

**MINUTES OF KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP  
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES  
September 9, 2019**

The monthly meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held on this date at the Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, New Jersey. This meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Mayor Starrs.

Mayor Starrs led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Starrs read the following statement: “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 the Star Gazette and/or the Star Ledger as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk’s office.”

**Roll Call**

Present: Committeeman McNinch, Committeeman Van Horn, and Mayor Starrs

Also present was Township Engineer Ted Rodman, EMS Captain Dave Neal and Township Attorney Richard Cushing via conference call at 7:20 p.m.

Absent: Committeewoman Cuntala and Deputy Mayor Shipps

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Resident Theresa Capriccio-Thoene read a statement that she prepared regarding the salt issues in the Village of Columbia. Mrs. Capriccio-Thoene is asking the Township to install a community water system that would service Columbia, with funding provided through loans and residents being charged a fee. Discussion took place regarding the NJ Department of Environmental Protection report that found 6 agencies contributed to salt deposition: the state Department of Transportation, the Delaware River Bridge Commission, the township, the county, the Travel Centers of America, and residents’ own water softeners. Mayor Starrs said a second study, provided by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, looked at long-term solutions. The least expensive solution cost approximately \$9 million. Changes that Knowlton Township has made include using magnesium chloride in the village instead of salt. Mayor Starrs also explained the research that she has done and that there are grants, but that they require the substance to be a primary contaminant, which salt is not a primary contaminant.

Mrs. Capriccio- Thoene volunteered to investigate other grants & programs that could assist in funding.

**Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to approve to have Mrs. Capriccio-Thoene to investigate other grants & programs that could assist in funding and report back to the township.**

Resident Sharon Valentine commented that the township has done everything that they could do to

help with the salt issue in the Village.

Resident Robert Van Wattering stated that he is getting ready to sell his business and he does not have any water issues. Mr. Van Wattering's well is 300 feet and asked if the township would be interested in buying his property. Mayor Starrs explained that the committee would need to discuss it but they get residents asking to purchase their property all the time and there is protocol for that.

Resident Dave Murray commented to the committee regarding an ongoing issue that he has had with lighting at his neighbor's house. Mr. Murray is upset he was not notified that permits were approved. Attorney Cushing stated that it is not normal practice for a Zoning officer to notify neighbors of permits that were issued, but Mr. Murray can explain that he is an interested party and can appeal to the Board of Adjustment about the permits issued.

Mayor Starrs asked for one piece of advice from Attorney Cushing. Mayor Starrs received a denial from the NJDOT to her request for baseline air quality analysis showing how the I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project will affect the township. The letter said that the NJDOT is exempt from providing Air Quality monitoring or assessments. Mayor Starrs inquired about filing a Notice of Tort claim and if it needs to be filed at the time of damage. Attorney Cushing requested to discuss this further in an Executive Session.

Resident Dave Murray had a question regarding a fence issue with his neighbor. Attorney Cushing let Mr. Murray know that the zoning officer is interpreting the zoning ordinance and that a right-of-way issue may be a neighbor dispute that the township committee would not get involved in.

At this time Attorney Cushing ended his phone conference at 7:45.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **David Neal Knowlton Fire & Rescue**

St. Luke's is now providing emergency medical services to Knowlton Township 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They purchased an ambulance which they had in the parking lot for anyone who would like to see it. St. Luke's also purchased a Lucas device which aids in CPR.

**Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman Van Horn and carried to approve to take a 15-minute break to look at the new ambulance.**

**Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to approve to return to public session.**

### **Township Engineer Ted Rodman**

Stark Rd. DPW is still working on the road before paving.

Kill/Station Rd.—the overlay is complete.

Tunnel Field permits have been received for the new drinking water system. County wants a level 2 assessment. Mr. Rodman will speak with the County.

Mayor Starrs asked about posting No Truck signs on Hainesburg River Rd. Mr. Rodman will look into that and speak with DPW Supervisor Brian Peck.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **2019-124- Resolution Recognizing the Negative Effects of a Proposed Large Warehouse Development Project on Knowlton Township**

WHEREAS, a conceptual plan has been proposed for 6-million-square foot warehouse complex on an industrially zoned lot on Route 519 in White Township; and

WHEREAS, if this proposal advances, it will be the largest warehouse complex in the state of NJ; and  
WHEREAS, professional estimates of truck traffic would produce many thousands of trucks per day traveling to and from the site; and

WHEREAS, trucks traveling to and from the site are likely to use Route 46 in Knowlton Township to reach their destination in White; and

WHEREAS, Warren County Planning Department’s 2018 Technical Study (WCTTS), pages 36 and 70, cites: CR 519 Intersection with US Route 46 is approaching capacity, US 46 is pavement deficient, NJRTM-E 46 is approaching capacity, and CR 519 is approaching capacity; and

