

**TABERNACLE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
MARCH 8, 2021 MINUTES
WORKSHOP**

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE

Deputy Mayor Moore led in the silent Salute to the Flag.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

“Provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act have been met. Notice of this meeting, Resolution 2021-22, has been transmitted to the legal newspapers, posted on the Bulletin Board and on the Tabernacle Website, transmitted to the Municipal Clerk, and given to those having requested and paying for same on January 6, 2021.”

ROLL CALL

Present:

Mr. Barton

Ms. McGinnis

Mr. Moore

Mr. Sunbury

Absent:

Mayor Brown

Professionals present: Mr. Cramer, Administrator, Mr. Haines, CMFO, Mr. Burns, Township Attorney, Mr. Guzzi, Engineer, Mr. Stuart, Environmental Consultant, Mr. Boyd, Construction Code Official, and Mrs. Kennedy, Municipal Clerk.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda Items Only)

Deputy Mayor Moore opened the meeting to public comment on agenda items only.

Allen Rowls, 4 Walton Drive, stated he knows about solar as he has inspected several. The solar panels fall down after a while. They would need a suitable barrier. The panels are mostly made in foreign countries.

Mark LeMire, Washington Way, thought that the Landfill should be looked at to repurpose the property such as a move for Public Works. The Solar program’s life expectancy will be obsolete in the near future.

Fran Brooks, Moores Meadow Road, said she sent a letter questioning the tax exempt status and the benefit of the solar farm. Ms. Brooks wanted to know what protections the Township has if the company goes bankrupt even those they would have bonds.

Stuart Brooks, Moores Meadow Road, agreed that Mr. LeMire had good ideas. There would have to be a feasibility study. Mr. Brooks asked who uses the Community Center and what their intentions are regarding the building.

Deputy Mayor Moore stated these items are just discussion items.

Being no further comment, Deputy Mayor Moore closed public comment.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Community Center

Mr. Cramer advised the Committee the uses since Covid have been limited. The Scouts meet in that building with limited meetings and to discuss Eagle Scout projects. Prior to Covid, the Historic Society has met there, also. It had been used for the Pinewood Derby. There were also girl scouts meeting in there. It is used for storage for various equipment. The Township received a grant to upgrade the bathrooms. There is 3200 square feet and the boiler has been updated. Mr. Cramer broke down the utility expenses for the building for the last four years. It has been down the past year due to Covid. The building is in need of a roof. Mr. Cramer along with Tom Boyd and Scott England went over original drawings for other uses, i.e. court office, reducing the cost to Woodland. It could be utilized for Construction, fire, assessor, and secretaries for fire, etc. Mr. Cramer asked for time to do more investigation. Mr. Guzzi put in a request at the County for the septic system. If used as storage, the septic would not be a factor. Mr. Cramer can bring this back in two to three months. If the Committee wanted to sell it, there are legal steps which would need to be done. The building could be demolished and rebuilt; however, this would not be the cheaper route.

Mr. Barton asked about the drainage along Hawkins Road. Mr. Cramer responded that he and Mr. Guzzi did look at this. It would have to have drains on the opposite side of the gas lines. Mr. Barton asked if part of this drainage could include the old first aid squad. Mr. Cramer said it is a high water table there.

Mr. Sunbury asked if there were any other properties owned by the Township that could meet the needs of the Township. Mr. Cramer reported the properties owned by the Township which could be used for Township projects. There were pieces the Township sold to others and there were other landlocked properties which did not sell. Mr. Sunbury felt that the growing Township might be needed in the future.

Mr. Moore felt that Mr. Cramer should be given the time to investigate further and coming back in June.

Ms. McGinnis thought that the Community Center could be used by the Township offices and a meeting room.

Mr. Barton stated the Township did sell properties in the past. There was no bonding room to feasibly use some of the properties. Mr. Barton thought the Committee should look into all options for use of the properties. Mr. Haines stated that the Township had bonding capacities; however, it would have raised taxes.

Solar Project

Deputy Mayor Moore asked Mr. Burns how it work. Mr. Burns advised that the Township Committee would adopt a resolution to go to the Planning Board for redevelopment to do study and prepare a report. This report goes back to the Governing Body, sending it to DCA, having a public hearing.

Ms. McGinnis asked why CEP Steve Gouin was not invited. Deputy Mayor Moore stated that this is a discussion for the Committee.

Mr. Barton asked to hear from our Environmental Consultant, Douglas Stuart, including Township purposes, the costs, recreational uses.

Mr. Stuart advised that to utilize the landfill for recreation or other uses, it would have to be capped at a cost of approximately \$600,000. The groundwater has been and continues to be tested and for the most part has been good for drinking water. The Pinelands prohibits the soil to be brought in from outside the Pinelands.

Deputy Mayor Moore asked if Mr. Cramer spoke to the assessor about the taxable value if it were a solar project. There is a valuation of \$75,000. If it goes to a grid, that part is taxable.

Ms. McGinnis asked if Mr. Cramer reached out to Southampton or Shamong. Mr. Cramer advised that those municipalities do not own the landfills; they only held the tax liens. Mr. Cramer also contacted Pemberton Township who explained that they are waiting for a report back from the Planning Board. Pemberton has a lot of experience with redevelopment.

Ms. McGinnis asked if the meeting would be open to the DEP, to which Deputy Mayor Moore advised that they can speak during public comment. Ms. McGinnis advised that she invited them to the meeting to answer questions. Deputy Mayor Moore advised her that this is a discussion for the Committee.

