

Florence, New Jersey
April 6, 2011

The Florence Township Council held a regular meeting on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by Council President O'Hara at 8:15PM. President O'Hara led the Salute to the Flag.

The following statement was read: "Notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice was published in the Burlington County Times on January 2, 2011 and January 16, 2011; given to the Register News for information. Notice was posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board."

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Frank Baldorossi
Sean Ryan
Jerry Sandusky
David Woolston
Dennis O'Hara

Also present:

Mayor William Berry; Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator; Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Municipal Administrator; William John Kearns, Jr., Township Solicitor

MINUTES

Sandusky made a MOTION; seconded by Baldorossi to approve the following minutes. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried.

Executive Session	February 9, 2011
Budget Session	March 16, 2011

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

It was on the MOTION of Ryan, seconded by Woolston to receive and file the Chief of Police's report for March. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carries.

Ryan made a MOTION; seconded by Woolston to approve the Treasurer's Bill List. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried.

REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE

Preserve America, March 14, 2011, Roebing – Preserve America Community

Administrator Brook explained that the volunteers of the Roebing Museum along with the township, the volunteers did a bulk of the work, submitted an application and were successful in gaining recognition as a Preserve America Community. Once the museum became designated as a Preserve America Community it gives them opportunities to capitalize on publicity for the property and helps in attracting visitors of all ages to the museum to learn about Roebing. Administrator Brook stated that Roebing has a fascinating history. This designation will also help the museum when they apply for grants because it shows a commitment to maintaining the historical significance of Roebing. Administrator Brook praised the volunteers of the Roebing Museum, who give a tremendous amount of their time.

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Council President O'Hara stated that the Roebling Museum opened their latest gallery, The General John S. Pustay Gallery, this past weekend. General Pustay was a native of Roebling, born and raised, one of the first Florence Township residents to receive an appointment to the US Naval Academy. It is a magnificent gallery that deals with how the residents came to and lived in the village.

APPLICATIONS

- A. Night at the Races: Florence Township Civic Association, Inc., Roebling American Legion Post 39, May 27, 2011, 6:00PM – 12:00AM
- B. Social Affair permit Application: Florence Township Civic Association, Inc., Roebling American Legion Post 39, May 27, 2011, 12:00PM – 12:00AM
- C. Off Premise Draw Raffle: Parish of Sts. Francis & Clare, September 24, 2011, 3:00PM, McGrath Hall

It was on the MOTION of Ryan, seconded by Woolston to approve the above applications.

On the Question

Nothing at this time.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ryan, Sandusky (C), Woolston, O'Hara

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: Sandusky (A & B)

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Don Kamienski, 10 McCay Drive, stated that on March 24th he attended a Florence Township Board of Education Budget Meeting. At that meeting he asked how many people graduated from high school in 2010 and was advised that there were 90 graduates. Mr. Kamienski advised at that meeting that his daughter graduated in 1988 (22 years earlier) and there were 90 graduates at that time; the same number as in 2010. The Board Secretary advised Mr. Kamienski that costs have increased since then. Mr. Kamienski stated that the BOE is asking for \$1.1 million over last year. He believes that this budget will be voted down on Election Day and will come before Council. He asked that Council keep in mind that there were the same number of graduates in 1988 as in 2010 when reviewing and making cuts in the budget.

Mr. Kamienski asked when the boat dock will be installed? Administrator Brook stated that it should be in by the end of next week. There is a part that is currently being repaired.

John D'Acquisto, 7 Yockus, discussed Resolution No. 2011-84, Appoint Special Tax Consultant. Council President O'Hara stated that the township is appointing a consultant, Dennis Bianchini (former Tax Assessor), to assist the new part time Tax Assessor with appeals at the State Tax Court. He explained that there are a large number of appeals to go before the county, this way the township will be prepared with the appeals going to the state.

In response to Mr. D'Acquisto, Administrator Brook explained that Mr. Bianchini retired in the fall of 2010 but volunteered to work for the township for three to four months with no pay. He has been in over the past several days, without receiving any payment. Administrator Brook explained that the township is in transition with Mr. Bianchini's retirement and hiring a new tax assessor. The township also went from having a full time tax assessor to a part time tax assessor. Due to the

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reassessment, the new tax assessor, Tom Colavecchio, has been very busy meeting with a significant number of homeowners. Administrator Brook felt the best option, in order to be prepared for State Tax Court on May 4, 2011, was to bring in someone to help with just the State Tax Appeals. So Mr. Bianchini has been working for the past several days without pay and understands that he has to be approved and appointed by a formal Resolution. Administrator Brook stated that the County Tax Board was advised that Mr. Bianchini would be working for the township at no cost during the period of his retirement and the start date of Mr. Colavecchio.

