

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

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Office on Monday, March 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

February 13, 2022	Regular Meeting
January 10, 2022	Regular Meeting
January 10, 2022	Executive Session Meeting
December 13, 2021	Executive Session Meeting
November 8, 2021	Executive Session Meeting

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Byrne the minutes of the following meetings 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 |

ORDINANCE PUBLIC HEARING

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 Byrne to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2022-2.

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

Kary Wilson of Newport asked what the reason for the amendment is. Mrs. Bertram answered the original ordinance referenced the wrong project. This ordinance corrects that.

Liz Cowley of Fortescue asked if this project is associated with a beach replenishment project to fill in some areas that need it. Mr. Campbell answered these are two different projects. The beach replenishment project is being done by the American Littoral Society. The other project is a Downe Township FEMA project to cap the berm. This is the project that should have been referenced in the ordinance and not the sewer project.

There being no further comments from the public, a motion was made by Bart and seconded by Jordan to close the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2022-2

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

ORDINANCE FINAL ADOPTION

Ordinance 2022-2 *An Amendment to Ordinance 2019-9 Authorizing and Directing the Block 114 Lot 2 Owned by John Michael Caney 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 adopt Ordinance 2022-2.
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-48-2022 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills*
R-49-2022 *Approval to Submit a Grant Application LAIF-2022-Downe Township-NJ-00051 and Execute Grant Agreement with the New Jersey Department of Transportation*
R-50-2022 *Resolution Authorizing Shared Service Agreement Between the Township of Downe and the Township of Lawrence*
R-51-2022 *Resolution of Approval of Contact Person for the Employment Practices Liability Attorney Consultation Service for the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund*
R-52-2022 *Resolution Authorizing Executive Session*

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-48-2022 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills* in the total amount of \$278,525.46.

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

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-49-2022.

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

Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-50-2022.

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-51-2022.

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-52-2022.

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

Vote: All in favor

PUBLIC COMMENT

On a motion by Jordan and seconded by Campbell, 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 gave a brief update on the truck traffic situation that was a topic at the last meeting. Mayor Rothman stated discussion took place between Downe Township and Commercial Township and the sand company. They informed us the truck traffic would be slowed down and the trucks will be monitored by the sand company. The hours of operations were changed to accommodate the school buses on Route 553. County placed school in session signs in Dividing Creek. The State Police and the Sheriff Office will be monitoring this area. The sand company is working on a permanent truck route.

Nancy Hartem of Dividing Creek asked what is being done about abandoned properties in the township. There are a couple of properties in Dividing Creek that have squatters and there is a lot of action at those properties. Mayor Rothman commented the committee is aware of a couple of issues in Dividing Creek. We are working on cleaning up these types of situations. We have to do it one at a time to keep things under control. You will notice we recently had a property on Methodist Road cleaned up that had been an eyesore for years. We are doing our best to get these issues taken care of. We understand your frustration, just know we are doing our best to fix the problems.

Kary Wilson of Newport asked for details on the NJDOT resolution that was passed. She wanted to know what roads were included in this grant application and the amount of the grant. Mr. Campbell stated we don't have that information tonight. The resolution is needed in order to apply for the grant. The roads will be associated with the sewer project.

Mrs. Wilson asked who the contact person for Resolution R-51-2022 is. Mayor Rothman answered the contact person is our solicitor. This is a JIF requirement to have this person in place.

Mrs. Wilson asked if Shore Animal Control is responsible for small animals only. Mayor Rothman answered they are responsible for all animals in the township.

Mrs. Wilson asked if there are any scheduled meetings of the Downe Township Historic Commission. Mr. Jordan responded now that COVID seems to be under control the meetings will resume. Jamie Warner is the lead. Mrs. Wilson asked how the meetings dates will be advertised. Mayor Rothman responded we have been using Facebook and the township website to advertise meetings. There will be notices posted in various locations.

