

**TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON
COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
October 22, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held at the Knowlton Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Starrs, Deputy Mayor Cuntala and Township Committee Members Mathez and Farber. Also present was Ted Rodman, Municipal Engineer. The minutes were recorded by Lisa Patton, Municipal Clerk.

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by publishing notice of all regularly scheduled meetings in the Star Gazette, Star Ledger or Express Times as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk's office.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm with a salute to the flag and roll call.

PRESENTATION: Pete Summers, Warren County Health Department

Mr. Summers addressed the issue of salt contamination in private residential wells in the town of Columbia. He reported that a meeting took place in June with representatives of the NJDEP, NJDOT, Warren County, Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission and Knowlton Township. Mr. Summers stated the DEP has agreed to test 100 private wells in Columbia and throughout the township. Additional testing will be done on 25 samples to try to pinpoint potential sources of the salt.

Testing will take place in November. There is no cost to residents requesting the test. Residents will call the lab and arrange for their test. GIS mapping of wells will be included. Preliminary results are expected at the end of November. NJDEP chose this timeframe because it is before the snow season.

Deputy Mayor Cuntala asked how the information will be disseminated. Mayor Starrs stated she and Pam Russweiler will go door to door to contact residents. Township Committee members present agreed to alert residents through Nixle, the website and flyers. Committeeman Mathez requested that a flyer be posted in Columbia.

Pam Russweiler asked if results will be shared with residents. Mr. Summers explained Warren County Health Department will distribute results to each resident. The health department will not reveal each household result. Mayor Starrs stated the cost of testing is being borne by the Warren County Health Department and NJDEP.

Committeeman Farber asked if there is an indication of a bad winter, would testing occur in the spring. Mrs. Russweiler said it is under consideration. Mayor Starrs said the DEP is hoping to determine the type of salt present. Committeeman Farber stated the DEP may be able to determine if water softeners are affecting residential water supplies.

Sharon Valentine, Columbia, reported that Warren County Health Department tested residential wells in 2006 or 2007. The testing was done from a direct line, not the faucet.

Kevin Covatta, Warren County Health Department, introduced himself as the contact person at Warren County Health Department. He stated the testing will be done from a direct line.

Jaime Murray, Knowlton Township Environmental Commission

Mrs. Murray presented a Scenic Byway application and distributed a copy for public review. The application will include Route 80, boarder to boarder, and Route 94 from the Portland Bridge to Tunnel Field. The goal

The goal is to protect the natural, scenic and rural character of the township. The application is prepared in conjunction with the master plan. Mrs. Murray requested that the application be posted on the Township website.

Mrs. Murray reviewed the ecotourism benefits of a scenic byway. She explained the process of application, nomination, approval from Governing Body and County Freeholders and completion of a corridor management plan. The corridor management plan cost could be up to \$100,000 with federal funding available.

Committeeman Farber asked who oversees compliance with requirements. He asked if businesses must obtain a special permit for signs and if there any additional cost to businesses. Mrs. Murray explained review would be done by the Township Committee. Businesses would comply with the corridor management plan. There is a five year time period to adopt a corridor management plan.

Mayor Starrs asked what is the advantage of a scenic byway nomination if an executive order designates Route 80 from Pennsylvania to Hackettstown a scenic highway. Mrs. Murray explained the scenic byway could enhance tourism. Mayor Starrs also asked if the designation could be used to prevent the NJDOT Route 80 Rock Mitigation Project. Mrs. Murray replied it is not expected to affect the project.

Sharon Valentine, Columbia, asked if grant funds are not provided for the corridor management plan, would taxpayers incur any costs. Mrs. Murray stated there would be no cost to taxpayers.

Bob McNinch, Vail Road, asked why Route 46 was not included. Mrs. Murray reported the Environmental Commission did not include Route 46 because it is more commercial.

Mrs. Murray stated she will look further into signage and business requirements in the application.

ORDINANCE:

Ordinance 15-09

An Ordinance Amending Chapter XI OF The Revised General Ordinances Of The Township Of Knowlton Known As The "Land Development Ordinance Of The Township Of Knowlton With Specific Revisions To Section 11-297.A(3)

(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to open the public hearing for Ordinance 15-09. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, asked for clarification of changes to road frontage requirements. The ordinance requires common driveways to have road frontage and brings the local land use ordinance in line with New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law.

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 15-09 was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

Ordinance 15-10

Ordinance Amending 2015 Salary Ordinance

(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to open the public

hearing for Ordinance 15-10.

