

MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
OCTOBER 26, 2015

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Council Meeting of the Township of Monroe was called to order at approximately 8:10 PM by **Cncl. Pres., Frank Caligiuri** in the Court Room 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, the Courier Post and the Sentinel of Gloucester County). A copy of that notice is posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex.

Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri stated the Clerk has placed a sign-in sheet at the rear of the Court Room. If anyone would like to address Council during the Public Portion, please sign in and you will be asked to come forward to the microphone. Kindly state your name for the record.

SALUTE TO FLAG - INVOCATION

Cncl. McIlvaine led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to Our Flag and **Pastor Jeff Tilden of the Cross Keys United Methodist Church** offered the Invocation.

ROLL CALL OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Cncl. Walter Bryson	Present
Cncl. Marvin Dilks	Present
Cncl. Rich DiLucia	Present
Cncl. Bob Heffner	Present
Cncl. Bart McIlvaine	Present
Cncl. Cody Miller	Present
Cncl. Pres., Frank Caligiuri	Present

Mayor Daniel Teefy	Present
Solicitor, Charles Fiore	Present
Business Adm., Kevin Heydel	Present
Engineer, Chris Rehmann	Present
Dir. Of Code Enforcement, George Reitz	Present
Dir. Of Public Safety, Jim Smart	Present
Dir. Of Public Works, Bob Avis	Present
Deputy Mayor Andy Potopchuk	Present
Township Clerk, Susan McCormick	Present

PRESENTATION

- **Eagle Scout** - Presentation rescheduled to November 23, 2015
- **Spotlight on Business** - MonaLisia Restaurant (*Corkery Lane*)

The owner of MonaLisia Restaurant brought samples of food for the members of Council to try and he urged them to tell their friends and family about his restaurant located in Corkery Plaza next to Milana's Pizza. He also requested Council's help in getting a sign installed on the Black Horse Pike to direct people to his restaurant since it can be difficult for people to find. He spoke of getting 1200 likes on Facebook and thanked the Mayor, his wife and Cncl. Miller for their help. **Mayor Teefy** questioned what type of menu the restaurant has and if patrons can bring in a bottle of wine? The owner replied mostly Italian food and wine can be brought in. He then explained some of his specialty dishes and noted the restaurant is open Monday through Thursday 11:30 AM to 9:00 PM, Friday 11:30 AM to 10:00 PM and Saturday and Sunday 3:30 PM to 10:00 PM. Reservations are accepted. The restaurant is not open for lunch on Saturday or Sunday because he is trying to book banquets (*showers, birthday parties, etc.*) during those days. Council questioned if there was a specific lunch menu. The owner replied sandwiches, salads and smaller portions of items on the dinner menu. **Business Administrator, Kevin Heydel** questioned if the actual menu can be deviated from. The owner replied yes because people come in that may be allergic to certain foods/spices so all food is cooked to order. **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri**

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PRESENTATION *(cont'd)*

suggested the owner contact the Zoning Office regarding the sign on the Black Horse Pike. He noted arrangements will need to be made with the property owner where the sign will be located and a waiver or variance may be needed but Monroe Township is business friendly so there should be no problem with that. Mr. Heydel urged residents to have a nice night out by going to the MonaLisia for dinner and then to the Grand Theater to see a show. Mayor Teeffy noted he went to the MonaLisia four times and each time he tried a different dish and each one was excellent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Cncl. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted of the Council Work Session and Regular Council Meeting of October 12, 2015. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Bryson** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

B.) **CORRESPONDENCE** - None

C.) **RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED - PUBLIC PORTION**

Cncl. Miller made a motion to open the Resolutions Scheduled - Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Dilks** and unanimously approved by all members of Council. With no one wishing to speak **Cncl. Miller** made a motion to close the Resolutions Scheduled - Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. DiLucia** and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

CONCENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS R:162-2015 THROUGH R:168-2015

R:162-2015 Resolution Requesting Approval Of Items Of Revenue And Appropriation N.J.S.A. 40a:4-87 2015 Community Development Block Grant For Ada Curbs And Sidewalks

R:163-2015 Resolution Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe Authorizing The Mayor To Execute An Agreement For Use Of Community Development Block Grant Funds Between Gloucester County, New Jersey And The Township Of Monroe In The Amount Of \$50,000.00 For Public Improvement Activity For Sidewalk Installation Within The Township Of Monroe

R:164-2015 Resolution Adjusting Township Of Monroe Tax Records

R:165-2015 Resolution Approving The Bill List For The Council Meeting Of October 26, 2015

R:166-2015 Resolution Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe Authorizing The Planning Board To Modify And Prepare An Amendment To The Williamstown Square Redevelopment Plan Pursuant To N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 Et Seq.

