

Minutes of the Agenda Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial held on November 18, 2024, at 6:00 P.M., at the Township Hall, 1768 Main Street, Port Norris, NJ.

Those Present:

Joseph Klaudi	Deputy Mayor
Mike Vizzard	Committeeman
Thomas Seeley	Solicitor
Heather Miller	Township Clerk
Nick DiCosmo	Township Engineer
Clint Miller	Public Works Supervisor

Absent:

Ron Sutton	Mayor
Robert Welch	Township OEM

Deputy Mayor Klaudi 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.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi moved on to the reports from the Riverfront Consultant.

Barney Hollinger:

- BRIC Meeting with MRT on 9/23.
- There were 11 events in September at the Mauricetown Causeway, 6 of them closed.
- 10/10 was the BRIC meeting at the Township Open House.
- PSEG needs to be at the meetings.
- The clam house has flooding, and PSEG needs to maintain the sluice. There were at least 3 sluiceways they put in.
- 10/15 Ben Stowman and Meghan met and asked what problems there were in the two Townships and what solutions they had.
- 10/17 Bayshore Council meeting. There is a new South Jersey Economic Development District representative, Kerry Italiano. She says there are USDA grants to help create jobs.
- Regarding the resilience real rules, Bayshore council took a vote and wrote a letter in opposition to the rules.
- DEP is not looking at sluice gates and is not funding any repairs. They are saying that they are not responsible for structures on private land.

Committeeman Vizzard asked for a contact for PSEG to help fix the sluiceways. Nick DiCosmo said he does have contact but has to go back to his notes to find it. Clint Miller asked about Meghan, but Barney stated she was deployed to a location by FEMA to help a crisis. Clint hopes that PSEG will help to come to the BRIC meetings.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi asked for the OEM Report.

Deputy OEM:

- House fire in Port Norris. Everything went good with that, but the major issue we had was trying to establish a water supply. They went to the public wharf, and it was dead low tide.

- Apparently, that night it was just mud. They had to find an alternative quickly, but there was never an interruption of water at the scene, but they went to the one sand plant and was able to get water at various other places.
- Talks of trying to get more static water supply such as from the 6 inch well here.
 - The wildfire that happened in Downe Township did spill over a little bit into Commercial with spot fires on Battle Lane. Battle lane was shut down for a little bit because of that.
 - Extreme fire bans are still going on and publicized everywhere. Nobody seems to listen though.
 - Laurel Lake this month has had 16 calls, and majority of them have been open burns.
 - The Coastal Coalition talked about the drought conditions major weather events. Next meeting is December 5th.

Committeeman Vizzard- I just seen another fire on 55 today. My guess is someone threw a cigarette out.

Deputy OEM- If you're caught burning it's a \$2,800.00 fine for the first offense. Beyond that its up to the State itself. The one that was up north, a 14-year charged with it.

Clint Miller- Just something about Mr. Smiths house. Robbie came up to me a couple days later that they were low on water. We have our ballfield well, and in the process of the fire there were so many companies at this scene. He said it's not easy for me for me to say, "go to the ballfield", because they are not from around here or how to access it. So, they are going to work on a couple of drills to try to help that situation out because we have a big well there that works with the turn of a key. I'm trying to check with Brian Saxton from the school because they have that big well in the back of the school. I don't know if that well is still there because of the new addition put on. The two things I told Brian and Robbie to work on from the Township side of things is 1. Get a hold of Billy at Silvi. There is an old standpipe there but they were pulling up stones and mud. Clint talks about the pipe they put in on Ferry Road.::

Committeeman Vizzard states he will call Brian from Silvi to discuss the pipe.

Clint Miller- Then township has a well here, but I have no idea how much horsepower that is or I know it has an 8-inch casing on it. It's a big well head. I just don't know what size pump is on it. I talked to Roselyn and that was a few weeks ago. He's supposed to get back to me and come see what type of well we have here. I remember George telling me a while ago it was a big pump, and he can put a small hook up here just to have a back up plan.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi- There are numerous standpipes throughout the Township.

The Committeeman discuss the different pipes around the Township, and how hard it's been for water since it has been so dry. Committeeman Vizzard asked if the saltwater effects the trucks. They stated that the trucks don't like it, and after words you dump all the water out and flush everything. It's not ideal but the fire doesn't discriminate against water. You get whatever you can get.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi moved on to the Engineers report.

