

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP REGULAR SESSION FEBRUARY 8, 2024

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 Matt Litt at 7:00 p.m.

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

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Present: Belinda Blazic, Shreekant Dhopte, Rebecca Hughes, Denise Koetas-Dale and Matt Litt

Also present: Caryn M. Hoyer, Township Clerk; Rachel Fryc, Deputy Clerk; Troy Ulshafer, Public Works Manager; Joseph Hirsh, Township Engineer; Dominic P. DiYanni, Township Attorney and Michael Davison, Police Chief

AGENDA MATTER(S) REQUIRING RECUSAL(S) – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve the January 25th 2024 regular meeting minutes. All were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA -

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to open the meeting to public comment for matters on the agenda. All were in favor.

Julia Trotman, 76 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road spoke on behalf of the Chesterfield Community Garden Club and supplied the Township Committee with a plan for the Community Garden. Ms. Trotman stated the proposed location is behind the Township Building. Their goal is to have 75 plus plots starting with 40 plots based on interest. They plan to look into grants to fund the project. Ms. Trotman stated that the town demographics are changing and thinks more residents will want to participate in a community garden.

Roseann Greenberg, 17 Iron Bridge Road commented on Troy Ulshafer's memo regarding the community garden. She said that his 8 recommended locations do not have water or have meter water which is an extra cost. Ms. Greenberg's recommended locations are either behind the Township Building or near the DPW at the Municipal Park near Newbold Lane. This would allow them to utilize the rain water due to the large rooftops on the buildings with the support of a rain storm water infrastructure. Ms. Greenberg stated a Rutgers Engineer can assist in designing the system and she plans to apply for grants to help in the funding of the rain storm water infrastructure. Ms. Greenberg said that out of the 30 residents who have signed up for a plot in the garden, 10 have stepped forward to be responsible for the project. SEWA has also volunteered to help with the building and maintenance of the garden.

Arathi Shankarling, 25 Canter Place – she stated on behalf of SEWA they support the Community Garden and said that SEWA volunteers already help out in the Community Gardens in surrounding towns and they donate the food grown to local food banks. This is a good way to engage the youth and a space to connect with others.

Brittany Riccitiello, 8 Rosewood Drive is in support of the Community Garden and does not understand why the EC is not supporting it. This is a sustainable environmental benefit and a way to connect with other residents.

Cassandra Greenberg, 55 Newbold Lane is in support of the Community Garden and does not believe it will be competition with the local farm stands. A larger percentage of residents do not have an area to do gardening.

Meredith McCabe, 94 Harness Way supports the Community Garden. She works as a therapist and believes that community gardens help with loneliness and isolation. She was part of a community garden in Princeton and made a lot of friends.

Brett Anderson, 62 Brookdale Way - He stated that last year this time we saw first-hand transparency in a look into the decision with the interviews of the professionals and seeing draft resolutions. However they have not been available lately. We saw professionals treat residents with respect and leadership to our town. He stated that some stonewalling by done by some who only work with those they like. The role of the Township Engineer is to think ahead and share answers that sometimes the township may not always like. He has respect for those with years of experience and education behind them but we need to move beyond that. The infrastructure is not getting any younger but maybe it wasn't put in correctly to being with. He stated many of his neighbors feel the same way. Show us that we have a brighter and better Chesterfield and moved forward beyond the petty past.

Akhila Pai, 12 Alluvial Drive spoke on behalf of SEWA International. They are asking the Township Committee for permission to put in a 9/11 Memorial which will include a reflective garden and commemorative plaque to engage the community. Troy Ulshafer suggested Charlotte Rogers Park as a good location for the memorial. If approved, Ms. Pai plans on reaching out to local landscapers for help designing and sponsors to help fund the project. She wanted to make sure Township Committee is in favor of this prior to them moving forward with a final plan for the memorial.

ORDINANCE FOR INTRODUCTION

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to introduce Ordinance 2024-3. Roll Call: YEA: Blazic, Dhopte, Hughes, Koetas-Dale, Litt
The public hearing for this ordinance will be February 22nd

ORDINANCE 2024-3

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD, IN THE COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR

Mayor Litt stated he would like to revise the Resolution 2024-2-1 to indicate the firm name instead of an individual name. Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-2-1 with the firm name. Voice vote - All in favor except Denise Koetas-Dale who voted no.

