

May 31, 2012

A Neighborhood Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Roxbury was held on May 31, 2012 at 7:00 PM in the Berkshire Valley Firehouse located at 271 Berkshire Valley Road in Wharton, New Jersey. This meeting was held for the purpose of general discussion with Township residents.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

Adequate notice of this Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Roxbury was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: On December 19, 2011, notice was faxed to the Daily Record, the Newark Star Ledger, The Roxbury Register and published in the Daily Record; notice shall also remain posted throughout the year on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building.

ROLL CALL (Present): Councilman Gary Behrens
Councilman Mark Crowley
Deputy Mayor Kathy DeFillippo
Councilman Martin Schmidt
Councilman Richard Zoschak
Mayor Fred Hall

Absent: Councilman Jim Rilee

Also Present: Christopher Raths, Township Manager
Amy Rhead, Acting Township Clerk

Staff: Rick Blood, Director of Public Works

Public: approximately twenty-five (25) members of the public

OPENING REMARKS – Mayor Fred Hall

Mayor Hall spoke about the relaxed atmosphere of the Neighborhood Meetings and noted that attendance is not limited to residents who live in the ward where the meeting is held; everyone is welcome at any of the meetings.

Introduction of Council Members

Mayor Hall introduced members of the Council.

Introduction of Staff

Mayor Hall introduced the Township Manager, Director of Public Works, and Township Clerk

PUBLIC PRESENTATION – PAVING UPDATE – Rick Blood

Mr. Blood updated attendees on the status of paving projects within the Township.

NUTRITION CENTER

General discussion took place regarding the building that previously housed the Nutrition Center which has since been relocated to the Senior Center at Horseshoe Lake. The building, although vacant, there are still costs associated with heating and various repairs. Ideas for potential uses and issues surrounding the possibilities included:

- Leasing
 - What type of tenants would benefit from the location?
 - Teen Center
 - Day Care Center
 - Small Business
 - Need for sufficient parking for park and building

- Costs associated with bringing the building up to code
 - Furnace
 - Roof
 - Structure
- Selling
 - Separation of park area from building
 - Impact on parking
- Demolition
 - Would park and/or parking lot be improved if building were demolished?

Mr. Rath informed that he had heard the Knights of Columbus might be interested in utilizing the building space. He said he would keep Council apprised of any information that is received.

Mayor Hall assured residents that the park would remain in place regardless of the final decision about the building. Discussion ensued among residents and Council members regarding possibilities for improving/upgrading the park facilities, including the following topics:

- Removal of tennis court(s)
- Installation of volleyball court(s)
- Installation of basketball court(s) (the Manager suggested that night time lighting not be permitted)

Funding challenges were identified with each of the suggestions. Mayor Hall and Mr. Rath informed attendees that the Recreation Committee had assessed all of the Township's thirteen parks and would be making recommendations for enhancements but, added, that thoughts, ideas and opinions were always welcome.

Mr. Blood outlined an upcoming volunteer project wherein mulching, bordering of the swingset and reconfiguring locations of playground equipment would help clean up areas of the park and make areas more accessible to lawn mowers.

QUESTIONS – PUBLIC PORTION

Residents identified safety and parking issues at the Berkshire Valley Park as their main concerns. Mayor Hall noted that a sound financial plan was needed before making any decisions.

Residents complained about parked cars on the streets that block driveways during sporting events. Mr. Rath said that he would send a message out to coaches reminding them that cars should be parked in the parking lot, not on Mill Road.

A resident provided information regarding the history of the “old stone building” and the various organizations that it housed throughout the years, providing school, health, nutrition, and child welfare services.

Residents asked if a time frame had been established as far as when a decision would be made about the building. One resident requested that demolition be removed as a consideration and pleaded for it not to be torn down.

Residents said that the work on Berkshire Valley Road had been affecting commuting schedules. It was noted that it is a county road and the Township's approval is not needed in order for them to work on it.

Councilman Behrens informed residents that the installation of pipes was not for residential gas lines, but for a high pressure gas transmission line. He also estimated that it might take about three more weeks to complete. Councilman Schmidt expanded on the statement saying that it was a transmission line, not a distribution line.

A resident suggested that Little Lane be resurfaced while it is closed for the gas line anyway. Mr. Blood said that closure of Little Lane would only be for one day when it is resurfaced.

Residents asked why New Jersey Natural Gas does not provide residential service to the area. Councilman Zoschak and Mr. Rath pointed out that the utility companies tend to embrace new projects only if it is cost effective.

Residents asked if Berkshire Valley Road would be repaved after the pipe was installed. Mr. Blood said that the County's paving plan would be after the finalization of the trench restoration, but said he would look into further.

Additional discussion took place regarding:

- Resident claims of vehicles speeding on various roads
- Decreases in the amount of grant funding
- Sidewalk and curb plan update for Main Street Streetscaping project
- Resident claim regarding damage from fallen tree during severe 2011 weather; believes Township should be responsible for paying his \$1,000 deductible
- Graffiti on bridge; Mr. Blood will address
- Visibility impaired due to trees at certain intersections; Mr. Blood will take care of
- Claims that Roxbury Auto Wrecker's business is continually blocking traffic and the tunnel when they back out of their driveway. Council members said that staff would look into licensing and zoning issues.

Mayor Hall also spoke about the many power outages that were experienced by residents during recent severe weather and informed attendees of the proactive steps that the BPU, JCP&L and municipal officials are taking to rectify the issues.

Deputy Mayor DeFillippo reminded residents to enroll in the Township's Notification System so they could get advance information on items and situations of their choice.

Deputy Mayor DeFillippo thanked the Memorial Day Parade Committee for providing another outstanding event.

Mayor Hall reviewed dates, times and locations for various upcoming Township events.

Mayor Hall thanked Company No. 3 for allowing the Council to utilize the building for the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00PM, Councilman Zoschak made a motion to adjourn the Neighborhood Meeting. Deputy Mayor DeFillippo seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: All in Favor – Yes

Motion carried 6 to 0.

Submitted By:

Amy E. Rhead
Township Clerk

MINUTES APPROVED BY COUNCIL

DATE: October 9, 2012

ROLL CALL: Councilman Behrens – Yes
Councilman Crowley – Yes
Councilman Schmidt – Yes
Councilman Zoschak – Yes
Mayor Hall – Yes