

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2023**

**A.) OPENING CEREMONIES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Special Council Meeting of the Township of Monroe was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by **Cncl. Pres., Carolann Fox** in the Courtroom of the Municipal Complex, located at 125 Virginia Avenue, Williamstown, New Jersey.

This meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. Notices of this meeting were sent to the Courier-Post and The Sentinel of Gloucester County on September 26, 2023. In addition, copies of the notices were posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and filed in the office of the Municipal Clerk on aforementioned date. Notices on the bulletin board have remained continuously posted at the Municipal Complex and on the Monroe Township website.

**Cncl. Pres., Carolann Fox** stated, the Clerk has placed a sign-in sheet in the rear of the meeting room. If anyone would like to address Council, please sign-in and raise your hand and you will be asked to come forward to the microphone. Kindly state your name and address for the record.

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

**Cncl. O'Reilly** led the Assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to Our Flag.

**ROLL CALL**

Cncl. Denise Adams	Present	
Cncl. Ronald Garbowski		Excused
Cncl. Donald Heverly		Excused
Cncl. Steven McKinney		Excused
Cncl. Patrick O'Reilly	Present	
Cncl. Vice-Pres. Chelsea Valcourt	Present	
Cncl. Pres. Carolann Fox	Present	
Mayor Gregory A. Wolfe	Present	
Deputy Mayor, Joseph Kurz		Excused
Solicitor, Sandra Graise	Present	
Business Administrator, James V. DeHart, III	Present	
Dir. of Code Enforcement, William Sebastian		Excused
Dir. of Community Affairs, Donna Park		Excused
Dir. of Community Development, Joseph Marino		Excused
Dir. of Parks & Recreation, Brian Cope		Excused
Dir. of Public Safety, Jon Rumpf		Excused
Dir. of Public Works, Marvin Dilks		Excused
Dir. of Real Estate, Jennifer Pesotski		Excused
Chief Financial Officer, Lorraine Boyer		Excused
Police Chief Craig Monahan		Excused
Deputy Municipal Clerk, Jennifer Harbison	Present	

**B.) ORDINANCES**

At this time, **Solicitor Graise** explained that this Special Council Meeting has been scheduled specifically for Ordinance O:36-2023, entitled Rent Leveling, there is nothing else on the agenda except for this Ordinance and advised how the Special Council Meeting will be run.

**Cncl. Adams** made a motion to open the meeting to the public for the Ordinance listed on the agenda for Second Reading. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. O'Reilly** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

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**B.) ORDINANCES (cont'd)**

**George W. Matteo, Jr., Esquire**, representing the Temple family who owns Summerfields West and Summerfields Friendly Village, addressed the Mayor and Council to express the Temple family's concerns with Ordinance O:36-2023. Mr. Matteo stated that he has sent correspondence to Solicitor Graise, which he asked be included as part of the official record of this evening's Special Council Meeting. He noted, the Township is considering implementation of a Rent Leveling Ordinance, also known as a Rent Control Ordinance, which he has had the opportunity to review and discuss with his clients and has requested a continuous of this matter of approximately thirty (30) days to begin to mediate a negotiation between the manufactured housing community owners and representatives of the residents of the various communities, with the purpose of allowing accommodations to be made which would provide a reasonable result to the satisfaction of the residents and the stability going forward. He noted, unfortunately once an Ordinance is adopted, the community owners' recourse will be to go to court to challenge the Ordinance, the effectiveness, the constitutionality and the enforceability of it. He is hopeful that an agreement can be reached, similar to an Ordinance, but as an agreement to control the fees not only in the present but also going forward. Mr. Matteo noted that his client's property is currently part of the Township's affordable housing compliance plan and if the Ordinance is adopted, his client would have to consider being removed from that plan. He expressed his concerns that the Ordinance only regulates the rent on manufactured homes and not all of the other types of rentals within the Township. He requested on the record that the cost analysis that was used in creating the Ordinance be provided to him for review. Mr. Matteo asked about what other remedies that the Township possibly considered to address the residents' concerns prior to proceeding with the Ordinance. He further expressed his client's concerns with the adoption of Ordinance O:36-2023 and the possible repercussions of the adoption. **Solicitor Graise** advised that in order to request copies of any records and/or reports, an Open Public Records Act Request will need to be completed and filed.

**Lori Greenberg, Esquire** thanked the Mayor and Council of being considerate of her religious beliefs on Monday. Ms. Greenberg stated, she is representing Nationwide Colonial Estates and Sunny Estates and provided a copy of her letter which states her clients' concerns with Ordinance O:36-2023 to the Mayor and Council, as part of the Meeting's record. Ms. Greenberg expressed her concerns with Ordinance O:36-2023 and the lack of inclusion with creating the Ordinance, noting by adopting this Ordinance, her clients will have no choice but to file suit. She spoke in reference to rent control, the unintended consequences that take place after the adoption of the Ordinance and offered suggestions on possible agreements in place of the Ordinance. Ms. Greenberg requested that the adoption of Ordinance O:36-2023 be tabled for thirty (30) days to enable herself and Mr. Matteo meet with the Township to come to an agreement that will benefit both the tenants and the Township.

**Joe Grande, 448 Cranbury Drive** expressed his concerns with Mr. Temple's response letter concerning Ordinance O:36-2023 and the need for rent control.

**Gail Miyetti, 237 Virginia Place** expressed her concerns with the landlords' attorneys' letters of response to Ordinance O:36-2023 and the need for rent control.

