

DOWNE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2022
AT 7:00 P.M.

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Office on Monday, February 14, 2022 at 7:00p.m. Mayor Michael L. Rothman, presided. Deputy Mayor Edward Bart, Committeeman Robert Campbell Steve Byrne and Larry Jordan 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 – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Absent – 0

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

November 8, 2021	Regular Meeting
December 13, 2021	Regular Meeting
January 4, 2022	Reorganization Meeting

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Byrne the meeting minutes for November 8, 2021 Regular meeting, December 13, 2021 Regular Meeting and January 4, 2022 Reorganization Meeting were approved as presented.

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

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Rothman read the Tax Collector and Chief Finance Officer Reports. The Township Committee acknowledged the receipt of the following report:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| • Chief Finance Officer | January 2022 |
| • Tax Collector | January 2022 |
| • Zoning Office | January 2022 |

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

Ordinance 2022-2 *An Amendment to Ordinance 2019-9 Authorizing and Directing the Block 114 Lot 2 Owned by John Michael Carney Located Within the Township of Downe, County of Cumberland and State of New Jersey be Acquired by Eminent Domain or Purchase or Gift.*

Motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Jordan to introduce Ordinance 2022-2.
Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
 Nay – 0
 Vote: All in favor

ORDINANCE PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance 2022-1 *An Ordinance Establishing Salaries and Wages for the Officers and Employees of the Township of Downe for the Year 2022.*

Motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Bart to open the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2022-1.

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

There being no comments from the public, a motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to close the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2022-1

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

ORDINANCE FINAL ADOPTION

Ordinance 2022-1 *An Ordinance Establishing Salaries and Wages for the Officers and Employees of the Township of Downe for the Year 2022.*

Motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Bart to adopt Ordinance 2022-1.
Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

MUNICIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Bertram stated a report was prepared for the committee. The report references topics that should only be discussed in an Executive Session. Mrs. Bertram asked if the committee had any questions about the report. There were no questions from the committee.

RESOLUTIONS

R-37-2022 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills*
R-38-2022 *Resolution Rescinding Designation of Redeveloper*
R-39-2022 *Resolution Designating Redeveloper and Authorizing Execution of a Redevelopment Agreement with Respect to Property in the Township of Downe*
R-40-2022 *Municipal Alliance Strategic Plan with Lawrence Township*
R-41-2022 *Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Property Taxes for Property Acquired by Downe Township*
R-42-2022 *Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Outstanding Checks*
R-43-2022 *Resolution Authorizing the Establishment of a New Petty Cash Fund*
R-44-2022 *Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Tax Sale Certificate 22-00018*
R-45-2022 *Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Tax Sale Certificate 22-00024 - REMOVED*
R-46-2022 *Resolution Appointing Nadine E. Lockley Municipal Clerk for Downe Township*
R-47-2022 *Authorizing Executive Session*

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-37-2022 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills* in the total amount of \$591,490.39.

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

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-38-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-39-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-40-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-41-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-42-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-43-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-44-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

Resolution R-45-2021 was removed from the agenda

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-46-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-47-2022.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

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

Mayor Rothman stated he is sure everyone here is aware of the truck issue in Downe Township. There have been a lot of statements made and a number of conversations have taken place about the issue. We need something done to slow the trucks down and tarp the loads to help make it safe for everyone. We are here to listen to what you have to say. We will work to get answers to the questions. We have invited the State Police here tonight to listen to your concerns and report back to Lieutenant Blizzard and your concerns will be addressed.

Bill McPhillips of Fortescue asked for an explanation on the need to acquire the property listed in Ordinance 2022-2. Mr. Campbell explained there are three beach front lots at the south end of Fortescue that total approximately 2400 feet. The township needed permission from the property owners to access the properties to finish a boardwalk cap project. The township has tried to work with the property owner to obtain the property. The project will put a 10-foot-wide concrete cap on top the berm with railings. This structure will protect our sewer line and our town. This is a FEMA project has been in the works since Hurricane Sandy. The engineer design work has been completed and we are in the process of obtaining permits to finish the project. Discussion continued on the beach replenishment projects that are being done by other organizations.

