DOWNE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 6, 2015
7:00 P.M.

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex on Monday, July 6, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Robert G. Campbell presided. Committee members present were Larry Jordan, Sr., Stephen Byrne, Dennis Cook (Deputy Mayor) and Edward Bart. Municipal Solicitor, John Carr, was also present.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / STATEMENT REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order; led the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

ROLL CALL

Present – Jordan, Byrne, Cook, Bart, Campbell
Absent – 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Cook and seconded by Bart to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2015 Regular Meeting.
Vote: All in favor

PUBLIC HEARING

- Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program
  Re: $200,000 Housing Rehabilitation Application

Mark Blauer, Consultant, stated that he has worked with Downe Township since 1999. He stated that a sign-in sheet was being passed around and he would appreciate everyone's cooperation because it proves helpful with the application. The Township has another opportunity to apply for funding to continue this worthwhile program. Last year $200,000 was applied for and $100,000 was received and the program is being administered now. He explained that this is a deferred loan program, it's not a grant program. Upon sale of the home the loan is repaid without interest. It has been a great program for Downe Township. It has helped a lot of people who have no other alternative to get the funding needed to rehabilitate their homes. He expects to have a waiting list as current funding is being used up. The point of tonight's hearing is to give folks an opportunity to ask questions or make comments.

David Pflueger, Money Island, asked if a batch plant could be considered. Mr. Blauer responded no as this loan goes to individuals. Septics are done on a case-by-case basis.

Pamela Tate, Money Island, asked if someone's income does not allow them to secure the required insurances could they be helped. Mr. Blauer responded no, the homeowner must have the required insurances.

Joseph Cerone, Dividing Creek, asked about taxes that are in arrears. Mr. Blauer responded that he is not aware of any policy on that. He is not conducting title searches on the homes. That would have to become standard policy. Remember that the point of the program is to help people…Are they a homeowner? Do they have a need? Can I help them? Do they have the necessary insurances? This is not a banking program.

Kary Wilson, Newport, asked if there are any restrictions from participation in the program by employees of the Township. Mr. Blauer responded that if there is a known conflict he would check with the State.

Joseph Cernone, Dividing Creek, asked about children, step-children of elected officials. Mr. Blauer stated that he does not know everyone's family tree. He also reminded folks that this is not a grant, it's a loan. What level of relationship would be improper? An employee does not have any influence over the program.

Mary Pflueger, Money Island, suggested that a simple solution would be to make such questions part of the/a questionnaire for disclosure purposes. Mr. Blauer stated this is getting ridiculous. At what level does he call it quits? Mrs. Phflueger commented that he is making light of it, but it's a means of disclosure. Mr. Bauer stated that he is not making light of it, it's out of bounds. Mayor Campbell assured folks that there is no influence by the Township Committee over this program; they don't know who applies or who gets approved. Mr. Blauer recited the application process. Are they eligible? None of the administrators no anyone here. Mr. Blauer went on to say that he works with many towns much bigger than Downe and he has never seen such a cauldron of worries. Mrs. Pfhlueger asked if it has to be a permanent home. Mr. Blauer responded that he has never worked on seasonal homes. He has done mobile homes on a case-by-case basis.

Carol Marshall, Fortescue, asked about the income limitation. Mr. Blauer responded that it varies by family size and estimated the limits for Cumberland County. He uses a Social Security Statement, not an Income Tax Return as some seniors do not file them.

Mr. Blauer summarized what the resolutions contained on the Agenda are about as pertains to the Housing Rehabilitation Grant Program.

MUNICIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Carr reported on the following topics: Correspondence and a Verizon conference call regarding the telecommunications issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON RESOLUTIONS

A motion was made by Cook and seconded by Byrne to open the meeting for comments on the following resolutions.
Vote: All in favor

