

September 22, 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—Terry reported on the following:

Status of dog licenses/dog census

Summonses have been issued and court date is set for the 23rd. Terry will be attending for the Borough, if required.

Status of proposed sale of 324 Davis Ave

Steve Rizzo has ordered title report and as soon as he has all the required documents, closing will be scheduled.

Enforcement of non-renewed mercantile licenses—this issue remains unresolved and is a high priority for discussion and resolution

Need an update as to status of Mt. Ephraim Dodge. Joe Federici reported that he did receive a letter from the engineer for Mt. Ephraim Dodge stating that they were testing the lighting and will report their findings. Joe added that he would follow-up on this issue to make sure it gets resolved.

- Sozzi Upholstery—this property appears to be out of business.
- Spread Eagle—taxes still delinquent. Scheduled to go to tax sale on October 1 for 2008 taxes. Commissioner Gilmore added that they were waiting on loan proceeds to bring their taxes current.

Resolution authorizing ARRA agreement/bid award

The bid opening for the Streetscape Phase II Project has been changed to October 14 at 11am. We will need to hold a special meeting to award this contract and possibly the Lambert Avenue project as well. We need to sign the Federal Aid agreement ASAP and get it back to the DOT. The resolution authorizing execution of the agreement will be on the general meeting agenda.

DOT Letter regarding grant application

We received a letter that the application for Streetscape Improvements, Phase III, from the Transportation Enhancement Program was denied.

Resident issue regarding bamboo on Kings Highway

The problem between the two residents on Kings Highway stemming from the bamboo growing over the homeowner's property line has escalated. One of the residents came in and Marie spoke to him at length. She explained that he is entitled to cut anything that has crossed his property line but that this is a civil matter between the residents themselves and the Borough cannot intervene. The resident may be present at the caucus or the commission meeting to vent his feelings.

Change of vendor for phone service

An analysis of the current charges for phone service revealed we were receiving invoices from three different vendors; Line Systems, Verizon and MCI. In an effort to streamline the billing for phone service and to save the Borough money, we obtained a proposal from Magellan Hill who is a phone vendor that provides one-stop shopping. A copy of their analysis attached. If we switch the phone service to Magellan Hill, not only will we receive only one invoice per month but we will also save about \$100 per month. If approved, we can authorize the change by resolution at the October 1 meeting. Mayor and Council approved the resolution to be on the agenda.

Police—Chief Dobleman reported on the following:

Door-to-door Solicitation Ordinance

Terry and Rich are working on new language. We hope to have language ready for introduction in November-December.

Warranty issues on police vehicles

Joe Marrazzo reported that he still has not heard back from Cherry Hill about their claims. He will follow-up.

Chapter 94—Traffic ordinance

Chief Dobleman spoke to DOT about Chapter 94 and they verified that we can go ahead and adopt any changes that do not impact state or county roads. Do we want to split the chapter into two ordinances so we can move forward with the changes to the local roads? It was determined that we would introduce the whole chapter but would only enforce the portion pertaining to local roads for now. Once the DOT has approved their portion, we will begin enforcement of the entire ordinance. The old ordinance would remain on the books until the DOT portion is approved. Introduction scheduled for November.

October 17 is South Jersey Thrill Show

Proceeds go to families of fallen police, fire and EMS personnel

Resident concerns from website

Chief Dobleman discussed resident concerns he received via website pertaining to sex offenders living at the Budget Inn. He stated that anyone living there would have to register with the Borough and he would follow-up to verify that this is being done.

Executive Session to discuss personnel matter

Chief Dobleman has requested an executive session at end of meeting to discuss personnel matter/litigation

Emergency Management:

Camden County 1st Responders Prophylaxis Plan

Camden County has been contacting us looking for the First Responder Information Forms. Commissioner Gilmore reported that the police department and emergency management are done. He will follow-up with the fire department.

Fire—Rich Schwab reported on the following:

Bell Rd. Fire Station project status

The architect reported that he met with vendors of steel buildings to answer, once and for all, whether that is a significantly less costly option. His conclusion remains the same, that there is little if any savings there. He just submitted his latest design proposal, reducing the size by 2600 s.f. Along with all the other de-scoping proposals brings the construction

budget down to \$2.35 million using standard cost estimating. He points out that recent bidding has shown the possibility of getting prices between 10 and 20 percent lower than the standard cost estimates. This would bring the potential low bid to between \$1.88 and \$2.15 million. We will set up a follow up meeting between the architect and the building committee as soon as possible. In the meantime, more grant support letters are going out to the Washington grant office. We are still hopeful for Federal funding to do the better project and should wait to hear about the grant before going forward.