Dan Jacobson of Dividing Creek asked what is the townships plan to make the truck traffic safe. Mayor Rothman stated we want to focus on getting their speeding down. Mr. Jacobson asked how are we going to slow them down. Mayor Rothman pointed at the State Police officer in attendance. Mr. Jacobson commented he also sees the State Police officers flying through the town also. The State Police are not seen sitting in town that often to curb the speeding. Mayor Rothman continued the reason the State Police are here is so they can hear what your residents are complaining about. We need to get the State Police more involved. We are contacting the sand plants to inform their drivers they need to slow down and tarp their vehicles. Downe Township has been in conversations with Commercial Township regarding the trucks running through our towns. We are working together with everyone involved to get these issues dealt with. The safety of our residents is our number one priority. Mr. Jacobson asked if it would be easier to find another route for the trucks. Mayor Rothman stated we have tried other routes and we still have the same problem.

Megan Jacobson of Dividing Creek stated the speed limit in Dividing Creek is 35mph. It is not just the trucks speeding there are a lot of residents who are speeding in town. Can we reduce the speed limit in town to 25mph? Mayor Rothman stated that would be done through the County. Route 553 is a county road. They will need to do a traffic study and the results would determine whether a slower speed would be approved. Mayor Rothman stated if the township asks for more police presence, everyone will be targeted not just the truck drivers. These issues will be addressed. Mr. Bart stated a traffic study will take some time to complete. It may be a while before the reduced speed is approved.

Joseph Cerone of Dividing Creek stated he is a business owner and he is not looking to hurt another business. These sand companies actually provide a lot of good jobs. One of these truck drivers ran a stop sign on Route 555 and almost hit me. You can not stop 80,000 pounds in a reasonable distance. These trucks are causing a bit of a problem with people coming in and out of his business establishment at the bridge. We all use Route 555 (Church Street) and over the years this has not been a real comfortable road to drive. Recently someone spent a lot of money on that road and repaved it and put in non-slip curb. That particular road is not designed for

80,000 lbs. vehicles. Mr. Cerone passed around some pictures of potholes and the beginning of the destruction of that road that was recently paved. The North Avenue route is a reasonable route. That road is better built and much heavier than some others and could handle the traffic and keep these trucks out of the center of town. This route is something we should look at. Mr. Cerone continued he has owned a house on Main Street for 15 years. In the last two years he has noticed a tremendous amount of dust in his home. The concrete used on his home was not really good. The shaking from the trucks that pass by his house are degrading his footings. This sand company is only running at a partial running point right. These trucks could double and triple in the next year. Mayor Rothman stated we will work with the sand company to assure our residents safety. Mr. Cerone stated we can as a community and with the Mayor and Committee pass a resolution that will go to the county and let the county make the decision to reroute these truck drivers. Mayor Rothman stated he and the committee will not entertain a resolution to move trucks from Route 553. Mr. Cerone stated the mayor and committee should consider lowering the speed limit. Mayor Rothman answered that is the direction the committee is taken, and we will let the authorities handle the rest. Mr. Cerone commented that has been done in Port Norris and they are still having a problem with speeding. Mayor Rothman stated he has made it very clear that Mayor Vizzard and he are very aware of the problem, and we are trying to correct it. You need to give us an opportunity to fix the issues.

Mr. VanCreef of Commercial Township stated both townships are experiencing the same issues. He lives on a very blinding bend and unfortunately the speed limit in that area is 45 mph. Just this past week as he was putting his 4-year-old on the bus and as the bus was preparing to leave, a dump truck doing 55 mph, the truck driver had to hit his brake real hard to slow the down and all you hear is his air brake squealing as he is coming around that bend. This is the third incident. Something must be done. Mayor Rothman stated there is dashboard camera videos that substantiates your statements. One of these times that school bus and the bus full of kids may not be so lucky. Mayor Rothman stated he is aware of the issues. We tried to get the County Public Works Supervisor to attend our meeting to hear these concerns, but as you can see, no one is here. As you may know a traffic study to reduce the speed limit will take time to complete. By the time they get the results, the projects that are being worked on right now will probably be completed.

Conversation continued about the difficult process of slowing down these trucks weighing 80,000 lbs. Mayor Rothman stated he is aware of the issues and is trying to come up with a solution. We need these trucks slowed down and the best way to do that is enforcement. They need to be stopped and ticketed. Mayor Rothman stated will make some calls tomorrow to suggest a better police presence on our roadways.

Edward Fox of Commercial Township stated thanked the mayor and committee for allowing him to attend our meeting. A change did take place with rerouting. At one point the shuttling was up North and that has changed. Mayor Rothman stated when the project started in Money Island there was no way to change the route. Mr. Fox commented he feels bad for some of the residents of Downe Township because this traffic was caused by other organization doing project in your township. Mayor Rothman stated a resolution to these issues is going to take some time. It is going to require action from both townships, the trucking companies, and the sand companies. Please give us an opportunity to do something. Discussion continued on the lack of support the residents feel they are receiving.