Mr. D'Acquisto stated that he is one of the homeowners that is appealing to the State Tax Court and was notified that in March the township asked for a 90 day extension for the May court that they have known about since December; the judge denied the extension. He stated that these appeals already went through the County Tax Court so he does not understand why the information is not readily available and the township has to pay someone to come in to work on the appeals. Administrator Brook explained that the township just hired a new assessor who it just learning the township and who has been meeting with a significant number of homeowners; the township would not have been prepared for the state appeals without hiring help. He explained that they could not take the same information used at the County Tax Court to the State Tax Court. He stated that it is not uncommon for municipalities to hire consultants in certain types of appeals and Mr. Bianchini is the most qualified because he knows the properties. Solicitor Kearns agreed with Administrator Brook.

Mr. D'Acquisto attended the Budget Meeting on March 7th and was advised that the township was going to be in compliance with the Tax Cap Levy Law. The next day there was an article in The Trenton Times stating that Florence Township was one of the municipalities that would go to the voters asking to exceed the Tax Cap Levy. Administrator Brook explained that the newspaper was wrong and the newspaper was contacted. He is not sure if a retraction was printed. He reiterated that there will be no application for a Tax Cap Levy Waiver.

Mr. D'Acquisto asked the status of the end user for the Roebing Steel Mill site? Council President O'Hara stated that it is still moving forward but at a slow pace. Mr. D'Acquisto asked when the community would see some tax relief from the end user? Administrator Brook explained that the steel mill site is a superfund site and has been for a multiple number of years. He stated that there are many parts to this and offered to meet with Mr. D'Acquisto to go over because it would be a rather lengthy discussion. He stated that they use the term "end user" because the company that is interested in the property has sworn the township to a confidentiality agreement. If they are moving here from another location it is a delicate topic. Administrator Brook stated that no company would come and build on the site without a Tax Abatement.

Administrator Brook explained that there have been many stumbling blocks and one of the biggest was the buildings that remained on the site. The township, through its efforts with Burlington County and Congressman Smith, went to Washington and New York for numerous meetings to get those buildings demolished. Through those efforts the EPA came up with \$4 – 5 million dollars to demolish those buildings and remediate the contents and underneath the buildings. A developer would not pay to have that done.

Administrator Brook gave an overview of the steps the township has taken over a multiple number of years to get a viable user for the site. He also gave an overview of the stumbling blocks that have been encountered.

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Administrator Brook knows that progress is moving slow but the potential is well in excess of 900 jobs, which will help the existing businesses and attract new businesses to the township. He stated that nothing can be built on the site until the EPA releases the property.

Administrator Brook is hopeful that the township will be able to report good news to the residents in the next few months.

Administrator Brook stated that EPA is working to complete the remediation work, working with the township and the end user on conceptual plans, working with DEP on the permits that are needed from the state and they are continuing to build a revetment along the river.

Council President O'Hara noted that the end user is spending money now; they have hired attorneys and a contractor.

Joseph Violante, 18 Trainor Circle, stated that Mr. Bianchini contacted him and asked if he could get in the home to assess the interior. He was wondering if Mr. Bianchini was working in an official capacity but Administrator Brook answered that question earlier in the meeting.

All residents having an opportunity to be heard, MOTION by Sandusky; seconded by Woolston to close the public portion of the meeting. All ayes - motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2011-82

**APPROVE LAND PRESERVATION AGREEMENT WITH
THE COUNTY OF BURLINGTON FOR THE ROEBLING MUSEUM PROPERTY**

It was on the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Woolston to approve Resolution No. 2011-82.

On the Question

Nothing at this time.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ryan, Sandusky, Woolston

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: O'Hara

Motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 2011-83

**RESOLUTION TO WITHHOLD FUTURE INSTALLMENTS FOR
SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FROM THE 2011 TAX SALE**

RESOLUTION NO. 2011-84

**AUTHORIZE APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL
TAX CONSULTANT – DENNIS BIANCHINI**

RESOLUTION NO. 2011-85

**AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE APPLICATION
FILED BY GARELICK FARMS, LLC FOR A NJDEP TREATMENT WORKS
APPLICATION PERMIT FOR BLOCK 162; LOT 4.02 117 CUMBERLAND BLVD.**

RESOLUTION NO. 2011 – 86

**APPROVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AGREEMENT WITH
THE SALT AND LIGHT COMPANY INC. REGARDING 340 ALDEN AVENUE**

Administrator Brook noted that on Resolution No. 2011-84 (Appoint Special Tax Consultant) the fee is not to exceed \$3,600.

It was on the MOTION of Baldorossi, seconded by Woolston to approve Resolution No. 2011-83 through 2011-86.

On the Question

Nothing at this time.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ryan, Sandusky, Woolston, O'Hara

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Unanimous approval.

