

**MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 6:30 pm**

This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the statutes of the State of New Jersey.

Call to Order

Mayor Oliver called the meeting to order and the pledge of allegiance followed.

Roll Call: J. Roy Oliver, present
Ken Whildin, present
Bill Ashton, present

Members Present: Brian Griffiths
Robert Baron
Jack Lafferty
Wade Sjogren
K. Louann Karrer, Deputy Municipal Clerk

Approval of minutes of previous meetings

Mr. Whildin made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, seconded by Mr. Ashton.

Roll Call: Ayes – Whildin, Ashton, Oliver Nays – None

Mr. Oliver thanked the members present for their willingness to serve on the Economic Development Committee for 2020. He asked that those present who had not attended the January 2, 2020 Reorganization Meeting to complete their Official Oath of Office and rise to be sworn in. Mr. Oliver then conducted the swearing in procedure.

Mr. Oliver stated the Township Committee worked with volunteers to make a lot of the projects come to fruition. He stated that thanks to volunteers, much has happened and we are seeing a marked increase in economic development within the Township.

Discussion Items

1. Review of status of dredge spoils from other communities

Mr. Whildin said that he attends at least one meeting per month regarding the dredging and these spoils wherein the conversation goes back and forth. He attended a recent meeting at Commercial Township with the American Littoral Society (ALS) who shared their ideas to obtain grant money to fund this project. They had a conceptual plan and Power Point presentation of their proposal. He reported that Basket Flats has not really changed. He said the

ALS proposed putting gabions around the area with space between to allow water to flow in and out with oyster shell and core logs behind it. However, on the Northwest Reach side there was a lot of debate. The ALS had a plan and the oystermen had a different plan, stating the ALS plan would not work. The ALS will take the oystermen's concept back to their engineers for consideration. Mr. Whildin said they had done a similar plan with rock, stacked on a pyramid at Basket Flats with 57 feet spaces between. If the goal is to allow sediment to make a marsh, these spaces will actually allow water to wash out and make a cut. There was a disagreement between the parties about whether this would happen. The engineers from ALS are willing to take their ideas under advisement and will reconvene at a later time.

Mr. Whildin said that the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) wants to put the dredged sediment in their own containment facility, since the ACOE and ALS were not in agreement for the details of the handling of the dredged materials. Monica Chastain from the ACOE stated it would be better for the ACOE to have their own containment facility for the 80,000 cu yds. When their part is complete, it will be handed over to the ALS to manage according to their plans. But, to get the job expedited, the ACOE, whose responsibility is to see this project through to completion, will devise a plan.

Mr. Whildin said that letters have been sent to the new legislators about the dredging of the river and shoreline stabilization. A reminder letter has also been sent to Congressman Van Drew that we still need his assistance.

Mr. Griffiths questioned if Maurice River Township could be included in the notification of contract renewals for the barrier islands regarding dredge spoils. Mr. Whildin said this was what he hoped to do, however it seems impossible to get everyone on the same page with this idea. Mr. Whildin said approximately 200,000 cubic yards of material between Somers Point and Brigantine is being hauled to Chester, PA. He questions why we would not be eligible to receive this, since we are closer. He said it was up the NJDEP. The problem seems to be that we do not have a "plan." So, until the ALS or NJDEP comes up with a plan that everyone can agree upon, we will not be permitted to receive the materials.

Mr. Griffiths questioned putting this material on a lot, however Mr. Whildin stated that the materials would then be handled twice. He said hauling the dewatered materials directly to the site was more cost effective than hauling it twice. Also, we would not be permitted to store any materials on a Pinelands site, which would limit where materials could be stored. But, if this was possible, we could address it.

Mr. Sjogren questioned the amount to be dredged by ACOE. Mr. Whildin stated that although the 80,000 cubic yards is not a lot, it would require pumping with a second booster pump to reach the area, but it could be done. But, the amount would make a cut in the mouth of the river and they are hoping tide and traffic will help keep it open.