WHEREAS, trucks will likely use two Route 46 bridges rated by the 2018 WCTTS, p. 39, as “structurally deficient,” bridges “for which the deck (riding surface), the superstructure (supports immediately beneath the driving surface) or the substructure (foundation and supporting posts and piers) are rated as poor or worse”; and

WHEREAS, increased truck traffic will be a safety hazard for parents and children waiting at bus stops and entering and exiting the Knowlton Township Elementary School, which is located on Route 46; and

WHEREAS, additional diesel pollution from truck traffic may impact air quality for children playing outside at the elementary school and families located near the Village of Delaware; and

WHEREAS, an additional unintended consequence may be longer response times for Knowlton Fire and Rescue, whose headquarters is located on Route 46; and

WHEREAS, vibration from existing truck traffic on Route 519 has contributed to damage to the stone foundations and structures of buildings within the Historic Village of Hope; and

WHEREAS, it is the professional opinion of the historical architect renovating the Ramsaysburg Historic Homestead that significant additional truck traffic on Route 46 may damage to the stone foundation of the main building of the Ramsaysburg main building; and

WHEREAS, it is the professional opinion of the historical architect renovating the Ramsaysburg Historic Homestead that soot from truck exhaust attaches to stucco and as this effect is repeated, the carbon can become chemically bonded to the stucco, which will require regular and costly cleaning of the stucco at the Ramsaysburg location; and

WHEREAS, trucks over 4-tons are prohibited on Decatur Street in Knowlton, yet drivers still use this road as a shortcut to Route 46, causing property damage and frequent complaints from residents; and

WHEREAS, an increase in trucks traveling to the warehouse complex in White will likely exacerbate the truck problems on Decatur; and

WHEREAS, the loss of prime farmland to warehouses diminishes the food supply and directly impacts the rural character of the region; and

WHEREAS, real estate developers in the Lehigh Valley conducted three studies and concluded that warehouses in that region resulted in a decrease of home property values of 11.5%\*; and

WHEREAS, the average warehouse worker in NJ, makes \$13 hour, which is not a living wage, and the result will be an added burden on the state and county social safety net; and

WHEREAS, the consequences listed above do not benefit the residents of Knowlton Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Township Committee of Knowlton petitions all other 21 municipalities in Warren County to address the impact of the 6-million-square-foot warehouse complex on their residents and their towns' futures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Committee of Knowlton petitions the Warren County Board of Freeholders to stop this project because of the many unintended consequences of the 6-million-square-foot warehouse complex, including but not limited to the alteration of Warren County residents' quality of life, taxes, education, police, fire and rescue squads, property values, and air quality.

**Motion made by Committeeman McNinch, second by Mayor Starrs and carried to approve Resolution 2019-124.**

**2019-125- 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 was made by Committeeman Van Horn, second by Committeeman McNinch approved by roll call vote: Cuntala—absent, McNinch—yes, Shipps—absent, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes to Resolution 2019-125.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Rockwall Update/ NJTPA meeting**

Mayor Starrs attending the meeting regarding the NJTPA funding for the Rockwall project and informed the residents and committee that the funding passed for the Rockwall project. She said the NJDOT has now formally denied requests for a reduction in speed on the “s” turns, denied the request for an air quality analysis during construction, and denied the request for a study of how 4 years of construction on Route 80 will affect local businesses and the economy.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Nuisance Complaints**

Zoning Officer Eric Snyder provided nuisance complaints to the committee. Committee agreed that the Committee should not be involved in individual complaints and would have Zoning Officer to handle the complaints. The committee will only discuss if there is clarification needed on an ordinance.

**Knowlton Town wide Cleanup-Saturday, October 19**

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to approve for Knowlton Town wide Cleanup - Saturday, October 19

**DPW Letter of Resignation**

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to accept the resignation of DPW employee Geoff Littlehale with regret.

### **DPW Position Advertisement**

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, Second by Committeeman McNinch a carried to approve the advertisement that Mayor Starrs prepared to be posted after the Committee receives a survey of how many road miles local municipalities have a how many DPW workers there are.

### **Attracting New Internet Provider**

Congressman Gottheimer got together the mayors of the surrounding towns to meet with Altice which is a new internet provider that has expanded into Sussex County.

Mayor Starrs also stated that the mayors are putting a list together on the residents who did not receive upgrades from CenturyLink upgrades last year. The mayors are asking CenturyLink to go out for a new grant to accommodate those residents.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

No Correspondence

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Resident Pam Rusweiler asked about getting more truck signs on Decatur St.

Resident Theresa Capriccio-Thoene mentioned that there as been an increase in vagrants in the village of Columbia.

Resident Sharon Valentine commented that she did call the police regarding a gentleman who was walking in the area. The police did pick him up and did tell Ms. Valentine that the residents need to call and they will pick them up.

Resident Pam Rusweiler commented on residents using other people's garbage cans to dump their garbage.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to adjourn tonight's Township meeting at 8:58 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristin Shipps  
Municipal Clerk