

Minutes of the Agenda Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial held on March 18, 2024, at 5:00 P.M., at the Township Hall, 1768 Main Street, Port Norris, NJ.

Those Present:

Ronald Sutton	Mayor
Joseph Klaudi	Deputy Mayor
Mike Vizzard	Committeeman
Thomas Seeley	Solicitor
Heather Miller	Township Clerk
Clint Miller	Public Works Supervisor

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

Mayor Sutton stated the first order of business is a special meeting with Triad Associates.

Carolyn Zumpino President of Triad Associates-

- Appreciates that we took the time to meet with her tonight.
- The firm specialized in Grant Writing.
- Coming up on their 46th year in business and they hit the 1.5 billion mark in funding and financing. They specialize in helping municipalities with grant writing for different projects.

Tom Seeley- Just really quick, I want to let you know, that we know each other from Greenwich, Lawrence, Commercial, and several other municipalities that we worked with together. I just don't want you guys to think we have a special relationship or anything like that. I can tell you that we have always had good experiences with them, and I want you to take that totally apart from what I suggest.

Mike Vizzard- I am familiar with Triad Associates, and a lot of work that I do is with Triad. I am very much aware of Triad Associates.

Carolyn Zumpino-

- My dad started the company, and I am continuing is we would rather work with you if it is something that we think can get funded. I can't guarantee you something is getting funded, but what I can guarantee is that we will spend the time together to really drill down and make sure it is going to be competitive.
- The way we set up our arrangement is with most municipalities you don't have to RFP with us, we just set up a general services contract. That just designates us as your grant's consultant.

Mayor Sutton- Why we wanted to meet up with you is we have a Warf in Mauricetown that needs repair. It needs around 600 thousand dollars' worth of work, and we wanted to know if you knew ways to obtain money for that.

Carolyn- Generally speaking, yes. We have a grants committee that does grant writing and research. So, any information you can give me on the project, how much it is going to cost, any permitting obstacles we may have, how long construction is going to take, those types of details are what we are going to drill and see what the perfect fit is. I will say time wise, the

Congressionally Direct of spending applications are open now. Right now, Senator Booker has his applications open, and they are a really great opportunity to pursue out of the box projects.

Tom Seeley- I know in other municipalities, a lot smaller than here, are you asking for certain amount upfront from these guys?

Carolyn- To engage us? No.

Tom Seeley- So you only benefit from obtaining the money?

Carolyn – Yeah, so let's just say you want us to submit the application, and it takes my team 10 hours to submit, you would offer us to go from there. We don't work under a retainer base.

The team and Carolyn talk about how the grant writing process works.

Mayor Sutton – I'd say our two priorities right now which are the waterfront park, and trucks and equipment.

Carolyn – Public Works?

Mayor Sutton- Yes.

Mike Vizzard- And the park on Battle Lane.

Carolyn shows the Committee some of projects Triad Associates has done.

Nick Asselta from Vineland NJ interjects to tell his story about how far he goes back with Triad Associates, and the projects he is working with them now.

- They are the best in the business, and you are in good hands with them.

Carolyn continues her presentation and talks about the time frame of how long the grant writing process is and the chain of events.

Mayor Sutton concludes Carolyn's presentation and thanks her for coming out.

Joe Cortez starts his presentation for Tateaux NJ Solar.

Joe Cortez-

- We are unlike any other solar firm.
- Commercial, we have everything prepared and we would submit the Exrex Subsites in June.
- We only do community solar projects. Community solar projects are projects that deliver their electricity to residential customers.
- Because our projects connect to the grid, we can deliver our electricity to everybody in the community.
- It's the towns, counties, school districts, and nonprofits that provide us the property on which we build solar. As a result, we work directly with the towns.
- We also provide a discount to residential customers that are between 25-50 percent off their bill credit rate, which is basically the bulk of their electricity bill.
- To towns like Commercial we apply at least 50 percent, but if the numbers allow, we could provide it for free.

- We also provide job training, education programs, grants, and donations. Our proposal to Commercial reflects grants and donations over and above what we would pay you to lease the property that we are using, the land fill.
- We have an annual lease payment, up front lease payment, along with grants and donations.
- Commercial's project is 3 megawatts.
- The project can be finished in 1 year depending on the interconnection. We can start work as soon as they award the June Exrex.
- When we submit the documents to the BPU, you are now our community partner.
- In terms of the landfill on Snow Hill Road, 100 thousand dollars up front in grants and lease payments. 75 thousand dollars in donations, 15 thousand dollars annual lease payment.
- The biggest line item on the cost is the Atlantic City intercity connection.
- They will build a new gate for the convenience center and install an electric car charger. The first fast charger between Vineland and Mays Landing in Atlantic County. They will put the car charger at the Township Hall so it's more convenient for everybody. When they build it, the Township keeps all the revenues.
- Residents of Commercial Township have priority for the discounts of the solar on their electric bills, along with the people who work for the Township if they live in Cumberland County.
- The residents who already have residential solar installed would not qualify the discounts sense they are already in a contract.
- Since there is a new substation here, our interconnection costs may be lower than their estimates. If that is the case, they share the additional profit with the Township.

