

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP REGULAR SESSION MARCH 9, 2023

The Township Committee met on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 295 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road, Chesterfield, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Koetas-Dale at 7:00 p.m. followed by a flag salute and moment of silence.

The Open Public Meetings Act Statement was read and compliance noted.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Present: Belinda Blazic, Jeremy Liedtka, Matthew Litt, Shreekant Dhopte and Denise Koetas-Dale

Also present: Thomas A. Sahol, Township Administrator; Caryn M. Hoyer, Township Clerk; Rachel Fryc, Deputy Clerk; Michael Davison, Chief of Police and Wendy A. Wulstein, CFO

AGENDA MATTER(S) REQUIRING RECUSAL(S) - NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve the February 16th and February 23rd regular and executive meeting minutes. All were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to open public comment. All were in favor.

Lorrie Thier, 40 Foulkes Lane wants to get a better understanding of Resolutions 3-8, 3-12 and 3-13. She thanked the Township Committee for going through the lengthy review process and for choosing a new Township Solicitor. Ms. Thier asked why the Township Committee has chosen John Gillespie, the prior solicitor that you wanted change from, to represent the Township as special legal counsel for pending litigation against Save Old York. She asked the Township Committee to put these resolutions on hold to allow the new Township Solicitor to review the litigation with a fresh set of eyes and new prospective.

Agnes Marsala, 42 Cromwell Drive spoke about Resolutions 3-8, 3-12 and 3-13 and stated that Active Acquisitions is paying the Township to retain John Gillespie in this matter. She stated saving money in the short term should not be considered a reason for John Gillespie to represent the town in the litigation. She urged the Township Committee to prioritize transparency and accountability in their decision making process and to seek the advice of the newly appointed Township Solicitor by reconsidering these resolutions.

Hedl Brick, 25 Bordentown-Crosswicks Road asked why and how is Active Acquisitions reimbursing the Township for legal expenses only if the Township keeps Parker McCay for litigation. She asked if Parker McCay is representing the Township or Active Acquisitions and says this puts the Township in a position of being bought.

Lauren D'Amato, 73 Harker Road echoes some of the comments that are being made tonight. She advised the Township Committee to get recommendations from the new Township Solicitor before moving forward with Resolution 3-8.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to close public comment. All were in favor.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to move Resolution 2023-3-7 to the top of the agenda. All were in favor.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to approve Resolution 2023-3-7. All were in favor. Mr. DiYanni joined the Township Committee.

RESOLUTION 2023-3-7

RESOLUTION APPOINTING TOWNSHIP SOLICITOR FOR 2023

ORDINANCE FOR INTRODUCTION

Mr. Litt made a motion seconded by Mr. Liedtka introduce Ordinance 2023-2. All were in favor. The public hearing will be March 23, 2023.

ORDINANCE 2023-2

AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Mr. Litt to approve Resolution 2023-3-2. All were in favor.

RESOLUTION 2023-3-2

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PUBLIC SALE OF ONE PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LICENSE

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Mr. Liedtka to approve Resolution 2023-3-3. All were in favor.

RESOLUTION 2023-3-3

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE 2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Mr. Litt to approve Resolution 2023-3-4.

All were in favor.

RESOLUTION 2023-3-4

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD AUTHORIZING AN APPLICATION TO THE LOCAL FINANCE BOARD PURSUANT TO NJSA 40A:4-45.3EE

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to approve Resolution 2023-3-5. All were in favor.

RESOLUTION 2023-3-5

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE FISCAL GRANT CYCLE JULY 1, 2023 TO JUNE 30, 2024

Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Liedtka to approve Resolution 2023-3-6. All were in favor.

RESOLUTION 2023-3-6

RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING APPOINTMENT OF CONFLICT TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Litt stated the reason he is voting yes for Resolution 3-8 is because it will save the tax payers a significant amount of money. There will be a new set of eyes since the sitting Burlington County Chancery Judge will be making the judication on this case. The agreement is clear that John Gillespie is representing the Township of Chesterfield. Mr. Dhopte asked to table this resolution until the next meeting based on Active Acquisitions making conditions. Mr. Liedtka does not agree with tabling the resolution and says that Mr. Gillespie has the history of the case. He does not feel it is fair to ask the new Township Attorney to review two years of history and result in costing the Township more money. There are also deadlines that need to be met. Mayor Koetas-Dale stated that she has struggled with this decision but feels we owe it to the tax payers to be fiscally responsible and it is a considerable amount of money that will be saved. Ms. Blazic said Mr. Gillespie is a very reputable attorney and the town has the opportunity to have one of the best attorney's in Burlington County represent us in this litigation. Mr. Litt said he cannot justify using another attorney based on the cost savings to the tax payers. Mr. Dhopte stated that by us passing this resolution, it appears Active Acquisitions is dictating who represents the town.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to approve Resolution 2023-3-8. Roll Call - YEA: Blazic, Liedtka, Litt, Koetas-Dale
NAY: Dhopte

RESOLUTION 2023-3-8

RESOLUTION APPOINTING SPECIAL LEGAL COUNSEL FOR PENDING LITIGATION

Voice vote – All in favor.

Mr. Dhopte stated that the Budget Advisory Board suggested making some updates to the Bill List such as including a “running balance”. He would like these updates to be implemented on the Bill List. Ms. Wulstein stated that she is able to provide a “running balance” on a monthly basis but it would not be part of the Bill List. Mayor Koetas-Dale suggested discussing further at another time.

