

DOWNE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
September 12, 2016

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex on Monday, September 12, 2016 at 7:00p.m. Mayor Robert G. Campbell presided. Committee members present were Larry Jordan, Sr. (Deputy Mayor), Stephen Byrne, Dennis Cook 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, Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Cook

Absent – 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

May 2, 2016 - Executive Session

June 6, 2016 - Regular Meeting

June 6, 2016 - Executive Session

July 11, 2016 - Executive Session

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to approve the minutes as listed above

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell  
Nay – 0 Abstain - Cook

Vote: The minutes were approved

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Campbell read the CFO and Tax Collector Reports. The Township Committee acknowledged the receipt of the following reports:

- Chief Finance Officer June 2016 & July 2016
- Tax Collector July 2016
- Housing/Zoning Report August 2016

PRESENTATION – BOB CONNORS – MINTS INSURANCE AGENCY

Deputy Mayor Jordan introduced Mr. Connors who is in attendance to give a quick overview of the Township's current insurance program and offer a recommendation to moving forward in 2017. Mr. Connors compared our current policy to options available. He commented that the current policy contains good coverage and pointed out some issues with changing. One issue being the Township would not be able to obtain insurance coverage for a three year period like we currently have with the JIF. Other policies will be for one year only and there is a

possibility that each year the coverage premium could increase. From the estimates he received there is no dramatic increase or decrease in pricing. The Committee thanked Mr. Conner for his presentation.

Mr. Cook asked if a traditional insurance company can drop our coverage after one year. Mr. Connors answered yes it can be done. If you have an atrocious year of losses and an attitude of uncaring to correct the issues these insurance company will issue a notice of non-renewal or penalize you.

Mayor Campbell stated even with the massive loss we experienced with Hurricane Sandy there was no fluctuation in the premiums for the JIF.

Bernie Sayers commented he does not understand why Mr. Connors is making this presentation. Mayor Campbell stated the Committee is trying to learn about insurance options besides the JIF.

Mr. Jordan stated the Township is looking at a deadline for the renewal of the current insurance carrier and the Committee was interested to see what was out there to help us make our decision to stay with the JIF or find a new carrier.

#### MUNICIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Carr presented his report which consisted of information and updates on the Township's recent land sale, possible executive session topics of discussion being potential contract negotiations.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS ON RESOLUTIONS

A motion was made by Cook and seconded by Jordan to open the meeting for public comment on the following resolutions.

Vote: All in favor

- R-95-2016 *Accepting Sale Contract Entered Into Between the Buyer and Township Regarding Public Sale of Land Known as Block 23, Lot 93*
- R-97-2016 *Accepting Sale Contract Entered Into Between the Buyer and Township Regarding Public Sale of Land Known as Block 9, Lot 11*
- R-99-2016 *Appointing Brian Rosenberger as Tax Assessor - **CORRECTED***
- R-100-2016 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills*
- R-101-2016 *Authorizing the Cancellation of Property Taxes for Property Acquired by the State of New Jersey*
- R-102-2016 *Authorizing the Refund of Property Taxes*
- R-103-2016 *Authorizing the Execution of a Contract Renewing Membership in the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund - **TABLED***
- R-104-2016 *Accepting a Grant for Property Known as Block 53 Lot 22*
- R-105-2016 *Authorizing Executive Session*

Karen Smith of Raybins Beach asked where the property is located that is referenced in R-104-2016. Mayor Campbell answered this is a piece of property he owns and it is located on Turkey Point Road. He stopped paying taxes on the property because it is underwater and the

assessment was very high for a piece such as this. He communicated with Mr. Carr to find a way to give the lot back to the town to be sold and put back on the tax roles.

Joe Cerone of Dividing Creek asked if the back taxes will be paid to the Township or does the Township lose that money. Mayor Campbell answered yes.

Bernie Sayers of Sharp Lane asked for a list of topics to be discussed during executive session. Mr. Carr answered township insurance options and a couple of litigation issues (Comcast and Blue Acres), and discussion about potential litigation in regard to PILOT funding, property tax foreclosures. Discussion continued among the committee and Mr. Sayers on the insurance presentation held earlier in the meeting.

There being no further comments from the public, a motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Bart to close the segment.

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell  
Nay – Cook

#### RESOLUTIONS

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-95-2016.

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Cook  
Nay – 0

Vote: The resolution was approved.

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-97-2016.

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Cook  
Nay – 0

Vote: The resolution was approved.

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-99-2016.

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Byrne, Bart, Campbell  
Nay – 0  
Abstain - Cook

Vote: The resolution was approved.

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-100-2016  
*Authorizing the Payment of Bills in the amount of \$185,713.27.*

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Byrne, Bart, Campbell  
Nay – Cook

Vote: The resolution was approved.

