

August 25, 2009 CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM

MEETING CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Wolk called the meeting to order at 3:07pm.

SALUTE TO FLAG:

All present pledged their allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

ABSENT

Commissioner Gilmore	___x___	_____
Commissioner Greenwald	___x___	_____
Mayor Wolk	___x___	_____

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Borough Solicitor – Joe Marrazzo
Borough Engineers – Joe Federici & Doug Akin
Rich Schwab—Borough Consultant
PW Supervisor – Ken Jones
Sewer Operator—John Wenner
Zoning Officer—Chris Fitzgerald
Police Chief – Ed Dobleman
Marie Darlington –Tax Collector/Deputy Clerk

“OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW” ANNOUNCEMENT:

Mayor Wolk announced this Meeting has been advertised and notices posted in accordance with the “Open Public Meetings Act.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS:

Administration & Finance—the Clerk reported the following items:

●**Status of dog licenses/dog census**—the list of those to get a summons has been prepared and will be sent over to court. Each have received multiple

mailings and Mickey has also followed up with phone calls. We have 14 residents who will be getting a summons for failure to license their dogs.

●**Discuss status of proposed sale of 324 Davis Ave**

Joe Marrazzo will contact Rizzo and Valenti to find out status of items needed before closing can be scheduled. Terry will send Joe a copy of the purchase agreement.

●**Discuss enforcement of non-renewed mercantile licenses**-this issue remains unresolved. The ordinance separating this licensing from the landlord's tax status has been introduced and is scheduled to be adopted at the Sept. 3 meeting. However, the following mercantile licenses remain un-issued and these businesses are operating in violation of our ordinance:

Sozzi & Spread Eagle (delinquent property taxes)

Mt. Ephraim Dodge has not been renewed because of outstanding zoning issues. Joe Federici added that they did address the lighting problem on 2nd Avenue but they still need to address the lighting problem on 3rd and Black Horse Pike. His office will follow-up on this issue.

●**Sustainable Jersey Program grant**

An article will be submitted to the newsletter asking for volunteers to join a Green Team. Councilman Greenwald will be the liaison.

Police—Chief Dobleman reported on the following items:

●**Door-to-door Solicitation Ordinance**

No action has been taken on this as of yet. The current ordinance language is very old and out-of-date. Terry and Richard will review language from other municipalities and work on re-writing the whole chapter to make it more current.

●**Amendment to Chapter 94 of the Borough Code**

Ed has been working on the language for the traffic ordinance. He obtained sample language from the DOT. After the language is complete, it will need to be reviewed by the County and the DOT.

●**Parking situation at Centre and Station**

The Chief, Captain and Commissioner Gilmore met out there to review the parking situation. They believe they have come up with the best scenario. The changes to the parking ordinance will need to be prepared as an ordinance amendment for introduction. They will then meet with the parents and the school to go over the changes

●**Warranty issues on police vehicles**

Joe Marrazzo reached out to the solicitor representing Cherry Hill on this matter but has not heard back as of yet.

●**Discuss policy on sending flowers to current/former employees/officials and/or families**

The Clerk explained that we are really not supposed to use taxpayer funds for sending flowers, etc., however if it is kept reasonable, between \$50 and \$60, it would most likely not be a finding by the auditor. This should be limited to employees and immediate family members.

●**Camden County Bicycling & Multi-use Trails Master Plan**

Chief Dobleman attended the meeting held by the DVRPC to discuss the proposed bicycle plan but they do not have an actual plan yet. This was a brainstorming session to explain to the towns the plan to have a connecting bike trail. They will be studying and proposing a route for each town and then will submit the proposal to the town for their review and input.

Emergency Management:

●**Camden County 1st Responders Prophylaxis Plan**

Commissioner Gilmore reported that the police department completed their plan. The fire department started their plan but have not completed it yet. He will follow-up with the fire department and emergency management to see that they get their plans completed.

Fire Department—Rich Schwab reported on the following:

●**Bell Rd. Fire Station project status**

A meeting with the architect and the building committee was held on July 30 to review the project and the "de-scoping" proposals. A memo summarizing the discussion has been prepared and will be distributed. It was understood that we are hoping our application for Federal stimulus grant funds for \$1.5 million towards a \$3.25 million building, will be successful and allow the project to move forward in January. At the same time, in case the grant is not obtained, work will continue on "de-scoping". However, with word that the State will not provide funds for the drainage work and no word yet from the County, more ideas were shared to reduce the building's cost which may need to get nearer to \$2.2 million. Arrangements are being made for the architect and building committee reps to meet with at least one purveyor of steel buildings to answer, once and for all, whether that is a significantly less costly option. With respect to the lease, the committee of Comm. Gilmore, Consultant Schwab and Fire Dept. reps Rich Holmes and Keith Kalbach, has met and will issue a memo on ideas for the next Caucus/workshop meeting. The lease and property transfer for this location doesn't need to be done for a couple more months.

