

Minutes of the Agenda meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial held on April 17, 2023, at 6:00 P.M., at the Township Hall, 1768 Main Street, Port Norris, NJ.

Those Present:

Mike Vizzard	Mayor
Fletcher Jamison	Deputy Mayor
Joseph Klaudi	Committeeman
Thomas Seeley	Solicitor
Nick DiCosmo	Engineer
Heather Miller	Township Clerk

Mayor Vizzard presided and called the meeting to order with the announcement that the meeting had been advertised, it was being electronically recorded and being in full compliance of the Open Public Meeting Act.

Mayor Vizzard – Asked Barney Hollinger for his report.

Barney Hollinger – The council meeting isn't until Thursday, so I don't have anything to report on that. I did have an interesting conversation with Atlantic City Electric. Last Monday I got a call from the guys, they said they didn't have any electricity, the generator is running. I caught up with the Atlantic City electric guy and he says down the end of Berry where you come into our place, there are ospreys that built a nest and they took two lines out. They came back and put one of the guards up there. Today I pulled up and got out of the truck, looked up and there was another one. This is on our property and there are 3 transformers on it that feeds our place and Reed & Reed, and it has one of those things on it, but they have figured out how to make a nest. I called Atlantic City electric. I got a call back from a girl that used to work down here at Schooner and Rutgers, and she has now been over there for 12 years. She's going to send somebody down. She said there is a project starting this fall to either change the polls or renovate the polls and take down all the cross arms. I said that sounds good. I also told her that on all the guide wire poles, they sit up there. They are thinking of putting up a couple of platforms to give them something else to sit on.

Mayor Vizzard- They have done that in Dividing Creek.

Barney Hollinger- This year is the most ospreys I've seen in a single year. There has to be 3 or 4 nesting pairs, only one of them is old, the other three are all young.

Mayor Vizzard- Stephanie Gold told me they were updating some of the electric so people down here could put in solar, they had another transformer installed.

Mayor Vizzard- called for the Engineers report.

Nick DiCosmo- Berry Ave bridge & tide gate- I'm hoping to get the DEP permits by the end of this month or next month, they asked for additional information. Public comment is over and I didn't receive anything where anyone had public comment so I don't imagine there is any. We are proceeding with our final design. We are still looking at summer construction.

Cobb & Brown Streets- We are doing the NJDOT closeout now.

Yock Wock & High St. – The design is ongoing; we are almost done. I met Clint last week. We walked Yock Wock and High streets to go over any last-minute issues and make sure we have anything in the design that you wanted. I hope to submit the review package to DOT for that road at the end of this month or early May.

Main Street- I walked Main Street with Clint last week to address any of the drainage concerns while we are working on that design.

State Aid Pedestrian Path- The survey was completed for that last week. We are working on the base plans now. I will start the design of that one once Yock Wock and Main are done.

Gas Company Paving in Laurel Lake – Completed. They paved the full width of Doris from Crocus to Petunia and half width on Doris Daffodil to Sandalwood. As well as various other side streets. I drove it last week when I was down here, and I think it turned out nice. We got a decent amount paved basically for free.

Laurel Lake water & Sewer- We didn't end up having the meeting with Millville. Our employee who has a relationship with the Millville city Engineer, his father passed away, so we had to postpone that meeting. I did see the Millville City Engineer at an unrelated meeting, and I did mention it. He is excited about it. We will eventually get that meeting set up.

Local Recreation Grant- We did not get the grant which is unfortunate.

2023 Local Impact Fund- We also did not get this grant for Strawberry Avenue. I suspect it was because the counts were as low as they were. However, don't think of that as a waste because, the application isn't going to change, all we have to do is re-submit it. What I want to do for that is monitor when the trucks are running and then we will re-deploy the counter over the end of Spring, Summer and into the fall, once that application period re-opens. For the next 6 months, we'll just keep an eye and when we know the trucks are running, we will deploy the counter.

Mauricetown Park- I don't know what the committee is thinking.

Mayor Vizzard- I was going to ask you. There was a response from Booker's office, Mackenzie Belling, with some ideas. Mayor asked Nick to investigate some of the suggestions from Cory Booker's office for grant funding.