R:167-2015 Resolution Establishing And Adopting A Complete Streets Policy For The Township Of Monroe, Gloucester County

R:168-2015 Resolution Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe, County Of Gloucester, State Of New Jersey Amending The Rules And Regulations For The Monroe Township Police Department And Authorizing The Director Of Public Safety To Execute Said Amendments

Cncl. Miller made a motion to approve Resolutions R:162-2015 through R:168-2015. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Dilks**.

Cncl. DiLucia noted he would vote in favor of Resolution R:166-2015 providing that he agrees with the conceptual plan that comes back from the Planning Board. **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** indicated he agreed with **Cncl. DiLucia** on that.

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C.) RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED - PUBLIC PORTION (cont'd)

Resolutions R:163-2015 through R:168-2015 were unanimously approved by all members of Council.

R:169-2015 Resolution Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe Transferring Funds For The Budget Year 2015

Cncl. Miller made a motion to approve Resolution R:169-2015. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Heffner**.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE RESOLUTION R:169-2015- ALL AYES

Tally: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent Resolution R:169-2015 was duly approved .

R:170-2015 Resolution Authorizing Closed Executive Session Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe To Discuss The Fera's Coins & Precious Metals, Inc. And Mark Fera V. Monroe Township Litigation And The Simmermon V. Monroe Township Litigation (REMOVED FROM AGENDA)

D.) ORDINANCES

Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri turned this portion of the meeting over to **Ordinance Committee Chairman, Cncl. Dilks**. **Cncl. Miller** made a motion to open the Public Hearing for Ordinance O:35-2015. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** and unanimously approved by all members of Council. With no one wishing to speak **Cncl. Miller** made a motion to close the Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

O:35-2015 An Ordinance Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe To Amend Chapter 175 Of The Code Of The Township Of Monroe, Entitled "Land Management" (Craft Alcoholic Beverage Establishment)

Second Reading: The above ordinance was published in an official publication for the Township of Monroe. This portion was opened to the public.

Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri made a motion to approve Ordinance O:35-2015. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Miller**.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE ORDINANCE O:35-2015 FOR
SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING - ALL AYES**

Tally: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent. Ordinance O:35-2015 was duly approved for Second Reading and Public Hearing.

O:36-2015 An Ordinance To Further Amend The Code Of The Township Of Monroe Establishing Rates Of Compensation To Officers And Employees Of The Township Of Monroe (Code Enforcement Officer - Trainee)

First Reading: A copy of this ordinance was posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex. Additional copies were made available to the public.

Cncl. Miller made a motion to approve O:36-2015 for First Reading and Publication. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

O:37-2015 An Ordinance Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe To Amend Chapter 175 Of The Code Of The Township Of Monroe, Entitled "Land Management" (Review Solar Energy Systems Requirements Fee)

First Reading: A copy of this ordinance was posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex. Additional copies were made available to the public.

Cncl. Miller made a motion to approve O:37-2015 for First Reading and Publication. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

