

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION MEETING
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
FEBRUARY 11, 2019**

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES

CALL TO ORDER

The Work Session Meeting of the Township of Monroe was called to order at approximately 7:00PM by **Cncl. Pres., Ronald Garbowski** 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 (*N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 thru 10:4-21*). Notices were placed in the official publications for the Township of Monroe (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 and on the Monroe Township website.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Cncl. Falcone led the Assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Cncl. Marvin Dilks	Present
Cncl. Katherine Falcone	Present
Cncl. Joseph Marino	Present
Cncl. Cody Miller	Present
Cncl. Patrick O'Reilly	Present
Cncl. Gregory Wolfe	Present
Cncl. Pres. Ronald Garbowski	Present

Mayor Richard DiLucia	Present
Solicitor, John Trimble	Present
Business Administrator, Jill McCrea	Present
Engineer, Kathryn Cornforth	Present
Dir. of Code Enf./Comm. Dev., Ralph Manfredi	Present
Dir. of Community Affairs, Brandee Derieux	Present
Chief Financial Officer, Lorraine Boyer	Present
Dir. of Parks & Recreation, Terrance Bannister	Present
Dir. of Public Safety, Joseph Kurz	Present
Dir. of Public Works, Nicholas Mercado	Present
Police Chief John McKeown	Present
Municipal Clerk, Aileen Chiselko	Present

B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

• **EDC Recommendation – Cannabis Letter of Support**

Cncl. Falcone spoke in reference to a letter of general support for the Cannabis companies that are interested in coming to the Township. She said the Economic Development Commission is receiving a lot of inquiries as far as whether our town is supportive of the cannabis industry. She said the Commission is interested in meeting with a few of these companies, as these companies have already chosen Williamstown specifically and they are not soliciting any other towns. **Cncl. Falcone** is asking

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

Council to consider approving a general blanket support letter to put out to these companies, saying we are open for business and we are interested in bringing in the cannabis industry at this time. She said at this point, they are unaware of what the tax revenue is going to be, however, it is anticipated to be anywhere from 10% to 25%. She feels this is part of the ratables that we are looking for and if the Township does not choose to invite these businesses in, another neighboring township will. **Cncl. Miller** asked if these companies were mostly grow facilities, meaning they want to grow and process and not dispense at this point. **Cncl. Falcone** confirmed and said, it is only medical marijuana at this time, it is not recreational since that is not yet legalized. She said, there is another round of licensing going through the State right now and approximately twelve different licenses will be given out. She explained that a company she met with is a forty-nine million dollar facility with over one hundred acres, it is a huge facility with security, and it is very complex. **Cncl. Pres. Garbowski** questioned if this letter of support would be a guarantee that the Township would receive a license or if it would only be informing that we are willing to support. **Cncl. Marino** asked the Solicitor, how this needs to be handled, as far as with an Ordinance, if we do submit a letter of support. **Solicitor Trimble** advised, as part of the application process, these companies have to go through a lot of criteria. He said one of the requested criteria is obtaining local support, if they have local support it adds fifty points to their rating system. He confirmed this is just a letter from the Governing Body stating we are pro cannabis. He advised, Council may want to ask the companies what their hiring practice will be, will they be hiring within our town. **Cncl. Falcone** confirmed when both she and **Cncl. Miller** had spoken with two different companies, they were interested in hiring locally and are trying to employ union workers. **Cncl. Marino** asked if a Council sub-committee needs to be formed, because if Governor Murphy signs a bill or a dispensary receives a license, he would like Council to be prepared. **Cncl. Pres. Garbowski** agreed that a sub-committee with Police involvement needs to be formed and he feels Council should move forward with the letter of support. **Cncl. Wolfe** stated he is unsure if he can support this at this time without having a committee, to perform more research and review more detail prior to sending out a letter of support. **Mayor DiLucia** said he has been asked to provide a letter of support as well, and at this point, he has declined based on the fact he feels there needs to be a broader discussion first. He thinks the discussion with medical marijuana verses recreational marijuana is a big step and if they decide to make a decision to allow recreational marijuana, it will open up a whole other issue. He likes the idea of a business coming into the Township and providing rateables, however, he feels we need to be selective in who and what we support. **Cncl. Miller** suggested he, **Cncl. Falcone** and **Cncl. Wolfe** be a part of the committee, along with the Police Department to do their research, set some parameters and guidelines, and bring it back to Council to discuss at the next meeting. **Cncl. Falcone** said the New Jersey Cannabis Association holds meetings and they are having one in March that the committee can attend.

