Meeting.

Director of Public Safety, Jim Smart reported he met with Solicitor Fiore, Chief McKeown and Engineer, Chris Rehmann to discuss the on-street parking issue with representatives of the Amberleigh development. He noted it was a very productive meeting; there was good dialogue and a few good ideas were exchanged. With discussion and background work, we are going to act on coming up with a reasonable solution to help them out. There has been some good progress in this area as well as much community response and he will keep council apprised of any progress. There was further discussion on the parking areas, handicapped parking areas and what ultimately was needed to alleviate the parking problems. Mr. Smart then advised that Amberleigh does recognize this as a safety problem and he let them know we would be behind them when the time is right to enforce.

Solicitor Fiore advised the original approval for Amberleigh does not allow any parking on any of the interior streets. Of course, the signs have not yet been installed by the bonding company and we were asking to kind of hold off until we resolve this issue. One issue that did come to the forefront, for every little parking area there is two (2) handicapped parking spots. What they are doing is polling everyone within the subdivision to see if you actually need a handicapped parking spot and they may propose doing away with one (1) spot. However, in the future they would reserve the right in the event someone would move in and needed a handicapped space they would re-stripe it for handicapped parking. He felt it was a very good meeting.

Engineer, Chris Rehmann noted the homeowner's association may want to consider building a few spots for guest parking. The mayor then stressed we have to make sure it is not open space as that is a problem. Mr. Rehmann advised they would have to come back to the Planning Board for an amendment but you have the RSIS that dictate the number of spaces that you are required to have and one of those spaces is the garage. Now, when the homeowner's association said all recycling and trash containers must be kept in the garage you almost effectively lost a number of parking places. He continued, we did caution everybody that when they put the no parking signs up, that will not be a "first priority" of the police department. Mr. Rehmann noted they (*Amberleigh reps*) were very cooperative and we (*ARH*) will be donating some services to them in an attempt to give them some ideas and thoughts.

G.) QUESTIONS REGARDING RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED - None

H.) QUESTIONS REGARDING ORDINANCES SCHEDULED - None

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I.) ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further for discussion, **Cncl. William Sebastian** made a motion to adjourn the Council Work Session of March 10, 2014. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Marvin 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 March 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 SM Date 3/24/14
Approved as corrected _____ Date _____