Mike Vizzard- In your proposal it is a 3 mega wat system, but you are saying the benefits to the Boro of Commercial are 10 megawatts. Is that typo? Or do we have to generate 10 megawatts?

Joe Cortese- I have no documents for that. We made the same typos in other documents.

Mike Vizzard- I want this built bad, but I just want everyone to understand you have a way to back out if the costs are higher than what you have budgeted. And, to not give the township the benefits stated, but you will keep the property running the solar.

Jose Cortese- No, the way it works is this, we will have a solar lease option.

Mike Vizzard- Okay you have 3 solar lease options. I would like to know why three?

Joe Cortese- The new one, is scrap everything else.

Solicitor Tom Seeley- Everything is different than what you have presented. We want the new changes. We need the right facts. We want to know for sure what we are getting.

The Committeemen and Joe Cortese converse about the typos and new contract changes.

Joe Cortese presentation concludes.

Barney Hollinger, Riverfront Consultant Report –

- Bayshore Council met on February 15.
- ALS is dredging the Maurice River.
- Want to see what the future dredging will be.
- Has not been able to attend the BRIC meetings.

- Maurice River has been tracking the recent study of flooding, and they put together a spread sheet that gives you all the information based on a sensor at Long Reach Marina.

Robert Welch, OEM Coordinator-

- Trying to get a grant for upgrading Public Works radio channels. Talked to Dan who is in charge of the radio stations, and stated he was here when they first put the radio system in at the State Police barracks. He recommends that the Public Works goes on the state systems. It would only cost the Township \$35 a year to get 2 channels awarded to them.
- The Annual Triathlon is coming up. Whenever we have a large event with lots of people, we have to have a safety plan from them stating what they are covering for liability purposes. The safety plan breaks down on who are doing their traffic control, EMS services, and policing.

Clint Miller, Public Works Supervisor-

- The water was all over the road last week and did the repair to the hole that was there. He isn't thrilled about what they did to repair it, but he doesn't know their rights to tell them what to do. They do have a massive amount of dirt to try to hold off the water, but he doesn't think it is going to hold up in future storms.

Robert Welch stated if this issue becomes a safety hazard to the public, he can get the County OEM Director involved to put pressure on making the repair a more permanent solution.

Clint Miller, Public Works Supervisor-

- He appreciates the Committeeman coming down the Marina to check out the damage.
- Josh Hoffman's job title is Public Works Heavy Equipment Operator. We have all spoken in the past that when I retire, he will take over my spot at Supervisor of Public Works. Josh needs to get enrolled in classes, and the only way he can do that is to have a position of authority. We do have a position open in the Public Works department for Forman. We aren't expecting any money change, just a title changes so he can enroll in the classes. It is going to take a couple years for him to get through the classes, but over a period of time he will be putting in payment for his classes.

The Committee will add Resolution 2024-44 to Thursday's meeting.

- We had a few trees down from the recent storms with heavy rain and winds. There was a tree on Daffodil Road that broke electric, laid on the telephones, and pulled the poles in. Robbie Welch OEM has been talking with his contacts to help get the poles fixed.

Nick DiCosmo, Engineer-

- Not in attendance to give report.

Mayor Sutton moved to correspondence.

- Land Sale request from Jay Hendricks. Request to purchase block 138, lot 7690 known as 325 Mulberry Road which is a vacant adjoining property to one of his properties. He is offering \$500 for the property.

Mayor Sutton- Is there a structure on this property?

Clint Miller- I would have to check on that.

Mayor Sutton- Yeah, we would have to check on that. Technically I think we need to get away from this \$500 bid. It covers Toms cost. It has to go back up to \$750, I don't know how it got back down to \$500.

Clint Miller- COVID. We should recoup our costs, that's for sure.

Mayor Sutton- I think we should reject every bid for \$500.

Several conversations ensued about the fees and costs associated with land sales.

Tom Seeley reiterates that all land sales done at the meetings, the Township does not pay him.

Continues Correspondence.

- Land sale request from Robert Loth. Request to purchase block 79, lot 1634 known as 3850 Battle Lane. There is a small home on the property which he desires to fix up. He is offering \$10,000.

Mayor Sutton wants to see the property. He wants to reject the \$10,000 bid and make it a minimum of \$20,000.

Heather Miller- The property size for that lot is 124 x 98.

Mayor Sutton moved on to Resolutions.

- Resolution 2024-33 Governing Body Certification of Compliance with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decision Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Mayor Sutton- What is that about Tom?

Heather Miller - The state requires us to pass that resolution in order to pass our budget.

- Resolution 2024-34 Resolution to Introduce the 2024 Municipal Budget.

