

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON  
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

PUBLIC PORTION/CONFERENCE MEETING

June 25, 2012

The Township Council held a Public Portion/Conference Meeting in the Municipal Building, Pascack Road. The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Council President Richard Hrbek with the Clerk leading the salute to the flag. Members present: Glenn Beckmeyer, Steve Cascio, Joseph D'Urso, Fred Goetz, Richard Hrbek. Also present: Janet Sobkowicz, Mayor; Kenneth Poller, Attorney, Catherine Navarro-Steinel, Administrator.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, this meeting was noticed with the Ridgewood News, posted on Municipal Bulletin Board and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Mr. D'Urso, seconded by Dr. Cascio to approve the May 7, 2012 Public, Conference and Closed minutes of the Township Council.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Cascio, D'Urso, Goetz, Hrbek

Nays: None

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION:**

A motion was made by Mr. D'Urso, seconded by Dr. Cascio to open the Public Discussion.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Cascio, D'Urso, Goetz, Hrbek

Nays: None

**Terry Kipradis, Gyros and Goodies, Washington Town Center** – Ms. Kipradis asked for the Council's help to promote new businesses to come into the shopping center. She said that the Township is a good municipality to work with as a new store owner. She asked for a committee to be formed that would include the Mayor, Council representation, community members and business owners. The committee could brainstorm ways of getting more traffic and new stores into the center.

**David Snyder, 91 Windsor Circle** – Mr. Snyder said he is disappointed with the new management company at the shopping center. He would like to see one or two events in the shopping center to promote the businesses that are there. He asked why there is a big pile of dirt on the side of town hall. Mr. Poller said there is a great deal of work being done in anticipation of the cell tower. Verizon indicated that they would begin the application process with the Planning Board very soon. Mr. Snyder said that he feels that the Township should put up new entrance signs that would make a better impression when people drive into the Township. He said that the Township should consider legal action against Woodcliff Lake in regard to the traffic congestion issue on Washington Avenue and Pascack Road. More traffic is going to be filling that intersection soon.

**Rosa D'Ambra, 423 Colonial Blvd.** – Mrs. D'Ambra gave the Council a petition signed by residents asking the Council to appeal the Zoning Board's decision on allowing Sky Trading to build a convenience store. She explained the reasons for wanting the Council to appeal. She said that the Council and Mayor are elected by the residents. Zoning Board is chosen by the Council. Planning Board is selected by the Mayor. The Planning Board could not hear the Sky Trading because it required a variance which only the Zoning Board can grant. She spoke against the approval of the Sky Trading application and said that it will cause a negative environmental impact to the Township. She called it spot zoning. She said that the property should not have allowed the property to become neglected. She said that the residents should not let their magical garden disappear. Mrs. D'Ambra was told that her petition is not a

legal appeal. She asked if the application for Sky Trading goes to the Planning Board after it is memorialized by the Zoning Board.

**Robert Bruno, 697 Hillcrest Road** – Mr. Bruno asked if the Township has a Chamber of Commerce and what can be done to promote the shopping center. Mayor Sobkowicz said that the new management company did not want to come to the Planning Board at the time she spoke to them. A discussion ensued about starting a committee. Mr. Bruno asked Mr. D’Urso if there is any new information from the Woodcliff Lake Police Chief in regard to exit 171. Mr. D’Urso said that he is in contact with the chief and will be meeting with him soon. A traffic light at exit 168 is an idea that Mr. D’Urso is in favor of. Accident rates have gone down since the Turnpike Authority did the improvement at the exit.

**Michael Ullman, 2 Clark Avenue** – Mr. Ullman asked if there is a strategic plan going forward from a capital perspective and interim perspective of services provided by the town. He gave an example of shared dispatching. He said the equipment needed for the DMF now may not be needed if the Township should go into a shared service. He asked if the DMF is going to need equipment to maintain Memorial Field after the sod improvement. Mr. Hrbek said that the equipment that the DMF needs on this evening’s agenda is to pick up leaves in the fall in a more effective way and not taking away other trucks that are needed for regular services. Mayor Sobkowicz said that the DMF has been doing local shared agreements for an extended period of time. Mr. Ullman asked if there is a midpoint the Council can meet in regard to the fields. He suggested an engineering study to gage the cost of improvements.