REPORTS & DISCUSSION

Ms. Blazic suggested creating and posting a FAQ for the Redevelopment Agreement between Active Acquisitions and the Township. She mentioned a few of the requirements in the agreement. They will be required to pay a community impact fee of \$20,000/month upon the issuance of a permit. After they receive a CO, they will pay the Township \$400,000 per year for ten years. She stated the developer will be required to pay the township 2 years of taxes which will remain in an interest bearing account for 10 years. The township will retain 25% of the interest on the account for administrative costs. All truck Traffic must enter and exit from Route 206. Violators during construction will be fined \$1,250 per incident and \$2,500 per incident after the CO. The Township will have cameras installed at the entrance installed to verify compliance. She thanked John Gillespie and the members of the subcommittee for all their hard work and thought and the Township Committee to negotiate this agreement to address the concerns of the community. Mayor Koetas-Dale replied she is not opposed to the FAQ but does not think it is needed because you would have to pick and choose what is in the FAQ. She encourages all residents to read the agreement.

REPORTS & ADMINISTRATON

Mayor – Reminded everyone to attend the Green Fun Fair which is run by the Green Team at the Township on April 23rd from 11am – 3pm.

Administration – Mr. Sahol had a plaque designed explaining the history behind the weathervane plow that was designed and placed on the roof of the Township building. The plaque will be on display at the Township building for all to see.

Mr. Litt thanked Mr. Sahol on his communication to the Township Committee and the residents surrounding the recent gas leak that occurred at the compression station. Mr. Litt would like more detailed information to be sent out to the residents in the future. He suggested having in a spokesperson from Transco attend a future Township meeting to answer questions about the recent issue. He does not believe a 47 minutes response time is prudent utility practice. Mayor Koetas-Dale suggested having the Pipeline Task Force put a report together as well. Mr. Dhopte would like to have the school task force at that meeting as well.

Mr. Litt stated that to the members of the Environmental Commission and Historic Preservation Commission who are working through their OPRA request, there will be additional resources coming from the township tomorrow.

New Business

Holi Festival – Mr. Dhopte reported that the Chesterfield Ganesh Utsav and Cultural Group have requested to hold the Holi Festival of colors at Village Square Park on Saturday, March 25th. The event will be from 1pm – 3pm. There will be a DJ for dancing and a few pop up tents. They will supply the colors to all that attend. They will be serving food and expect to have up to 200 attendees. Rain date is scheduled for April 1st. Ms. Fryc stated that the organization has sent in their paperwork to the Township for the event. Mr. Liedtka made a motion to allow the event seconded by Mr. Dhopte. All were in favor.

TNR – Ms. Blazic reported that they had another meeting regarding cat/dog registration. The animal control officer will have a table at the Green Fun Fair to educate residents on registration and vaccination of their dogs and cats. Ms. Blazic suggested having a Trap Neuter Release (TNR) professional attend a Township meeting to answer any questions. Ms. Blazic suggested increasing the fines and also having a senior discount. Mayor Koetas-Dale thanked Ms. Blazic for her work on this and asked her to work with the Township Solicitor Mr. DiYanni on a draft ordinance.

Ms. Hoyer mentioned that the Chesterfield Inn will be having a St. Patrick's event with a tent and bands on March 11th, 17th & 18th.

Old Business

Memorial Day Service – The service is scheduled for Monday, May 29th at 10am in front of the memorial outside the Township Building. Ms. Fryc starting working on the service by reaching out to the local Boy Scouts and Historical Society. She also plans to reach out to all of the pastors at the local churches. Once all of the details are finalized a flyer will go out to the community for all to attend. Mr. Litt thanked Ms. Fryc for the work she has done on this getting this going.

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Mr. Litt to open the meeting to public comment. All were in favor.

Steve Hazen, 447 Main Street said that he would like to have the FAQ for the agreement between Active Acquisitions and the Township. He asked how much would cost if the Township paid the legal fees instead of Active Acquisitions.

Karl Braun, 12 White Pine Road stated he has heart disease and on the advice of his doctor, after 46 years he must leave his positions with the township. He stated that a lot of wonderful things have happened here and it is with a heavy heart that he must leave. He gave the Mayor his resignation letters for the Environmental Commission, Planning Board and Historic Preservation effective March 10, 2023.

Agnes Marsala, 42 Cromwell Drive thanked Mr. Braun for his service and wished him well. She thanked Mr. Dhopte for voting no on the resolutions. She stated this is a transactional agreement.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to close public comment. All were in favor.

Mr. Liedtka welcomed the new Township Attorney Mr. DiYanni. Mr. DiYanni stated he has worked with Mr. Gillespie before and has a lot of respect for him. He stated he understands he has big shoes to fill. He will do his best to give 150% and hopefully the committee will like his style it might be a little different. He stated he will give it to you straight and in the best interest of Chesterfield Township.

Mr. Litt thanked Mr. Braun. He is grateful for his service to the town. He wished Mr. Braun the best. Mayor Koetas-Dale stated that 46 years is a lot of dedication and she accepts the resignation letters with a heavy heart.

Ms. Fryc stated that the Chesterfield Baptist Church has submitted their information for the Easter Sunday service at Village Square Park from 7-9 AM. Same as they have done for the past 4 years. Mayor Koetas-Dale asked Ms. Fry to send the information to the Township Committee.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Caryn M. Hoyer, RMC
Township Clerk