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E.) REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Cncl. Bryson reported attending the Historical Society Meeting and noted they are looking for volunteers to join the Historical Society and to help with projects. He also reported attending the Board of Health Meeting and noted the Board is advised on a regular basis on the number of vacant/abandoned homes in Monroe Township. At this point in time about 125 homes have been registered and the \$500.00 fee paid for each home. Of that fee \$100.00 goes to the independent program administrator, \$100.00 goes to the County and the balance of \$300.00 goes to the township to help maintain those properties in the future. The township has received about \$37,000.00 from those homes and that number should grow as houses are registered. Cncl. Bryson reported the Courier Post ran a series of articles regarding the high taxes in New Jersey and did a great deal of research to inform people what the problems are, gave suggestions on how to resolve those problems and who is in favor of doing those things. The Courier put together a petition, which 10,000 people signed and they asked our legislators to sign it too. He noted nothing significantly has been done to reduce taxes to help seniors on fixed incomes who get no salary increases the way young people do. Younger people are also affected because they can buy a reasonably priced home in South Jersey but then end up paying high property taxes. New Jersey has the highest property taxes in the Nation and to make the situation worse Governor Christie put in a 2% cap, which has done nothing more but give every township the option of raising taxes at least 2%, which is what has been happening. That is not fair to every taxpayer. The objective of every community should be to keep the tax increases at zero. The Senate, the Governor and Assembly have been petitioned for a property tax cut and the last article lists the legislators in red that are doing nothing to reduce taxes and the ones that are trying to do something are listed in blue. He urged residents to consider that list when voting in the November General Election. Cncl. Bryson noted the Governor could grant a special session but he's not because he has been out of the State campaigning. The legislators could recommend changes but they only made one recommendation and passed a preliminary bill by a vote of 35 to 1 for every senior citizen to have the ability to work for their township as a volunteer to get a \$1,000.00 deduction from their taxes. He added if he was down south he would call that a "*chain gang*" because no one works for nothing so that is not a legitimate help to seniors in this State. One good idea that was proposed in the Senate but not accepted by the Assembly is shared services. This township shares services for various things but the real problem is the educational system in the State because that takes a lot of money and that is where services should be shared. The 2% cap is ridiculous. Things should be put in the hands of municipalities and increased funding incentives should be offered to municipalities that keep their budgets stable or at zero if possible. Many times the State mandates municipalities and school boards to do something such as affordable housing, or the way sewers and roads are constructed. If the State is going to issue mandates they should fund those mandates not have the municipalities do it themselves. He suggested Trenton put together a committee that would visit other states to see how they handle their tax situations and they should also get together with federal officials because the people in New Jersey rank about 45 as far as per capita return from the Federal Government so we need those legislators to fight for more money for mandated programs. Cncl. Bryson noted he wanted everyone in Gloucester County to know that our two Assembly people are on the blue side trying to do something to reduce taxes. They signed the petition to reduce taxes 10% by year end so they have made the commitment and need to take the time to do it because people are leaving this State and we are losing cooperative income. People in this state cannot afford their mortgages, which is why we have so many abandoned houses in this town. He urged all legislators to sign the pledge so that something can be done this year.

Cncl. Dilks thanked the Parks and Recreation Committee, the Mayor and everyone else that worked on the Fall Festival and the Halloween Parade. He noted the number of people that came out for the Halloween Parade was amazing. He also thanked the committee for having Jeanette Remsen as the parade Grand Marshal in recognition of all the volunteer work she has done over the years.

Cncl. DiLucia noted he was a speaker at a meeting a couple weeks ago that was geared towards consumer fraud and a representative from the State gave a presentation of ways people can guard themselves against consumer fraud because one of the most dangerous things in this Country is losing your identity. She explained six years ago her identity was stolen and she is still getting bills from people in foreign countries opening accounts in her name. Cncl. DiLucia spoke of recently receiving a phone call from someone who purported to be a business person

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E.) REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS (cont'd)

whose computer was interfacing with his computer and preventing them from running their business. The man used technical terms and requested to take over Cncl. DiLucia's computer to correct the problem. Cncl. DiLucia noted what that person was actually trying to do was to get into his computer to take over his bank accounts. Another individual called him questioning if he received the durable medical goods he had ordered and when he said he didn't know if his wife had ordered anything they requested his wife's name, birthdate and Social Security number and that was another attempt to get personal information. He cautioned residents not to provide any personal information to anyone that calls on the phone or sends a letter. Another lure is something for free because nothing is ever for free. The person giving the presentation said no personal information should ever be given over the phone or by mail and she offered to come here and give a presentation to anyone interested in attending. Cncl. DiLucia spoke of the consumer price index, which did not go up even though car insurance, gas, electric, fuel, food and everything went up. The consumer price index sets all the economics for the coming year so anyone who has a contract, which includes collective bargaining agreements as well as independent contracts will get zero. Anyone who is disabled or on Social Security whose calculations are through the consumer price index will get zero and seniors who are on fixed incomes will get zero. Cncl. DiLucia felt there is something wrong with the calculation method because he knows of nothing that has gone down. A comment was made from the audience that gasoline has gone down but Cncl. DiLucia stated it may be cheaper in New Jersey but it has not gone down in every state, as it is still \$4.00 per gallon on the west coast. He noted eight months ago he reported that Congress and the Legislators were attempting to change the calculation for the consumer price index. They said the consumer price index over compensated people because it was not a true measure of the cost of living. He added people are paying more for everything they consume and that is compounded by the taxes in New Jersey, which are much higher than anywhere else in the country. That is not the fault of municipalities since there are many factors that make it impossible for municipalities to comply with any kind of zero increase due to the requirement for services that must be performed. For the next fifteen months those people that rely on increases via the consumer price index will not receive one penny more and that is an absolute crime. He noted he hates to address a problem without having a solution but he has no idea what the solution is for this or how we get the people who control the economics in this Country to believe there is pain inflicted on the average citizen by doing things like this. He noted he defies them to say that the cost of everyday living has not gone up and he is going to personally write to AARP to see if something could be started to address this issue, as questions should be asked about how they came up with this calculation.

