

**TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON
COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
March 11 , 2024**

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 Shipps. Mayor Shipps led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Shipps 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: Bates--absent Cuntala—yes, Mazza—yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps—yes

Deputy Mayor Mazza joined the meeting via conference call at 7:10

PUBLIC COMMENT- Limited To 20 Minutes With 3 Minutes Per Member Of The Public

Mr. Paul Dulaff addressed the committee regarding the timeframe of when 102 trucks were allowed back onto Route 94. Attorney Tara St. Angelo will check with NJDOT to see if they have any record of such date.

Mr. Chuck Walsh addressed the new bill in front of the Senate regarding OPRA. Acting Clerk Molion advised Mr. Walsh of a recent zoom meeting she attended regarding this bill and what it would mean for the Municipalities. There are to be an estimate of 96 changes within the bill that could affect the way OPRA’s are handled. As of right now, this proposed bill is not delaying any requests coming into the Township.

Mr. Frank Arena discussed the TriTop warehouse that has recently been approved by the Blairstown Land Use Board. There are concerns with truck traffic and the 35 bus stops along the way to the approved warehouse. Mayor Shipps stated it does raise concern with accidents that have happened in the past in that specific area. Mr. Arena thanked Mayor Shipps and the committee for their support.

DEPARTMENT REPORT

Transportation: I80-611-Amtrak

Ms. Tara Mezzanotte presented to the committee an update on I80-611. On February 21, Hardwick passed their joint resolution with Knowlton in regard to requesting agencies make immediate short term I-80 s-curve area safety improvements and immediately initiate the problem statement/study requested in 2020.

February 22 was the NJDOT held a local officials briefing which Ms. Mezzanotte attended. The retaining wall has 11 panels that need to be repaired. Ms. Mezzanotte submitted 26 questions to NJDOT which should be answered by April 1.

Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic River – Paulins Kill Update

Ms. Mezzanotte explained The National Parks Service will be conducting a review of the Paulins Kill Bridge and Ms. Mezzanotte will keep the committee updated on the review.

ORDINANCES

2024-01 An Ordinance Regulation Privately-Owned Salt Storage

WHEREAS, in order to prevent pollutants from being transported to local water bodies from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), federal stormwater regulations require MS4 operators to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and implement a stormwater management program; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to NJPDES Master General Permit No. NJ0141852, as of January 1, 2023, all 101 New Jersey municipalities previously assigned to Tier B, such as Knowlton Township, have now been assigned to Tier A, in order to help better manage stormwater discharges and resulting pollutant and nutrient impacts to waterways. **WHEREAS**, this reassignment requires Knowlton (and all former Tier B municipalities) to update their ordinances to be consistent with Tier A standards.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 141 of the Code of the Township of Knowlton, entitled “Privately-Owned Salt Storage” is hereby added as follows:

§141-1 Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is to prevent stored salt and other solid de-icing materials from being exposed to stormwater.

This ordinance establishes requirements for the storage of salt and other solid de-icing materials on properties not owned or operated by the municipality (privately-owned), including residences, in Knowlton Township to protect the environment, public health, safety and welfare, and to prescribe penalties for failure to comply.

§141-2 Definitions:

For the purpose of this ordinance, the following terms, phrases, words and their derivations shall have the meanings stated herein unless their use in the text of this Chapter clearly demonstrates a different meaning. When consistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future, words used in the plural number include the singular number, and words used in the singular number include the plural number. The word “shall” is always mandatory and not merely directory.

- A. “De-icing materials” means any granular or solid material such as melting salt or any other granular solid that assists in the melting of snow.
- B. “Impervious surface” means a surface that has been covered with a layer of material so that it is highly resistant to infiltration by water.
- C. “Storm drain inlet” means the point of entry into the storm sewer system.
- D. “Permanent structure” means a permanent building or permanent structure that is anchored to a permanent foundation with an impermeable floor, and that is completely roofed and walled (new structures require a door or other means of sealing the access way from wind driven rainfall).

A fabric frame structure is a permanent structure if it meets the following specifications:

- 1. Concrete blocks, jersey barriers or other similar material shall be placed around the interior of the structure to protect the side walls during loading and unloading of de-icing materials;
 - 2. The design shall prevent stormwater run-on and run through, and the fabric cannot leak;
 - 3. The structure shall be erected on an impermeable slab;
 - 4. The structure cannot be open sided; and
 - 5. The structure shall have a roll up door or other means of sealing the access way from wind driven rainfall.
- E. “Person” means any individual, corporation, company, partnership, firm, association, or political subdivision of this State subject to municipal jurisdiction.