Nick DiCosmo- I asked people at the resiliency meeting but it's such a unique situation, it's a bulkhead but it's a park. It's hard to find a funding category that fits.

Mayor Vizzard- I'm just afraid we are going to end up losing that park.

Barney Hollinger- I have a question on the sewage stuff. Does that money cover the cost of taking the old one out?

Nick DiCosmo- Taking the old septic out? No.

Mayor Vizzard- This has nothing to do with septic.

Nick DiCosmo- It's unrelated. It's for water but it depends on how you approach it.

Mayor Vizzard- last I knew it's for water and we would put the pipes in for future infrastructure for septic at a later date.

Nick DiCosmo- Unless we are able to get the funding to do both, which is a possibility. The I bank is funding both. It's expected that we will have the infrastructure to tie into in Millville. To do the sewer we would have to either construct our own plant or tie into the Millville system which is just more complicated.

Committeeman Klaudi- They are looking to tie us into the Fairton prison right now. They want future capacity to be for Millville.

Nick DiCosmo- It may just be better to construct our own plant which the I bank does fund but I don't think it would cover anything with existing septic's. What we could do is get it to cover the connections to the homes.

Barney Hollinger- I'm sure the Health Department is going to want them closed.

A brief discussion ensued about the septic systems in the township and the difficulties residents have had with them, the closing of existing septic's and whether residents would want septic.

Nick DiCosmo- I have the e-mail from Booker's office, is there something you want to address specifically?

Mayor Vizzard- No, I don't know what the feasibility of any of it is.

Nick DiCosmo- It may be something to loop Pam into and potentially bond for it.

Mayor moved to correspondence.

Received request from the Laurel Lake Triathlon which is a run, bike run, and swim in Laurel Lake. The event takes place on Millville and Commercial Roads. Heather has sent to Mints insurance for review. Certificate of insurance is attached. This requires the Committee's approval by resolution.

Correspondence from William Dungey III of a tax lien business called Capital Lien Group, LLC. He would like to have a lien assigned to him from block 222, lot 29 known as 7071 Parson's Lane in Port Norris. The current lien amount is \$4,556.

Mayor said we'll put that on for Thursday night.

Letter from Commercial Township School District requesting the Committee again support academic awards to the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Last year the township sponsored two \$100 awards. We'll put that on for Thursday night.

Mayor Vizzard- We have the Budget. Resolution 2023-48 Authorizing the 2023 Municipal Budget to be read by title only. Then we'll have the budget hearing. Then Resolutions 2023-49 Resolution to amend the 2023 Municipal Budget and Resolution 2023-50 Resolution for Local Examination.

#### Additional Resolutions

Resolution 2023-51 Resolution to Adopt the 2023 Municipal Budget

Resolution 2023-52 Approving Bond Anticipation note in the amount of \$580,450.00 awarded to Newfield Bank at 3.42 percent interest.

Resolution 2023-53 A resolution endorsing the adoption of Green Building Practices for Civic, Commercial and Residential Buildings.

Resolution 2023-54 Approving Annual Laurel Lake Triathlon Sprint on July 29, 2023.

#### Mayor Vizzard asked for Reports from Officials

Committeeman Klaudi- I have the report from the Spaghetti dinner we did this past weekend. Total sales were 138 tickets. Total cash taken in was \$2,762.00 of that, \$708.00 was donations.

Mayor Vizzard- Do we know what the cost was?

Committeeman Klaudi- I have some vouchers for clam shells. Mary Ella Morie passed away and there were a lot of deserts left and we needed something to put the cakes in. I had other vouchers for other supplies, if you can look them up, we can figure out what our profit was.

Committeeman Jamison had nothing to report.

Mayor Vizzard asked the clerk about a bill from Ocean View Veterinary for \$162.73. Mayor wants to know why we are paying for Ocean View. The clerk was not familiar with that bill and was going to look into it.

Mayor Vizzard- The building contract, we have a pre-construction meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup>. We are going to need to come up with a plan to move the furniture out. The problem is we have nowhere to put it so I think we will need to get a storage container.

