

March 24, 2009 CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM

MEETING CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Wolk called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

SALUTE TO FLAG:

All present pledged their allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

ABSENT

Commissioner Gilmore	_____x_____	_____
Commissioner Greenwald	_____x_____	_____
Mayor Wolk	_____x_____	_____

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Borough Solicitor – Joe Marrazzo
Borough Engineers – Joe Federici & Doug Akin
PW Supervisor – Ken Jones
Zoning Officer—Chris Fitzgerald
Sewer Dept.—John Wenner
Police Chief – Ed Dobleman
Richard Schwab – Consultant
Marie Darlington –Tax Collector/Deputy Clerk

“OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW” ANNOUNCEMENT:

Mayor Wolk announced this Meeting has been advertised and notices posted in accordance with the “Open Public Meetings Act.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS:

Administration & Finance:

2009-Budget update--Mayor Wolk reported that the Budget is ready for introduction and reflects a modest increase. The expenditure CAP and levy CAP issues have been resolved and we are within CAP. There will be no layoffs or furloughs. We still need to

determine if we plan to apply for the COPS grant. Dean Ciminera will make sure that Rob Inverso is ready for introduction at the April regular meeting.

2009 dog licensing—Marie Darlington reported that the rabies clinic was very successful. We still have a number of people who have not been in to renew their licenses. She reported that they ran a report showing all licenses from 2007 and 2008 that have not been in yet and asked if we should consider granting amnesty and allowing these folks to come in for 2009 licenses with no penalty. The Governing Body agreed that an amnesty program was a good idea and to go ahead and implement it. The Clerk reported that we will have to decide how we want to handle a dog census this year and that various options would be explored. Rich Schwab stated that we should consider raising the license fees for 2010.

Update on library renovation project--Ken Jones reported that the library project was nearly complete. All interior work is done and Bellmawr will be repaving the parking lot. Gloria plans to re-open the library on Monday, March 30.

Delinquent water bills from out-of-town properties—The solicitor reported they are preparing a letter to go out to these customers and the content would be submitted to the Governing Body for approval before the letters are mailed out.

Update on 324 Davis Avenue—the Solicitor reported that we need to make some decisions regarding the sale of the property. We need to determine if we want to establish a minimum amount and what that amount should be. We will need to advertise twice and will have to add language such as “Not less than...”; “As is”; “Reserve the right not to sell to the highest bidder”; “due diligence period”; etc. We will be ready to approve for advertisement by resolution at the May meeting.

Change of polling locations—the Clerk reported that that the Camden County Board of Elections approved MEPRI as the alternate polling place for all districts while the firehouse construction project is ongoing. This will apply at least to the 2009 and 2010 elections and we will have to mount a public awareness campaign so the residents are fully informed. We will utilize the message board, sandwich boards and the school sign.

Enforcement of non-renewed mercantile licenses—the Deputy Clerk reported that we have several businesses whose licenses have not been issued because of delinquent taxes. Also, we have one property that has tenants who have filed their licenses but the property owner has not paid the taxes. Do we want to penalize the individual businesses because their landlord has not paid the taxes? In addition, the mercantile license for Mt. Ephraim Dodge has not been issued because of outstanding zoning issues. The Governing Body took these situations under advisement and will decide how to proceed at a later date after they have explored all the options.

Police Department:

Police Department—Chief Dobleman reported there was a problem with officers stopping solicitors over the prior weekend who were actually Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Clerk reported that an official from the Jehovah’s Witnesses had called on Monday to complain about this situation. Chief Dobleman called him back and explained it was a misunderstanding on the part of his officers and it would be rectified. The Chief added that at the April regular meeting we will be appointing Mark Malinowski as an officer in the Police Department. Chief Dobleman also reported that the situation with the tow truck illegally parking on Harding Ave. has been resolved and it is now being parked in the driveway. The resident may be operating a business from his home and it was referred to the Zoning Officer for investigation.

