

**MINUTES OF  
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL  
WORKSESSION MEETING  
July 20, 2020**

The Worksession Meeting of the Municipal Council of the Township of Edison was via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m. by Council President Ship-Freeman followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were Councilmembers Brescher, Coyle, Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Patil and Ship-Freeman.

Also present were Township Clerk Russomanno, Deputy Clerk McCray, Township Attorney Northgrave, Business Administrator Ruane, Health Director Elliott, Water & Sewer Director Smith, Acting Recreation Director Fircha, Tax Assessor Jimenez, Township Engineer O’Krepky, Police Captain Schreck, Fire Chief Latham, Frances McManimon, Attorney, Dennis Enright of NW Financial, Fred Rubenstein, Esq., Ken DeRoberts, and IT Jim DeVico.

The Clerk advised that adequate notice of this meeting as required by the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975, has been provided by an Annual Notice sent to The Home News and Tribune, The Star Ledger, Criterion Sentinel and News India Times on December 13, 2019 and posted in the Main Lobby of the Municipal Complex on the same date.

**PRESENTATION:**

Charlie Kratovil, Clean Energy Canvass Director  
Food & Water Watch and Food & Water Action

Council President Ship-Freeman introduced Mr. Kratovil he proceeded with a slide presentation regarding the Initiative Petition Ordinance on Energy Aggregation.

Councilmember Patil, is in support of this idea.

Councilmember Brescher, also is in support of this program.

Councilmember Gomez, asked how will it work and will it be funneled from P.S.E & G.

Councilmember Diehl, thanked him it certainly is something to look at to consider. He applauded him for his work.

Councilmember Coyle, good job he looks forward to supporting this.

Councilmember Joshi, he is in support of all green efforts. He asked a few questions such as average time for contracts, how many options and what would happen if the resident falls behind in the bill.

Council President Ship-Freeman asked how easy will it be for residents who are not computer savey? She also asked about how would the appliance program work? She would like to see the consensus of the entire Township.

Mr. Kratovil explained the bidding process, third party supplier and any one can opt out, however Commercial Businesses will have to opt in. He will email the council the information regarding contracts and suppliers. Residents with Solar Panels are exempt.

Council President Ship-Freeman opened the meeting for comments from the public.

Christo, 14 Fox Road, he asked if everyone received a copy of a flyer he emailed today. These flyers are generally racist. The Township should investigate who did these flyers.

Lisa Zmyewski, 82 Sharon Avenue, thank you Charlie for that presentation. She asked is this coming to be voted on in November.

Mr. Northgrave explained the law regarding the petition and process.

Hearing no further comments, this public hearing was closed, on a motion made by Councilmember Gomez seconded by Councilmember Patil, with all in favor.

**6. REPORTS FROM ALL COUNCIL COMMITTEES:**

Councilmember Coyle, thanked the Mayor and Administration for all their cooperation in Beautification Program.

Councilmember Gomez, Finance Committee has met with Tax Assessor and Ken DeRoberts on revisiting the threshold on Tax Appeals. Ms. Jimenez explained the details of the Resolution which is on the agenda.

Mr. Rubenstein explained it would ultimately save money by increasing the authority. A lot of appeals you will find less than a hearing.

Council President Ship-Freeman, this resolution is for one year. She reported she is still looking into splash parks. She was speaking with Sally Yahara and Open Space Committee regarding a Community Garden.

**7. POINTS OF LIGHT**

Council President Ship-Freeman announced we will be have all our Council Meetings via Zoom due to COVID until further notice. We must follow the Governors guidelines. Applaud everyone from New Jersey for following the rules during COVID.

**8. FROM THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR:**

a. No comments were made.

b. Councilmember Coyle, Facebook live is there going to be any additional cost besides this cost, could you walk thru process.

Jim DeVico, the system has to be intergraded into audio video in the room so you will only have to hit one button.

Councilmember Coyle, is this going to make comments on Facebook or just feed.

Ms. Ruane, it is only going to be a feed.

