

MINUTES OF KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
Public Session Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2021

The meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held on this date at the Knowlton Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, New Jersey and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Starrs.

Mayor Starrs led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Starrs read the following statements “This meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: P: 1975, Chapter 231, noting that notice of all regularly scheduled meetings has been published in the *New Jersey Herald* and/or Express Times as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk’s office.”

Roll Call

Cuntala—yes, Mazza—absent, Shipps—absent, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes.

PRESENTATION

Jackie Espinoza, JCP&L

Ms. Espinoza addressed concerns about a notice that was sent out regarding rates being increased.

Ms. Espinoza stated the increase is for smart meters. Smart meters are advance metering infrastructure that will eliminate customers from calling in power outages. Smart meters will run by a secure wireless network and will also eliminate estimated billing and meter reading.

Installation of the meters is expected by the end of 2025. There will be increases in billing in 2022-2025 but there will be a decrease in billing in 2026 & 2027. Ms. Espinoza did not know the reasoning for the decrease but would find out.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Smith asked what the increase in the JCP&L bills will be? Ms. Espinoza stated that in 2022 the increase will be .66 cents, 2023 will be .97 cents and 2023 will \$1.366.

Tara Mezzanotte provided an update to the committee on her efforts to prove that NJDOT violated their own policy as it involves scope change and community involvement

- **DEPARTMENT REPORTS--**None for this month

RESOLUTIONS

2021-92- Award Archeology Contract

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton have the need for an Archaeological Survey Plan in preparation of the site utility upgrades at the Ramsaysburg Historic Homestead; and,

WHEREAS, the Township advertised Request for Proposals of such services; and

WHEREAS, two proposals were received and reviewed by Knowlton Township’s Historic Architects Connolly & Hickey, who recommend awarding contract to Hunter Research Inc. Trenton, New Jersey;

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officers Certifies has certified that funds are available thru a Grant from the Warren County Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, that the Archaeological services of Hunter Research, Inc. 120 West State Street Trenton, New Jersey 08608-1185 be retained at a cost not to exceed \$58,425.00:

**Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and approve by roll call vote:
Cuntala—yes, Mazza—absent, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes to Resolution 2021-92.**

2021-93- Resolution Appointing Non-Compensated Appointments

WHEREAS, it is necessary to appoint various persons to fill various positions on boards, committees and commissions and officers of the Township of Knowlton, as required by the various ordinances adopted in connection therewith:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, on the twenty eighth day October 2021 that the following persons be appointed for terms as set forth:

Knowlton Township Historic Commission

Hal Bromm as a Class A with a term expiring 12/31/2021 (4-year term PB)

Bob McNinch as a Class A with a term expiring 12/31/2022 (1-year term)

Ken Metcalf as a Class B with a term expiring 12/ 31/ 2025 (4-year term)

Tom Drake as a Class B with a term expiring 12/31/2021 (1-year term PB)

Candice Nattland as a class C with a term expiring 12/ 31/ 2025 (4-year term)

Rita Baragonaas a class C with a term expiring 12/31/2024 (3-year term)

Karin Strom as a Class C with a term expiring 12/31/2024 (3-year term)

Gloria Hardiman as Class C with a term expiring 12/31/2023 (2-year term)

Dennis Melillo as a class C with a term expiring 12/31/2023 (4-year term BOA)

Alternates

Rick Clarkson term expiring 12/31/2023 (2 years)

Pat Clayton term expiring 12/31/2022 (1 year)

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to approve Resolution 2021-93.

2021-94- Resolution Payment of Vouchers

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, that all claims attached are hereby approved as reasonable and proper claims against the Township of Knowlton.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that approval for payment is hereby given to the Chief Financial Officer to pay said claims, subject to the availability of funds.

**Motion made by Van Horn, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Cuntala—yes, Mazza—absent, Shippis—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes to Resolution 2021-94.**

2021-96- Resolution Supporting “Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Application” for year 2023
WHEREAS, Knowlton Township has an active Farmland Preservation Program, mostly funded by the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC); and

WHEREAS the SADC requires a yearly submittal of a “Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Application; and

WHEREAS, the SADC requires the annual application be now accompanied by a resolution of support from the governing body (NJAC 2:76-17A.6(a)3); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governing Body of Knowlton township hereby supports the “Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Application: for the 2023 funding round.

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to approve resolution 2021-96.

OLD BUSINESS--No Old Business _

NEW BUSINESS

Proposal to Build Warehouses in Knowlton

Mayor Starrs received an email that she read aloud from an attorney in Warren County who represents a national builder of warehouses who is interested in building a warehouse on an existing property to the rear of the truck stop along route 80. Property is zoned C2, which is planned redevelopment business park, which the attorney believed allowed warehouses. Township Zoning office said that it could be only used as an accessory use in C2 zone. The attorney requested for the committee to amend the ordinance for the C2 Zone to allow warehousing. Mayor Starrs read an email from the Township tax assessor explaining that warehouses are weak ratables, bringing in the least income per square foot, much lower than office complexes and retail establishments. She said she thought it is a poor financial move to amend Knowlton’s ordinances, so the best commercial real estate can go to the lowest bidder. Full committee does not want to see warehouses in Knowlton and all agreed to have Mayor Starrs reply not interested.

Amending the Soil Exportation Ordinance

Mayor Starrs asked Attorney St. Angelo about our soil exportation ordinance. It was discovered that a Knowlton business cannot be held liable for taking likely contaminated soil because of the planning

board resolution. Attorney St. Angelo suggested combining the soil exportation and importation ordinance into one with the same permitting requirements and similar fines. Committee agreed to have Attorney St. Angelo to present a combined ordinance at a later meeting.