Nick DiCosmo-

- Port Norris Phase 3 Tide gate project is now complete, and the contractors moved over to the bridge. The gas line move is all done and moved to the limits of the foundations. I believe they ripped out the old bridge and worked on the test piles. Once the productions piles are ordered they will start driving piles.
- Overlay repair is also complete on Yock Work and High Street by APS as a solution to the portion on Yock Wock that was breaking apart. They did the work for free.

- One remaining conduit on Main Street. South State is supposed to come out on Friday.
- The fence was installed for North Avenue. The only thing now is the hydroseed didn't take. We will leave it open and reseed.
- Whittier Drive drainage was complete, and the paving was completed last Friday. They are working on driveway aprons and once that is all completed, we will also have to make a call on the turf repair if we want to do it now or not.
- We are wrapping up the design for mill and overlay of main street phase 2.
- Milbourne Drive and Dennis Lane are making some progress.
- We did receive the funding notice for the FY2025 State Aid App. We received over \$280,000.00 dollars awarded for Magnolia Drive. Did draft a proposal for that design. I removed Milbourne Drive from it because we don't have enough money for both roads. We will do Magnolia drive basically as far as we can.
- The proposal for the FY2025 LFIF Application was submitted and on the agenda for consideration. The applications are due January 8th. The project does need to be discussed. We still need a count of vehicle trucks to show the amount of truck traffic.

Clint Miller- I would like to mention something, APS the company that did Yock Wock. On Yock Wock when they paved the road, we had one little spot by north avenue had little holes in it. One of their big managers looked at the road and was concerned we would see blister spots in the future. So, out of the goodness of their hearts, they did an overlay of epoxy. The stuff they put down is like steal. I mean it's extremely dense. They dropped probably 50-60 thousand dollars on that and had to restripe the lines and all that.

Nick DiCosmo- Thanks for bringing that up, Clint. Yes, that was a 40-50-thousand-dollar job and they did that just to address any potential issues that might develop in the asphalt. They saw in the one spot we brought to their attention probably a year ago now, and they just had some concerns that it might pop up. This is their way of encapsulating the whole road in preventing any other future issues from happening. In their perspective they didn't want it to be a constant maintenance issue.

Nick asked if anyone had any ideas for the LFIF. Clint mentioned the sluice on Sheppards property would be ideal. Clint mentions we don't have any easements on the sluiceways in the Township. The Committeeman talk about the sluices and how the LFIF could work for repair. Nick stated that we need to have a decision no later than the first week of December. Clint stated the only other road that would be plausible because of the truck counts would be the bypass. It is freight impacts, and we can get new signage out of the deal.

The Committeeman talk about other project road ideas.

Regarding the truck counts, Nick stated that they are able to count from a box truck up. The count for trucks is based on weight and the weight class of the truck. A box truck type, single unit, was our cut off and that was what we have been using. If it is a pickup truck, it won't show and is our limit.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi moved on to correspondence.

1. Memo from Pam Humphries, CFO. The committee is to review the 2024 Best Practices Inventory Questionnaire.

Committeeman Vizzard- Heather, I did review this. There were 69 questions on here and I think we scored pretty good!

Heather Miller- Yeah, we did! That is for the aid that we receive.

2. Letter from Attorney that represents the CCIA regarding the NJ State Police Barracks. In the development of the barracks, the stormwater basin encroaches into the Godfrey right-of-way. CCIA proposes an easement be allowed for the construction and maintenance of this portion of the stormwater basin. This request was previously requested by the committee and the committee asked to determine whether any alternate designs were feasible. After review with the engineer and project team, it was determined that a revised project layout was not feasible. The committee is being asked to approve and authorize the execution of the enclosed basin easement. (A representative may attend the regular meeting in support of the rest unless otherwise contacted.)
Thursday- ON

Tom Seeley- This where you guys' kind of asked for a new design. I went back at them, and you see their answer. If you want to dispute it.

Clint Miller- Are they going to pipe over to the other basin? I don't see why not. There is a big basin there. We shouldn't be losing anymore of our property.

Tom Seeley- One of the big things is they are spending a lot of money on engineering work and they are going to have to reengineer it.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi- How did they miss that?

Tom Seeley- We brought it up. They didn't really give us the option. They said they will have a representative here if you want to tell them about it.

The Committee agreed that they want a representative here to talk to them.