Cncl. Heffner noted people always think fraud is not going to happen to them but on Friday his wife's debit card was hacked. Most people think hacking deals with thousands of dollars but his wife's card had expenditures that only totaled \$70.00 for purchases made in North Jersey. He added you get into the habit of just paying bills but when you scrutinize bills you may find things you didn't buy. Cncl. Heffner reported attending the Zoning Board Meeting where discussion took place regarding a variance for backyard solar panels. He also reported attending the Economic Development and Main Street Committee Meetings. He commended the Main Street Committee for doing a fantastic job with the scarecrow contest. The street looks great and hopefully this tradition will continue for a very long time. He noted he has been a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee for about ten years and this is his first year as the Council liaison. He noted the Committee begins decorating Owens Park at 6:30 AM for the Oktoberfest activities, they clean up by 2:00 PM and move on to Main Street for the Halloween Parade. Everyone gets about 30 to 45 minutes to get something to eat and then they go back to work until 9:30 PM. He noted usually he is the one that lines everyone up for the Halloween Parade but this year the Mayor talked him into walking in the parade and he was amazed at how many people came out for that parade. He also thanked Debbie Saia for loaning her convertible for Grand Marshal Jeanette Remsen to ride in. He commented on how thrilled Jeanette was to be the Grand Marshal and how she smiled from one end of Main Street to the other. He added her recognition was well deserved.

Cncl. McIlvaine reported that he and the Deputy Mayor had the privilege of driving Jeanette in the parade using Debbie Saia's vehicle and as Cncl. Heffner said she was tickled to be the Grand Marshal. He added she always smiles but she had a unique grin on her face that night. Cncl. McIlvaine noted he has lived in Monroe Township all his life and has never seen as many

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E.) REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS (cont'd)

people at a Halloween Parade as he saw this year. He noted when you think of volunteers you think of fire, ambulance and senior volunteers but the members of the Parks and Recreation Commission are people like his wife who volunteer their time and work hard under the leadership and visions of Jim Bonder to put together events that are enjoyed by children as well as adults. Cncl. McIlvaine reported attending the Library Board Meeting where he was asked to mention that the Friends of the Monroe Township Library will hold a craft fair on November 14th from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Christmas crafts will be sold and all proceeds will benefit the Library. He commended the Library Board for running the Library properly. Approximately 100,000 people a year use the Library System, which has CDs, movies, books and many activities for old and young people alike and he urged all residents to make time to go there. He also thanked the Main Street Committee and Ernie Carbone for doing a fantastic job. He added that committee is made up of all volunteers and he is a big proponent of volunteers being one himself.

Cncl. Miller also commended the Parks and Recreation Committee for doing a wonderful job with the Halloween Parade and Fall Festival. He also thanked the School System, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts for donating the scarecrows and Zeilke's Greenhouses for giving the township a good deal on the mums purchased for Main Street. Cncl. Miller referred to the Complete Streets Policy Resolution and thanked ARH, the Green Team, Cross County Connections and the Solicitor for working together to draft this resolution. He explained the great thing about this resolution is that we are trying to incorporate all forms of transportation into township road improvements or new construction that is undertaken. This says we want our township to be more accessible in terms of transportation so hopefully we will be able to cut down on cost of transportation to the schools and wear and tear on our roads if we are providing sidewalks when cost feasible and bike lanes as a means of transportation. He thanked Council for passing this resolution and those that took part in drafting it. He also thanked the Williamstown and Cecil Fire Company members for doing a phenomenal job educating the children during Fire Prevention Week.