2. Follow-up on NJDEP releasing the easement on the Sapello property

Mr. Oliver reported that it has been difficult to get NJDEP to explain the mechanics of getting the easement lifted. He said apparently this is only done twice per year. Beyond getting this through NJDEP, we will also need to clear this with the Pinelands, since the property is in the

Pinelands. But, he said the Township received a grant from NJDEP, Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Funding for \$204,000 to investigate the existing foundry, cast iron machinery and steel at the site. This funding will provide for testing of the concrete block and paint for toxicity. If it is found to be nontoxic, we may be able to get an additional grant to demolish the building. He said, ideally, if no contamination is found, we could possibly use the razed materials for ditch fill, etc., which will save the township money. The machinery could be taken and sold to a recycling facility.

The Township also received a grant from NJ Department of Transportation to resurface Fox Street in the amount of \$188,000. This road leads to the rear of the Sapello property.

Mr. Oliver said that he met with the school board chairman, principal, administrator and superintendent in December to go over ideas for this tract. Since part of the easement requires that the property could only be used for recreation or conservation, a regulation soccer field was proposed for the school. However, Fox Street residents were not excited about this proposal. At the December meeting, it was determined that the school could continue to use their existing soccer field, which would appease the residents.

Mr. Oliver stated that an alternative use for this \$188,000 grant would be to lengthen the road to go around the property and give additional ingress and egress for buses to exit onto Second Street. This would alleviate some traffic issues related to only one exit on Route 47, especially during peak times for student arrival and dismissal as well as shore traffic from approximately mid-April to June. The Fox Street "extension" would provide an alternate exit onto Second Street, then the traffic light can be used for safer entrance onto Route 47 for the seven school buses when need. This would be especially helpful to limit congestion which might be exacerbated by the new Dollar General. This should not inconvenience the Fox Street residents, since there are only seven buses.

Another intermediate use for the front of this property is to relocate the existing recycling facility to this site when the easement is lifted. This would make the current facility's 6-7 acre site, (located on Route 47 and not in the Pinelands), available for economic development by a private investor. Economic development sites are at a premium in the Township, so this would be a prime location if the easement is lifted.

Mr. Sjogren asked if there has been any groundwater testing for contamination at the Sapello site. Mr. Oliver replied that there are investigative monitoring wells at the site. These wells are monitored quarterly. With the two grants, for investigation and clean-up, for the USEPA, the soil has been removed and the sand casting have been buried. The only potentially toxic area on the property is the actual foundry building itself. The new grant will provide information for how and where the razed material is disposed of.

Mr. Ashton clarified the answer regarding the groundwater testing. Although one house nearby tested positive for lead, the source was from the house's individual plumbing. There was no contamination from the foundry indicated.

3. Status of Bricksboro Bulkhead project

Mr. Oliver said this project was completed. He stated that in the Township's 2020 calendar there is a photo of the completed bulkhead project. There is now close to five hundred feet of bulkhead and the project is done. The Township went out for a capital project for \$100,000. The bid came in at \$84,000, which was \$16,000 under budget. In addition to the one hundred feet of bulkhead installed by the township, the adjacent property owners to the north and south of the township bulkhead worked under the Township permit and funded the extension the bulkhead for their own properties. This new bulkhead will alleviate flooding in the Bricksboro area. Residents have expressed gratitude to the Township since they have not experienced flooding since its installation. So far, the bulkhead is doing what it was built to do.

4. Marina property negotiations

Mr. Whildin said that this is ongoing and is in the federal government's hands. The Township had a verbal agreement with the State to purchase and trade some land. When the State began digging into the project, it was found that Federal grant monies were used to purchase the whole Matt's Landing area. This has made it complicated due to Federal rules and regulations coming into play. Mr. Whildin said the Deputy Attorney General (DAG) has been working diligently on this, which she said could take some time; but lines of communication are open. The Federal Government has to approve the State's plans for its disposition to the Township. There is a procedure that must be followed, wherein the monies received by the Fed's must be used to purchase additional land. Mr. Whildin stated he is scheduled to attend another meeting in the same building where the DAG is located next week, and he hopes to stop by her office for an update.

Mr. Ashton said that in a recent email, the DAG said the Federal Government's process is similar to the State's process. So, as the project moves forward, much of the work will be done when it reaches the State level. The current DAG has been very responsive to questions and although the process is moving slowly, they want to see this happen.