Councilmember Gomez asked if there is a need right now to purchase that equipment since we are doing zoom now. Do we need to make investment now?

Jim DeVico, explained it does give us other features in terms of intergrading with the TV station for recording and rendering the videos.

Council President Ship-Freeman has spoken with Residents, they like the fact they can see the meeting on Facebook live on any device.

c. & d. No comments were made.

e. Councilmember Brescher, is this just a renewal on this or did we get bids.

Mr. DeVico, explained it's a renewal with same company purchased through a Co-op at the same dollar amount and we go a ten percent discount. We have used the same company for last seven years. He explained what it covers. It's roughly \$26.00 per vehicle.

Councilmember Brescher, asked for data when a vehicle maintenance. Give him a list of what this program does for us.

Council President Ship- Freeman regarding the tracking system, she doesn't want to see more than we gain. I would rather have a fair bid than a too low bid.

f. No comments were made.

g. Councilmember Patil, how many people/departments are on this cellular phone.

Ms. Ruane, will get him a list.

**9. FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE:**

a. and b. No comments were made.

c. Councilmember Brescher, the dollar amount used on the water is that based on last year budget or based on the purposed.

Ms. Ruane, it is based on the proposed budget. We are in talks with Councilmembers on adjusting, we can do that for Wednesday.

Councilmember Patil, the rest of budget is 1/12 of last year budget.

Ms. Ruane, yes

d. through f. No comments were made.

**10. FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH:**

a. No Comments were made.

**11. FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW:**

a. through e. No comments were made.

f. Councilmember Patil, asked is this for open bid.

Mr. Northgrave explained this property came up a few years ago. This is giving authorization to put property to bid.

Councilmember Coyle, asked to include a sign for the property to get more exposure.

Mr. Northgrave expressed it is a great idea to get the best price. He will draft what should go on the sign and circulate to all council.

g. through i. No comments were made.

j. Councilmember Brescher, increasing of legal fees, what is the need. Do we have extraordinary expenses?

Mr. Northgrave explained they are representing the Township for the Officers. We didn't expect Middlesex County to have indictment dismissed.

k. No comments were made.

l. **Added to agenda**, "A Resolution authorizing the Township Planning Board to investigate whether the property immediately adjacent to property fronting on the southerly side of Amboy Avenue, between Liddle Avenue and Brower Avenue, should be designated as an "area in need of redevelopment"

m. **Added to agenda**, "Resolution authorizing the Township Planning Board to investigate whether the properties immediately north and south adjacent to the existing Township marina along the Raritan River should be designated as an "area in need of redevelopment."

**12. FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ENGINEERING:**

a. through k. No comments were made.

L. **Adding to Agenda**; "This resolution provides for Township Acceptance of the constructed improvements under Public Bid No. 18-30-02: 2018 ROAD RESURFACING PROGRAM – VARIOUS STREETS CONTRACT 2; and authorizes FINAL CONTRACT PAYMENT for release of retainage in the amount of \$35,525.82 and close-out of the construction project."

**13. FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS:**

a. through e. No comments were made

**14. FROM THE DEPARTMENT WATER AND SEWER:**

a. Councilmember Brescher if this is for a capital improvement project, I would like to know what this includes.

Mr. Smith explained the estimated construction cost is 3.65million, engineering cost is approximately 7.67% which is about 280,000.

Councilmember Coyle, commented they have been getting a lot of contracts from Edison.

Mr. Smith, they were on board when I got here, I trust them I know we will get a fair price. He reiterated this is critical.

Ms. Ruane, this is an engineering design, they are one of the premier companies. She is 100% confident in this company, it's a critical project.

Councilmember Coyle, feels they should sharpen their pencil.

Council President Ship-Freeman added when you take short cuts it cost more in the long run. She said Mr. Smith is an expert in his field.

There was lengthy discussion on this.

Councilmember Patil, we are all watching every dollars, he agrees with Councilmembers Coyle and Brescher to shop around. It is the duty of the Mayor and Business Administration to get the job done.

b. No comments were made.

c. No comments were made.

d. & e. Councilmember Brescher asked what have we been doing for the past eight months.