Mayor Teefy reported to stimulate economic development we have discussed putting a video together and last Wednesday we shot the first half at a studio in Washington Township with Deputy Chief Rumpf, a couple business owners and a developer. On Thursday another shoot will take place and the two will all be spliced together. The Mayor reported attending the Planning Board Meeting where discussion took place regarding an application for a gas station near Sam's Club and the IHOP. Right now a dentist office is next to the IHOP and an Egyptian Restaurant is coming in. The Mayor commended the Main Street Committee for their first event, the Scarecrow Contest and thanked Zeilke's Greenhouse for giving the committee a great price on the larger mums. This event brought the community together, as the Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, schools and churches all got together to put the twenty-six scarecrows up. The pope scarecrow took first place, the ballerina second place and the Girl Scout third place. The Mayor noted his joke of the week was that the Pope came to Main Street and he didn't need to close the street like Mayor Nutter did in Philadelphia. The Mayor noted everyone thanked the Parks and Rec Commission and Jim Bonder but he also wanted to thank the people who built the floats and participated in the parade. The volunteers did a terrific job putting everything together and they are looking forward to the Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 5th. The Mayor noted about 7,000 people came out to the Halloween Parade and it would be nice if we could get 7,000 people out to vote on November 3rd. He urged residents to review the list that Cncl. Bryson spoke about and consider those candidates when casting their votes on November 3rd.

Director of Public Works, Bob Avis reported an auction was held at the Public Works yard on October 22nd. We took in \$42,220.00 and the people were given until Friday to pick up the vehicles they purchased.

Deputy Mayor Potopchuk reported the Drug Alliance Meeting will be held at the high school on October 27th and he invited Council to attend.

Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri reported he attended the Halloween Parade dressed as Council President and some people recognized him while others didn't but everyone had a lot of fun. He did not attend the Planning Board Meeting but the Mayor did report on what took place at that meeting. He noted there have been some potential issues with the Monroe Township School

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E.) REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS (cont'd)

District and questions have come up from concerned citizens so he sent an email to the Superintendent Mr. Earling on September 23rd but no response has been received from that even though he was advised it was a formal written request. Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri indicated he then filed an OPRA request via certified mail. He added he is not a rebel and most of the time goes with the flow but if he sees something that is wrong or an injustice he is not reluctant to express himself when he has to and in this particular case he felt it was appropriate. He added he is known very well by many people as well as by the Law Firm of Trimble and Armano and will take this to Superior Court if he has to. He reported the Redevelopment Committee met and that meeting resulted in Resolution R:166-2015, which recommended that the Planning Board amend the Williamstown Square Redevelopment Zone.

F.) GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Cncl. Miller made a motion to open the General Public Discussion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Dilks and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

Jack Luby was in attendance to address his concerns regarding the gas lights in the Forest Hills Development. Mr. Luby noted being retired he had the opportunity to walk around the development and found the gas lights to be in deplorable condition. He came to the township and was told by Mr. Heydel the gas lights would be torn out and replaced with ugly overhead street lights because it cost \$70,000.00 a year for maintenance and gas for 179 lights and also because replacement parts are difficult to get. Mr. Luby noted Cape May historical areas have the same identical lights as Forest Hills so he went to their City Hall and Public Works Department and those folks were very helpful. They said they have no problem getting parts or the entire lamp and they gave him two names of suppliers. He also looked on line and came up will a million hits so there are plenty of people who provide the parts. Mr. Luby called the company that Cape May uses and they said the lights are called Victorian, they are very popular and there is absolutely no problem getting them. This company supplies the clear glass lights to the entire Country. The cost is \$159.00 per light and it is cheaper if purchased in bulk. They also have all parts necessary to maintain the lights. Mr. Luby noted he also talked to a company who supplies mantels and they said there was absolutely no problem getting them and they can be purchased for \$5.99 each or two for \$2.28 each. He noted he hopes this puts to bed the idea that these lights are obsolete, there is a shortage or that they are out of style because they are not. Mr. Luby noted he also got copies of seven gas bills and he divided the actual dollars paid by 179 and came out with some interesting statistics. The highest cost per light was \$17.82 and the lowest was \$14.82 so there is quite a disparity there. What is also interesting is the fact that those gas bills are supposed to be actual according to the information provided on the bill. He noted in the past he was a CPA and did auditing and he noticed a red flag here. In March the actual reading in dollars was \$2,913.15, in June it was \$2,913.15, the same number for both months. May and August were also identical so it is hard to believe that we can get two sets of the exact number if it is actual usage. He also questioned how they get the usage since he didn't see a meter on his lamp. He added he believes all lamps are connected to the main gas line that serves each of the residents so he is suspect of that automatically. In addition to that he couldn't get the second page of the gas bill so he didn't know how many therms were used so he looked at his gas bill and knows that South Jersey Gas charges over a dollar per therm. He then went to Google and came up with the average per therm is 61¢ and we are paying \$1.00, which is almost 40% more so that gas price could be reduced. He came up with a difference of 17% on the high and low reading for the 179 lights and that should be looked into. Mr. Luby noted he got copies of the South Jersey Gas work orders from January and February. In January they serviced 33 lamps, they installed 99 mantels so the labor costs were \$1,728.48 and he divided that by 33 lamps it amounted to \$52.38 per lamp. On another work order it looked like they were maintaining five lamps per hour. If they do four lamps in an hour the cost would be \$209.51 per hour that South Jersey Gas is charging us for someone to change a mantel and that is outrageous in his view. The cost of the mantel on the bill was \$477.00 divided by 99 comes to \$4.82 per mantel but they can be purchased for \$2.50 or less. The April 15th bill was for \$1,522.00 for the service of 32 poles and two days later on April 17th there is another bill for \$1,380.00 for the service of 34 lamps. He noted on the April 15th bill they worked on lamp 1873 in which they put three mantels. On April 17th they put three more mantels on lamp 1873 so there is something wrong here, you do not put three mantels in one day and three more in two days later. Mr. Luby noted in his estimation it

