

DOWNE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Office on Thursday, January 12, 2023 at 7:00p.m. Mayor Michael L. Rothman, presided. Committeeman Robert Campbell Steve Byrne and Edward Bart 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 stated Deputy Mayor Jordan will not be in attendance tonight as we just received word his mother-in-law has passed. 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, and Rothman

Absent - 0

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

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

- Chief Finance Officer December 2022
- Tax Collector December 2022
- Zoning Office December 2022

MUNICIPAL SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Solicitor Bertram presented her report which consisted of information and updates on matters that should be discussed in Executive Session. One piece of correspondence received related to an application extension for a mining permit. They are asking for permission to continue operating pending submittal of the renewal. The facility is not currently mining in Downe Township. The committee was all in agreement with the extension. Mrs. Bertram will respond to the facility.

RESOLUTIONS

- R-26-2023 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills*
- R-27-2023 *Appointing Animal Shelter Service Provider for the Township of Downe*
- R-28-2023 *Authorizing a Change Fund for \$100 for the Tax Collectors’ Office*
- R-29-2023 *Authorizing Dog Account Change Fund of \$100 for Municipal Clerk’s Office*
- R-30-2023 *Authorizing Cancellation of Small Tax Balances of \$10 or Less for 2021*
- R-31-2023 *Resolution Appointing Members of the Combined Planning Board*
- R-32-2023 *Designating Primary Care Providers for EMS Services*
- R-33-2023 *Authorizing Renewal of a Petty Cash Fund for Public Works Office*
- R-34-2023 *Authorizing Shared Service Agreement with Lawrence Township*
- R-35-2023 *Authorizing Executive Session*

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-26-2023 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills* in the total amount of \$204,451.60.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-27-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-28-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-29-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-30-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-31-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-32-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-33-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-34-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-35-2023.

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

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

Mayor Rothman reported yes it was cold for the 1st Downe Township Polar Plunge. Mayor thanked everyone who had a hand in putting it together. There were about 95 who went into the water and about 200 on the shore. It was an incredible experience. Mayor Rothman thanked the fire company that was in attendance to make sure everyone was safe. Thanks to our Public Works Department that cleanup the beach area for the event. We will reach out to the Sheriff Dept for a presence on NJ Avenue and Louisiana Avenue due to request for speed bumps to slow the traffic. IF we fix the road down there now then after the sewer they will need to be done again. There were some issues reported related to the back side of the trailer park. We have

spoken to the owners. They have been working on the issues by the eviction process. The area will also be cleaned up. Lastly, the owner of the property in Fortescue that has a damaged bulkhead is currently in the process of making obtaining the permits necessary to make the repairs.

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, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

Kary Wilson of Newport asked for the date of the Tax Sale. Miss Lockley replied January 20th. Mrs. Wilson is for a progress report on the enforcement of illegal trailers, junkyards, eyesore, etc. in the township and the possible violations. Mrs. Bertram answer there is no report, there is only an internal document that is not OPRAable. Mayor Rothman stated there are 23 items that have been looked into since the Code Enforcement Officer was hired. Fourteen has been rectified, six are still ongoing. Mrs. Wilson asked for clarification on the increases related to the sewer design from 2022 regarding added costs. Will the township be looking for more grants to cover the increases in costs. Mayor Rothman stated we are constantly looking for grants. Mayor Rothman gave a brief history of what the township has been through trying to get the permits from the NJDEP that are required to approve the project. Yes, more money has been spent then anticipated while working through the process. We have kept pushing through for 9 years. Through every change of hands at the NJDEP to the new NJPACT rules they are trying to approve today. Mayor Rothman reported we received notice today from the USDA that our project will not be required to abide by BABA. This would have been an increase in cost of millions of dollars to build the project.

Meghan Wren of Fortescue gave a Green Team report on the Polar Plunge there was so much support from the fire companies, township committee, and the large group of volunteer in this township. It was great to see so many people at the event. We have selected next years date of January 6, 2024 to hold our second plunge. It felt good to have a reason to get together in the winter months. The Chilli at the Fire House was also a very popular get together for fellowship and fun. Thanks to everyone. The next Green Team activity will be February 12th (Super Bowl Sunday) there is a Bear Swamp Hike at 2pm. The Horseshoe Crab Festival is set or May 13th please mark that on your calendars. Speaking of calendars, our township calendar is a little late this year but will be a 13 month calendar since we are already in January. Lastly, the volunteerism in this township is spectacular. Its great to be a part of this.