●**Lambert Ave property transfer status and Removal of Architectural Barriers project status**

The lease agreement for Lambert is done and signed. The Solicitor has been asked to arrange the closing for transfer of the ownership of the property and not wait to do Bell Rd at the same time. Plans for the bathroom renovations are done and ready to be authorized for bidding at the Sept. 3 meeting. The bids are to be opened on Sept. 29 and if all is perfect, the award can be added to the Oct. 1 agenda. If time is needed to review the bids, we will ask the Commissioners to schedule a very brief special meeting for Oct. 13 (or other date around then) to take action on the project in order to move it along. The goal is to have the work

completed by the end of the year, before the Fire Dept has to move everything back there while Bell Rd is demolished.

Public Works, Planning and Zoning:

●Delinquent landlord registrations

Commissioner Greenwald reported that Ken Herman went to court but was informed by the Judge that he was not prepared. There is also apparently a notice issue. The responsibilities for notice and the files need to be resolved. Ken will be going to court again and will hopefully be more prepared.

●Property Maintenance/Zoning Officer situation

Terry and Ken Jones suggested that the position of zoning officer and property maintenance be switched. It makes more sense for Fitz to be property maintenance as they are here during the day and can immediately follow-up on any complaints. Also, as it is DPW who actually performs the property maintenance work, it makes sense for them to be responsible for the enforcement. It would be more efficient if Steve Beach was given zoning officer as it naturally fits with the construction office format. Commissioner Greenwald said this would be discussed further and he would schedule a meeting with those involved.

●Plan Review Process

Commissioner Greenwald suggested that when project plans are submitted to the Planning Board, that the plans be sent to DPW and police and fire for their review as well. We will require an approval letter from each to address any concerns they may have before plans are approved by the Board. We need to explain this to Tara so she can set up the necessary procedures.

Engineer—Joe Federici provided an update on the following projects and grants:

●Streetscape Phase II

His office is working on revisions so the project comes in at the funding amount.

●Status of Harding Ave. generator project

They were having problems with PSE&G to get the problems with the utility connections resolved. Mayor Wolk indicated he would contact the new government representative to see if he could help.

●Status of Kingsway Station construction

The lot for the clock needs to be transferred to the Borough.

●Update on Cedar Avenue project

Base coat has been paved. The contractor wanted to put the top coat down the day after the base coat but the engineer stopped them. It is too hot and the base coat needs to set up. A door-to-door letter will go to the residents before the final paving is done. The engineer agreed to cover half of the contract penalty.

●**Tax Map revisions**

They have been working on the tax map revisions but they did not have all the deeds. A meeting will be scheduled with the assessor to review the information they need to complete the revisions.

Solicitor—Joe Marrazzo reported on the following:

●**Status of dealing with remaining outstanding water bills from out of town properties**—he is waiting for a trial date.

●**Update on ownership of Lumberyard lots**—this is still being investigated.

●**Update on public intoxication ordinance class action (see letter)**

All discovery has been provided.

●**Question from the Partnership for a Drug-free NJ on whether Mt. Ephraim has adopted P.L. Chap. 33 regarding possession of alcohol on private property by minors**

This issue came up before and the Borough elected not to adopt such an ordinance. Joe will get more information from Eric Riso and will provide same to the Governing Body.

COMMENTS BY OFFICIALS:

Mayor Wolk reported on the following:

●He received a call from Pennaro, the realtor who represents the prospective buyer, regarding 710 BHP and the price is now 1.29 million. They offered \$800,000 but there is a question as to the value of the “cabaret license”. The seller thinks the “cabaret license” is worth \$150,000. Would the Borough be interested in purchasing the license and pocketing it? The Clerk explained that there is no such license but that she would research.

●The Mayor received a call from Robert Webb, the holder of the lease agreement with Clear Channel for the billboard at the senior center. Clear Channel stopped paying him as there is a question as to ownership. We own the property but the lease agreement was already in place so Clear Channel should continue paying Mr. Webb. The current lease expires in 2013. Joe Marrazzo will follow-up with Mr. Webb.

●Mayor Wolk said he received an e-mail from Vic Victorino at Birdsall who said he was waiting to hear from us regarding an energy audit. Rich Schwab said he would follow-up.

●He has received a complaint about the bamboo growing at Kings Highway and Roosevelt. Mr. Vanderslice owns the bamboo and the neighbor claims it is encroaching on his property. Steve Beach is investigating.

●Karen Herman is taking a group of seniors over to the County’s Senior Health Day.

Motion to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel matter

On a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the caucus meeting was adjourned for a closed session at 5:10 pm.**

On a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the public meeting was re-opened at 5:35.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenwald and seconded by Commissioner Gilmore to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Shannon
Municipal Clerk

**The minutes of the closed session will be released when it is determined that the matter is no longer sensitive.