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F.) GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION (cont'd)

makes these thing very suspect as to how we are being billed. He added he did some math and found out that Cape May orders their own parts and their Public Works Department makes the repairs. The Gas Company comes out for other things such as gas leaks. It makes sense if you can have someone do the job for \$20.00 an hour as opposed to \$209.00 per hour, as that is a significant savings and buying the materials ourselves would be a significant savings. Mr. Luby felt if we review this and do some very creative things we could bring the cost of maintaining and servicing those lights down considerably. He took the liberty of discussing this with the Public Works Director and found out that Public Works even has a bucket truck. He noted if the township took two people, one to drive the truck and one in the bucket it would be \$40.00 per hour and by using two guys you would lower the cost even more. Mr. Luby noted he took the budget of \$35,918,120.00 and divided it into the current \$70,000.00 cost for the lights and it comes out to 001% of the budget, which is 1/1000% of a \$35,000,000.00 budget. He noted he doesn't know why we are even talking about these lights that have been here for forty-seven years because these lights have a lot of character and back in the day were featured on Channels 3, 6 and 10 and were in weekly magazines. Those lights do a lot to add to the quality of not only Forest Hills but for the entire township. He noted according to statistics the average tax bill is \$6,610.00, the municipal portion of that is 25%, which amounts to \$1,652.50 per house and if that is divided by 179 that is \$391.06 per pole. All we are asking is that 10% of every dollar received from the Forest Hills area be reinvested for those gas lights. He noted the gas lights have even been a positive force in the resale value for homes. The gas company removed the gas lights at the entrance of Forest Hills because they said there was an energy crisis when there really wasn't and they wanted to remove the rest of the lights but at that time the Forest Hills Civic Association was active and filed a complaint with the New Jersey Public Utilities Commission. The ruling was that South Jersey Gas Company cannot take those gas lights unilaterally out of our development. Mr. Luby noted now he understands that some people don't want them but he didn't know whether that was at the executive level or the individuals servicing the lamps. They have decided not to maintain the lights and that will make them look so bad that the residents will want them taken out. Mr. Luby noted what he wants is for the township to live up to its obligation to maintain those lamps and to serve the people because the folks in Forest Hills pay taxes, the area is not a tax free zone. He noted he wanted to disclose that he is 74 years old and is a 100% disabled Vietnam veteran. He added he may look fine but he is rotting from the inside out from Cancer and Diabetes so finally he is exempt from paying real estate tax but is willing to pay the township \$318 to cover the cost of the gas light in front of his house. Mr. Luby noted residents can call the Township Clerk's Office if their light is out but if she doesn't get a response residents can call 881-7000 and if they don't help there the CEO of South Jersey Industries can be reached at 609-561-9000. People can also contact the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. Mr. Luby requested Council and the Mayor to call those numbers to get the gas company to bring the quality of that neighborhood back up to where it belongs and if there is a cost to do that it could fall under a capital improvement, which is amortized over a number of years. He noted his globe lasted 47 years and he took it down and put a clean one in. The recommendation is to clean the globe once or twice a year and replace the mantels every year if needed and that will decrease the use of gas dramatically. **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** requested Mr. Luby to email him the contact information for the parts supplier but explained that he didn't know if the township had the liberty to contract with another supplier. Mr. Luby didn't think the township was under contract with the gas company. He went on to say that when the gas company removes the lights they sell them to someone else. The lights they took out from Forest Hills was sold to the Cape May Historic District. Our lights are made of cast iron but there are ones that look just like them that are made from aluminum. Mr. Luby noted when the Forest Hills Association went before the Board of Public Utilities it was clear that they cannot remove all the lights and he knows because he was there and testified. **Mayor Teefy** advised that removing the lights is just under discussion and he thanked Mr. Luby for researching this matter, as it will help down the road. **Cncl. Heffner** questioned if we do have a contract with the gas company and if it was set to expire. **Business Administrator Kevin Heydel** noted he has not seen a contract. **Cncl. Heffner** stated then technically they are not obligated to fix anything if they don't want to. Mr. Heydel noted there are 177 gas lamps in Forest Hills that service 300 homes. The average assessment for those homes is \$88,000.00 and our portion of taxes is 26.2% of the \$1.9 million that is generated is half a million dollars. The cost to maintain those lights is \$60,000.00 so 12% of their taxes go towards maintenance and the cost is \$16.00 to \$17.00 per month to run each gas lamp. Electrical lamps cost \$7.00 to \$8.00 each through Atlantic City Electric so the cost is double. **Cncl. Miller** added