Liz Cowley of Fortescue stated this all ties in to conversations we were having about a year ago with traffic and speeding in Fortescue. At that time my concern was tickets were not being written and it is still not happening. Ms. Cowley asked the State Police officers to please correct

her if she is wrong, but she heard when our court moved out of Downe Township the officers had to go to Upper Deerfield in order to file the ticket and would have to appear in Upper Deerfield for the hearing, so they stopped writing a lot of tickets. The Officer responded if we issue a ticket, we do not have to deliver the ticket. Ms. Cowley replied this is the answer she was given when she asked an office about the number of tickets written in this township. Trooper McMenamen replied he has spent most of his career in this area. He is unsure where Mrs. Cowley has gotten her information from, but the location of a stop has never deterred him from issuing a ticket. Where the court is held has also never deterred him. He speaks for all of the troopers he works with, but the location of a stop would never prevent him from doing his job.

Jamie Warner of Dividing Creek asked if the County Sheriff's office has been involved at all. Mayor Rothman stated the County is aware of this situation.

Sean Pignatelli of Fortescue stated in the last two weeks we have been having people come to Fortescue drag racing. Mayor Rothman asked where this is taking place. Mr. Pignatelli answered on New Jersey Avenue. They are travelling from the stop sign on New Jersey and Downe Avenue all the way down to the south beach bridge. This happened about 8:30pm – 10pm. Mr. Pignatelli stated he contacted the State Police and has taken pictures of a few of the cars that. He asked the State Police officers what should be done when this happens again. Sometimes by the time we contact the State Police it takes 40 minutes to get here, and they are long gone by then. The officer stated he will be making a report to Lieutenant Blizzard when he returns to his barracks. Mr. Pignatelli asked if pictures and tag information is a help to the officers or is this something you must witness in order to write a citation or investigate. The officer responded that type of information is a big help to the police.

Committeeman Campbell replied the speeding situation will be handled with the new paving after the sewer system is installed. We have discussed placing speed bumps or attenuators to help slow down the traffic in Fortescue.

Laurie Williams of Fortescue stated to receive a resolution or a mitigation to what is happening in Fortescue, and we go the route of a traffic study with the county, because we are not a city with police officers, can we request they use technology like camera and speed sensing devices can be used in lieu of having state police for our roads. This sounds like a good application in a rural area with a significant speeding problem. The police office responded these devices fail in the courts.

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

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

Vote: All in favor

Mayor Rothman thanked everyone in attendance for their comments and stated these comments are very important to getting these issues resolved. We are going to get things under control we just require some time to do it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Rothman reported the solar project is ongoing. Public Works has done an excellent job keeping our road cleared from the snow.

Mr. Bart reported when Clean Shores was here, they collected 142 bags of recycling, 85 bags of trash, 13 tires and 30 cubic yard of wood and large debris and covered 28 miles. The Green

Team completed a cleanup project and collected 26 bags of recycling, 18 bags of trash and 1100 pounds of large debris. The clean up projects have done a great job in the township. April is Amnesty Month which will include a bulk pickup day. The public works department has been working on repairs to Maple Avenue.

Mr. Byrne reported that Union Hall has a concert scheduled for March 19th at 7pm featuring Mr. Jim Albertson. All upcoming events can be found on the Downe Historic Society Facebook page. We have plans for one Sunday a month Jam Session which will be held at 1pm. All are welcome to attend.

Mr. Jordan had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Campbell reported the sewer is moving forward. We have a conference call scheduled this week regarding the funding of the project. We are very close to being able to go out to bid for the construction. Mr. Bart mention Maple Avenue and an opportunity has just come to light regarding a 404-mitigation grant that would help us finish the improvements to make this area a viable recreation spot.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be held on Monday, March 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. 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.

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

Vote: All in favor

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

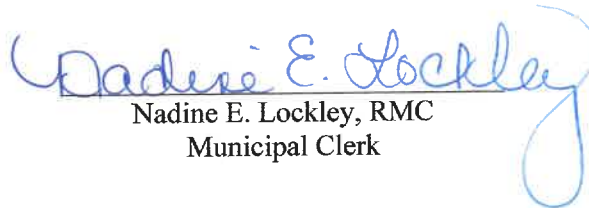
Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Jordan, Rothman, and Campbell
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

ADJOURNMENT

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

Vote: All in favor


Nadine E. Lockley, RMC
Municipal Clerk