Mr. Oliver said that when we do sign the contract with the NJDEP, we need a paragraph that they will be responsible for the surveys involved with the land transfer. Mr. Whildin said that he does not believe at this time it would be a problem. Mr. Ashton said that he believes some of that would already be done as part of the process before it is signed-off.

5. Dollar General update

Mr. Whildin said the store had a soft opening last week and there is a grand opening scheduled next Saturday at 1:00 PM with a ribbon-cutting. The Township Committee and Dollar General Representatives, possibly from Alabama will be present. He observed that the store is very nice, and hopes they will keep it that way.

6. Dunkin Donuts update

Mr. Whildin spoke with the owner of Dunkin Donuts recently. The owner had been in conversation with his engineer that morning and they have the County's approval on the septic design but they are now discussing brand materials and parts. He said that apparently only

certain companies make certain of these materials, so they are trying to find all the parts and materials necessary for construction. The engineers also are trying to extend the septic bed to reduce the height of the system for aesthetics. Mr. Whildin said he is still moving forward, but Mr. Whildin urged him not to drag his feet on this. Mr. Whildin said he recently attended a Pineland's meeting and it was discussed that they were going to begin looking at alternate septic systems. Mr. Whildin said, "This scares me—when they start looking at something. That means they are going to change it, and it's never to our favor."

Mr. Whildin reminded the Committee to keep an eye on the Pinelands meetings' agendas. "For although the meetings are usually in Pemberton, and not convenient for us, this will need to come up for public comment for any changes," Mr. Whildin said. "This could affect any business, or residential systems."

Mr. Whildin said, relating to the Pinelands, it was stated at the meeting that any new construction in the Pinelands will be required to have solar. Mr. Whildin said he had a problem with that but it is out there.

Mr. Ashton said there was an email from the Pinelands that they are starting a "Climate Change Division." He inferred, "Only 100% of that is bad." Mr. Ashton stated, "It's not enough that they've destroyed as much of New Jersey as they've already destroyed with their overregulation. But, now they're starting a Climate Change Division and encouraging the youth to get involved in it."

Mr. Whildin stated there was disagreement within their organization about solar. He said the topic of solar on a landfill came up. The director said that the problem the Pinelands Commissioners have is they cannot decide which is better or which is worse, because the landfills were closed 20-30 years ago and are now covered with trees. Some Commissioners cannot agree to cut down the trees for solar. Others argue that there will be more carbon savings by installing solar. Mr. Whildin said they are arguing among themselves about which is better.

In any case, Mr. Whildin said that the Dunkin' Donuts owner has promised him, he is still moving forward with his plans. He has incurred costs for septic design and changes. "He has endured much," the Committee agreed.

7. New Welcome Sign on Mauricetown Causeway

Mr. Whildin said he believes there is only one blank spot on the sign. He hopes it is getting the desired attention by motorists as was intended.

8. PSE&G properties

Mr. Oliver reported the Township Solicitor, Frank DiDomenico sent an email that day to the effect that PSE&G is going to donate these properties to the township. However, before we can accept them, the Township Committee will make a decision at the upcoming Bill Review meeting to authorize a title search on these two properties, on east side of the river along either side of the Mauricetown Bridge. Mr. Oliver stated that the Township does not want to inherit debt or anything with this donation. If the searches come back clean, the Township will accept

the donation of these two parcels gladly from PSE&G. Then the Township can examine these properties from an Economic Development standpoint.

Mr. Griffiths asked if PSE&G were unloading all of their properties. Although it appears that they are, the Township Committee is only interested in these two properties due to their location along the river for a possible boat ramp or recreational interest next to the Mauricetown Bridge.

9. Ackley property update

Mr. Oliver said this property was the old gas station at the Yawp Shore Road and Route 47. Mr. Oliver said the drums are now gone. The Area of Concern #7, where some old batteries and oil filters were found near the back of the property, are continuing to be checked out. Part of this area is in wetlands area, but Mr. Oliver believes the Township's Environmental Engineer is near to signing off on the property as soon as this area is remediated.

Mr. Oliver stated it is the Township's intent to sell this property to an investor for a positive economic development impact.

