

WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

October 21, 2015 - 7:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

The regular meeting of the West Amwell Township Committee was called to order at 7:33 p.m. Present were Mayor George A. Fisher, Deputy Mayor Zachary T. Rich, Committeeman John Dale, Clerk Lora Olsen and Attorney Philip J. Faherty III. Also in attendance were John Cronic, David Gill, Dave Beaumont, Hal Shute and Steve Bergenfeld.

Mayor Fisher announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was included in the Resolution faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and Trenton Times on January 6, 2015, was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on said date and has remained continuously posted as required under the Statute. A copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

The meeting was recorded via digital recording system.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Mayor Fisher led the assembled group in the pledge to the nation's flag.

AGENDA REVIEW BY TOWNSHIP CLERK

Nothing was added.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Last Clean-up Day for 2015 – October 31st, Permits Available in the Clerk's Office
- General Election – November 3rd, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., Municipal Building
- Municipal Offices Closed – November 11th, Veterans Day
- Hazardous Waste Day – November 14th, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., County Complex, Rt 12
- PSE&G to Perform ROW Vegetation Maintenance from Nov 1 throughout 2016
- Please Come to the Table if You Wish to Address the Committee
- Kindly Turn Cell Phones Off During Meeting

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The October 7, 2015 Regular and Closed Session minutes were unanimously approved on motion from Dale, seconded by Rich.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC/TOPIC NOT ON THE AGENDA

No one came forward.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION(S)

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE AND/OR PUBLIC HEARING

Introduction: Ordinance 10, 2015

Mayor Fisher commented that this amendment was a long time in the making and has cut down uses to a manageable level. Mr. Shute advised that a table is missing from the ordinance. The planner will be contacted to provide same.

The following ordinance was read by title and introduced on first reading:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER 109, "LAND DEVELOPMENT" OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST AMWELL TO AMEND PERMITTED USES OF ZONING DISTRICTS; TO CONSOLIDATE AND REORGANIZE SECTIONS PERTAINING TO CONDITIONAL USES; TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR FARMS AS A PRINCIPAL USE; AND TO ADD STANDARDS FOR ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

(copy attached to the original minutes)

Rich moved to introduce the Ordinance on first reading and Fisher seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The public hearing will be November 18th.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Open Space

- Preserved Acreage Total: Held

- *Project Status Update:* **Amwell Chase** (Toll N) closed as planned last week. The CADB will forward a copy of the deeds for Township files at a future date. Mr. Rich requested that a note be placed on the website concerning preservation of this 210 acre property. The **Lambert** survey has been approved by both the County and State. Mr. Shute offered that he hopes that the introduced ordinance satisfies the request for a potential second home on the farm. The ordinance has been forwarded to the attorney. Attorney Faherty advised that work is progressing on the survey for **Holcombe** and that there is language ready to send to the State. However, he has not received a revised agreement and will follow up. The **Green Acres** signs have been posted, with the big ones on municipal property plus that of Runkle on Route 179.

Environmental

- *Authorization to Post September 10, 2015 Minutes to Website:* Approved

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Possible Appointments – None

Updates – 1) The mayor met recently with Engineer Burr about the **generator** and some pictures were taken. The latter will be sent out for specs. 2) Attorney Faherty advised that he spoke with someone at the NJ Historic group concerning the **unsafe structure on Route 31**. His letter has been received but there is a 60 day review/respond window. 3) A **backup plan** for the Comcast phone system was held. 4) Mr. Rich relayed that he spoke with Mr. Flemming concerning the George Washington Road (**Coon Path**) situation. All is good.

Discussion Concerning Professional Services for 2016 - Held

Results of Gypsy Moth Inspection by Department of Agriculture – The recent survey detected no major infestations.

Proposed Records Clearance Ordinance – Attorney Faherty stated that the inclusion of the Assessor would be good idea as he should be part of the process. However, he has not yet completed his review of the ordinance. Mr. Gill added his concern over work without permits. Mr. Dale stated his objection to a fee for this proposed clearance work. Held

Resolution to Enter Closed Session – Held until later in the evening

NEW BUSINESS

Equalized Evaluation Appeal – Attorney Faherty relayed that he has reviewed the form presented at the last meeting; overviewed the steps needed to file an appeal; noted that both he and the County Tax Administrator are new to the process; and, that he has at least five hours of research time into this assignment, with several more in order to get up to speed. At this point Dave Beaumont and Dave Gill came forward and a lengthy discussion ensued over types of sales used by the State for their calculations; ratios; parcels that should be questioned; outreach to knowledgeable professionals for information and guidance; estimates for savings; whether a challenge should be pursued and would same be worth the effort; the possible downside involved in a re-review by the State; time frame for the overall process; and, costs involved. Mr. Beaumont also relayed inconsistencies he has found with the State's work during his research. Given the knowledge that Mr. Beaumont has acquired during his extensive study of the matter, authorization was given to pull it together and present it to tax attorney Harry Haushalter to verify what to submit; to offer an opinion as to whether this could be a successful appeal; and, cost involved. The matter will be brought back on November 4th for a final decision as to whether or not to proceed. The CFO is also to be apprised of potential cost involved.

Resolution for Rocktown-Lamb Road Application –

Township of West Amwell Resolution No. 149-2015

Resolution: Approval to submit a grant application and execute a grant contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the Rocktown-Lambertville Road - Phase 3 project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Council of West Amwell Township formally approves the grant application for the above stated project.

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
ATTORNEY CLIENT PRIVILEGE
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

The Resolution was unanimously approved on motion by Dale, seconded by Fisher.

The meeting returned to Open Session at 9:03 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Treasurer –

Presentation of Bills for Approval:

RESOLUTION #151-2015

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of West Amwell that the vouchers listed on the Bill List, in the amount of \$515,232.37, dated October 21, 2015, as presented by the Township Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, be paid from existing appropriations.

Rich motioned to approve the evening's bills for payment, seconded by Fisher, and carried unanimously.

Treasurer Report: Appropriations through October 21, 2015 were provided and reviewed.

Court – The September 2015 monthly report was received showing a ticket total of 207 (176 local) and the receipt of \$9,896.72.

The reports were unanimously accepted as filed and without comment.

CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence as listed on the Agenda was ordered filed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:05 p.m. on motion from Fisher.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora L. Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk

APPROVED: November 4, 2015