Townships potential use of portions of the Tabernacle School Board's Carranza Road property
THS one room school house located on the Tabernacle School Board's Carranza Road property

Mr. Barton advised that the THS one room school house should be discussed together. Mr. Barton and Mr. Franzen met with the school board. When the school was destroyed, the school moved out of town and never came back. The school has maintained the grounds. Mr. Barton discussed subdividing the property, with the school board willing to do so. Mr. Barton thought the school should give it to the Township since the taxpayers already paid for it. The Township would incur the other costs of the subdivision, etc. Mr. Guzzi would have to survey the property.

Mr. Sunbury advised that the parking lot would be needed if the school house was to be used. Mr. Barton thought it could be a park, a gazebo, etc. Mr. Guzzi will look into this and advise the Committee.

Ms. McGinnis said that no one would buy it if the Township takes a part of the property from the school.

Mr. Barton asked to allow Mr. Cramer and Mr. Guzzi to meet to discuss a subdivision.

MOTION – Mr. Barton moved to allow Mr. Guzzi and Mr. Cramer to create a subdivision plan, without impacting the schoolhouse, and subdivide the grass area, seconded by Mr. Sunbury. Ayes – Barton, Moore, Sunbury. Nays – McGinnis. Absent – Brown. **Motion carried.**

Connection of Tabernacle Township Municipal Buildings to the Tabernacle School Board's sewer system

Mr. Barton said there is a sewer connection between the schools and the rescue squad, which goes right past the Municipal Buildings. The Township would have to do a study to ascertain the capacity. The school is willing to bring this to the school board. Mr. Barton asked Mr. Cramer if there is value. Mr. Cramer advised that the line from the sewer to Sequia to New Road to Town Hall would have to have the capacity. Pinelands said it is at maximum unless they get sewers. Mr. Cramer felt that this should be discussed further with the school board as long as they have the capacity for Town Hall. Ms. McGinnis suggested to buy the school; however, Mr. Cramer advised her that the town already paid for it and this would be paying twice. Mr. Haines added that the taxpayers paid for it and would be paying for the same asset twice. Ms. McGinnis thought sewers should go to Rt 206 for more ratables.

MOTION – Mr. Barton made a motion to have Mr. Cramer and Mr. Guzzi do the studies with the cost to tie into the school. Mr. Sunbury had concerns with the amount of use and the septic plant has an aging septic system. Mr. Guzzi added that the plant is not in bad shape; it is in very good shape. There is limited flow during the summer and the breaks. Mr. Guzzi thought they would have the capacity. Ms. McGinnis again mentioned they could tie into Route 206. Mr. Guzzi reported this is limited to the village, not Route 206.

MOTION SECOND – seconded by Mr., Sunbury. Ayes – Barton, Sunbury, Moore, Nays – McGinnis. **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. LeMire, Washington Way thought the workshops are a good idea to discuss ideas, etc. He felt it is important to preserve the little property the Township has.

Allen Rowls, 4 Walton Drive, asked if there is an ordinance in place about soil leaving the town.

Steve Gouin, 125 Half Mile Road said that some of the solar project would not be taxable. The company will either purchase or lease the landfill if his company can get the process on the project.

Fran Brooks, Moores Meadow Road, said it would be helpful to have the 3-minute clock up. Ms. Brooks asked the cost to conduct the work for the two motions made tonight – sewer from school to town hall and cost estimate on the subdivision.

Being no further public comment, Deputy Mayor Moore closed this portion of the meeting.

REPORTS

Engineer – Mr. Guzzi reported they have authorization to go out to bid for Phase II from DOT on Oak Shade Road. He is waiting to hear about Carranza. Mr. Guzzi is working with Mr. Cramer on the remaining drainage issues in town.

Administrator – Mr. Cramer reported he would ask for authorization for the drainage project at the next meeting. Mr. Cramer advised that last year during Covid, the Registrars from Shamong, Medford Lakes, and Tabernacle had an agreement to cover for each other should one of the town halls have to close down. There is no cost to the Township. It can be memorialized at the next meeting.

Township Solicitor - Mr. Burns will hold his report until Executive Session.

Emergency Management – Mr. Sunbury reported that the vaccine from Johnson and Johnson has been approved.

Township Committee –

Ms. McGinnis asked for any legitimate questions for CEP concerning the solar project. She would like to move forward next month.

Mr. Sunbury stated that he has concerns concerning the benefits of sewers on Route 206. This would open it to low income, affordable housing.

Deputy Mayor Moore asked Mr. Cramer if there were grants for the fire company. Mr. Cramer responded he is applying for a safer grant (a 2 year grant).

Deputy Mayor Moore apologized for the 3-minute timer.

Environmental Consultant – Mr. Stuart advised there is an ordinance in place for soil removal and restoration in our Township.

Ms. McGinnis advised she must leave before executive session and asked if she could get her answers in writing. Mr. Burns advised her it would be discussed in executive session. He does not give a written report on this.

RESOLUTION - CS 03 082021

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, P. L. 1975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting of a public body in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Tabernacle Township Committee is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this meeting is to discuss pending litigation specifically to discuss Brooks v. Tabernacle Township et al. A-001132-20 and matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer, to provide legal advice and general legal guidance concerning the Open Public Meetings Act; and

WHEREAS, minutes will be kept and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer exist, the minutes can be made public.

MOTION – Mr. Sunbury made a motion to adopt Resolution CS 03 082021, seconded by Mr. Barton, and unanimously carried. The Committee, Mr. Cramer, Mr. Burns, and Municipal Clerk entered executive session at 9:28 p.m.

RECONVENE TO WORKSHOP MEETING

Deputy Mayor Moore reconvened to workshop at 10:08 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION – Mr. Barton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Sunbury, and unanimously carried. The Committee adjourned at 10:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine B. Kennedy, RMC/CMC
Municipal Clerk