

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP SPECIAL MEETING SESSION SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

The Township Committee met on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 295 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road, Chesterfield, New Jersey. The special meeting was called to order by Mayor Panfili at 7:00 p.m. followed by a flag salute and moment of silence.

The Open Public Meetings Act Statement was read and compliance noted.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Present: Belinda Blazic, Denise Koetas-Dale, Michael Russo, Jeremy Liedtka, and Mayor Lee Panfili.

Also present: Thomas A. Sahol, Township Administrator; Caryn M. Hoyer, Township Clerk; John Gillespie, Township Attorney and Michael Davison, Chief of Police.

AGENDA MATTER(S) REQUIRING RECUSAL(S) - NONE

ORDINANCE FOR INTRODUCTION

Ordinance 2022-15 – Ordinance of the Township of Chesterfield, County of Burlington, State of New Jersey Adopting “Old York Redevelopment Plan” For Certain Property Known as Block 701, Lot 2.01, the Former Old York Country Club

Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Russo to introduce the ordinance.

Roll Call: Ms. Blazic – yes; Mr. Russo – yes; Ms. Koetas-Dale – No, Mr. Liedtka – yes; Mayor Panfili – yes.

Mr. Gillespie stated a public hearing date needs to be established. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about the additional information requested to be included in the updated traffic study. Mayor Panfili stated he understood that CME would be able to review and report back promptly. After discussion, it was decided to have the public hearing at the regular meeting October 27th at 6:30 pm. Mr. Gillespie clarified that this ordinance would be the focus of the meeting but there may be other routine business on the agenda. All agreed.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to open the meeting to public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Panfili stated that anyone wishing to make public comment will have the opportunity to do so however there will be a three (3) minute time limit. He stated that public comments made regarding the ordinance introduced this evening would not be part of the public hearing on the ordinance. Mr. Gillespie stated that the ordinance is introduced and the Township Committee can now release the redevelopment plan and associated information that the public was requesting which will address a lot of the concerns. He urged the Township Committee not to

respond to any questions this evening on the ordinance. Mr. Gillespie stated that at the last meeting, the Township Committee agreed to have this meeting to introduce the ordinance so that the information can be released to the public. They will now have the opportunity to review the information and ask questions at the public hearing.

Brett Anderson – 62 Brookdale Way – Concerned that the Committee is not going to talk about the Redevelopment Plan. There is regional pressure on the agricultural district. He does not agree with the designation of Area in Need of Redevelopment (ANR). He would like the Township Committee to remove the ANR. He wants each committee person to answer directly on why they believe the ANR designation should remain.

Dawn Donahue – 79 Bordentown-Chesterfield Rd – She reached out to OYCC and toured the site. She wanted to see for herself instead of looking at a piece of paper. She urged the Township Committee and anyone else, whether they are for or against the plan, to reach out to OYCC and visit the site to see for themselves.

Lorrie Thier – 40 Foulkes – She stated the Master Plan indicates the Ag district should remain a priority. She stated that by changing the zoning that would not protect the Ag district. She does not believe tearing down the buildings and covering it with asphalt rehabs the property, it only destroys the area.

John Kelly – 40 White Pine Road – He stated he read a letter today from the school about the police force and safety of the kids if the warehouse goes in. He is concerned if the Township goes to referendum we will lose our police department. He stated we cannot give up the tax revenue for something on the corner of the Township. All the trucks go in and out to 206.

Marc Lifland – 62 Brookdale Way – He stated the financials posted on the township website indicate that if a warehouse goes in it will not change the fact that there will be a referendum. He stated it shows that taxes will continue to go up.

April Sette – 202 Old York Road – She stated a warehouse is not the only option. There is a lot of farmland in Chesterfield. She stated we need to come up with another revenue source. Cannabis is a good choice.

Agnes Marsala – 42 Cromwell Drive – Thanked Denise for voting no to the introduction of the warehouse. She stated DEP is requesting more information regarding the freshwater wetland application. She is concerned the impervious coverage will disturb the wetlands. She stated the benefit is not worth the consequences.

Shreekant Dhopte – 18 Donlonton Circle – He stated he wished the Township Committee did not introduce the ordinance. He referred to an article in mycentraljersey.com with a similar situation in Branchburg however the Township Committee there held a non-binding referendum to poll the residents to proceed as the residents wanted.

Chip Katona – 355 Ellisdale Road, 43 Margerum Road & 120 Old York Road - He stated he pays way too many taxes in this town. The warehouse might help with

the tax base and not raise taxes as fast. The truck traffic will come and go from 206. Truck drivers will figure it out. It is off the road and only a few home around it which is unfortunate for them but we need to do something. Let's put money from the warehouse to something for all the township, not cricket fields or other fields but something for the whole town such as ambulance, firetruck, police, not something for just one section of the town. When the development was built there was a lot of truck traffic bringing dirt in to build the property up 5 feet to accommodate the sewer. There are now a lot more cars. That's progress and we dealt with it. He doesn't complain about all the cars that cut him off when he is on his tractor. Just deal with it.

Sam Cannizzaro – 214 Recklesstown Way – Thanked the committee for considering the ordinance. We have elected officials that have more information than the residents and support the officials to make these decisions. Keep the course. We have a thriving community and we need to keep it that way.

Erica Vershelde – 10 Deerfield Drive, Mansfield – Former member of the golf course. All the surrounding golf courses are at full capacity. There are not enough of them. The traffic on Route 68 has already picked up a lot of truck traffic.

Matthew Litt – 19 Sprague Street – Speaking this evening as the VP of the School Board and their Finance Committee. A letter was circulated today and they are not for or against the warehouse. They were promised information back in July and it has not yet been received. For some reason, all communication has stopped between the School Board and the Township. They would like that information well in advance of the October 27th meeting so they can perform an analysis to see what is in the best interest of the school and students.

