

Florence Township Council Regular Session 2/5/25

Florence, New Jersey
February 5, 2025

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 Frappolli at 7:00 p.m. Council President Frappolli led the Salute to the Flag and a moment of silence was held for the passing of longtime Township resident and Emeritus Member of the Economic Development Committee, Marvin Wainwright, Sr..

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice was posted on the municipal bulletin board on January 3, 2025; published in the Burlington County Times on January 12, 2025, placed on the Township website and given to the Courier Post for information.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Frank Baldorossi, John Fratinardo, Nicholas Haas, Talaya Loftin, Joseph Frappolli

Also Present: Mayor Kristan I. Marter; Thomas A. Sahol, Township Administrator; Robert Wright, Esq., Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Township Clerk; Jenise Silinsky, Deputy Township Clerk

Absent: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Frappolli opened the public comment portion of the meeting.

Elizabeth Sloan, 1140 Emerick Avenue, asked why the Animal Control services was switched to a company in Medford. They had to call over the weekend and were told 40 minutes for a response from animal control.

Administrator Sahol explained that the Township was in a shared services agreement with Bordentown Township who provided animal control services and they have since ceased the relationship with Florence Township because they have moved away from allowing the service for their own community and are now contracting with the same third party. Unfortunately, there aren't any certified animal control officers that live in our community or are willing to serve. It is becoming an increasingly difficult certification to maintain and, unfortunately a lot of communities are having to use these third party private companies.

Kristin Mustillo, 132 6th Avenue, noticed on the agenda from last week that the Fourth Round Fair Share Obligation numbers have recently been adopted. She wanted to come before Council to reiterate a public comment that she made almost two years ago regarding the possible purchase of the old VFW property in Roebling on the corner of 10th and Main Streets which was on the agenda for that night which would be used for part of a larger public housing development that was also going to include the undeveloped property on Hornberger Avenue as well. She came before Council at the time to comment on how she thought that property was a key property that could, with proper planning, be used for more than one public benefit at the same time. Not only affordable housing, which is a public benefit, but also to provide better public access to the lower Roebling park and potentially even provide park amenities. And with really good planning, whatever goes in there may even be structured to help support and revitalize Roebling's downtown, which would also be a public benefit. She asked Council to take into consideration the

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opportunities to remedy that area. With the proper planning there is an opportunity to create a really clear and accessible park entrance that takes traffic off of the avenues and adds things that people are looking for in recreational facilities like parking lots, public restrooms, picnic areas, etc. These things may attract people to the area and then they may spend their money here. She just wanted to remind Council of the potential to do more than one really good thing here if it is still under consideration. Council thanked Ms. Mustillo for her comments and ideas.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, it was the Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Haas to close public comment. Voice vote – All ayes.

Council went out of order on the Agenda at this time to discuss following:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Risoldi's Automotive – Appeal Denial of 2025 Towing License Public Hearing Continued from January 22, 2025

Chief Boldizar explained that he was concerned about the fact that Mr. Risoldi stated that we were not being fair and equitable across the board with the decision to deny their towing application. He went the very next morning to All Brand in Burlington to see if they had a secure lot and they do, which he provided pictures to Council showing a fenced lot and surveillance video. He stated that the other concern was Flynn's lot and not being able to store commercial vehicles within five driving miles. The Chief said in re-reading the ordinance is states for "passenger vehicles" so no tractor trailers have to be stored in that lot just south of Neck Road. Both of those concerns turned out to be invalid.

Angelo Risoldi, Risoldi's Automotive, stated that Flynn's is able to tow trucks to Eastampton so there should be another list for heavy duties and Risoldi's should be able to get on that list. Chief Boldizar stated that there are two lists and the ordinance states that there must be a lot for passenger vehicles and Flynn's does have a lot within five driving miles. He explained that if Risoldi's got a lot within five miles that was able to store passenger vehicles, then they would be able to tow for the township.

Michael Risoldi, Risoldi's Automotive, stated that every time they come before Council the story seems to change. This time it's vehicles only? He asked why they are being excluded from being able to tow for the township? The Chief explained that it has always been vehicles only in the original ordinance, that has not change.

Council President Frappolli explained that there has to be some sort of conclusion. As Township Council they have to go by the information provided by the Chief and their Administration.

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Haas to close the public hearing. Voice vote – All ayes.

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Frappolli to deny the appeal of the towing license.

