

June 23, 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 3:05 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
 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:

- Update on dog licenses—the Clerk reported that we are down to only 14 residents who have not come in for a dog license. Mickey is going to prepare the paperwork to have summonses issued and we will present the list to you for approval.

- Update on 324 Davis Avenue—unfortunately we only received one bid for this property from Rizzo/Valenti for the minimum bid of \$25,000. Rich suggested that perhaps we get a rough appraisal from a local realtor as to actual value and we more aggressively market the property including an ad in the real estate section of the Courier Post so we get more bidders. The decision was made to reject the bid and to re-advertise with a new minimum of \$35,000 and an auction date in mid-August with award at the September commission meeting. We will also better market the property including advertising and putting a “For Sale” sign on the lot itself.

- Enforcement of non-renewed mercantile licenses—we still have several businesses whose licenses have not been issued because of delinquent taxes and/or outstanding zoning issues. These businesses are currently operating in violation of our ordinance. The Clerk asked if they wanted to consider amending the ordinance so a tenant can obtain a license even if the landlord has not paid the taxes. Joe Marrazzo added that we don’t have any choice as the current ordinance precludes us from issuing the mercantile license. The Governing Body agreed that the ordinance should be amended so tenant businesses can obtain their licenses. There was further discussion about whether or not we should prevent any license from being issued because of delinquent taxes. Rich Schwab pointed out that 50% of the businesses in town are exempt from that rule in that they are licensed by the State and not by us. Is it fair to penalize the other 50% for failure to pay their taxes? No final decision was made on this. Bruce asked Fitz if there was an update on the zoning issues with Mt. Ephraim. Dodge. Fitz reported that Joe Nardi was going to contact their attorney. Bruce added that he believed the only outstanding issue was the lighting and the failure to file a site plan. Mayor Wolk wrapped it up by stating that we have solved one problem and tenant businesses will be able to obtain their license but there will have to be further discussion on the delinquent taxes issue.

- ABC License renewals—the Clerk reported that there is a strong possibility that we are going to lose the Staliga liquor license assigned to Bubba Dean’s/Pasta Café. Staliga has problems with the IRS and they are considering seizing the license. The license is currently inactive and cannot be renewed until a Special Ruling is received from the ABC. We also need a tax clearance certificate. The Clerk contacted the ABC to see if the license would revert back to the municipality if the renewal was not filed but because we are already over the limit of how many licenses we are permitted by statute due to grandfathering, if the renewal is not filed, the license will die. This does not apply to the inactive license held by YABA2, LLC. They have filed their petition for a Special Ruling and we are waiting for approval by the Director of the ABC.

- The Clerk reported that the following ordinances will be on the agenda for public hearing and adoption: 14-09, 2009 Salary Ordinance; 15-09, Repeal of Chapter 91-1, Towing; 16-09, Amending Chapter 48, Excavations in Streets.

- Cleveland Avenue Landfill DEP case—Mayor Wolk reported that he put everyone together in a room to discuss and there is nothing further to report at this time.

- Project Porchlight—scheduled for Saturday, July 18. The Clerk is trying to come up with ways to promote it in the town to get volunteers. It is going on the sign at Mary Bray after July 4. Any help will be appreciated.
- Appointment of Deputy Registrar—the Borough needs to appoint a Deputy Registrar as the individual who took the classes has not become certified. The Clerk stated that as she is already certified, she could fill the position. The Governing Body approved and the resolution will be on the agenda.
- Audubon/Haddon Hts/Mt. Ephraim Traffic Calming Project—the County has set a meeting for June 24 to discuss the traffic situation at the Kings Highway and East Lake Drive crossing at Audubon Lake. Marie had suggested a pedestrian crossing sign requiring motorists to stop. Commissioner Gilmore pointed out that the crossing is actually in Haddon Heights. Chief Dobleman will attend for Mt. Ephraim but as the two primary towns involved are Audubon and Haddon Heights, we can only provide our opinion and support

Police Department:

Police Department—Chief Dobleman reported that we received a letter from the VFW asking that we make the returning veterans Grand Marshals of the July 4 parade. The names of the six individuals are in the letter. We could honor them at the commission meeting on July 2 and they will ride in the parade as Grand Marshals on a float. Mayor and Council agreed.

Lease of new police car—Chief Dobleman reported that the interest rates through Winner Ford for a new patrol car lease are currently 6.9% but will go up to 8.1% on June 1. Winner will lock us in at 6.9% as long as we give them verbal authorization. He will provide all the paperwork so a resolution authorizing the lease can be included on the agenda for June 4.

Fire Department:

Firehouse Project update—it has been determined that the estimated construction cost was going to be well over the 2.2 million budgeted. The bidding schedule has been put on hold. Mayor Wolk asked Rich Schwab to work with the Fire Company building committee and the architect and engineer to resolve the cost issue. A meeting is scheduled for June 4 at 3pm. The professionals are to be asked how they designed building plans that exceed the budget for the project. A resolution with is to be ready for the June 23 caucus meeting. Also, Joe Marrazzo is to schedule settlement for the land transfer.

Lambert Avenue project—since we did not request federal stimulus funds for this project, we remain on the ball bid timetable. The resolution to contract with the architect for the specs and bidding phase was approved at the May meeting. We cannot award the project

until October when the CDBG funds become available. Bidding should take place in August for receipt in September and award in October.

Other Public Safety Items:

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

Public Works/Planning/Zoning

Tara has submitted a list of delinquent landlord registrations and is requesting permission to send them summons'. We will send one more demand letter and give them ten days to comply and then issue summons'.

Camden County Workforce Development Summer Employment Project—John Wenner prepared an application to participate with this program and requested three employees all over the age of 18. The package was hand-delivered to the Bellmawr office today. Camden County pays the wages and provides all insurance coverage and we just provide the work and supervision. Hopefully we will get three summer employees out of the program.

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. He will send the requested language to the solicitor to prepare the ordinance for introduction June 4.

Planting of trees at the senior center—Commissioner Greenwald stated that there were no objections to the request to plant trees down the side of the senior center. He authorized the sending of a letter approving the planting and reminding them to get markouts prior to digging.

Engineer:

Joe Federici reported that they are working on the documents needed by the DOT for the additional funding for the streetscape project in the amount of \$55,325. The deadline is August 15 and they will have the documents ready.

Joe also reported that they are continuing to follow-up on our stimulus funds application submissions and will advise the governing body as soon as information is available. The applications for DOT 2010 funds have been submitted through the SAGE system.

Cedar Avenue resurfacing—the request for bids has been advertised and bids are due back June 3 at 10m. They should be able to review the bids and make an award recommendation for the June 4 meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

COMMENTS BY OFFICIALS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenwald and seconded by Commissioner Gilmore to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Shannon
Municipal Clerk