3. Correspondence from Judd Moore. Requesting that the County Engineers Office and the Committee review the possibility of an all the way stop at the intersection of County roads 649 and 676 (Highland and Bypass.)

Deputy Mayor Klaudi- I say no. Of all the years I've lived here and there hasn't even been a bicycle accident in the intersection.

Committeeman Vizzard- Yeah, and I don't know what would have caused those skid marks in that picture. It may not even have been an accident.

The committeeman addresses the possibilities in that intersection.

Committeeman Vizzard- I just have a question, is a traffic signal safer than a four way stop? What's your thought? So, what I'm thinking is, if we do something with the freight impact fund, we can put a full enforce traffic signal.

Nick DiCosmo- That would be the County.

Committeeman Vizzard- Yeah, if we can get the money for the County. If you think that is safer than a four way stop.

Clint Miller- I remember when they redid that road, I thought, now is your perfect time to fix that.

Committeeman Vizzard- Yeah, that intersection needs to be redone. The Committeeman discuss that intersection, and that they just resurfaced the road. Nick stated he will reach out to the County Engineer.

4. Correspondence from NJDOT- Applications now being accepted for FY 2025 Local Freight Impact fund. The deadline for applications is January 8, 2025. Discussion of the next project.
5. Correspondence from NJDCA-NJDGLS is now accepting applications for local recreation improvement grand program funding. Application deadline is January 31, 2025. Does the committee want to apply? Project ideas?

Committeeman Vizzard stated he would like to get a park built. Nick said he could apply for that and let him know exactly what you want. Committeeman Vizzard said he's not against a dog park, and a park on Battle Lane. Laurel Lake needs a park.

6. Correspondence from NJDCA-DLGS is now accepting applications for the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) for 2025. Leap grants provide financial assistance to local governments to identify, study and implement shared services initiatives. (Mayor Sutton- EMS).

Committeeman Vizzard- I was going to see about the shared services between Maurice River and Down Township. This will help fund the study.

Heather Miller- Yes, and how to implement it. I did reach out to the contact at DCA, and they are willing to have a meeting on TEAMS meeting online to go over a project and what your hopes are. I can reach out to them and set that up.

The Committeeman were all in aggrievance.

7. The Cumberland CDC has brought to the Committee that The Cumberland County "Love where you live-Beacons of Pride" grant has been opened to all County municipalities for community beautification and improvement projects. Grant maximum is \$20,000.00. 50% match required.

Committeeman Vizzard- That last sentence pushed it right off the table.

Heather Miller- Ron read it. He went to the meeting, maybe a gazebo for the Veterans Park because that was mentioned years ago. It wouldn't be that costly at 50%. That's totally up to you.

Committeeman Vizzard- We will look into it and see what prices we get and where we can get the money from.

8. TRIAD has submitted the preliminary grand application through the USDA for the purchase of a utility vehicle for code enforcement. The preliminary application was accepted. TRIAD has submitted a proposal to proceed with full application. Authorizing resolution has been added to the agenda.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi moved on to Thursdays Regular Meeting Land Sales.

1. Block 139, lot 7903 known as Beaver Drive. Lot is undersized at 40x100.
Block 139, lot 7904 known as 342 Beaver Drive. Lot is undersized at 60x100.
Block 139, lot 7907 known as 352 Beaver Drive. Lot is undersized at 40x100.
The starting offer accepted on September 19, 2024, was for \$5,000.00 for all three lots to be sold together as one buildable size lot.
2. Block 116, lot 9933 known as 428 Opal Road. Lot is undersized at 40x100. The starting bid accepted on September 19, 2024, was for \$800.00. The Bidder is an adjoining owner.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi moved on to Resolutions.

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| 1. Resolution 2024-112 | Resolution Accepting Proposal of TRIAD for USDA grant and Authorizing Submission. |
| 2. Resolution 2024-113 | Resolution Requesting Change in Title, Text or Amount of Appropriation Pursuant to NJSA 40A:4-85 |

These two resolutions need to be adopted tonight. The resolution that follows will be adopted Thursday.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi asked for a motion to approve. Committeeman Vizzard made a motion, and Deputy Mayor Klaudi seconded. Roll call vote, all approve.