Sean Pignatelli of Fortescue asked if Fortescue Road will be resurfaced because the patches are bad. Mayor Rothman commented he believes South Jersey Gas will be fixing those patches once they have completed their installation. Mr. Pignatelli asked if the township has any plans for a cellphone tower. He also noticed a tower not erected at the fire company. What are the plans for that tower? Mayor Rothman answered the tower belongs to the Downe Fire Commissioners and they are in conversations to put the tower up. This is not a township issue. We were once on a list to receive a cell tower, and something happened, and Cedarville ended up with the tower instead. Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Pignatelli what his interest in the tower is. Mr. Pignatelli answered for cellphone service. He remembered an incident on the beach last year where someone was hurt and had no service to call someone for help. Mayor Rothman stated the cellphone and internet services have improved greatly since Bayshore Wireless has been in town. They have managed to get service to areas that were not in the past.

Liz Cowley of Fortescue reporting for the Downe Green Team stated a road clean up was held on February 26th in Dividing Creek. The team cleaned from Main Street to Railroad Avenue. The next cleanup is scheduled for March 26th. The location has not been determined yet. The Green Team will be holding the Annual Horseshoe Crab Festival on May 14th. The Green Team is looking for volunteers for the festival to help with a number of tasks from traffic control, parking, t-shirt sales, etc.

Ms. Cowley reported the Heart and Soul project held its first storytelling, story gathering, and information sharing event on March 11th after the Downe Senior Meeting. This project is focused on speaking to everyone in the township to hear what your vision is for Downe Township, what you would like to see happen in the next 5 years. The Green Team will be reaching out to community organizations, the churches, the fire companies and business owners for their input in the coming weeks. The Heart and Soul project will have office hours on Monday from 3pm-8pm at the OEM building. Anyone is welcome to stop by and speak with Jamie Warner. Ms. Cowley reported the Green Team and a few volunteers spent 3 hours on Sunday, March 13th building an osprey nest stand and placing it in Fortescue.

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

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

Vote: All in favor

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Rothman reported South Jersey Gas Company has started installation of gas lines. The COVID numbers are dropping. Gas prices are rising fast. Every month the attendees express displeasures and some express their thanks. He asked that the attendees think about what they would like to see happen in Downe Township. Let us know what we, the committee you elected,

can do for you. We don't want two hours meetings where nothing is accomplished. We would like your input on topics you would like to discuss because it affects all of us who are taxpayers in this township.

Mr. Bart reported April is Amnesty month at the Convenience Center. We plan to do bulk pick up on Wednesday, April 20th. Interested residents should contact the office to arrange your pickup.

Mr. Jordan had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Byrne reported Union Hall will be open on Saturday, March 19th at 7pm and will feature Mr. Jim Albertson. Also, on one Sunday of the month acoustic music gatherings from 1pm – 4pm will start on March 20th. All are welcome to attend. Informational flyers will be posted throughout the township for all events at Union Hall. All events are free will offerings.

Mr. Campbell reported the sewer project is on track and in the final stages before going out to bid. We are expecting to go out to bid in April. The Newport Streetscape project is still moving slow. All paperwork is in the hands of the NJDOT. We are waiting to hear from them. I have been told these projects usually take 2-3 years to get moving.

Mrs. Bertram stated tonight's executive session will consist of discussion on matter related to Real Estate associated with 14 Lores Avenue and discussion on a sewer project easement document.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be held on Monday, April 11, 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 Jordan, the Executive Session portion was closed.

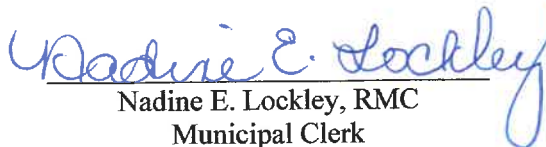
Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Jordan, Rothman, and Campbell
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

ADJOURNMENT

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

Vote: All in favor


Nadine E. Lockley, RMC
Municipal Clerk