

DOWNE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 13, 2021
at 7:00 P.M.

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Office on Monday, December 13, 2021 at 7:00p.m. Mayor Michael L. Rothman, presided. Deputy Mayor Edward Bart was absent. Committeeman Robert G. Campbell, Larry Jordan and Steve Byrne were in attendance. Municipal Solicitor Rebecca Bertram was also present.

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

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

ROLL CALL

Present – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan and Rothman
Absent - Bart

Mayor Rothman stated representatives from South Jersey Gas Company were scheduled to make a presentation tonight, but no one is present. We will reach out to South Jersey Gas Company and reschedule the presentation.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

October 11, 2021 Executive Session

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to approve the Executive Session Meeting minutes for October 11, 2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
 Nay – 0
 Absent - Bart
 Vote: All in favor

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Rothman read the Tax Collector Report for November 2021. The Chief Finance Officer Report for November 2021. The Zoning Office Report for November 2021 was read.

MUNICIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Bertram stated a written report was submitted to the committee. She asked if the committee has any question regarding her report. There were no comments from the committee.

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

Ordinance 2021-12 *An Ordinance Amending Ordinance #2020-4 Concerning the Acquisition of Block 13 Lot 10*

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to introduce Ordinance 2021-12.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
 Nay – 0
 Absent - Bart
 Vote: All in favor

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

Ordinance 2021-13 *An Ordinance Authorizing the Acquisition of Property Known as 266 Cove Road (Block 1 Lot 34) on the Tax Map of the Township of Downe*

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to introduce Ordinance 2021-13.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

ORDINANCE PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance 2021-11 *An Ordinance Authorizing the Acquisition of Property Known as 302 Cove Road (Block 1 Lot 51) on the Tax Map of the Township of Downe*

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to open the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2021-11.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

There being no comments from the public, a motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to close the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2021-11.

ORDINANCE FINAL ADOPTION

Ordinance 2021-11 *An Ordinance Authorizing the Acquisition of Property Known as 302 Cove Road (Block 1 Lot 51) on the Tax Map of the Township of Downe*

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Ordinance 2021-11.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

RESOLUTIONS

R-110-2021 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills*

R-111-2021 *Resolution Authorizing Execution of the Satisfaction and Discharge of a Small Cities Home Rehabilitation Program Mortgage for Resident/Taxpayer Steve Farkas and Jacqueline Farkas*

R-112-2021 *Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Property Taxes for Property Acquired by Downe Township*

R-113-2021 *Resolution Authorizing the Tax Collector to Cancel and Refund Property Taxes on Block 23 Lot 190 & 191 Due to a Tax Assessor Error*

R-114-2021 *Resolution Authorizing Transfers Between Budget Appropriations*

R-115-2021 *Authorizing Executive Session*

R-116-2021 *Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of 2021 Final and 2022 Preliminary Property Taxes for a 100% Disabled Veteran*

R-117-2021 *Resolution Providing for the Insertion of Items of Revenue in the Budget Pursuant to NJSA 40AL487 (Chapter 159, P.L. 1048) FEMA Flood Mitigation Grant \$25,000*

R-118-2021 *Resolution Providing for the Insertion of Items of Revenue in the Budget Pursuant to NJSA 40A:4-87 (Chapter 159, P.L. 1048) NJDOT \$85,400*

R-119-2021 *Resolution Providing for the Insertion of Items of Revenue in the Budget Pursuant to NJSA 40A:4-87 (Chapter 159, P.L. 1048) NJ Historic Trust Grant for \$29,000*

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-110-2021 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills* in the total amount of \$416,131.80.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-111-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-112-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-113-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-114-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-115-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-116-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-117-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-118-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-119-2021.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

PUBLIC COMMENT

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Jordan, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

A resident commented she has noticed the dredging equipment has arrived, is there any word on when the dredging will start. Mayor Rothman answered he will reach out to his contact tomorrow to inquire about the start date. We were previously told they would be starting around Christmas.