Cncl. O'Reilly discussed the Solar Initiative, explaining the Committee has received feedback from the School Board stating that they are bringing it out of committee. **Cncl. Marino** confirmed the School Board will be bringing it out of committee for their next meeting, but he is unsure if it will be at this Thursday's meeting or at the end of February. He said they will be bringing it to the Board and it looks like they are going to be in support of it, but we need to receive a final approval. **Cncl. O'Reilly** stated he has spoken with Wendy Mahoney, from the MMUA, they are also planning to bring it out of committee and present it to the MMUA Board's next meeting. **Cncl. Marino** said the next step in the process is to begin preparing an RFI with the Solicitor. **Cncl. O'Reilly** said that Council will be the lead on the joint RFI. He said, once everyone formally brings it out of committee, we will do a joint RFI with all three entities and then bring the solar companies to the table. **Cncl. Marino** said he would like to bring the Solar Companies to the table to present to the Committee all of the options that are available.

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

Cncl. O'Reilly discussed an online permitting system and he is in the process of meeting with Business Administrator, Jill McCrea and the permitting department. He suggested the need to update the Ordinance, to reflect having more electronic permits as opposed to hard copies. **Cncl. O'Reilly** said all of the permits in Construction, Zoning, Land Use and Planning are all going to start migrating together. **Cncl. Marino** said our Ordinance currently says it is a hard copy, so it will have to be added to the next Ordinance Committee Meeting Agenda to discuss making the change. **Cncl. O'Reilly** said he would like to see over time, the residents be able to file their permits online. He said they have spent a lot of time vetting the vendors and gathering input from the departments, the system was tested last week and it has been approved by the DCA. **Solicitor Trimble** said the IT Department will also have to be involved. **Cncl. Marino** feels that by implementing an electronic system, it will really help the homeowners when obtaining permits and would also be more efficient. **Business Administrator, Jill McCrea** asked for confirmation of what was going to be brought to the Ordinance Committee Meeting. **Cncl. O'Reilly** stated right now the Ordinance has hard copy requirements, which tends to be a lot of wasted paper. He said they want to change the Ordinance to reflect being able to submit documentation via USB and electronically. He said we will then upload everything to the cloud and all Board Members will be able to retrieve it on their iPads to review and a hard copy will be provided, if needed.

C.) PUBLIC PORTION

Cncl. Miller made a motion to open the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Wolfe** and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

Sherrie Kennedy, 375 Brynn Mawr Drive addressed Council regarding the property tax cards. She said it was brought up in 2015, with the Township having received funding from Investors Bank and having a budget of \$25,000. She asked why Council waited four years to decide to discuss pulling this program after time and money was already invested. **Cncl. Falcone** said she ran for office on the tax card platform and since being elected she has been doing more research about the program. She said, since the election, other townships have been able to experience the tax card and after talking with eight different surrounding townships, she found out they are not happy with the tax card. She used Glassboro as a general example and their Economic Development Commission Coordinator advised if we have not started the program, not to because it is not working. She said they had forty-six businesses signed up for the program and they are now down to twenty-one and the only reason they keep it going is because it does not cost them any money to sustain it. She said the actual research that has been done, is just now being done by the current Council's committee. She explained they have found with regards to the managing company of the program that they are not financially sound, they are insured but they are not bonded. She said they would hold our money for over a year and at the end of the year that money may not be there because they are not bonded. She said she, the Economic Development Committee Consultant, Shannon Morgan-Leonen, along with the Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, Steve Slotnick have been researching other possibilities where they can still use the tax card. **Mayor DiLucia** clarified this program was not looked at in 2015, but was in 2013, when Mayor Gabbianelli was in office. There was a presentation, which was very impressive and sounded like a very good deal. He said this company had recommended the Township get ten thousand cards to start with and that cost was estimated to be a dollar per card and they said that money could be very easily raised by local participating businesses. He said the first business who expressed interest in participation was the bank who gave five thousand dollars and then there was an election where a new mayor and new Council took over and for those four years nothing happened. He said it was occasionally discussed, however no

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C.) PUBLIC PORTION (cont'd)