R-73-2015	*To Amend Budget (2015)* [Held until August 3, 2015]
R-74-2015	*Adoption of 2015 Municipal Budget* [Held until August 3, 2015]
R-75-2015	*Authorizing The Payment Of Bills*
R-76-2015	*Authorizing The Submission Of A Small Cities Community Development Block Grant For Home Rehabilitation FY2016*
R-77-2015	*Authorizing The Adoption Of A State Model Citizen Participation Plan For State Of New Jersey, Department Of Community Affairs Small Cities Program*
R-78-2015	*Designating Fair Housing Officer Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program For Home Rehabilitation FY2016*
R-79-2015	*Approving Grant Management Plan For Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Housing Rehabilitation FY2016*
R-80-2015	*Adopting Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program Policies And Procedures Manual Small Cities Community Development Block Grant*
R-81-2015	*Authorizing The Entry Into An Agreement For Professional Services With Mark Blauer, An Individual, Trading As Blauer Associates As Consultant For The FY2016 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program For Home Rehabilitation*

Joseph Cerone, Dividing Creek, noticed yet another mileage reimbursement for Robert Campbell in the amount of $440.00. He doesn't understand. He asked the Mayor if he realized that this type of reimbursement is income. He stated that the Mayor is paying himself to drive from home to the Township building.

Bernie Sayers, Newport, questioned why the Mayor doesn't recuse himself from voting to approve the Bill List like other members do when they have a bill on the list. Solicitor Carr agreed that it could be considered a conflict; it's a valid point.

Joseph Cerone, Dividing Creek, asked about the bill to Christine Byrne for $100. Who and what is it for? Committeeman Jordan responded that the Committee can't comment on something that is not before them; Mr. Cerone was referring to the May Bill List, not July. Committeeman Byrne stated that she was his wife, but he did not recall that she was paid for anything. Mayor Campbell informed him that he could obtain a copy of the bill if requested. Mr. Cerone stated that he did not appreciate the Mayor saying that he was being confrontational. Committeeman Jordan asked Mr. Cerone to please not come in here every month and do this; the Township Committee has a job to do. Mr. Cerone said he is an American citizen and has every right to be here; is this Cuba?

A motion was then made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to close the segment.
Vote: All in favor

RESOLUTIONS

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-75-2015 *Authorizing The Payment Of Bills.*
Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Byrne, Bart,
Nay – Cook
Abstain – Campbell

A motion was made by Cook and seconded by Jordan to adopt the aforementioned Resolution Nos. R-76-2015, R-77-2015, R-78-2015, R-79-2015, R-80-2015 and R-81-2015 via consent agenda.
Vote: All in favor

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Campbell had no report.

Deputy Mayor Cook was asked to report on Solar Lighting at Gandy's Beach which will be the purpose of a Work Session. He thanked Engineer Battistini who submitted a list of about 31 different items he reported on which will also be a subject of a Work Session. He reported that two meetings are being held Wednesday afternoon, July 8, 2015; one from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. concerning flood insurance appeals and the other at 6:00 p.m. with Money Island residents to discuss island issues. Mark Blauer offered that the USDA is a good source for that type of plant for multiple properties. Mayor Campbell stated that he just learned that they will fund up to 75%.

Committeeman Bart had no report.

Committeeman Jordan had no report.

Committeeman Byrne had no report.

RESOLUTION

A motion was made by Cook and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-82-2015 *Awarding The Money Island Bulkhead Replacement Project Pursuant To N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.1.*
Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bryrne, Cook, Bart, Campbell
Nay - 0

PUBLIC COMMENT

On a motion by Cook and seconded by Byrne, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.
Vote: All in favor

David Pflueger, Money Island, said that he has been in touch with the Zoning Officer about an enforcement issue and would like to know how long it is going to take to get something resolved. Mayor Campbell agreed that it is taking a long time. The matter involves litigation so it can only be talked about generally. The Mayor informed Mr. Phflueger that he will check on the status of the matter.

Mary Pflueger, Money Island, asked who enforces ordinances. Mayor Campbell responded the Zoning Officer, however, you can't make people homeless. The Township would be responsible to put them up somewhere for as long as it takes. You have to be careful about these issues. The County would have to do the same thing. Committeeman Jordan understands the frustration and agrees that there needs to be more consistent enforcement, but it costs money, more hours. Mr. Pflueger stated that everyone else pays taxes for those who do not. Mrs. Pflueger asked how long you can go without paying taxes before it's jumped on. She says jump hard, jump fast so someone doesn't get comfortable and think that nothing is going to be done. Mayor Campbell explained the timeline and said that the Township Committee is moving forward on the matter.