Council Representative Loftin asked how many additional applications were received for the towing license? Chief Boldizar explained that Risoldi was the only company to apply and be denied. Township Solicitor Wright explained that we do not know how many companies did not apply because they are outside of the five miles or other criteria in the ordinance.

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Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Fratinardo, Frappolli
 - NOES: Baldorossi, Loftin
 - ABSTAIN Haas
 - ABSENT: None
- Tie vote – Motion defeated

Township Solicitor Wright explained that there needs to be a motion to grant the appeal and a vote on that and if that is either a tie or if it does not pass, then procedurally the appeal would fail. Administrator Sahol explained that if the appeal passes, Council would be in conflict with its own ordinance by allowing a tower outside of the five mile range which would automatically mean they would have an approval. No further action was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Executive/Worksession Meeting of January 15, 2025

Motion of Haas, seconded by Loftin to approve the minutes. Voice vote – All ayes.

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Motion of Loftin, seconded by Baldorossi to approve the **Treasurer's Bill List**.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

APPLICATIONS

- A. On-Premise Merchandise Raffle and On-Premise 50/50 on May 2, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Florence Township Memorial High School, 1050 Cedar Lane for the Florence Township Memorial High School Parent Organization

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Haas to approve the application. Voice vote – All ayes.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-55 Authorize Issuance of a Duplicate Tax Sale Certificate

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Resolution No. 2025-55.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

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ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-01

Amending Chapter 36 of the Florence Township Code Entitled “Alcoholic Beverages” to Permit up to Three Package Good Liquor Stores to Operate Within One Mile Radius” (2nd Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption)

Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Haas to open up the Public Hearing.

Jonas Singer, Esq. on behalf of Punam Corporation, explained that his client owns a Class B license and he has had it in his pocket since 2019 and he would like to activate that license by establishing a new store within the township of Florence on Route 130. He provided Council with a visual of what the effect is of the ordinance on the land uses on Route 130 indicating that some of the stores within a one-mile radius basically consume most of the available sites that exist on Route 130. His client is prepared to build a new store, obtain all of the proper permits and approvals from the Planning Board, it would be a permitted use within the zone and, although he has not specifically identified a site, he has targeted some and spoken to some property owners. They believe that the ordinance unfairly targets liquor licenses because there is no legitimate reason to protect this type of business from any other type of business that is within the township and the ordinance effectively removes his ability to own and operate a new store. He has been paying the annual fees to the township and to the ABC, which controls liquor licenses and it does not have this provision in its ordinance that limits the amount of liquor licenses that may be located within a distance of each other. It does protect against churches and schools and has those types of regulations but not locating licenses to protect other license holders. He stated that there is no liquor store northbound on Route 130 between Burlington and Yardville so there is a need and the township would receive a new ratable.

Jay Patel, Town Liquor, 2117 Route 130, stated that he has been before Council and the Planning Board to state his points opposing amending this ordinance. He reiterated some of his points to Council at this time. He reminded Council that the four license owners that currently hold the licenses knew of this ordinance when they got the license to operate a business in this town. The liquor store in question was already in business on Route 130 in a strip mall with Wawa across from it and warehouses behind it so he is not sure what area of Route 130 will be more beneficial to this business. In his opinion it is not a matter of location, he does not understand why the business did not thrive in that location and he does not believe it is the Township’s responsibility or the current liquor store owners’ responsibility to figure out a suitable location where they can succeed. Just as you were talking about the towing companies, there is an ordinance in place for a reason and the three license holders that are currently operating in this town that have been serving the community and paying their taxes, have no violations with ABC or the Township and they are abiding by the ordinance. If they were to shut down, they are not going to blame a certain thing and hope that the township is going to bail them out. He believes amending the ordinance will be detrimental to everyone and asked Council to take his points into consideration when making the decision.

Blake Dimon, 1051 Florence-Columbus Road, owner of the Liquor Barn, stated that the ordinance is vague. He stated that he is not in favor of changing the ordinance.

Hansell Desai, Florence Wine and Liquor, 302 Broad Street, agreed with and showed support for the other liquor store owners.

Motion of Haas, seconded by Loftin to close the Public Hearing. Motion of Loftin, seconded by Fratinardo approve Ordinance No. 2025-01.