10. Master Plan Revisions/COAH

Mr. Whildin said the Township has made attempts to talk to the NJDEP about the former Bacon property to make this a possible Node, which is a designated area that is allowed for more impervious coverage than what is normally allowed. Currently only approximately three percent is permitted. A node would allow 80-85 percent. The Township Planner advised that our Center Designations, which designates certain areas of the Township or town as business, which would allow similar things. The Centers' Designation only allows approximately 60% of coverage. So, Mr. Whildin explained, a Node is technically better.

On advice of the State Planner, the Center Designations are due to run out in June of 2020 statewide. The Planner advised that a predetermination letter be submitted that the Township is looking into these centers, which should be enough to halt losing the Center Designations we have. The downside of this is the Affordable Housing aspect. They are going to want Affordable Housing included in the Centers Designation plan. This means that an area will be assigned for Affordable Housing. The Township Committee and Land Use Board will need to have serious discussion about this. The reality of this is that a judge will decide if we have met the criteria.

Mr. Whildin said if an area is designated, a developer may come in; but without the infrastructure, i.e. water and sewer, what are the chances it will actually happen?

Mr. Whildin said it will cost the Township to go through the Centers Designation process; but it will be money well-spent if we could get the Centers Designations or Nodes to get some of these river areas up and running commercially.

Mr. Whildin will be meeting with the Assistant Commissioner Copcash to discuss this. Several other bay-shore areas, like Commercial and Downe Township will also be there for the discussion.

Mr. Ashton said the up-side to the Node/Centers Designation is that any of the riverfront development is so ridiculously low at 3%, if we can get 60% or 80% it will be good.

Mr. Oliver said that the original concept with the Node, was to do a redevelopment zone within the redevelopment zone. He said the Township is looking at a Marine Services Activity Node. Mr. Oliver was referring to include the approximate 100 acre property recently purchased by Phil Risko, and the adjacent former Newporter Shipyard along the river.

However, the owner of Newporter Shipyard, Mr. Sjogren indicated they want to work within the confines of the existing Master Plan.

Mr. Risko wants to put an activity on his property that will parallel Yank Marine with a travel-lift that is not quite as big as the one at Yank, but will be for hauling boats out of the river and returning boats to the water. Mr. Risko does a lot of service with the off-shore wind farms in Atlantic City. Mr. Risko also owns Boat World Marina, adjacent to this new property. All three entities will hopefully tie into the Marine Services Activity Node concept.

11. 5G Implementation

Mr. Ashton said the Federal Government handed us guidelines, wherein the Township had to have a plan in place when the providers were ready to install cabinets for 5G technology. The Solicitor and Township Committee provided input for what needed to be in place to protect the Township. The goal is to keep these installations as unsightly as possible, to ensure they are maintained poles, and when their usefulness is ended, they are properly removed. Mr. Ashton said a suggestion was implemented for instituting an annual fee once the cabinets were installed to receive revenue. He also mentioned the comprehensive permit process to meet the time constraints mandated. The engineer needs to review and sign-off on the proposed permit process. The ordinance is very detailed to protect the Township.

Mr. Oliver mentioned that the Township is ahead of many other municipalities in the State in implementation of the 5G mandates.

Conversation about installation details of this new technology continued. Mr. Ashton concluded by stating that failure to have a procedure in place, individual providers could install their own equipment all along residential properties without restraint. Mr. Whildin interjected that this information came directly from the F.C.C.

12. East Point Lighthouse Update

Mr. Whildin reported that the Geotube Project is complete. He said there was a meeting scheduled at the Township Hall on February 14th with Ray Buchowski, Assistant Commissioner

of NJDEP. The topic will be about the Lighthouse and its future. He said a feasibility study was done about raising it up. Mr. Whildin expressed concern that merely raising the building up would not be enough. He said more would need to be done, such as putting big rocks around it or something to save/protect the lighthouse now. He opined that this should be done now, rather than when and if the lighthouse is raised-up. Mr. Whildin said that NJDEP Fish & Wildlife are the actual owners of the lighthouse and he is confident that they do not want to own a lighthouse. He said it would be better in a Parks Services division, whether State or National. Fish & Wildlife are not in the “lighthouse business” but they became owners a long time ago.