Bernie Sayers, Newport, asked for an explanation of moving forward. Solicitor Carr explained In Rem Foreclosures. Title searches are obtained on properties and an In Rem Foreclosure can expedite the process; people pay up or the Township acquires properties and then can make them available at a Land Sale; 21 properties are moving forward.

Jim Giles, Money Island, asked why the Township does not have a Property Maintenance Ordinance to take care of some of the problems; some people just don't care and he's sick and tired of it. Solicitor Carr informed the Township Committee that it is a State Statute and they have a Property Maintenance Ordinance that could be implemented.

Bernie Sayers, Newport, reported that there are two trees at the Convenience Center that are about to fall over and because of where one tree is it's going to take out the transformer which will prohibit us from processing trash. Committeeman Bart will see that the concern is addressed by the Public Works Manager and Mr. Sayers was thanked for bringing it to the Township Committee's attention. It will be taken care of.

Karen Smith, Raybin's Beach, suggested that someone contact Bert Lopez, Atlantic Electric, regarding the tree being too close to the primary. Why pay for something that the electric company may take down. In keeping with Mr. Giles being sick and tired she explained her frustration with some people who do not live in community and visit the beaches. She said that there was 50 - 60 people there over the weekend, all day with their dogs from out-of-state to fish, cook, eat and crap on the beaches, and then they leave. Then, the taxpayers show up in what looked like a calvary of golf carts to clean up the area for about a half hour. We pay for them to play for the day. There is no one to go down there to enforce anything. She went out twice, once to speak to them about throwing rip rap over the wall into the creek. Enforcement could make in one weekend what it would cost to cover his/her salary.

Jim Giles, Fortescue, added plus they're tramping down the dunes that were just put in. Damage is not caused from the tides, it's from people.

Mayor Campbell stated that it's hard to manage. Solicitor Carr suggested Township Constables which were mentioned before. Deputy Mayor Cook stated that other municipalities do not put up with it. He mentioned about the dike in Dividing Creek that takes Public Works personnel hours to clean up and this is on Fish and Game property. We need some action down there; he's fed up with it. We have to come up with plan. Whether it be a Constable or the State Police in a cruiser, it's really not that hard.

Karen Smith, Raybin's Beach, said it's a quality of life issue and provided numerous examples of what goes on, leaving a mess in our wake.

Bill Scherzer, Fortescue, thinks that the lack of enforcement is a problem and it's becoming a more popular area because of that. It's getting worse and is pretty rough down at the beach with fights and music and every summer is worse. He realizes that you have to be careful what you ask for and feels that getting someone local in the summer, seasonally; to enforce the regulations is best.

Deputy Mayor Cook stated that there are fishermen that have been coming here for many years that are not a problem, but there is a new crowd coming in. There is no respect for residents or authority and there is a drug problem in Downe Township that scares him.

Committeeman Bart commented that there will not be selective enforcement if the NJ State Police are called in.

Perry Ashman, Gandy's Beach, former NJSP 30 years, suggested that the elected officials meet with the Station Commander at Port Norris to resolve or do something about the problem. He designates where the troopers are going. Mayor Campbell agreed that was a good idea.

Dave Sadusky, Fortescue, asked if there was any update on a sewer system. Mayor Campbell responded that he attended a meeting at the County a couple weeks ago and a package plan was proposed for all five villages. The whole thing is in process and is being worked on as we speak. We don't know how fast it will happen. A preliminary feasibility study will be done. There will be meetings about it. Mr. Sadusky thinks it would raise property values if sewer and water comes in. Mayor Campbell agreed.

There being no further comments, the public segment was closed on a motion by Cook and seconded by Jordan.
Vote: All in favor

Mayor Campbell said that he received a letter from Edmund Reed expressing an interest in purchasing an adjacent landlocked parcel. With the Committee's consensus, he requested that Solicitor Carr prepare the necessary Ordinance for a Land Sale so that the matter could be further considered at an upcoming meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be held on Monday, August 3, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Cook and seconded by Jordan.
Vote: All in favor

Constance S. Garton
Municipal Clerk