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F.) GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION (cont'd)

the Police Department reported increased vandalism in Forest Hills and there have been instances where cars have been broken into and the thieves were able to hide from the police due to the area being poorly lit. Mr. Heydel noted those lights do look nice. He added Cape May has their Public Works Department service their lights but they bring in much more tax revenue to service that historical area. We could not afford to take one of our Public Works guys away from his job because we wouldn't have anyone to cut the grass or pick up the trash. If another laborer was hired at \$37,000.00 plus the benefit package of \$30,000.00 for health insurance, 20% for pension and Social Security the cost for us to maintain the lamps would be \$80,000.00. We try to be as efficient as we can with tax dollars. Cncl. Heffner noted when he gets all the numbers he will present it to Council and they can make the decision which way to go. He noted everyone will now be calling the Clerk because they want their lights fixed and he advised that contractually they are only worked on two days a month so they will not run right out there. It just so happened when Mr. Luby called that was the cycle, which is why they were out there. There are a lot of lights in there and they are a mess. He noted he spent two days on two streets, so wait until we get that bill. Cncl. Bryson questioned is it because the lights are not maintained and without mantels the gas is just going into the air and not burning, which could make them cost more money. Mr. Heydel noted it is a fixed cost for the gas every month. Cncl. Heffner explained the commodity is the therm and then there is a transportation cost. In New Jersey utilities do not make a whole lot of money on their commodity it is the transportation where they make their money because they are the only ones who transport it. Mr. Heydel added it is just like electricity where the generation charge maybe 9¢ and the distribution charge is 9¢ which doubles the bill. Cncl. Heffner noted he will get all the numbers and facts together and present it to Council to make the decision but he can say that the gas company will be happy to get rid of them because they just don't put out enough light. To him this should not be a big issue because it is a safety issue since there is not enough light that comes out of them and it's not like you can jack up the pressure to make more light come out of them. **Director of Public Safety Jim Smart** added the gas lamps are low so there is no distribution to the light.

With no one else wishing to speak **Cncl. Miller** made a motion to close the General Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Dilks** and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

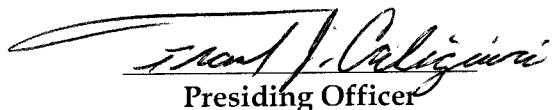
G.) ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to discuss **Cncl. Miller** made a motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting of October 26, 2015. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Heffner** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan McCormick, RMC
Township Clerk


Presiding Officer

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Regular Council Meeting of October 26, 2015 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings. 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* _____
Approved as corrected _____

Date 11/9/15
Date _____