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-101-2016.

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell  
Nay – Cook

Vote: The resolution was approved

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-102-2016.

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell  
Nay – Cook

Vote: The resolution was approved

Resolution R-103-2016 was tabled

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-104-2016.

Mr. Cook asked how much in back taxes is the Township owed. Mayor Campbell answered approximately \$20,000.

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bart, Byrne  
Nay – Cook  
Abstain - Campbell

Vote: The resolution was approved

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-105-2016.

Roll Call: Aye – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell  
Nay – Cook

Vote: The resolution was approved

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Campbell reported we receive correspondence weekly about property being purchased in Money Island by the Blue Acres Buyout. It looks like everyone in Money Island has given up and is selling out. We received notice today that Mr. Cook has put in an application to sell also. There have been some repairs done on the Money Island Road where it was caving in. We worked with the County on the repair. The USDA has approved another \$30,000 Planning Grant for the Fortescue Wastewater Treatment System. In theory, the County has agreed to do the batch plants and not to go with their \$35M sewer main extension. We are waiting for the conceptual design plans from Mott MacDonald. The county has agreed to sign on as a co-sponsor on this project. The more grant money we receive the less cost to the end user. We are looking at funding from US Army Corp, the EDA, the DEP and the NJEIT. We received correspondence from NJDEP referencing a meeting of all of the agencies involved with the Wastewater Treatment System.

Committeeman Cook stated he doesn't believe the residents of this Township believe the residents of Money Island have abandoned it. This will be the legacy of this committee and it will impact on sustainability issues going forward. Mr. Cook thanked Mr. Doug Cook for

making an excellent presentation in front of the NJ Public Board of Utilities Committee Meeting on the Verizon issues. The input of all residents is still needed and gives support to the issues we are meeting about. Mr. Cook thanked the residents involved in the police investigation and arrest involving a theft ring in Downe Township.

Committeeman Bart had nothing to report.

Committeeman Jordan had nothing to report.

Committeeman Byrne had nothing to report

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

On a motion by Cook and seconded by Byrne, the meeting was opened to the public for comments.

Vote: All in favor

Joe Cerone asked Mr. Carr if there is a conflict of interest due to the property being owned by the Mayor that is back in taxes. Why doesn't the Mayor satisfy the tax debt on the property then turn it over to the Township. Mayor Campbell stated the Township should have foreclosed on this property 20 years ago. Mr. Cerone continued this is a very unprofessional group of elected officials who clearly doesn't know how to treat the taxpayers in this community.

Bernie Sayers of Sharp Lane asked for the amount of tax lost in the Money Island buyout that is currently happening. Mayor Campbell answered if Blue Acres takes all 58 properties they have listed it will probably be between \$8M-\$10M. Despite what Mr. Cook has said, the Township does not want to lose Money Island. Between 2010 and 2016 the Township has lost \$13M in ratables which amounts to 14% of our tax base. Mayor Campbell stated there is a newly organized tax exempt group called the Bayshore Council and one of their first missions is to go after the PILOT Funding issue. Van Drew has authored a bill to stop tax exemption at 30% after the 30% has been reached the sale of property will have to be approved by the Township Committee for tax exemption.

Mary Pflueger of Money Island stated to Mayor Campbell his statement that the Township should have foreclosed on that property some 25 year ago, we have the same situation on Money Island where there is a property that owes in excess of \$70,000. What keeps this current administration from doing what you just stated? Mr. Cook asked if we have foreclosed on any properties in the Township because we have been talking about it for about 7 months.

Karen Smith of Raybins Beach stated she has asked that the signage that is missing be replaced at the turnaround. The No fishing and crabbing sign also needs to be replaced. The turnaround area has become a parking lot. We have been talking a long time about someone being available as a Code Enforcement Officer. The signs are no good if we have no one to enforce them. We have no one in this community to enforce our ordinances. Mayor Campbell stated he has been down on the bridge and there were people crabbing there. We will work on correcting this issue.

Doug Cook of Fortescue asked what would be the consequences if the Township Committee voted no on Resolution R-101-2016. Mr. Carr answered you cannot tax the State of New Jersey. We have no choice in the matter.

On a motion by Cook and seconded by Bart, the meeting was closed to the public for comment.

Vote: All in favor

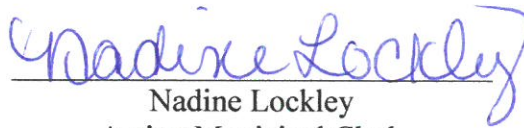
#### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be held on Monday, October 3, 2016 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 Jordan and seconded by Cook.

Vote: All in favor



Nadine Lockley  
Acting Municipal Clerk