F. "Resident" means a person who resides on a residential property where de-icing material is stored.

§141-3 Deicing Material Storage Requirements:

A. Temporary outdoor storage of de-icing materials in accordance with the requirements below is allowed between October 15th and April 15th:

1. Loose materials shall be placed on a flat, impervious surface in a manner that prevents stormwater run-through;
2. Loose materials shall be placed at least 50 feet from surface water bodies, storm drain inlets, ditches and/or other stormwater conveyance channels;
3. Loose materials shall be maintained in a cone-shaped storage pile. If loading or unloading activities alter the cone-shape during daily activities, tracked materials shall be swept back into the storage pile, and the storage pile shall be reshaped into a cone after use;
4. Loose materials shall be covered as follows:
 - a. The cover shall be waterproof, impermeable, and flexible;
 - b. The cover shall extend to the base of the pile(s);
 - c. The cover shall be free from holes or tears;
 - d. The cover shall be secured and weighed down around the perimeter to prevent removal by wind; and
 - e. Weight shall be placed on the cover(s) in such a way that minimizes the potential of exposure as materials shift and runoff flows down to the base of the pile.
 - (1) Sandbags lashed together with rope or cable and placed uniformly over the flexible cover, or poly-cord nets provide a suitable method. Items that can potentially hold water (e.g., old tires) shall not be used;
5. Containers must be sealed when not in use; and
6. The site shall be free of all de-icing materials between April 16th and October 14th.

B. De-icing materials should be stored in a permanent structure if a suitable storage structure is available. For storage of loose de-icing materials in a permanent structure, such storage may be permanent, and thus not restricted to October 15 -April 15.

C. **All such temporary and/or permanent structures intended to store de-icing materials must also comply with all other local ordinances, including building and zoning regulations.**

D. The property owner, or owner of the de-icing materials if different, shall designate a person(s) responsible for operations at the site where these materials are stored outdoors, and who shall document that weekly inspections are conducted to ensure that the conditions of this ordinance are met. Inspection records shall be kept on site and made available to the municipality upon request.

1. Residents who operate businesses from their homes that utilize de-icing materials are required to perform weekly inspections.

§141-4 Exemptions:

- A. Residents may store de-icing materials outside in a solid-walled, closed container that prevents precipitation from entering and exiting the container, and which prevents the de-icing materials from leaking or spilling out. Under these circumstances, weekly inspections are not necessary, but repair or replacement of damaged or inadequate containers shall occur within 2 weeks.
- B. If containerized (in bags or buckets) de-icing materials are stored within a permanent structure, they are not subject to the storage and inspection requirements in Section 141-3 above.
- C. Piles of de-icing materials are not exempt, even if stored in a permanent structure.
- D. Chapter 141 of the Township Code does not apply to facilities where the stormwater discharges from de-icing material storage activities are regulated under another NJPDES permit.

§141-5 Enforcement:

This ordinance shall be enforced by the Township Zoning Officer during the course of ordinary enforcement duties.

§141-6 Violations and Penalties:

Any person(s) who is found to be in violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall have 72 hours to complete corrective action. Any person, firm or corporation who or which violates, disobeys, omits, neglects or refuses to comply with or who or which resists the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter and who or which refuses to abate the violation within 72 hours after written notice has been served upon him or her or it by registered mail or by personal service shall, for each and every violation, be subject to a fine of not more than \$500. Each and every day that such a violation continues after such notice shall be considered a separate and specific violation of this chapter without the service of additional notice.

SECTION 3. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict or inconsistent with any part of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent that they are in conflict or inconsistent.

SECTION 4. If any section, provision, or part of provision of this Ordinance shall be held to be unenforceable or invalid by any court, such holding shall not affect the validity of this Ordinance, or any part thereof, other than the part so held unenforceable or invalid.

SECTION 5. This Ordinance shall take effect after passage and publication in the manner provided by law.

Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved for introduction by roll call vote:

Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes

2024-02 An Ordinance Prohibiting Overnight Parking At Tunnel Field

WHEREAS, the Township Committee desires to prohibit overnight parking at Tunnel Field.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 134-27 of the Code of the Township of Knowlton, entitled “Parking,” and regarding parking at Parks and Recreation Areas is hereby amended as follows (additions noted in bold italic *thus* and deletions noted in strikethrough ~~thus~~):

No person shall operate or have parked a vehicle except in designated driveway and parking areas. No person shall operate or have parked a vehicle on playing fields or areas covered by grass unless said area has been specifically designated, by the use of signs, to be a parking area. *No person shall park a vehicle overnight (i.e. between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am) at Tunnel Field without express permission from the Township Committee.*

SECTION 2. Section 174-15 of the Code of the Township of Knowlton, entitled “Schedule II: Parking Prohibited Certain Hours,” is hereby amended by adding the following:

Name of Street	Side	Hours	Location
Parking areas or parts of parking areas and public property of the Township of Knowlton, specifically, Tunnel Field	All	9:00pm to 6:00am; unless express permission is given by the Township Committee	Tunnel Field

SECTION 3. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict or inconsistent with any part of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent that they are in conflict or inconsistent.