Jeffrey Russo, Esq. stated New Jersey statute prohibits reduction of the municipal clerk salary and uncomingling of duties. He stated more careful reflection is required in this matter. He stated this action will result in a lawsuit.

Bob McNinch, Vail Road, asked for the mayor to clarify specific changes to the ordinance. Mayor Starrs reported an office manager position was added at the rate of \$200 per day. She stated the municipal clerk/personnel administrator salary is reduced by \$10,000 and the municipal clerk will no longer perform personnel administrator duties.

Mr. McNinch asked if the additional position was requested by the public. Mayor Starrs said no.

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to adopt Ordinance 15-10. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – no, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 15-91 Resolution Approving Payment Of Vouchers (copy attached)

Discussion took place regarding spraying at the recreation site. Deputy Mayor Cuntala will follow up with the recreation director. Also discussed was an invoice for \$700 for tee shirts. The municipal clerk stated the shirts were purchased by the Clean Community Coordinator with grant funds. Discussion also entailed whether the senior group allows Pennsylvania residents to attend functions. Howard Cowell, Route 94, stated the group charges PA residents for trips. Committeeman Mathez reported the senior flu shot luncheon will be held on November 6th at 12:30 pm. Mayor Starrs will follow up with the security company to determine if monthly maintenance reports are needed.

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 15-91. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 15-92 Resolution Authorizing Increase To Salary Of Brian Peck (copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 15-92. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 15-93 Resolution Approving Waiver of Municipal Permit Fees For Knowlton Township Non Profit Organizations. (copy attached)

A motion as made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Committeeman Farber to approve Resolution 15-93. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 15-94 Resolution Supporting The Scenic Byways Nomination Application To NJ Scenic Byways Advisory Committee (At NJDOT) (copy attached)

Township Committee members present were in agreement to table Resolution 15-94 to allow time for public comment and to clarify effects on businesses from the nomination.

Resolution 15-95
Resolution Approving Professional Services Resolution – Office Manager
(copy attached)

Discussion took place regarding a work at home policy for the office manager position. Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, asked how the Committee can hire a new person with a work at home policy when other employees are not permitted to work at home at their discretion.

Mayor Starrs responded the municipal clerk is required to work from home on scheduled court days.

Committeeman Farber stated it would do no good to allow the office manager to work at home. He stated the office cannot be supervised from home. Deputy Mayor Cuntala agreed and stated it would defeat the purpose to manage the office.

Mayor Starrs stated it would be a deal breaker if the employee cannot work at home. George James, Honey Run Road, asked if the Township Committee is hiring an employee who will dictate their terms of employment.

Township Committee members present were in agreement to table Resolution 15-95.

Resolution 15-96
Resolution For Transfer of Decatur Street From Warren County To Knowlton Township
(copy attached)

Mayor Starrs reported the County Freeholder will only allow change of jurisdiction of winter road maintenance on Decatur Street in Columbia. The County will contribute two dump trucks' worth of salt (\$1,100 at 2014 cost) to the Township.

Ted Rodman, Municipal Engineer, stated there is concern with the drainage system in Columbia. He said it consists of 30 plus catch basins. The catch basins' condition is unknown. Mr. Rodman proposed the Township could incur winter road maintenance (salting and clearing snow) while leaving jurisdiction of Decatur Street with Warren County. Mayor Starrs stated the County did not agree.

Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, asked how many feet of road on Decatur Street is involved. Mayor Starrs said .4 mile. Mr. Clifford asked if it is advisable to run cameras down the drains to determine their condition. Mayor Starrs said the county might be willing but is requiring the resolution first.

Committeeman Farber asked when will the section of road needs to be resurfaced. Committeeman Mathez suggested the Township could wait until after the Warren County Health Department report on salt is complete.

Bill Clifford stated if the drains run into the river, the Township could become liable for installation of infiltrators. He also stated this could be very costly and should be investigated.

Mayor Starrs said the consensus seems to be to wait for more information. Committeeman Farber suggested the County should keep salt and jurisdiction.

Mr. Murray suggested each party should keep responsibility for salting. Engineer Rodman explained the jurisdiction is broken up; there is overlap in salting from trucks stopping and starting. Mr. Murray also stated mid-west states use grit only to avoid salt problems. He said it is not a bad option. Engineer Rodman said grit requires clean up at the end of the season.