Fire Department:

Firehouse Project update—Rich Schwab reported that we cannot authorize Earth Engineering to begin the environmental work until the ownership has been transferred to the Borough and the lease agreement between the Fire Company and the Borough has been signed. The Borough has agreed to be responsible for the environmental work. The Solicitor is reviewing the language for the lease agreements. We are still waiting to hear from Camden County as to the drainage issues. Rich also reported that we are re-programming prior year CDBG funds from the “senior center project” to “Removal of Architectural Barriers” at the Lambert Avenue facility as this will make the work CDBG funds eligible. The resolution and public hearing will be on the April agenda. Also, the Year 31 funds are also going to be submitted as “Removal of Barriers” for the ADA work that will be included in this project to convert from a firehouse to an ADA compliant senior center.

Other Public Safety Items:

NJ Transit request for bus stop relocation—Chief Dobleman reported that he would like to table this for now so he can investigate further and make recommendations to the Governing Body.

Chief Dobleman reported that Mr. Jacoby, from Center & Abraham, requested a handicapped parking spot in front of his house. This will have to be approved by resolution.

There is concern about parking at the Kingsway Station project—Joe Federici will review the plans and approvals and will report back to the Governing Body.

Marie Darlington asked about the two small parcels contiguous to the Kingsway Station property as they are owned by the Borough and have unredeemed tax title liens on the deeds. The Engineer will get information on these lots to the Solicitor so he can review.

Kingsway Station—the new road, Lumber Lane, has been re-paved. There will be no bond reductions and we need a five-year maintenance bond. The Engineer will request the paperwork. Also, Mr. McKeever from 8th Avenue needs a retaining wall built at the corner of his property as the road is lower than the corner lot. The builder will be responsible for construction of the retaining wall. The Engineer will also see if we can get the builder to mill and overlay further down on the street.

Public Works:

Kenny Jones reported that the manhole replacement on Market Street is done. Also, the speed humps were painted.

Rich Schwab reported that he met with the union local to discuss having a working foreman covered by the contract. As long as they do not have hiring/firing powers, they can be covered by the contract. The plan for succession to move a DPW employee into the working foreman position can now be finalized. Rich said that we also need to determine who will negotiate the next contract as the current contract expires at the end of 2009.

Kenny Jones reported that he is still working on the language for the street opening ordinance. He has obtained copies of ordinances from other municipalities and is extracting the best language for our ordinance.

Kenny also reported that we received ordinance language from the DEP for two amendments to the stormwater regulations. One pertains to refuse containers and the other to private stormdrain inlet regulations. He proposed that these be introduced at the April meeting.

Kenny also reported that he has obtained all the sewer easements except for Rappa. She did indicate that she would be in to sign the easement. The Solicitor reported that if both the husband and wife are listed on the deed, then they both need to sign the easement. Kenny will follow-up with them.

Commissioner Greenwald and Mayor Wolk provided an update as to the status of the 710 Black Horse Pike property. They added that Joe Nardi is exploring the possibility of a redevelopment designation of the property. If we designate as a redevelopment zone, can we restrict the type of business that moves onto the site? Is there another available property available in close enough proximity to allow for this? These questions will be answered after Joe Nardi completes his review.

Chris Fitzgerald, Zoning Officer, reported that storage of junked cars is being worked on. He also reported that Mt. Ephraim Dodge still has not submitted the plans that were required and this needs to be pursued. We are still getting complaints from the neighbors about the lighting.

Engineer:

Joe Federici reported that they have contacted the DVRPC regarding the status of our submission for stimulus funds. He has asked them what we need to do to get the funds approved. He will be sending over a letter.

Harding Ave. generator—the performance bond for this project will be sent over to the Solicitor for his review.

DOT request for return of grant funds—there has been no response to our letter requesting that the remaining \$6500 be moved to another project. Mayor Wolk will pursue through Rob Andrews' office.

Joe Federici reported that they are working on grant applications for 2010 DOT funding for Delaware Ave and Hartka.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

COMMENTS BY OFFICIALS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Commissioner Gilmore and seconded by Commissioner Greenwald to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Shannon
Municipal Clerk