**RESOLUTION 2024-2-1 RESOLUTION APPOINTING TOWNSHIP
ENGINEER FOR 2024**

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-2-2. Voice vote - All in favor.

**RESOLUTION 2024-2-2 RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR AND OBTAIN A
FY 2024 LOCAL RECREATION IMPROVEMENT
GRANT THROUGH THE NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-2-3. Voice vote - All in favor.

**RESOLUTION 2024-2-3 RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE
LAND USE**

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-2-4. Voice vote - All in favor.

**RESOLUTION 2024-2-4 RESOLUTION APPOINTING SUBSTITUTE
PLUMBING AND MECHANICAL SUB-CODE
INSPECTOR**

Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to approve Resolution 2024-2-5. Voice vote - All in favor.

**RESOLUTION 2024-2-5 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP
OF CHESTERFIELD TO ENTER INTO A
SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE
TOWNSHIP OF FLORENCE FOR CERTIFIED
RECYCLING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

The clerk explained that the 4th quarter sewer billing had an error which was realized after the billing went out to the residents. It was recommended to waive the penalty for the 4th quarter, which was due on February 28th, and extend to March 29th.

BILL LIST

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to approve the bill list. Voice vote – All in favor.

REPORTS & DISCUSSION

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Mr. Dhopte asked that the Township Committee to determine tonight if we are moving forward with the Community Garden or not after Troy Ulshafer states his concerns based on a memo he sent to the Township Committee. Troy said his concerns are location. He does not agree with the proposed location behind Town Hall and feels it will detract from the building. There is no access or parking near the garden area and is worried gardeners will drive on the grass to get to the gardens. He is concerned about upkeep of the gardens and that eventually it will fall on the DPW to maintain. Mr. Dhopte stated he is in favor of having the garden behind the Township Building and suggests putting in another driveway close to the gardens. Mayor Litt stated Troy's concerns are valid but can be overcome. He thank Ms. Greenberg for not giving up on this project. He suggests approving the community garden on a trial basis. Ms. Blazic is concerned that the EC is not in support of the community garden. Ms. Koetas-Dale explained that the EC is not opposed to the garden but is not able to help with the project at this time. Mayor Litt asked that someone from the EC attend the next Township meeting. Mr. DiYanni suggested that the approval of the community garden is done in phases. He is not concerned with any liability as the applications should have a hold harmless clause. Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to grant the community garden behind the Township Building subject to funding obtained by the Community Garden Association and subject to rules and regulations approved by the Township Committee from time to time on a trial basis. All were in favor except Belinda Blazic who voted no.

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-2-4. Voice vote - All in favor.

RESOLUTION 2024-2-6

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXTENSION OF THE GRACE PERIOD FOR 2023 FOURTH QUARTER SEWER PAYMENTS DUE FEBRUARY 28, 2024

PORCH FEST

Rachel Fryc received a request from Chesterfield residents to hold the 4th Annual Porch Fest in Old York Village at various homes on Saturday, May 11th from 1pm – 7pm. Road closures maps were given to Chief Davison, Troy Ulshafer and the Township Committee for their approval. Chief Davison stated that he is in agreement for the requested road closures for the event with the exception of Recklesstown Way between Saddle & Harness. Recklesstown is a major road through the development. He stated Recklesstown Way would need an officer at each end of the closure for him to feel comfortable allowing the closure. Ms. Koetas-Dale said that at last year's event that road was not closed and there were a lot of people going back and forth across the road which is why the Porch Fest Committee is suggesting to close it. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked for police presence at that location during the event. Chief Davison suggested removing that location from the event if it is creating an issue. Troy will supply cones and barricades for the event for the Porch Fest Committee to pick up and set up and break down for the event. Mr. Dhopte is in agreement with Ms. Koetas-Dale to shut down

Recklesstown Way or have police presence for safety reasons. Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve the Porch Fest and road closures for Sprague Street – between Lathem & Stevenson and Stevenson between Sprague and Recklesstown. Recklesstown Way is not be closed but can be discussed between Chief Davison and the applicants between now and the event if needed. All were in favor.