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| 3. Resolution 2024-114 | Authorizing Clerks Office to Advertise for Bids for Animal Control Services for 2025. |
| 4. Resolution 2024-115 | Authorizing Tax Collector to Issue Duplicate Tax Sale Certificate for Block 48, Lot 6082 |
| 5. Resolution 2024-116 | Approving Bingo and Raffle License Applications for the Laurel Lake Volunteer Fire and Rescue Inc. for Year 2025. |
| 6. Resolution 2024-117 | Accepting Proposal of Remington and Vernick for remainder of engineering work for FY2024 NJDOT LAIF Program of Roadway & Drainage Improvements to Milbourne Drive and Dennis Lane. |

Deputy Mayor Klaudi moved on to Ordinance for Introduction.

Township of Commercial
ORDINANCE 2024-637
Stormwater Control Ordinance

Deputy Mayor Klaudi moved onto the Public Portion.

Committeeman Vizzard made a motion to open to the public, and Deputy Mayor Klaudi seconded.

Barney Hollinger, Port Norris-

- You have the new thing on the internet on the Township website. It's the User-Friendly Budget. We just happened to be looking through it and one thing that came up was Liverpool Estates. They have pilot funding. What I found was funding the building was 18,548.00 that's what they are paying. If they have paid their \$35,677.80 which would be a little over half a cent. One penny would raise 26000 dollars towards the tax rate. You have almost ¼ of a cent right here. That the tax rate could of came down if they were paying their full taxes. I don't know what they are costing us with these dumpsters. I mean the ones over here next to me, people are walking across the street putting trash in. The lids aren't fastened, and people are still throwing trash in them. The rest of them are overloaded all the time. They are putting things out that I can't, but they can because it goes into the dumpster, and nobody looks at it and the truck pulls up and throws it in. Everyone else has to go to the dump facility.

Tom Seeley- When we last went to do that, I can't remember how many years ago 6-7 years ago. One of the things you have to understand is that 100 percent of this money goes to the township not the county. If

they were to be taxed at the same rate the difference you, I can't say at the top of my head. This was to set up to where 100 percent went to the township.

Committeeman Vizzard- So you're saying they don't pay taxes to the County?

Tom Seeley- No, the way it was set up, it went directly to the Township.

Barney Hollinger- So they don't pay fire tax?

Tom Seeley- I'm not sure exactly, we have to talk to Pam. We took this all the way to Trenton, and they appealed it. It was a long process of appeal but at that time, should we revisit it again. I think we should. At the time it was a good deal for us. I don't know if that is the case anymore.

Debbie Hollinger, Port Norris- It went from 16000 to 18000 in the last year.

Tom Seeley- Yeah, it does need to be looked at again. The problem is it costs us money to deal with that.

Barney Hollinger- The only thing you're looking at is that it's not going to the fire companies, Port Norris, Laurel Lake. Them and the rescue squads are still going to these places. The other thing is I was looking at the anticipated revenues and your rental registrations 2023 you were estimating you were going to take in 60000 dollars, 2024 you lowered it to 57000 dollars with rentals.

Clint Miller- A lot of it was due to COVID. We had a lot of severe houses that were just abandoned now.

Tom Seeley- Are you talking about registered properties? They shouldn't be registered unless they pay.

Barney Hollinger- They are not registered. You dropped your anticipated income by 3000.00.

Tom Seeley- So we are not enforcing.

Clint Miller- Well, that's the other thing, it's I don't mean to step in here Deputy Mayor. We don't have the employees we used to have. When Dave was here, he was extremely familiar with all the people. He knew who the rentals were, and we haven't had that in a long time. That is the number one problem, and we don't have the staff to do that.

Tom Seeley- You got to send someone out and knock on doors.

Committeeman Vizzard- Do you think they over estimated last year?

Barney Hollinger- It went down from 2023 to \$60,000.00; it went to \$57,050.00. So, in 2024 they estimated they took the 50 dollars off the 57. So that tells me they are not going to look for these or somebody dropped out. The only way to find out is to go see what your numbers are. There used to be 1000 rentals in this town, and there is more now than ever. I can tell you where two of them are now.

Tom Seeley- To me it's a pandemic problem around everywhere you go. People are just ignoring the Cos and what hurts them is when someone is trying to evict, the courts won't allow you to evict someone unless you have a CO or rental registration.

Barney Hollinger- That's the other problem, there are a lot of homes without CO's.

Committeeman Vizzard- I will tell you too that I did sit with pam to go over the budget and what we are going to put in the budget. She is a big one for not overestimating. She didn't want to overestimate and not have the true income coming in. I'm sure it's not any other reason other than that.