Meghan Wren of Fortescue gave a Green Team report. There was a walk this past weekend at Hansey Creek that went well. The next one is scheduled for February. The calendars are being done again this year and will be handed out at the convenience center and mailed to our out-of-town residents. The Sustainable Jersey grant we received was to be used at Raybin Beach, but that project didn't come to fruition. The grant funds will now be used in a project for signage and osprey nest platforms in Fortescue. We are looking at two locations. There were debris & keep our waterways clean posters done by our township students that will be placed throughout the township explaining why we do our beach clean ups. While we were doing our clean up on Maple Road, we collected a very large amount of fishing line, crabbing line and trash. We will be placing signage in at area to help in our cleanup efforts. Mr. Campbell asked where are the two locations for the osprey nest platforms? Mrs. Wren answered the planning and research for those location will get started in January. We have checked to see who owns the properties. We are looking for volunteers. Conversation continued on osprey nest building. Mrs. Wren commented some volunteers on the Green Team have previously built osprey nests. Mrs. Wren stated our Bronze Certification from Sustainable Jersey is coming due again. We are working with the program to get recertified and looking at our points to see if we can upgrade our certification. The Community Foundation of South Jersey gave us an opportunity to participate in an event that they paid the members. The participants donated the funds to the Green Team, so we have \$2500 coming in. We also had a generous resident make a donation of \$2000. The whole point of the Heart and Soul project is to get input from every resident of the township and come up with ideals for things that would make the town better. This resident interview process is currently underway. Mayor Rothman commented all the efforts of the Green Team are very much appreciated by the committee. Mrs. Wren thank all the Green Team members in attendance with a special thanks to Liz, Laurie & Maureen who go above and beyond. We have a great group of people on the Green Team.

Sean Pignatelli of Fortescue stated we have a severe issue with cats. Not sure if they are feral cats or pets. Can we implement an ordinance to treat cats like dogs? Have them registered and collared. Mr. Campbell commented we have had this problem for a long time in Gandy's Beach and Fortescue. Licensing cats is an impossible task. When animal control was contacted, they stated the township should look into a catch and release program because you don't know which cats are pets and which cats are feral. Mayor Rothman stated this is not just a Downe Township issues it is a problem throughout the county. There is a movement to try and get this under control, but it has been a rough road. Discussion continued and it was expressed that all residents should make sure their pet cat has a collar, so it is not mistaken for a feral cat. Mayor Rothman stated the biggest issue in Downe is cats or kittens get dumped here on these country roads, then our residents start feeding them. This is why animal control says if you feed the cat, it becomes your pet cat. Mayor Rothman stated we will continue to look into this issue.

There being no further comments, the public comment portion was closed on a motion by Jordan and seconded by Byrne.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Rothman stated we are in the holiday season. Enjoy your family and friends. It feels good to see the community coming together for different event. It's a sign of what this community is. Please practice safe habits with the spread of Covid happening. Happy Holidays to all.

Mr. Jordan stated he has been giving some thought about a few township foreclosures that need to happen and he is planning to put together some properties in the coming months.

Mr. Byrne reported this Saturday, December 18th at Union Hall the Bell Family will be performing. There are flyers on the table. The program starts at 7pm.

Mr. Campbell reported the sewer project is moving forward. We are getting close to having all the design specification completed and approved by the end of the month. We will be going out to bid hopefully in January and by April we should be moving dirt. We are also working on the landfill solar project. We received another bid and exceeded the previous bid. We will be moving forward with this project. We plan to reach out to South Jersey Gas to reschedule their presentation.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be the 2022 Reorganization Meeting which will be held on Monday, January 3, 2022 at 10am in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Byrne, the meeting was closed to the public and the Executive Session was opened with no action to be taken after Executive Session.

Topics under discussion during Executive Session: 1. Solar Project – Litigation, 2. Contracts/Real Estate – Eminent Domain/Fortescue Property, 3. Sewer Project County Invoicing - Litigation/Contracts.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Rothman, Jordan, and Campbell
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

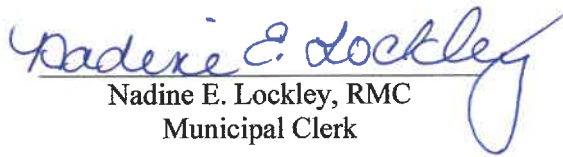
On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Byrne, the Executive Session portion was closed.

Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Rothman, Jordan, and Campbell
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart
Vote: All in favor

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Jordan and seconded by Campbell.

Vote: All in favor.


Nadine E. Lockley, RMC
Municipal Clerk