Mr. Whildin said he had some hard questions prepared for the meeting.

Mr. Whildin said he also is not really happy with the Geotube, but not being an engineer, he does not understand what they did. He said most of it makes sense to him, but there is a section that he calls into question. Mr. Whildin said it appears that they fell short 50-60 feet to reach the bulkhead of the old boat ramp. By ending it where they did, it creates a channel between the boat ramp and the Geotube, forcing the high tide to come into the parking lot, and as it recedes, it cuts a channel right into the parking lot. Mr. Whildin is curious to find out what the Assistant Commissioner says about this problem.

Mr. Whildin said that we have a true interest in this historic landmark and we cannot allow just anything to be done. He said that someone at NJDEP had to sign-off on the \$800,000 grant to renovate the lighthouse about five years ago. The Lighthouse Society has a lease with the NJDEP, so he questions their intent five years ago verses now. He said, “If their intent was to walk away from it, why would they sign-off on putting \$800,000 into it?”

Mr. Whildin said Coastal Engineering and the Fish & Wildlife Director, as well as other officials will also be at the meeting and he hopes to have his questions answered.

Mr. Ashton interjected, “The cost of raising the Lighthouse and fortifying it, versus the cost of the bulkhead is pennies in comparison. If the bulkhead is put out there, the beach and parking lot are extended and it is done forever.” Mr. Whildin agreed. Mr. Ashton continued, “Only raising the Lighthouse does not protect the beaches, parking lot, road, etc. By only raising the Lighthouse up, they will think there is no need to continue to maintain the beach, parking lot, road...” Mr. Whildin said the beautiful museum quality Lighthouse would become inaccessible.

Mr. Oliver said that the problem lies with people who are not familiar with the area. He mentioned a recent article in The Press which indicated the Lighthouse could be moved to save it. Mr. Oliver replied to the article with facts about the location and questioned the validity of the proposal, as well as technical issues regarding the actual process of moving the Lighthouse on the compromised road. Mr. Oliver also suggested in his letter putting an interlocking bulkhead to the front and behind that put the gabions with sand over them to become sand dunes. Then the Geotube would become a third line of defense. He wrote that for 200 years the Township’s salt hay farmers, they managed to keep the Delaware Bay from encroachment using a series of manmade dikes and sluices. He deduced if they could do it with primitive mechanics, why couldn’t we do the same thing? He said people need to actually travel to the site and see the issues for themselves before making recommendations. He concluded, “In just our lifetimes,

over 75 yards of beach frontage has been lost. It will only take one or two more hurricanes and everything will be gone.”

13. Distribution of the Cumberland County Economic Resource Guides

Mr. Oliver encouraged committee members to read through the guide provided by the County.

C. Comments

Mr. Oliver stated that it is evident where this Township Committee has been and wants to go. He encouraged the group to provide insights, comments and questions and reiterated his appreciation to the EDC volunteers for their participation. He concluded, “I think Maurice River Township is a special place and we have a lot going for us. And if most of the projects we just mentioned in this last half hour come to fruition (and I’m sure more than that will), it will make a big difference in our tax ratables and also our quality of life for Maurice River Township.”

Mr. Sjogren asked if anyone from Omnitrax, successor to the Winchester & Western Railroad had contacted the Township about their plans. He explained that the old Winchester & Western Railroad Short Line that had serviced (Whibco’s) plant, went out of service decades ago which affected the customers they were serving. He said a lot had to do with the condition of the track, the wood bridge and the concrete bridge. He believes they have plans to get that back in service by mid-2021.

Mr. Sjogren said they have already met with them about possible movements. This area is along the shared asset railroad with Conrail and CSX from Millville to Whibco’s plant. Omnitrax is also in the real estate business and are looking to purchase properties adjacent to the railroad where they can use the railroad as an opportunity to be a real estate developer. Mr. Whildin remembers a meeting where this had been mentioned. Mr. Whildin stated that in Maurice River Township either the NJDEP or Nature Conservancy has purchased all of this land, which puts us in a bad position again. “The Township would love to have a business that would benefit from a rail service,” Mr. Whildin said. Mr. Sjogren affirmed that Whibco and US Silica will benefit.