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2011-03

(2nd Reading)

**BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF FLORENCE, IN THE COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, NEW JERSEY,
APPROPRIATING THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT OF \$800,000 THEREFOR AND
AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$783,750 BONDS OR NOTES OF
TOWNSHIP TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF**

Assistant Administrator Sahol explained that Florence Township has received three (3) grants and this Ordinance allows the municipality to have the funds available to start these projects and the township will be paid back through the grant process to satisfy the bonds:

- \$250,000 from Burlington County for park improvement projects
- \$150,000 from NJDOT for pedestrian improvement grant for sidewalks primarily serving the middle school and elementary school areas
- \$203,000 from NJDOT for Phase II of the bikeway project in the country portion of the township

It was on the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Ordinance No. 2011-03 on second reading for adoption.

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Public Comment

Council President O'Hara opened the meeting to the public for comments at this time.

Don Kamienski, 10 McCay Drive, questioned the path of the bikeway. Assistant Administrator Sahol stated that the first bikeway went from Brookside Drive on Old York Road to Marter Park, which will be extended closer to the Bustleton Church to complete Phase I. He is hoping Phase II funding will take them out the rest of Bustleton Road to Cedar Lane, then Cedar Lane to just prior to the bridge over the creek, if funding allows them to go further they will.

It was on the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to close the public hearing. All ayes – motion carried.

On the Question

Nothing at this time.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Sandusky, Woolston, O'Hara

NOES: Ryan

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

REPORTS

Committees, Boards and Officers

- Nothing at this time.

Mayor

- **Mayor Berry** stated that he **has decided not to seek a second term as Mayor of Florence Township**. It is a decision he has struggled with for many months. He feels he did not live up to his own expectations. He stated that he enjoyed his time as Florence Township Mayor; it is something he has always wanted to do and he was able to fulfill a dream. He has worked very hard on the Roebing Steel Mill site and hopes to still be a part of it. He hopes to be able to make an announcement in the next couple of months that will change the economics for this community for many years.

Administrator

- Administrator Brook advised that Florence Township belongs to the **Joint Insurance Fund (JIF)**, and David Lebak, Water and Sewer Superintendent, is the township's Safety Coordinator. **The township always meets the gold standard and receives almost \$4,000 a year**, which is put back into safety, such as safety training or safety equipment. There is paperwork to be signed.
- Administrator Brook introduced the township's primary contacts at **Garelick Farms**: Eric Bayer, Plant Manager; Tom Kolkmeier, Plant Engineering Manager; Larry Cuomo, Environmental Health and Safety District Manager. Dave Lebak, Florence Township Water and Sewer Superintendent is also in attendance at the meeting. It is good to put a face to some of the names associated with the businesses in town. Council President O'Hara thanked the gentlemen for attending the meeting and on behalf of the township he expressed appreciation that Garelick Farms is here in the township; they are a tremendous user of the water system and believes the equipment they are putting in will help the township's waste treatment plant run more efficiently and less costly. He hopes that Garelick Farms will continue being part of the community for many years. A representative of Garelick stated

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that they appreciate all of the help they have received from Florence Township over the years.

Assistant Municipal Administrator

- Nothing at this time.

Township Solicitor

- Solicitor Kearns noted that the April 30th deadline for filing **Financial Disclosure Statements** is approaching. He has learned from the Local Finance Board that this year they will be treating late filings as a violation subject to fines. Joy Weiler, Township Clerk, will be sending out a notice to those that have to file.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nothing at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Nothing at this time.

BOARD OF HEALTH

Nothing at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

Council Member Sandusky stated that it is bicycle, scooter, roller-skating and skateboarding season and he would like the police patrols to look out for the **children** and make sure they are wearing **safety helmets**.

Council Member Ryan told Mayor Berry that it has been a sincere pleasure to work with him over the last three years and looks forward to working with him for the rest of the year. He believes that the governing body has accomplished a lot of good things in the community but has also had to make some difficult decisions, which have been made collectively. He stated that Mayor Berry has done a good job. Mayor Berry thanked Council Member Ryan.

Council President O'Hara, along with Administrator Brook, Mayor Berry and Council Member Woolston, attended an award dinner last week **honoring Florence Township Police Detectives James Ford and Albert Jacoby** for their efforts in a drug related apprehension. It was a tremendous honor.

Council President O'Hara **expressed his appreciation to Mayor Berry** for the efforts he has put forth for the community through some trying times. They have come to know each other very well over the past three years. Mayor Berry thanked Council President O'Hara and stated that it has been very rewarding being Mayor of Florence Township.

9:15PM MOTION by Sandusky, seconded by Ryan to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote - all ayes. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

9:15PM Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD A. BROOK
Township Administrator/Deputy Township Clerk

/mab