I had some issues come up, I had a talk to the mayor night, I'll need to talk to Clint. We have some flooding that will need to be taken care of.

My next thing is these dogs. We have a bill of like \$12,000 and it's continuing to go up. We need someone to relinquish ownership.

The clerk stated that it is supposedly the Prosecutors office holding things up. The owner is being charged and the dogs can't be released until that has been resolved. In the meantime the township is being charged.

Mayor Vizzard- Can we hold the owner liable.

Solicitor Seeley- Sure you can, problem is, you have to get a judgement against them, so you file a civil suit.

Mayor Vizzard- So let's start it, we can't wait.

Solicitor Seeley – Are these all puppies?

The clerk- They are all old, like 10, 11, and 12 years old, they are going to be harder to adopt out.

Mayor Vizzard- We have to hold this lady responsible for these dogs.

Solicitor Seeley- You can't get blood from a stone. Does she own her home?

The Clerk- She's a squatter. She was living in a camper and the dogs were confiscated from the camper.

Mayor Vizzard- So the residents of this township have to pay for these dogs? How do I justify this to the residents of this town?

Solicitor Seeley- You can put them in jail but if somebody doesn't have money, how do you make them pay for it.

Mayor Vizzard- But how do we make the residents pay for it? I mean they are going to whether they like it or not so why can't she pay it whether she likes it or not. I know, she doesn't have the money, but the residents of this town don't have the money.

Solicitor Seeley- Mayor, I agree 100%, you can get a judgement against any one you want for as much as you want.

Mayor Vizzard- Do you know how hard it is to collect taxes from the residents of this township because they don't have any money and now, they have to pay for dogs that they don't

even know exist. I don't like it one bit. There is no doubt in my mind, the township is going to have to pay it, we signed a contract with them, we are going to have to do it but I want her to be held liable for something.

Solicitor Seeley- We can get a judgement against her.

Mayor Vizzard- Then do it.

Solicitor Seeley- It will follow her, if she comes into some money, buys a house, then the judgement will go against the property.

Mayor Vizzard- There is a letter of support for liquor law reform that I signed, it came from the Governor's office. The most significant part of that is to allow the retail consumption license for more retail consumption licenses by reducing the population requirements. Over 5 years, it will be reduced to a population of 500. So, I did sign that as a letter of support.

Mayor Vizzard- I also wanted to thank Tom for answering the complaints we have had recently. I know you put a lot of work into that. How are we making out with the marriage license notice of violations?

Solicitor Seeley- Good, I have had several very good conversations. I said to her, you're dealing with old farmers town here and it is difficult to understand, and I teach this stuff. She is going to waive the fine, she is going to work with me. She sent me an e-mail that said I owe you a letter and we will come up with a deal.

Committeeman Jamison- I have heard of other township's going through the same thing.

Mayor Vizzard- I just want to sum it up. You're saying we may not have to pay the fines and that's fantastic but are we going to have to have classes, and will it apply to elected officials as well.

Solicitor Seeley- Eventually, I think its going to be like the harassment training we have had before except your going to add all these different, I mean since I have been doing the training, it went from probably 5 categories to 25 categories and when I say categories, I mean protected classes under the NJ state constitution. What they want to do is put every municipality and obviously they are more interested in larger cities because there are more people, but they want everybody to come up with a law. Whether you agree with it or not, you have to uphold the law.

Mayor Vizzard- I get that and that's not the issue.

Solicitor Seeley- It's easy for people to laugh about it, we aren't exposed to a lot of that stuff and if you go to New York, seeing what you see there is completely different, and this woman is based out of Newark. She calls herself she/her which I found out means she is just a female. The issue is people need to learn, if she is identifying as a she/her, she is telling you she is a heterosexual female.

Mayor Vizzard- Ok, I want to move on. The other issue I have is the amount we have to pay for DEP charges. Where do we stand with that.

Nick DiCosmo- I did receive an e-mail from the Commissioner requesting some budget information. I don't know if that means they are considering reducing them, but that would be good. I haven't received anything further yet.

Mayor asked if anyone had anything else, with nothing a motion and second moved to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Heather Miller, Township Clerk