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Council Representative Loftin asked why we only protect the liquor stores. There are no other ordinances for any other type of business in town. Mayor Marter explained that Mr. Patel, of Punam Corporation, had owned a liquor store on Route 130 where the Rite Aid is now. At that time, Town Liquor was already there and the third store that came in that actually violated the ordinance at that time was the Liquor Barn because the two liquor stores on Route 130 already existed. When Mr. Patel sold to Rite Aid, he moved his store down the street.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Fratinardo, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: Baldorossi, Haas
 - ABSENT: None
- Majority vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02

Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limit and to Establish a Cap Bank (2nd Reading & Public Hearing)

Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Haas to open up the Public Hearing. Seeing no one wishing to be heard it was a motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Haas to close the Public Hearing.

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Ordinance No. 2025-02.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-03

Bond Ordinance for Improvements to Municipal Buildings in and for the Township Appropriating \$115,000 and Authorizing the Issuance of \$109,250 in General Improvement Bonds or Notes of the Township to Finance the Same (Intro. & 1st Reading) (2nd Reading & Public Hearing 2/19/25)

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Ordinance No. 2025-03.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-04

Bond Ordinance, for Improvements to Municipal Sidewalks, Ramps and Curbs in and for the Township, Appropriating \$180,000 and Authorizing the Issuance of \$171,000 in General Improvement Bonds or Notes of the Township to Finance the Same (Intro. & 1st Reading) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing on 2/19/25)

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Ordinance No. 2025-04.

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Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-05

**Bond Ordinance for the Acquisition of Remote Police Cameras in and for the Township,
Appropriating \$210,000 and Authorizing the Issuance of \$199,500 in General Improvement Bonds
or Notes of the Township to Finance the Same
(Intro. & 1st Reading) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing on 2/19/25)**

Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Haas to approve Ordinance No. 2025-05.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Fratinardo, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: Baldorossi, Haas
 - ABSENT: None
- Majority vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06

**Bond Ordinance, for the Acquisition of Police Vehicles for the Township, Appropriating \$170,000,
and Authorizing the Issuance of \$161,500 in General Improvement Bonds
or Notes of the Township to Finance the Same
(Intro. & 1st Reading) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing on 2/19/25)**

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Ordinance No. 2025-06.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-07

**Bond Ordinance for Information Technology and Document Management Equipment in and for
the Township, Appropriating the Issuance of \$152,000 in General Improvement Bonds
or Notes of the Township to Finance the Same
(Intro. & 1st Reading) (2nd Reading & Public Hearing 2/19/25)**

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Haas to approve Ordinance No. 2025-07.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Majority vote – Motion carried

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ORDINANCE NO. 2025-08

Authorizing an Agreement for Tax Exemption with 900 Richards Run Investors, LLC for Property Located at 900 Richards Run, Block 158, Lot 5.01 (Intro. & 1st Reading) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing on 2/19/25)

Administrator Sahol explained that this is a large industrial complex by Whitesell. It was an approval made previously by the Planning Board many years ago and it has finally come to the point that the developer would like to construct this site and in order for them to do that they are asking for the municipality to allow them to enter into a five year abatement. This is not an exemption, it is an abatement and, whereas a traditional five year abatement starts at 0% the first year, the township is going to get 40% the first year and it will continue to ramp up from there. It is an advantage to the municipality to structure it this way because we are going to have the business land where it is supposed to be and it is designed for that purpose and we will be getting it sooner.

Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Loftin to approve Ordinance No. 2025-08.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: None

Unanimous vote – Motion carried

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

None at this time.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Marter explained that she appointed Dawn Liberto to the opening on the Shade Tree Commission and Toniann Carroll to the Recreation Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Council President Frappolli announced that he had a few members of the fire department come out to his home to inspect the safety of his home and checked the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replaced some things. This is a service that they provide every Wednesday and he wanted the public to know that if they have any questions or concerns about the safety of their homes you just need to call and set up an appointment with them. He thanked the fire department publicly.

BOARD OF HEALTH

None at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

None at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Baldorossi to open the meeting up to the public at this time. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was a motion of Haas, seconded by Loftin to close the public comment portion of the meeting. Voice Vote – All Ayes.

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ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION

Resolution 2025-54 Resolution Authorizing the Mayor, Township Council and Support Staff to meet on Closed Session and Authorizing the Exclusion of the Public from that Portion of the Meeting Dealing with Specific Issues Requiring Non-Public Discussions:

- Discussion of litigation related to Affordable Housing, possible acquisition of real property, and matters of attorney client privilege

It was a Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Loftin to adjourn to Closed Session at 8:13 p.m. where no action will be taken.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

ADJOURNMENT

Council returned to the Regular meeting at 9:21 p.m. Voice vote – All ayes. No action was taken. Motion of Baldorossi seconded by Loftin to adjourn. Voice vote – All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
/js