**Bill Thompson, 560 Hoover Avenue** - Mr. Thompson told the Council that he appreciates the fact they want to look into helping the shopping center attract new stores and patron business. He said that it is not unusual for shopping center owners to leave stores vacant to write them off as a tax loss. He spoke about the possibility of the Council working with State Legislatures to initiate a conversation making it mandatory for owners and management companies to have a percentage of stores occupied in local shopping centers. The Township is not the only town in the state where this is happening. Selling strip malls is not a problem, but filling them is the problem. He hopes that the Council will make an effort. Mr. Thompson said that the intersection of Washington Avenue and Pascack Road is impossible to travel through at rush hour. The roads need to be widened or the turning lanes need to be limited. He suggested not allowing left hand turns heading from Washington Avenue (west) onto Pascack Road (north). Mr. Thompson said that baseball is not tearing up Memorial Field. He said that he sent Councilmen D’Urso and Goetz a report of a study from University of Arkansas showing that the cost of up keeping artificial turf is more expensive annually than the up keep of sod. He said that sod will get people back on the field quickly.

**Eamon Twomey, 187 Devon Road** – Mr. Twomey said that he came to the Council meeting on March 26, 2012 and gave a report on artificial turf for Memorial Field. He said the field is used 300 days per year. He said that the cost of turfing the field has been quoted as \$2,600,000 but without the basketball court and the other amenities the cost of the turf will be under \$2,000,000. He said that the sod that is being proposed at this time is the same sod that was used the last time and will not last the number of years Council has been told. Mr. Hrbek compared the costs of the sodding project compared to turfing. Mr. Twomey said that turfing will take the risk out of the project. He explained the economics in his estimation that favored turfing the field.

**Scott Spezial, 575 Washington Avenue** – Mr. Spezial said that the Recreation Advisory Committee wants to know why they were denied the meeting they requested with the Council. He said that the engineer that gave

the field drainage report at the last meeting was wrong. He said that there is no drainage system on the field. The systems in place does not take care of the playing field. There is a surface drain only. Mr. Spezial said that geese will continue to defecate on the field all year. He said that the basketball court gets dirt runoff after a rain and is unsafe for the cheerleaders to practice on. There have been 19 cheerleading injuries last year. His last comment was about the numbers, trying to get all the sports enough practice and play time on the field. He stated that the field will need to be closed for too long a period of time if the sod project goes forward. He said that turf project will cost 2.5 million dollars plus 28 percent. He said that the \$133,000 now spent on annual maintenance of sod will be put back in the town's pocket.

**Donna McGinnis, 680 Washington Avenue** – Mrs. McGinnis asked to let the taxpayers make the decision on sod or turf in a referendum.

**Terry Kipradis, Gyros and Goodies, Washington Town Center** - Ms. Kipradis asked if the Township can change ordinances without permission of the shopping center owner. The shopping center owner has told her that the Township ordinances are made and enforced by the town. Mayor Sobkowicz said that she spoke to Azarian Realty and asked them to apply to the Planning Board for sign approvals but they have not at this time.

#### **ORDINANCE**

Ordinance #12-10 was tabled and Ordinance #12-11 was tabled and not introduced.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The following resolution was part of the Consent Agenda and was made available to the Governing Body and the Public prior to the meeting.

The following resolution was presented and adopted on a motion by Mr. D'Urso, seconded by Dr. Cascio.

Ayes: Councilmen Beckmeyer, Cascio, D'Urso, Goetz, Hrbek.

Nays: None.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Washington wishes to enter into a grant agreement with the County of Bergen for the purpose of using \$4,469 in 2011 – 2012 Community Development Block Grant funds for Senior Citizen Activities at the Jack Woods Senior Center, 350 Hudson Avenue, Township of Washington, NJ 07676; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council hereby authorizes Mayor Janet Sobkowicz, to be a signatory for the aforesaid grant agreement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council hereby authorizes Catherine Navarro-Steinel to sign all County vouchers submitted in connection with the aforesaid project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council recognizes that the Township of Washington is liable for any funds not spent in accordance with the Grant Agreement; and that liability of the Mayor and Council is in accordance with HUD requirements.

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Mary Ann Ozment, Township Clerk

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Richard Hrbek, Council President