Mr. Smith explained the truck purchase and use is for the construction side.

f. & g. No comments were made.

h. Councilmember Brescher thought we would have been briefed on this but he hasn't had an update.

Mr. Northgrave explained when contract was first awarded in 2018, this is a change order.

Mr. Smith explained the hydraulic valves on pump station over 30 years old. This is to replace all three valves. If we don't and it goes in to wet lands it will be a big problem. We know these will work. This job is since 2018.

Councilmember Brescher, why not bid?

Mr. Smith this company was already into this station. This has been held up because of the values. We know these value we are recommending will work. I just need to get this station on line before we have an incident over there.

Councilmember Brescher asked if we have any other contractor we use for emergency.

Mr. Smith explained it doesn't make any sense to get another contractor at this point. The two contractors are Longo and Rapid Pump.

**15. FROM THE CHIEF OF FIRE:**

a. through c. No comments were made.

**16. FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK:**

a. and b. No comments were made.

c. Public hearing with be on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

**17. FROM THE COUNCIL MEMBER TO THE PLANNING BOARD:**

Councilmember Coyle reported they had a meeting last Monday. Resolution regarding sub-division for Federal Business was approved. Two applications were heard Lafayette Avenue, a minor sub-division lot line adjustment no construction was approved and Markim Developers, Major Sub-division was approved, no variances.

**19. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**Council President Ship-Freeman:**

- a. None

**Councilmember Brescher:**

- a. None

**Councilmember Coyle**

- a. Edmund Street update regarding one way.

Mr. O’Krepky, there was a meeting scheduled for July 10<sup>th</sup> canceled by the DOT. We are hoping to reschedule to have in September.

- b. Work at 3889 Park Avenue status.

Mr. O’Krepky, the zoning officer issued a summons, to stop work on Saturday.

- c. CARES Act money, the county has received 140 million dollars for COVID he is asking to draft a letter to get the break down. We deserve a piece of that money.

Ms. Ruane explained we are in the process of submitting our application for the time period of March 12<sup>th</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup>. That money is slated only for Municipalities not businesses. We work on this every day. She will share the criteria of the application with the Council. We hired a consultant from Millennium. We will not miss our opportunity.

**Councilmember Diehl:**

- a. He reminded Mr. Coyle to make sure the elevation on building doesn’t hurt the neighbors.
- b. He asked Engineer to call him regarding the status on the swale for Abbott & Calvert.
- c. Letter received from Open Space Committee regarding Lake Papanini Garden.
- d. He commented on Mr. Coyle’s comment, he has had the privilege as Council President many time to work with three clerks. They all did a terrific job. They have a difficult and a very important job. He feels they are more of a co-pilot, which is very important to the pilot.

**Councilmember Gomez:**

- a. He asked if the county funds are basis for reimbursement.

Ms. Ruane, correct the County and FEMA funds. The first round is for March 12<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>.

- b. He asked we have a moment of silence for Bobby Campbell, who worked for the Township for 46 years on Wednesday.

**Councilmember Joshi:**

- a. He would like this council to support Assembly Bill #3386 which is a law for residency required for Police and Fire. He feels this builds a stronger community.
- b. He asked who checks the curb to curb on streets.

Ms. Ruane replied that is the Engineering Department.

Mr. O’Krepky explained Road Opening Permits are not released until he has measured and inspected.

c. Report on Amazon

Mr. Elliot has met with a group of neighbors this additional cost should cover the rest of the study.

Councilmember Coyle, added Amazon is terrible for our town.

**Councilmember Patil:**

a. None

Council President Ship-Freeman announced the Senior Center Building is a cooling station for residents between 8:00am to 4:00pm.

On a motion made by Councilmember Diehl, seconded by Councilmember Gomez, with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 9:49pm.

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Joyce Ship-Freeman  
Council President

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Cheryl Russomanno, RMC  
Municipal Clerk