NJDOT Route 46 Bridge Replacement Project

Township Engineer and Mayor Starrs attended a meeting with NJDOT regarding a 2-year project to replace the Route 46 bridge which is expected to start in 2025. Traffic will be one lane each way. NJDOT says no traffic backups are anticipated and there will be a stop sign coming off the ramp instead of a yield. Liberty Trail will also be closed in this area for safety reasons. Mayor Starrs asked if the committee had any questions to bring back to NJDOT which there were none.

Defacing of Township Property

Due to two incidents of graffiti being put on township property at Tunnel Field Recreation Director Dennis Lembeck would like to purchase video cameras.

Motion made by Starrs, second by Van Horn and carried by roll call vote; Cuntala—yes, Mazza—absent, Shipp—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes not to exceed \$400 for video cameras.

Knowlton Representative for the Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic Management Council

Tara Mezzanotte has expressed an interest on being on the council, which is an unpaid, volunteer position.

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to approve to accept Tara Mezzanotte as the Knowlton Township Representative for the Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic Management Council.

Best Practices Inventory

Committee reviewed and had no comments.

Rabies Clinic

December 4th, 2021 from 10 am -12 pm at the Knowlton DPW building.

Copier/ Printer/ Fax Machine Quote

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala—yes, Mazza---absent, Shipp—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes to approve the quote of \$3,624.05 for a copier/printer/ fax machine.

NJ State Ban on Single-Use Plastic Bags and Straws Takes Effect May 2022

Effective May 4,th a new law will be put in place regarding plastic bags, straws, paper bags and Styrofoam. Municipalities are tasked to enforce this new law along with the NJDEP and Health Dept. Fines can go up to \$5,000 per day. Mayor Starrs would like to send a letter out to all the local business

in the municipality to give them time to start planning. Committee agreed and Mayor Starrs will prepare that letter.

Christmas Tree Lighting

Friday December 3, 2021 at 7 pm will be the Christmas Tree Lighting

Change in Sick Leave Policy

Deputy Mayor Shipps talked about updating the sick leave policy to provide a doctors note if they call out sick more then once in a work week. Attorney St. Angelo will look into other township policies.

DPW Server Connection

Deputy Mayor Shipps requested for the DPW emails to be backed up to the municipality server. Clerk Shipps explained that the emails are backed up through a cloud-based server.

2022 Meeting Calendar

Discussion took place on having only one meeting a month in 2022. No decision was made at this meeting.

Convex Driveway Mirror

Resident complained about obstructed sightline coming out of her driveway. The township engineer went and inspected the driveway and suggested a convex mirror be installed and that the township should be responsible for the purchase and installation. Which the committee agreed to do because it was a recommendation from the township professional.

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala –yes, Mazza—absent, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs to purchase and install a convex mirror per the township’s recommendation.

Whole-House Reverse Osmosis Filters for Elevated salt levels

Mayor Starrs explained that a letter was sent out to residents will high salt levels on October 4th and read a brief synopsis of the letter. The letter explained the NJDEP recommendation to install whole house reverse osmosis system to these homes for clean water. Cost to install are approximate \$10,000 per home and filter change can be approximate \$1,000. The letter also stated that the installation and one filter change will be paid for by federal funds with ongoing cost will be the responsibility of the resident. Some residents did reach out and requested an information meeting committee agreed to have Mayor Starrs hold the information meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Explore Warren History Trail

Clerk Shipps read the flyer for this event.

Mayor Starrs also stated that she has been trying to help get the Ramsaysburg homestead power washed but there is no water at Ramsaysburg. Historic Commission member Tom Drake stated that a D2 solution needs to be placed on the boards at the homestead and needs to be sponge washed.

Clerk Shipps requested to get quotes for a rodent issue that is at the municipality building for the next township meeting. Clerk Shipps also requested if both bathrooms can be painted.

MEETING MINUTES

August 9, 2021 Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to approve August 9, 2021 Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

August 9, 2021 Public Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to approve August 9, 2021 Public Session Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2021 Special Public Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to approve August 25, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tara Zetterberg 13 Susquehanna Lane asked the committee about having an ordinance regarding surveillance camera on residents' property. Attorney St. Angelo will speak to the Zoning officer and also look to see if any other township has ordinances regarding surveillance cameras on residents' property.

Rene Mathez asked about the walkway on Route 46 over the bridge that is part of the trail asked if NJDOT was aware of. Mayor Starrs replied that they are.

Mr. Mathez asked if a wild and scenic resolution was ever passed for the Delaware River? Mayor Starrs will look into the resolution to be passed for a later meeting.

Mr. Mathez also stated that the property behind the truck stop where the warehouse proposal is requiring about is on a hill and also believes that the NJDEP will not allow development there because of habitat considerations.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to go into Executive session at 8:35pm 2021- 95 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act; N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., declares it to be the public policy of the State to insure the right of citizens to have adequate advance notice of and the right to attend meetings of public bodies at which business affecting the public is discussed or acted upon; and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act also recognized exceptions to the right of the public to attend portions of such meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee find it necessary to conduct an executive session closed to the public as permitted by the N.J.S.A. 40:4-12; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee will reconvene in public session at the conclusion of the executive session;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Knowlton Township, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that they will conduct an executive session to discuss the following topic (s) as permitted by N.J.S.A. 40:4-12:

A. Contract Negotiations

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Township Committee hereby declare that their discussion of the subject (s) identified above may be made public at a time when the Township Attorney advises them that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest or duty of the Township or any other entity with respect to said discussion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Township Committee, for the reasons set forth above, hereby declare that the public is excluded from the portion of the meeting during which the above discussion shall take place.

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to come out of Executive session at 9:31 pm

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to adjourn tonight's meeting at 9:32 pm