Liz Cowley of Fortescue stated we also had the ambulance from Lawrence Township attended our Polar Plunge for free to help support us just because communities help other communities. The school bus was also a support system that was free. So many different departments and people involved that proves that we can pull these things off and it not be a big expense with plenty of people helping and everyone having a great time. It was great to see the Mayor get cold and wet. Everyone was in such a positive mood even though it only lasted 15 minutes. The Green Team is realizing that we are being asked to do a lot of other activities for our residents, we are maxed out with what we have on out plate. We would like to see the township committee get the Recreation Committee back together. We really need that committee. Mayor Rothman stated this has been discussed by the committee on many occasions but we have had no luck. Let us know in the office if you know of anyone interested. Mayor Rothman mentioned there has been a lot of activity with the fire departments putting on community events for the past year or so.

Laurie Williams of Fortescue stated a few weeks ago unless you lived in of our Bayshore communities you may not have realized that we had a pretty significant weather every - full moon, high tide and 50 mile an hour winds and our Bayshore took a beating. Fortescue survived, we had flooding for a couple of days and some sand. Gandy's Beach was really hit hard and our road department got out there and opened that road up, put temporary restraints in for further erosion. They put the sacks in and we lost bin blocks, a really significant storm event. Many of us did not even realize we had storm event, but our road department did everything to help those citizens and provided a temporary fix. Our Road Crew is Awesome. Mayor Rothman thanked Laurie for the comment. We are very fortunate to have them.

Ken Besta of Gandy's Beach stated he would like to back up what was just said about the Road Department and the great job they did. Mr. Besta asked about the timeline for the repair of the bulkhead at Gandy's Beach. Mr. Campbell stated the funding was recently authorized by FEMA and the project is moving forward with its design.

Sean Pignatelli of Fortescue asked if there are plans for the repaving of the roads disturbed by South Jersey Gas. Mayor Rothman stated they have been contacted. Mr. Bart stated this is the County's issue because it is their road. You can't get any answers.

Liz Cowley of Fortescue stated you spoke about an issue with the trailer park on New Jersey Avenue, there is another issue with that trailer park. That is considered a seasonal park. Does that park pay school taxes. Mr. Campbell stated that park was licensed as a year-round trailer park. This trailer park had to operate seasonally because he did not have a full-time water service for the winter months. They pay taxes on the trailer park but not sure about other fees right now. Ms. Cowley stated she understood it to be a seasonal trailer park and now they have people living there year round with no running water only portable tanks of water being bought in for them because the owner does not want the water turned for the park because too many trailers would have leaks. Mayor Rothman stated this issue will be addressed. I understand they have been in touch with the water company for water service in the trailer park. They should not be doing that; but that is a health department issue. Kary Wilson stated they should be made to come before the planning board for proper approval of the trailer park as a year round use. Especially since it has been used as a seasonal trailer park. There are ordinances that must be followed for single family homes. This is an issue we should be concerned about.

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

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

Vote: All in favor

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Bart had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Byrne reported the Horseshoe Crab festival is musically complete. Union Hall will start up again in March and we have all of our dates for 2023 filled. We will also be having our Sunday afternoon musical gatherings starting in March We will have flyer out soon.

Mr. Campbell reported we have been trying to get the last piece of the puzzle for the sewer project. We were told the last piece of the puzzle was sent to the DEP's counsel. The last piece that was sent to the DEP counsel wasn't returned for six months. We are pushing. It has been too long.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be held on Monday, February 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Byrne and seconded by Bart, the meeting was closed to the public and the Executive Session was opened with no action to be taken after Executive Session. A contract issue will be discussed.

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

Vote: All in favor

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

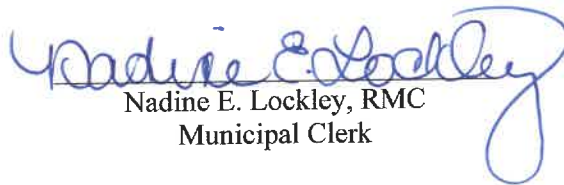
Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Jordan, Rothman, and Campbell
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

ADJOURNMENT

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

Vote: All in favor



Nadine E. Lockley, RMC
Municipal Clerk