Also, Kenny Jones is working with our engineers and the County on a lower cost solution to the drainage problem. At the same time, our engineer should be re-submitting the State DOT grant application for grant funding for 50% of the cost of the drainage work. Mayor Wolk is dealing with the County Freeholders on their share of the funds (25%).

A proposal has been received from TTI Environment to inspect and report on asbestos and other hazardous items in both the Fire Station and 205 James St. We need to know about this prior to demolition. If all is clear in the house, it is recommended that we proceed with demolition on its own. We have multiple quotes already with the low quote at \$11,500.

We should also discuss the outline of the proposed lease which the committee provided. If the Commissioners are supportive of the concepts in the proposal, the final details can be worked out. 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

Now that we officially own the building, bids are out for the bathroom renovations. Fifteen contractors had picked up the bid package from the architect as of last Tuesday and seven were at the voluntary pre-bid meeting. Arrangements have been made to provide access to others who want to inspect the project area. Bids will be opened on Tues., Sept. 29 at 11 am. That gives us a couple days for review before your Oct. 1 meeting. If the low bid is within the \$72,000 CDBG budget and meets all the criteria, the architect will recommend an award at that meeting. If more time is needed to review the bids, we will ask the Commissioners to schedule a very brief special meeting for later in the month to take action on the project (action on the Streetscape project bid could be done at the same time). 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

Joe Marrazzo reported that he spoke with the prosecutor and we need to make sure our paperwork is in order before going to court. Need proof pertaining to letters that went to property owners and that they must be addressed to the individual owners. Once our paperwork is in order, we can go to court successfully.

Property Maintenance/Zoning Officer situation

Commissioner Greenwald reported that he is still looking into this situation and will report future progress.

Review of Loss Control Report and plan for completion

The loss control report was reviewed and Ken reported that most outstanding items have been resolved. He will follow-up on any that are still open.

Work being done without permits

Marie brought up that it seems there has been an increase in renovation activity around town based on her observations. She added that in prior years, when the police were on patrol, if they saw someone doing work without a permit posted, they would provide the address so the construction office could verify that permits were obtained. Some time ago that practice stopped. Would it be a good idea to ask the police to resume that practice or, if not, can you think of another way we can capture this information so work is not done without permits? Perhaps this could be a discussion item for tomorrow? Obviously it would ensure that any work a homeowner is getting done is to code for safety reasons as well as enabling us to capture any increases in assessed values for tax purposes. Chief Dobleman said he would communicate with his officers and ask that they help with this. They will report anything they see to Joann who will forward to Tara.

Replacement of air conditioning unit in police department

Ken explained that the unit needs to be replaced. Proposal from Audubon Cesco is attached. Ken and Dean found funds in capital for this project.

Purchase of used lift (see attached)

Quotes were obtained for the purchase of a 12,000 lb. lift. The low bidder was Brooks with a price of \$5600. Ken would like to go ahead and award the purchase to Brooks. Funds are available in the capital budget.

Camden County Snow Removal Agreement

We received the shared services agreement relative to snow removal services. Ken has it to review. If approved, resolution authorizing agreement will be on the agenda.

Engineer: Projects and Grants Updates

Update on stimulus funds projects—we are waiting to hear about the firehouse grant.

Status of Harding Ave. generator project—almost complete –just waiting for completion of punchlist items.

Status of Kingsway Station construction—nothing new to report.

Update on Cedar Avenue project—project is close to completion.

Solicitor:

Status of dealing with remaining outstanding water bills from out of town properties—at the last meeting, Joe was waiting for a trial date. Any update? Nothing new to report—still waiting for date.

Update on ownership of Lumberyard lots—nothing to report.

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. At the last meeting, Joe Marrazzo indicated he was going to discuss with Eric and would provide more information. He reported that it was up to the governing body as to if they want to enact this legislation. The governing body decided they did not want to take any action at this time.

Motion to go into executive session to discuss pending litigation:

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore to go into executive session at 5:05.

At 5:40, a motion was made by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, to go back into open session.

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 5:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Shannon
Municipal Clerk