

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP REGULAR SESSION FEBRUARY 9, 2023

The Township Committee met on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 295 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road, Chesterfield, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Koetas-Dale 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, Jeremy Liedtka, Matthew Litt, Shreekant Dhopte and Denise Koetas-Dale

Also present: Thomas A. Sahol, Township Administrator; Caryn M. Hoyer, Township Clerk; Rachel Fryc, Deputy Clerk; Michael Davison, Chief of Police; Troy Ulshafer, Public Works Director; Carmella Roberts, Township Engineer and John Gillespie, Township Attorney.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to approve the December 29th executive minutes. Voice vote – All in favor except Mr. Dhopte and Mr. Litt who abstained. Mr. Litt made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve the January 26th minutes. All were in favor.

PROCLAMATIONS – F. Gerry Spence & Glenn McMahon

Mayor Koetas-Dale stated that both Gerry Spence and Glenn McMahon have gone above and beyond with volunteering for the Township.

Mayor Koetas-Dale Stated that Mr. Spence could not join us tonight but the Township Committee will present him with his Proclamation for 19 years of service as a member of the Planning Board and Environmental Commission at his home when he is feeling better.

Mayor Koetas-Dale presented Mr. McMahon with his Proclamation for volunteering and serving on the Planning Board for 14 years.

PUBLIC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

Mr. Litt made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to open to public comment. All were in favor.

Agnes Marsala, 42 Cromwell Drive thanked Troy Ulshafer and the Public Works Department for their help again. She urged the Township Committee to make all resolutions and ordinances available to the public prior to the meetings.

Lee Panfili, 518 Ward Avenue in regards to the 33 grinder pumps on for discussion tonight, he reminded the Township Committee that these 33 residents were forced to have grinder pumps. The residents cannot operate their sewer without the grinder pumps which is part of the overall sewer system. He asked the Township not to privatize the grinder pumps due to the cost and maintance it will put on the 33 home owners. It will be a financial hardship for some residents if they have to replace their pump. We pay the same as everyone else for the same service. If privatized it will not be the same service. He fully supports if there is misuse of the grinder pump, the resident should be responsible for the costs.

Susie Mahon, 16 Chesterfield-Crosswicks Road agrees with Mr. Panfili and said having a grinder pump was not her choice and she should not be forced to own and maintain it. We were forced to have the grinder pumps to avoid putting in a lift station. Ordinance states the pumps are the property of the Township. Mahon stated she understands the Historic Preservation Guidelines were presented to the Historic Association and that since the Township paid for the HPC Guidelines, the Township residents should get the first look at them not another organization.

Lorrie Thier, 40 Foulkes asked if there will be a provision in Ordinance 2023-1 on how the Township will monitor the maintenance that will be required by property owners and what will the consequences be to the property owners if the buildings are not maintained properly.

Devin Daniels, Fellowship CrossPoint Church member stated that if Ordinance 2023-1 is adopted, it will put a financial burden on the church. The church opposes it and asks the Township Committee not to adopt.

Steve Hazen, 447 Main Street regarding Resolution 2023-1, said that marijuana is still federally illegal. He is concerned that federal funds will be held back due to the Township having cannabis.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to close public comment. All were in favor.

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

Ms. Koetas-Dale indicated there will be a lot of changes with Ordinance 2023-1 and a reference to that ordinance is made within Ordinance 2023-2.

Mr. Gillespie recommended removing the definition section “demolition by neglect” from the ordinance for introduction. There was discussion about the Ordinance 2023-1. Mr. Gillespie explained it could either be held over or the ordinance can

just die. Mr. Liedtka questioned the numbering of the ordinance. Mr. Gillespie stated that Ordinance 2023-2 as presented tonight can be renumbered if the other ordinance is going away.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to introduce Ordinance 2023-1 with amendment regarding demolition by neglect reference. Voice vote – All in favor. The public hearing for this ordinance will be the February 23, 2023 meeting.

**(Formerly 2023-2)
ORDINANCE 2023-1**

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 123 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD, ENTITLED “HISTORIC PRESERVATION”, ESTABLISHING DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND SITES, AND MAKING CERTAIN OTHER REVISIONS”

ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to remove the prior numbered Ordinance 2023-1 from the agenda and die. **AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 123 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD, ENTITLED “HISTORIC PRESERVATION” AND ESTABLISHING A NEW SECTION ENTITLED “DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT; REQUIRED MAINTENANCE.** Voice vote – All in favor

PRESENTATION BY VERDURE VENTURES, LLC

Verdure Ventures attorney, Ryan McGee made a presentation to the Township Committee on the Cannabis licenses they are pursuing. He discussed the location and the Township Committee was previously provided a conceptual plan of the renderings of what the building will look like. He is requesting a resolution of support from the Township Committee to operate within the Township which is required as part of the Township licensing process.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2023-2-1. All were in favor. Mayor Koetas-Dale asked Mr. Sahol to put the conceptual plan on the Township website. Mr. Litt asked Mr. Gillespie if there are any concerns or risks of federal funds being withheld as one resident asked in public comment. Mr. Gillespie replied that the farm is not preserved. He stated the federal government can do what they want but does not see this as risk since the property is not farmland preserved. Mr. Gillespie stated the Township is conforming to state statute.

RESOLUTION 2023-2-1

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MUNICIPAL SUPPORT FOR VERDURE VENTURES LLC TO RECEIVE A CLASS 1 CANNABIS CULTIVATOR AND CLASS 2 CANNABIS MANUFACTURER LICENSE FROM THE NEW JERSEY CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION TO OPERATE WITHIN CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2023-2-2. All were in favor.