Pam Russweiler, Columbia, suggested attendance at a County Freeholder meeting to request low salt practices.
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Resolution 15-97
Resolution Approving Submission Of NJDOT State Aid Grant Application
For Overlay Of Polkville Road
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 15-97. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shippis – absent, Starrs – yes.

Committeeman Farber suggested that a copy of the application should be forwarded to Senator Oroho's office.

OLD BUSINESS:

24th Legislative Town Hall Meeting

Township Committee members reviewed discussion topics for the upcoming meeting with 24th District Legislators. Topics included Route 80 Rock Wall Mitigation Project, education funding excluding property tax and NJDOT Transportation Trust Fund.

Bob McNinch, Vail Road, asked if the meeting is open to the public. He stated it is ridiculous to call a town hall meeting and exclude the public. Township Committee members suggested that he attend.

Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, asked for the final cost of the Route 46 Rock Mitigation Project. He asked why the cost was not posted as required. He said this is public information but he has not been able to access the information.

Gypsy Moth Survey

Mayor Starrs reviewed the NJDEP form requesting feedback by December 18th. Engineer Rodman stated the Township has sprayed gypsy moths in the past but the program did not have a cost associated.

Mayor Starrs said she would like to know how effective the treatment is. Engineer Rodman reported the effectiveness of the spraying is affected if it rains immediately after the spraying.

A resident commented the spray for gypsy moths is very effective and very safe.

George James, Honey Run Road, asked if the federal park is being sprayed. He stated the population could spread if sprays are not coordinated. Mayor Starrs said she will ask the federal and state park services.

Committeeman Mathez stated the cost could be over \$9,000.

Municipal Building Access

Township Committee members discussed personnel policy regarding access to the municipal building. Township Committee members present were in agreement that employees can call for permission to enter the building for exceptions to the policy.

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Mayor Starrs to adhere to the current policy in the manual regarding access to the building. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – no, Shippis – absent, Starrs – yes.

Special Counsel Filing

Mayor Starrs reported the parties separately attended a meeting at the municipal attorney's office in attempt to resolve issues amicably. No agreement was reached. The Township proceeded with the Department of Community Affairs filing.

NEW BUSINESS:

Municipal Office Staffing

The municipal clerk reported that due to an employee's absence for over six months; issues with office staffing and workload are being affected. The personnel subcommittee will look into the matter.

Review of Best Practices Worksheet

Township Committee members present reviewed the New Jersey Best Practices Worksheet.

Donation of Block 33, Lots 3 & 5

The municipal clerk reported a resident is interested in donating two lots to the Township. Discussion took place regarding location, usefulness of the lots and a title search. The matter will be referred to the Knowlton Lions' Club.

Route 80 Rock Mitigation Project

Mayor Starrs stated one accident was reported involving falling rocks along Route 80 in the Delaware Water Gap. Committeeman Mathez offered to write a similar resolution to the Route 46 Rock Mitigation Project Resolution which opposed the project.

Board of Adjustment Appointment

Mayor Starrs appointed Kim Schad to the unexpired term of Arnold Kantor which expires 12/31/18.

Exterminator Services

Township Committee members present were in agreement to maintain exterminator service in the municipal building for rodent control.

Delaware Reservoir

Committeeman Mathez explained the Township did maintain the Delaware Reservoir while the Fire Company used it as a water source. The Fire Company no longer has a need to use the reservoir.

Air Conditioning

Engineer Rodman reported the specifications for air conditioning the meeting room are completed. To date, he distributed the specs to three vendors

Playground

Engineer Rodman explained the new playground equipment is being purchased through state contract. Installation of the equipment and ground material will be bided. He will advise when the date for bid opening is set.

Columbia Dam

Engineer Rodman reported he received a message from the County that Columbia Dam may be being removed. Mr. Rodman will invite NJDEP representatives to attend a meeting for discussion of this matter.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bob McNinch asked for the status of the July COAH filing. Committeeman Mathez will follow up.

Pam Russweiler, Columbia, asked about mail delivery in Columbia. Mayor Starrs reviewed recent changes to allow mailboxes in the town.

Jaime Murray reported she was biking on a Saturday and was unable to obtain a Station Road parking permit. She explained drop tap boxes which are used in other areas to issue automatic permits. Mr. Murray stated guide books reference the Paulinskill Trail. Mrs. Murray also suggested that any correspondence regarding the Route 80 Rock Mitigation Project should be in writing.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to approve Resolution 15-115 to enter executive session for discussion of personnel. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – absent, Starrs – yes.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Committeeman Mathez to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Patton
Municipal Clerk