action was taken during that time. He agreed that when he ran for election, he had committed to resurrect this program, however, once they started investigating they learned from other towns that it is a failure and he questions the managing company's solvency. Mayor DiLucia confirmed he did hire, with the consultation of Council, a subcontractor for a trial period of six months and the first job that was given was to research the tax card program. He said, the only money that has been spent, is the two weeks she has been employed. Mayor DiLucia explained the consultant's salary. He said, after two weeks, if there is no participation from the businesses, she will immediately convert to economic development and her job will be to try and convince businesses to come to Monroe. He does not believe that any money had been expended for this program up until two weeks ago when we had Mrs. Leonen start some investigations. **Cncl. Miller** explained he was able to secure the five thousand dollars from Investors Bank for the program. Council had earmarked money for it and the Economic Development Commission had money in their budget to administer this. He said they had asked the previous mayor for a consultant to deal with economic development, which never happened. He confirmed no money has been spent on this, and the issue had dropped due to the fact that no one was designated to administer the tax program. **Mayor DiLucia** confirmed that the \$20,000 was actually the budget of the Economic Development Committee to operate as a committee, not for the tax card. **Cncl. Marino** said Glassboro started their program two years ago and Washington Twp. just started last year, so we have had some good templates to see if the program is working or not. He said the Economic Development Committee are volunteers, who do not get paid and they worked tirelessly on this program and fully supported it, however, they ran into many roadblocks with the previous administration. **Mayor DiLucia** said, they have discovered from other towns that the system that is used is an antiquated system, and it gives more problems to the business owners than it is worth. He said they have been told by Terra Nova, statistically, they do not gain any business by giving out the discount, it was not a benefit to them, and they stopped participating. He said the Township would like to run this program like a business and if it will benefit the taxpayers, they are all for it. He said the Township is willing to do it, if there will be a big return, however it has not been found to be a big return at this point. He does not feel it is worth spending the taxpayers money and not receiving any return for their money; he feels it was a very simple decision. He said he believes Republic Bank may possibly be willing to do it at no cost, in order to get the business. He said they are going to continue to talk to them, because if we are able to get the full 100% return, it may make it more worthwhile. **Cncl. Wolfe** said, apparently this program had not gotten up and running because the past administration and mayor did not hire anyone and with Mayor DiLucia being the new mayor, he has hired someone pretty quickly. Mayor DiLucia said, this administration is going to only talk about the future, we are going to focus on everything that happens from January 5, 2019 going forward. He said he will take the credit and he will take the blame, and so far he feels they have made the right decision.

Cncl. Miller made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Marino** and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

D.) NEW BUSINESS

Mayor DiLucia advised he has received communication from the New Jersey Department of Transportation asking to meet with him to discuss development on Berlin-Cross Keys Road that will involve both Monroe and Washington Township. He said they asked him to pick the first meeting dates and they would like this meeting to be within the next week or two. Also, he stated, he and Cncl. Pres. Garbowski had a meeting with Senator Madden last week regarding Route 322 and Fries Mill Road.

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E.) OLD BUSINESS - none

F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS

Cncl. Marino said the Tax Abatement Committee met last week along with the Solicitor and discussed the Paparone Home property on Whitehall Road and their five-year tax abatement. He said as a committee, they all agree with the five-year tax abatement, as it is part of the rehabilitation area. He stated this is not to say that every developer coming in from this point forward will receive a five-year tax abatement. He said this is a unique situation in the Lakes area, it is a rehabilitation overlay with Victory and Timber Lakes and they are hoping this will entice some investment there. He said they have placed a timeline on the abatement with the developer, they do not want the neighborhood to start and then it takes ten years. He said it was settled on a total time of seven years that the abatement will be in effect. **Cncl. Marino** said he wanted the public know, this is moving forward and we will be seeing the ground breaking this summer.

Cncl. Wolfe said, regarding Public Safety, he, **Cncl. Dilks**, **Cncl. Miller**, Director of Public Safety, **Joe Kurz** met with all of the Chiefs from the Fire Departments, Ambulance and the Chief of Police. He said some of the concerns that arose were related to the buildings, maintenance and the lack of proper upkeep through the years. He said they are preparing to start working on their budgets and they are pretty happy with the way the budget process will be run this year as opposed to in years past.

G.) QUESTIONS REGARDING RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED

Cncl. O'Reilly questioned R:68-2019, mentioning one of the properties listed will be a part of the Dog Park and it needs to be stricken from the Resolution. **Engineer, Kathryn Conforth** confirmed that the Dog Park's construction will start this year, so if the Township were to go into contract with farming, it will be a conflict. **Cncl. O'Reilly** is concerned about the two-year deal that is written; he would like to see if it can be changed to reflect a year by year agreement, as we will be looking at some of these properties for non-farming potential uses. **Cncl. Dilks** explained the farmers that we were in contract with five years ago who had one year deals had asked to have the contract extended to two years so they would be able to put the time in to develop the ground. **Solicitor Trimble** asked to clarify if Council wanted the option written to terminate because of reasoning other than farming of the property or for any reason. He suggested writing it to state two years, with six months of notice termination, which will give the farmer an opportunity to search for other properties.

H.) QUESTIONS REGARDING ORDINANCES SCHEDULED - none

I.) ADJOURNMENT

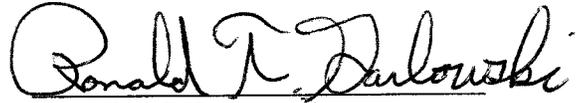
With nothing further for discussion, **Cncl. Miller** made a motion to adjourn the Council Work Session of February 11, 2019. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Wolfe** and was unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

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Respectfully submitted,



Aileen Chiselko, RMC
Municipal Clerk



Presiding Officer

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the recorded proceedings, as well as hand-written notes taken, of the Council Work Session of February 11, 2019 and serve only as a synopsis of the proceedings. The official recording may be heard in the Office of the Township Clerk upon proper notification, pursuant to the Open Public Records Act.

Approved as submitted asc
Approved as corrected _____

Date 3/25/19
Date _____