Mayor Sutton- I'm not ready for Thursday since I was just handed this tonight. I understand that the taxes will go up 5 and a half cents, and we don't have everything we need. If they are going up 5 and half cents, then we need to clean this town up because that is what the people are tired of these yards and derelict housing. I think that the budget needed to be looked at a month ago by the whole committee. This is just something that Pam does, she's only the CFO she shouldn't be doing our budget other than the set items, insurance, and wages. Everything else we should be doing because that is how it was done in the past.

Mike Vizzard- Like I told you earlier, pass the resolution and we will introduce it on Thursday. We will meet with Pam on Wednesday, and we will go through the whole thing, and if you are still not ready then we will postpone it.

- Resolution 2024- 35 Awarding Animal Control Contract to Shore Animal Control
- Resolution 2024-36 Authorizing the Transfer of Over Payment to Other Tax Years or Refund of Over Payment to Owner, Payer, or Their Representative.
- Resolution 2024-37 A Resolution of the Township of Commercial Awarding a Cannabis Retailer License to Rootly, LLC.
- Resolution 2024-38 Authorizing the 9th Annual Laurel Lake Triathlon on Saturday July 27, 2024.
- Resolution 2024-39 Awarding Contract to Landberg Construction LLC for FY 2023 NJDOT Municipal Aid Program North Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvements, Alternate Bid No.1 in the amount of \$222,545.85.
- Resolution 2024-40 Resolution Amending Resolution 2023-72 Authorizing Amended Shared Service Agreement with Cumberland County Mill and Overlay of CR 553.
- Resolution 2024-41 Resolution Amending Resolution 2022-33 Authorizing Amended Shared Service Agreement for the Reconstruction of County Owned Bridge on Miller Avenue.
- Resolution 2024-42 Awarding Contract to Walter Marine Construction for FY 2021 NJDOT Local Freight Infrastructure Fund, Port Norris Riverfront Roadway Improvements, Phase III in the Amount of \$1,678,026.60.
- Resolution 2024-43 – A Resolution Certifying Submission of Expenditures for Recycling Enhancement Act.

Mayor Sutton moves to the Ordinance for Introduction.

Ordinance 2023-633
 An Ordinance for the Township of Commercial,
 County of Cumberland, State of New Jersey,
 Amending Ordinance 2007-487 Development and Regulation Ordinance Amending Article VII, Section
 C, Item 3
 Reducing Set Back for Permanently Installed Generators

Additional Considerations.

Mayor Sutton- The Inspira building on Spring Garden Road. We need to send a letter to Inspira offering to sell the building to them for \$1, and if not then we will sell it. It is going to need some major work in the next year or two. I don't think we need the burden; we are building poor.

Clint Miller - The only thing I can suggest is that there is a lot of property that goes along with that building.

Mayor Sutton – My second thing is Inspira, is that everyone knows we have an EMS problem. I think Tom, you are going to have to lead us in the right direction after we have our meeting on the 4th. I believe the whole County, and I think the whole County including Millville, we are probably looking at a class action lawsuit. All the municipalities in Cumberland County, and Millville because Inspira were the ones that caused this dilemma. They are doing the same thing to Cape May County.

Mayor Sutton talked more about the problems with Inspira EMS.

Mayor Sutton- This is why I strive, and I know you don't want to hear it, but we need another part time code enforcer to help clean this town up. We are raising people's taxes up, and we aren't doing anything for them. It is everybody's problem, is these yards.

Joe Klaudi- One of the problems is the judges. Our code enforcer does write the tickets.

Mayor Sutton talked more about what the Code Enforcer needs to do in court, and in the field.

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion and a second to open the meeting to the public. Motion was made by Deputy Mayor Klaudi and seconded by Committeeman Vizzard. Mayor asked if anyone from the public wished to address the committee.

Barney Hollinger stated that the Liverpool Estates 2 cubic yard dumpsters are being disposed of by our trash companies while they only pay \$500 in taxes in the Pilot Program. He also stated that the Liverpool Estate apartments do not recycle. Each of the two apartments has a cubic yard dumpster, and he has watched people go there and dump trash in them. He thinks that they should get rid of the dumpsters, and just go to regular trash cans because the Township is getting screwed on this deal.

Clint Miller agrees with Barney because it will be less weight for the Townships trash tipping fees.

The Committee talks about the Pilot Program that the Liverpool Estates is in.

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting. Motion was made by Deputy Mayor Klaudi and seconded by Committeeman Vizzard.

Mayor Sutton asked if there were any reports of the officials.

Mike Vizzard- The only report I have was that our dinner Saturday night was fantastic! I was very happy with how it turned out and had a couple of people up to me and say that we should do that every year! The Recreation Committee did very well. Everybody enjoyed themselves and the food was great. It was a great time.

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Committeeman Vizzard and seconded by Deputy Mayor Klaudi.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Gabrielle Horseman, Deputy Clerk