**Fran Egal, 570 Homewood** expressed her concerns with the landlords' attorneys' letters of response to Ordinance O:36-2023, the need for rent control, and the lack of respect and communication from the management office at Summerfields/Friendly Village.

**Rita Kacey, 31 Dale Lane** expressed her concerns with the attorneys' statements made earlier in the meeting and the desperate need for rent control.

**Eric Fooder, 2014 Burlington Circle** spoke regarding the number of municipalities in New Jersey that have a Rent Leveling Ordinance in place and the need for rent control.

**Karen Lilly, 258 Yardley Place** expressed her concerns with the lack of assistance from the management at Summerfields/Friendly Village and the need for rent control.

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**B.) ORDINANCES (cont'd)**

**Elizabeth Flynn, 508 Buchanan Avenue, Colonial Estates** expressed her concerns with the ever-increasing rent and the need for rent control.

**Sara Wood, 305 Kennedy Avenue, Colonial Estates** expressed her concerns with constant rent increases, the lack of certified mechanics performing work needed in the development, and the need for rent control.

**Nancy Laxton, 235 Virginia Place** expressed her concerns with the possible repercussions of being in attendance and speaking at this evening's meeting and spoke in reference to her experience with the management office at Summerfields/Friendly Village.

**Joseph Bechta, 552 Edgemont Drive** spoke in reference to what he considers some absurd fees that are charged to the residents who reside in the community.

**Diane Harris, 2013 Burlington Circle** expressed her concerns with the attorneys request to extend the adoption of the Ordinance for thirty (30) days.

**John Romano, 405 Virginia Place** addressed Mr. Matteo regarding his communications to the Mayor and Council and spoke on behalf of the residents' concerns with regards to the rent increases and the lack of accountability from the management. He thanked Assemblyman Paul Moriarty, Mayor Wolfe and Council for helping the residents.

With no one else wishing to speak on the Ordinance for Second Reading, **Cncl. Adams** made a motion to close the Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. O'Reilly** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

At this time, **Solicitor Graise** advised Resolution R:244-2023 has been added to the Agenda and Council will be going into a Closed Executive Session.

**R:244-2023** Resolution Authorizing Closed Executive Session of the Township Council of the Township of Monroe

**Cncl. Vice-Pres. Valcourt** made a motion to approve Resolution R:244-2023. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. O'Reilly** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

**CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Mayor Wolfe** stated, as the Mayor of Monroe Township and the Council members, they have been elected to do what is right by the people and ensure everything done is proper and fair. He said, there are approximately one hundred twenty-four (124) Rent Leveling Ordinances within the state of New Jersey, seven (7) have been repealed, and two (2) have expired, some of them date back to 1999, noting that there are several towns that have a Rent Leveling Ordinance with a 2% cap. The Mayor explained that this Ordinance can be altered, changed or repealed in the future if there are agreements and if it is found to be in the best interest of the Township and everyone involved. This Ordinance provides everyone a seat at the table and if this Ordinance is adopted, a board will be appointed, two (2) members from the tenants, two (2) landowners along with three (3) residents from the Township, which enables everyone to have a voice. Mayor Wolfe believes, this is a fair Ordinance, because it does not cap the increase to 2% but it allows the landowners to come before the board with justification to increase it more if there is a need.

**O:36-2023** An Ordinance of the Township Council of the Township of Monroe, County of Gloucester Establishing Chapter 243 of the Code of the Township of Monroe, Entitled "Rent Leveling"

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

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**B.) ORDINANCES (cont'd)**

**Cncl. Pres. Fox** made a motion to approve Ordinance O:36-2023 for Second Reading and Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. O'Reilly** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE ORDINANCE O:36-2023 FOR SECOND READING  
AND PUBLIC HEARING –  
4 AYES (Adams, Fox, O'Reilly, Valcourt), 3 ABSENT (Garbowski, Heverly, McKinney)**

**Tally: 4 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 3 Absent.** Ordinance O:36-2023 was duly approved for Second Reading and Public Hearing.

**C.) GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

**Cncl. Vice-Pres. Valcourt** made a motion to open the General Public Discussion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. O'Reilly** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

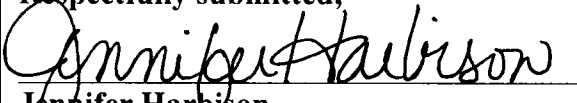
**Francis DeRocco, 2055 Salem Lane** thanked the Mayor and Council on behalf of himself and all of the residents on the adoption of Ordinance O:36-2023.

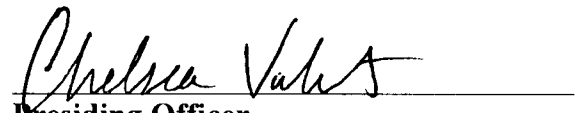
With no one else wishing to speak, **Cncl. Adams** made a motion to close the General Public Discussion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. O'Reilly** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

**D.) ADJOURNMENT**

With nothing further to discuss, **Cncl. Vice-Pres. Valcourt** made a motion to adjourn the Special Council Meeting of September 28, 2023. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. O'Reilly** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

  
**Jennifer Harbison**  
Deputy Municipal Clerk

  
**Chelsea Valeri**  
Presiding Officer

*These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the recorded proceedings, as well as hand-written notes taken, of the Special Council Meeting of September 28, 2023, 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as corrected \_\_\_\_\_



Date 2/14/2024  
Date \_\_\_\_\_