Mr. Ashton stated he was not aware that the railroad had been discontinued. Mr. Sjogren clarified that this area could not service loaded cars, but could push down the empty cars and received storage fees for the empty cars. The bridges were deemed insufficient to handle loaded cars.

Mr. Sjogren said they are fixing the bridges and putting a trans_____ facility in Millville at an undisclosed location, which will allow businesses to go by truck to the facility and then put it on a rail to go further than they could with a truck with whatever goods are being sold.

Mr. Sjogren stated they appear to be pro-active, which he appreciates. He said Whibco is revisiting some customers that were not cost effective by truck, but may be cost effective by rail. “This will open opportunities,” he said. “This also has an environmental impact with the use of less fossil fuels by train than by truck. And finding qualified truckers is difficult, too. Trucking companies are suffering especially in the current economy,” he concluded.

Mr. Ashton asked if Omnitrax was a rail operator or an investment company. Mr. Sjogren explained that they operate rails here and in other locations. "They are a privately owned American-based company from Denver, primarily in the Midwest," he said. He said they have a big fleet of rail cars and are very business oriented, which he appreciates.

Mr. Sjogren also wanted to mention Community Solar. Mr. Oliver said that someone had approached the Township Committee a few months ago with a basic sales pitch. Mr. Sjogren asked if they mentioned a pilot program. Mr. Whildin said the Township wanted to hear a presentation from the company that did Whibco's solar, but have not proceeded with this yet.

Mr. Sjogren said his was sold already. "It was purchased by Nextera, which is affiliated with Florida Power & Light, a large company. They are very capable," Mr. Sjogren said. "Whibco's partner, Spano Holdings is out of it. Advanced Solar Products is still available for maintenance for the foreseeable future."

Mr. Whildin explained the Township is looking at the old Dorchester Landfill for a possible solar location, with Pinelands and NJDEP's approval. Mr. Whildin stated that a possible problem might be transmission lines, because this location is not near a switching station. He said although the sales pitch did not include any numbers, but a large line, possibly 12,000 volts, vs. 7,000 volts for residential is the largest we have and it was not known if this would be able to support this use.

Mr. Sjogren said Advanced Solar Products, who were responsible for the engineering, were very good. They were able to get Atlantic Electric to get things done very quickly and made their own assessments about what the infrastructure was and whether it was adequate. Mr. Sjogren stated, "They were very professional and did a great job."

Mr. Oliver said someone from Salmon Ventures had invited him to a meeting about solar, but he was unable to attend. He said, a list has been compiled of 5+ acre lots in the Township for possible consideration for solar placement, but the problem, as previously stated, is tying into the trunk lines.

Mr. Sjogren said Whibco is looking into migrating from diesel, internal combustion over to electric and maybe add additional solar energy over time. "However, we have taken a fairly conservative approach to begin. We pay for our electric, so if business dropped, we'd still have to pay for our electric even if we're not using it."

Mr. Ashton asked how much of drop they experience in extended periods of cloudy, rainy weather. Mr. Sjogren emphatically stated, "You do!" Mr. Sjogren said his agreement is a power purchase agreement. "It says, 'you shall deliver to me this amount of power' and if you don't, I buy it from Atlantic Energy and you are going to pay the difference," said Mr. Sjogren. He explained the flip side of it is, if Whibco does not buy the amount of power he contracted for, they can go sell it wholesale. The difference between what he committed to purchase and what they can sell it for is damages, which Whibco has to pay. "It cuts both ways," he concluded. He said it is up to the solar company to make it produce.

Mr. Griffiths added his success story with a personal solar. Mr. Oliver questioned if there was an age requirement of five years or less for the installation of solar roof mount systems.

Mr. Griffiths said that a “date” was not a trigger, but the roof is inspected prior to installation.

Mr. Griffiths stated that installation of these actually prolong the life of the shingles, as it shades the roof.

Mr. Sjogren also said batteries for storage was a factor. When that becomes cost effective, Whibco is looking at that, too. Mr. Sjogren said then the power produced daily could be stored and used at night.

Mr. Oliver thanked everyone for attending.

Adjourn

Mr. Whildin made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Ashton.

K. Louann Karrer, Deputy Municipal Clerk