9/11 MEMORIAL

Troy supplied the Township Committee with his suggested location at Charlotte Rogers Park for the 9/11 Memorial. He said the location is based on parking, space as well as the need for an American flag. SEWA plans to start the project in the spring after they reach out to local landscapers and volunteers to start the project. Troy reached out to Green Acres for approval and is waiting to hear back but does not anticipate any issues. Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve the 9/11 Memorial Park at Charlotte Rogers Park subject to Green Acres approval. All were in favor.

INTERVIEW DATES FOR TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATOR

Mayor Litt suggested having this conversation when the Township Committee decides how many applicants they plan to interview.

REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATION

MAYOR:

Mayor Litt asked Mr. DiYanni to give everyone an update regarding Ginger Road. Mr. DiYanni stated that a notice was sent to the owner asking for specifics regarding the use of the property. They had 10 days to respond. The owner never picked up the certified mail, however the chief marketing person reached out to him and Mr. DiYanni emailed the letter to them. He stated that they will provide him a response to the letter. Mr. DiYanni spoke with Mr. McMahan who advised that there is not one living there at this time. The activity going on is just getting it ready for a use and that he was advised they are working with DCA to get approval for CSLR. Mr. DiYanni stated we are working on this. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about an ordinance that could require fencing or some other things to address the residents' concerns. Mr. DiYanni stated it depends on the type of license they get as they come with requirements that need to be met.

Mr. Litt would like to have an OPRA training for all the volunteers on the boards. He would also like to encourage them all to have a separate email to be used solely for their volunteer position. Mr. DiYanni stated he could setting up a zoom meeting to give the training to the members. Ms. Blazic stated that social media is also an issue as they had their own facebook page. Mr. DiYanni stated that everything should run through the township. He will set up a couple meeting dates.

Mr. Litt stated he would like to do a resolution appointing all 7 volunteers to the Budget Advisory Committee. Ms. Blazic thing having Mr. Anderson on the BAC

is an ethics violation. Mr. Litt stated that is ok because the lawsuit has no financial obligation that the Township would have to pay. Everything is being paid by Active Acquisitions. He also stated that all the documents that the BAC get are documents that are available to the public. Mr. DiYanni does not see an ethic issue. They are an advisory committee. Ms. Blazic would like an opinion letter from Mr. DiYanni. Ms. Hughes agrees.

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to appoint the following seven members to the Budget Advisory Committee: Brett Anderson, James Codella, Michael Franken, Steven Hazen, William Puglia, Brian Strobe and Daniel Wolverton. Mr. Dhopte, Ms. Koetas-Dale and Mayor Litt were in favor; Ms. Blazic and Ms. Hughes were opposed. Ms. Hughes and Mr. Koetas-Dale will be liaison to the BAC.

Mr. Ulshafer that the septic lines for the municipal building are located behind the building and he will need to confirm the community garden would not interfere with that.

Ms. Blazic asked about the payment for the damage to Village Square Park. Ms. Fryc stated she was advised they would be coming in Monday with a check for the damages.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Dawn Donahue, 79 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road wanted to make the Township Committee aware that she spoke with the County regarding 10 Ginger Road. Their septic application has not been approved and until it is no one should be living in the house. Ms. Donahue request the Township have a "No Knock" ordinance. She said that residents would sign up to be put on the list and pay a fee to receive a sticker to place on their front door so that solicitors know not to knock. Mayor Litt agrees this is a good idea and asked Chief Davison to weigh in. Chief Davison stated that the officers are already enforcing unpermitted solicitation so this list would just add an extra layer of protection. The Township Committee asked Mr. DiYanni to amend the ordinance to include the "No Knock" language and check to see if other towns have a fee for the sticker.

Brett Anderson, 62 Brookdale Way stated that his sewer bill was incorrect. Ms. Hoyer asked him to bring in the October, November and December bills from Aqua. He will bring that in. He is disappointed that the Township could not work well with the former Township Engineer. Mr. Anderson says he is in support of the Community Garden.

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

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Ms. Blazic is happy to see the Fenton Lane pickle ball courts are getting a lot of use. Mr. Dhopte agreed and said he has had requests from the residents to put lights on the courts. He reminded everyone that the tennis courts at the Municipal Park are also lined for pickle ball.

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-2-7 for executive session at 9:00 PM. All were in favor.

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to return to regular session at 9:57. All were in favor.

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 PM. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Caryn M. Hoyer, RMC
Township Clerk