Jacqueline Guthrie – 452 Main Street – You can put as many barriers as you want up but that will not stop the traffic. She is concerned that her quality of life will be destroyed if this goes through. She would have never moved to Chesterfield if she knew this was possible. She believes information is being kept from the public.

PJ Oliver – 29 Waln Road – The warehouse is not going to ruin our quality of life. He drives past the Old York Country Club every day to and from work and most people wouldn't even realize it is there. He has an Amazon warehouse right behind his shop in Bordentown. He was concerned about it before it went up, but now it doesn't bother them. The warehouses work efficiently. The Township is a business. He doesn't think it will help bring down the taxes, but hopefully help in not raising taxes as much. He doesn't want any police, EMS or fire being cut. We need all of our emergency services. He wants what is best for the township and all of the people in this room.

Mayor Panfili asked the public to allow everyone to speak without interruption or being mocked.

Ariel Hilton – 110 Bordentown-Georgetown Road – One of her biggest concerns is the economic impact is the leading charge. That should not be the reason for the ANR. She already has water problems on her property. She is concerned this will increase the existing water issue and the additional impacts her property will have

if a warehouse goes in. She doesn't understand why an agriculture first community is allowing a warehouse as its first option.

Lisa Perritt – 21 Clearwater Drive Allentown – She is right around the corner from Robbinsville warehouse and was told it wouldn't affect anyone. It is a big problem for Allentown. What is wrong with a golf course? The land is beautiful. It is a shame it is going to be bulldozed.

Partha Valmikam – 4 Quaker Street – He is a student at Norther Burlington. He goes to school by way of Old York Road. Public spaces are very important as a lot of people are still feeling the effects of COVID. He stated the focus should be on the wellbeing of our community and by getting their opinion on it before it happens. He believes that would help with a lot of misconceptions later.

Ralph Irizarry – 82 Sykesville Road – He moved here from Staten Island. This warehouse will be life changing for some people. He supports some sort of poll and then make the decision, heal and move on as a community.

Lester Wichtel – 607 Chesterfield-Arneytown Road – He stated he looks at who is going to benefit. The only one to benefit is the property owner. He stated to drive down Old York Road there will be 15-20 cars backed up and then add trucks. This makes no sense. He asked the committee to be more transparent. Why can't the public know everything?

Ashley Watson - 454 Main Street – She has been watching this for 2 years. One warehouse is going to affect 10-15 residents. She does not believe the ANR was property done. One warehouse will bring more. She moved from Bordentown because they were going to be building warehouses.

Joyce Dipaola – 247 Sykesville Road – She has lived here for 43 years. There are so many other types of tax revenues but they were turned down. The warehouse will not affect her. She stated if you change the zoning for Old York, then you will change for others as well.

Jim Robb – 110 Bordentown-Georgetown Road - He stated this will be right in his back yard. He is concerned what it will do to the value of his home. Every town wanted the money for the warehouses and every one of them are fed up with the burden that it places on the towns. Once you build one, there will be more. He understands the town needs revenue but thinks there are other avenues for revenue.

Amanda Layendecker – 103 Bordentown-Georgetown Road – The warehouse will be directly behind them. This is life changing for them. Just today, someone went by the bus with the stop sign out. There will be other traffic other than trucks with the warehouse. She stated do not be blinded by the money. She hopes we are doing our due diligence and looking past the dollar sign.

Jay Shah – 11 Thorn Lane – He saw a post about a letter from the Chesterfield Board of Education. What does the Board of Education have to do with this property? He was concerned that the Vice President of the School Board was speaking for the Board. Why are they inserting themselves in politics? They should

be concerned about the kids and staff in the school. He thinks the Board is being politicized. He does not understand why the school would be opposed as it will bring money into the school. He stated if losing \$241,000 in state funding and gaining \$1 million from this revenue and they oppose this, it doesn't make sense.

James Codella – 470 Main Street – He stated the main reason he is opposed to the warehouse is that it does not solve the underlying budget issue that will require a referendum. It may push it back a year or two. He stated the School Board is concerned that if the warehouse is not at full capacity, then they lose money. He stated he believes the tax revenue is only guaranteed if at full capacity. You are going to have 700-1000 people going to and from work. You are going to need more police to handle the traffic. He stated a new police officer will cost \$90,000 with benefits and training. He believes if it was a windfall of revenue, then the other towns wouldn't be building more.

Christina Hogan – 396 Chesterfield-Jacobstown Road – She stated Matt Litt was present to speak on behalf of the School Board because she was in hospital and unable to attend. She stated they are not supporting or against the warehouse. She stated that the Board has concerns. She stated they are involved because they are concerned about the kids. People have asked them questions and the Board is trying to do the appropriate thing for the kids and school. As far as the letter that went out, anyone can sign up on the Schools website to receive information from the school the same as they can for the Township.

Christy Green – 109 Bordentown-Georgetown Road – She appreciates that the committee allows everyone to be heard. She does not want a warehouse in Chesterfield. It would be close to her home and affect her life and the life of her kids. She stated we can do better if we think outside the box.

Shamita Kumar – 39 Harness Way – She stated the School Board letter was half baked because they did not have the information that was requested from the town in July. She stated you were elected to follow the will of the people. She believes the special meetings are called to hope people will not be show up. She stated if there was an open dialogue this would not be an issue.

Hearing no further public comment, Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to close public comment. All were in favor.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Russo to adjourn at 8:10 PM. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Caryn M. Hoyer, RMC
Township Clerk