RESOLUTION 2023-2-2

RESOLUTION APPOINTING JASON HANLEY AS CROSSING GUARD.

BILL LIST

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Mr. Litt to approve the bill list. Voice vote – All in favor.

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

CONSUMPTION LICENSE – Mr. Sahol supplied the committee with some consumption license sales. The Township Committee would like to put this out to bid. Mr. Gillespie asked that the Township Committee to determine the minimum bid for the next meeting.

REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATION

Mayor – Mayor Koetas-Dale suggested having a budget workshop. Mr. Liedtka suggested having 2 budget workshops prior to March 2nd. The Township Committee scheduled budget workshops for the following dates, February 16th at 7pm and February 23rd at 6pm. Both meetings will be open to the public.

Administration

Recreation - Porchfest – Ms. Fryc sent a memo to the Township Committee asking for their approval for the 3rd Annual Porchfest scheduled for May 13th by Township residents. Ms. Fryc stated that she will work with Chief Davison and PWD Troy Ulshafer on the road closures. The roads scheduled for closing would be Sprague Street between Latham and Stevenson and Stevenson between Sprague and Recklesstown. Mr. Litt made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve as requested. All were in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Grinder Pump Ownership – Ms. Koetas-Dale asked Mr. Sahol to explain. He stated that some of the Township Committee members have expressed an interest of transferring ownership of the pumps from the town to the homeowner. Mr. Sahol asked the Township Committee if they would like to discuss. Mr. Liedtka does not think it is fair to transfer ownership of the pumps to the homeowner. Mr. Litt asked what the benefits are to the Township if we transfer ownership to the homeowner. Mr. Sahol replied that the Township would no longer need to hire a sewer operator for calls, pump service and maintenance for the grinder pumps. We would still have costs for the overall sewer system maintenance & operation. Mr. Liedtka said that money comes out of the sewer budget and is funded by the residents using the sewer system. Mr. Litt asked what that costs were in 2021 and 2022. Troy Ulshafer will get that cost for Mr. Litt.

Public availability of resolutions and ordinances prior to meeting – Koetas-Dale – Mayor Koetas-Dale recommended that we start this process. Mr. Dhopte would like to see what the other towns are doing. Ms. Koetas-Dale replied that most towns are already following this process. Mr. Litt asked Mr. Gillespie if there are any legal implications. Mr. Gillespie indicated the issue is the public may be commenting or concerned about a document which is essentially still in draft form and subject to change up until introduced at the meeting. This may cause undue concern by the public if a change is made or needed prior to the meeting. Mr. Dhopte asked if we can pick and choose what resolutions and ordinances we want to make public. The Township Committee agreed it is all or nothing. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked the Township Committee to give it some thought and discuss at the next meeting.

The Need for Civility in Local Government Dialogue by John Gillespie – Litt Mr. Litt quoted a few paragraphs from Mr. Gillespie's article and gave him credit. Mr. Litt hopes that he and the Committee will run the meetings this way while he is on the Township Committee.

Checklist for public/private events – Koetas-Dale – Ms. Koetas-Dale came up with a checklist for events such as the Porchfest that she sent to Tom and Rachel to review and implement going forward.

Mr. Litt made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to open the meeting to public comment. All were in favor.

Brian Mahon, 16 Chesterfield-Crosswicks Road asked why the Township is considering having the homeowners own the grinder pumps. Ms. Koetas-Dale replied that it was requested to be on the agenda. He asked that it be removed from discussion.

Lorrie Thier, 40 Foulkes asked about the date and time of the Porchfest and thanked the Township Committee for their good questions tonight. Ms. Fryc replied that the Porchfest is scheduled for May 13th, time and locations are to be determined.

Dawn Donahue, 79 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road asked about the dog bite and what is being done to prevent in the future. She would like there to be more accountability for residents that don't register and vaccinate their cats and dogs.

Lee Givi, Treasurer of Fellowship CrossPoint Church commented on the demolition by neglect ordinance that was removed earlier in the meeting. He said that the church opposes any such ordinance since it will put a financial burden on their organization.

Janet Fletcher, 79 Wain Road is very concerned about the demolition by neglect ordinance because of the unfair financial burden that it will put on the Fellowship CrossPoint Church.

Kathleen Coughlin, 10 Tudor Court is against Resolution 2023-2-1 and asks the Township Committee to reconsider. In regards to Ordinance 2023-1 that was removed she asked the Township Committee to consider the families that will be directly affected by this type of ordinance.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Litt to close public comment. All were in favor.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Ms. Blazic stated she had a meeting with Chief Davison, Mr. Sahol and the Animal Control Officer regarding the vaccination and registration process for cats and dogs. They felt it is best to start with educating the community prior to enforcing. Some ideas would be to have a table set up at the Harvest Festival, Green Fair and other community event, send out reminder post cards and also make it easier by having a pay online or pay with credit card options. Mr. Litt asked if we know what percentage of animals in town are currently registered. Mr. Sahol stated that a couple of years ago we had 800 now we have 500. Mayor Koetas-Dale suggested having SEWA volunteers go door to door through-out the community to help educate the residents.

Mr. Liedtka thanked Glenn McMahon and said he always volunteers when asked.

Mr. Litt said that he reached out to the attorney for CrossPoint Church to find out if there was any common ground.

Mr. Litt asked Mr. Sahol if he had a chance to find out what other towns are doing incentivize compliance with the historic guidelines. Mr. Sahol reached out to several Townships but none have monetary incentive programs.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to go into Executive Session for matters related to litigation at 8:35 PM Resolution 2023-2-3. All were in favor.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Litt to return to regular session at 8:55 PM. All were in favor.

Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 PM. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Caryn M. Hoyer, RMC
Township Clerk