Barney Hollinger- Yeah but if you had \$60,000.00 in 2023, then anticipated less. Wouldn't you anticipate \$60,000.00 I you had \$60,000.00 the year before.

Clint Miller- She probably did that because the numbers weren't what they were reflecting.

Barney Hollinger- Especially with CO's. You just have to go back to the tax assessor and get all the sales to see who is where.

Tom Seeley- There are a lot of people who walked away from, and then people are still living in them. They aren't even paying any rent. They are squatting.

Clint Miller- People get a place, and don't even register it as a rental.

Tom Seeley- They are waiting to get foreclosed on but still collecting rent. They are saying "Yup go ahead foreclose on me, I'll collect rent for the next three years."

Committeeman Vizzard- I'll ask the housing department tomorrow what the rental numbers are now and see if it is going to fall based on that.

Barney Hollinger- There was a form on the website for vacant properties for the Township, and you can charge.

Tom Seeley- We have charged vacant properties.

Heather Miller- We do collect from banks, not individuals. Banks that have taken over a vacant property.

Barney Hollinger- Why not individuals?

Tom Seeley- It is illegal to do that and post it as a lien on the property.

Barney Hollinger- They are required to pay a fee if it's vacant. You don't have to put a lien on it.

Tom Seeley- You have to understand when you send it to an individual who abandoned a property they aren't going to care about a fee.

Barney Hollinger- There are a lot of properties abandoned and not trying to get rid of.

Tom Seeley- Yeah, I understand what you're saying but there are also a lot of properties where people abandon them and they aren't even paying the taxes, they are just collecting rent and hoping nobody forecloses on them.

Committeeman Vizzard- I also want to say that is possible something they are not even aware of it in the housing department.

Tom Seeley- It's a terrible problem in Laurel Lake. I see it in Bridgeton all the time. Laurel Lake makes Bridgeton look ya know. It really is a shame.

Barney Hollinger- There are quite a few houses that are vacant, but their taxes are being paid but they are falling apart. It is a revenue source. They had 4 ½ cent tax increase. You need to find revenue sources in order to bring those taxes down. I'm sorry to say that but through the houses through the township. You have to go out and find them. A lot of them you find in tax office. You just have to get a list of things and I'm just saying.

Tom Seeley- Its tough to actually serve the person. You don't even know who is living in the house.

Barney Hollinger- You don't need too, the tax office does.

Tom Seeley- No you don't. Not if they are renting it out.

Barney Hollinger- Right here on North Avenue I seen someone moved in and they are working with forklifts.

Debbie Hollinger- It's the house with the church with the building home. They just fixed it up, they are doing forklift repairs there.

Tom Seeley- Good luck with Laurel Lake. I don't know how that is going to get cleaned up and I don't mean to be negative.

Debbie Hollinger- It upsets you when you have to pay permits for everything you do and these people just skate around.

Tom Seeley- You're right, but do we have the manpower for that? How many people do we have in the housing office?

Clint Miller- If you know where these places are then stop in or call Bill.

Debbie Hollinger- We have. Yeah, and here's another thing, why is his wife driving him around? Isn't that a liability to the Township for his wife to be driving him around to do his work?

Clint Miller- He has health issues, and we don't have a vehicle for him.

Debbie Hollinger- I see him driving his own truck, but what if she falls while driving around? It's a liability issue.

Tom Seeley- This is the first I've heard of this, so if you are bringing this up as a liability issue.

Clint Miller- She does drive him around once in a while in his truck. I haven't seen her in a few weeks.

Debbie Hollinger- Every day.

Barney Hollinger- Last week she was here.

Tom Seeley- It should be addressed though. I agree with you on that.

Debbie Hollinger- You don't want another Steve issue, tripping over your own shoes.

Committeeman Vizzard- Would a waiver suffice?

Tom Seeley- Yeah, I mean if he wants to decide that she wants to drive he can sign a waiver to hold the Township harmless. If that is what it requires then let's do that. Good point.

Clint Miller- Joe did a great job tonight being Mayor! He looked good sitting there!

Tom Seeley- Yes you handled it very well!

Deputy Mayor Klaudi- Thank you!

Deputy Mayor Klaudi asked for a motion to close to the public.
Committeeman Vizzard made a motion and Deputy Mayor Klaudi seconded.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabrielle Horseman, Deputy Clerk