SECTION 4. If any section, provision, or part of provision of this Ordinance shall be held to be unenforceable or invalid by any court, such holding shall not affect the validity of this Ordinance, or any part thereof, other than the part so held unenforceable or invalid.

SECTION 5. This Ordinance shall take effect after passage and publication in the manner provided by law.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved for introduction by roll call vote:
Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes**

RESOLUTIONS

2024-24 Resolution Confirming Appointment Of Eric K. Snyder As The Affordable Housing Administrative Agent For The Township Of Knowlton And Confirming The Appointment Of Maggie Faselt As His Assistant

WHEREAS, Eric K. Snyder, A.I.C.P, P.P. was appointed as Knowlton Township’s administrative agent for the purpose of providing affordability control services for all affordable housing within the Township pursuant to Resolution 2024-02 adopted by the Knowlton Township Committee on January 4, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Snyder receives a stipend in the amount of \$_____ in connection with the administrative agent position; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Snyder employs an assistant, Maggie Faselt, to aid him in carrying out his administrative agent duties;

WHEREAS, Mr. Snyder supervises all of Ms. Faselt’s work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. Maggie Faselt is hereby appointed as assistant to the Administrative Agent.
2. Ms. Faselt shall not receive a stipend from the Township nor will the stipend for the administrative agent position be increased.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes**

2024-35 Resolution Of Support For The JCP&L Energize NJ Program

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton (the “Township”) recognizes that reliable electric service plays a crucial role in the daily lives of Township residents; and

WHEREAS, the Township recognizes that reliable electric service also is critical to the local businesses within our community, and drives commerce in the Township and across the region; and

WHEREAS, the Township supports efforts to upgrade our energy infrastructure to continue to provide families and businesses the reliable source of energy they need; and

WHEREAS, the Township supports efforts to enhance the reliability and resiliency of the electric distribution system against severe weather and reduce the number of customers affected by outages and shorten the duration of outages; and

WHEREAS, the Township has been informed that Jersey Central Power and Light Company's ("JCP&L") *EnergizeNJ* Program includes approximately \$935 million in targeted investments above and beyond its regular annual investments to enhance JCP&L's service reliability and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the Township has been informed that the JCP&L plan is broken into three key investment areas: grid modernization, system resiliency and substation modernization, that will strengthen the backbone of JCP&L's local electric system, providing the foundation for smart grid capabilities in the future; and

WHEREAS, the Township has been informed that this investment should pay for itself with approximately \$3.08 billion return in reliability benefits to customers by helping to reduce non-storm outages and improving JCP&L's ability to restore power following a major storm event; and

WHEREAS, the Township has been informed that JCP&L estimates the initial increase on the monthly bill for an average residential customer would be about 54 cents, with a total of seven incremental increases ranging from \$.10, or 0.1% to \$.99, or 0.8%

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Township supports the Energize NJ Program.
2. The Mayor of Knowlton Township is authorized to draft a letter to the Board of Public Utilities enclosing this Resolution and noting the Township's support of the Energize NJ Program.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

2024-36 Resolution Authorizing Release Of Performance Bond Of Petroleum Marketing Group, Inc. (Block 28, Lots 7, 8, 9 & 10)

WHEREAS, the Petroleum Marketing Group, Inc. received preliminary and final major site plan, conditional use, and bulk variance approval from the Township Zoning Board of Adjustment on or about November 3, 2020 to construct a gas station with convenience store on the property known as Block 28, Lots 7,8,9, and 10 on the Township of Knowlton's Tax Maps; and

WHEREAS, Petroleum, Marketing Group, Inc. has requested the refund of the Performance Guarantee for these site improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Township Engineer recommended release of the Performance Guarantee; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The cash and surety bonds shall not be released until all outstanding escrow fees for the Township's professional review costs have been paid in full.

2. Upon a certification of availability of funds, the Chief Financial Officer is hereby instructed to refund the amount held by the Township on the cash bond, to Petroleum Marketing Group, LLC.
3. The surety portion of the performance bond shall be released, subject to review of the required maintenance bond by the Township Attorney.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes**

2024-37 Resolution Authorizing Tax Collector to Apply Credits on Taxes Due – State Tax Court Judgment

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has received a stipulation of settlement and judgment from the Tax Court which reduced the 2022, 2023, and 2024 tax assessments on the property located at 4 Simpson Road and identified on the Tax Maps of the Township of Knowlton (the “Township”) as Block 12, Lot 12 (the “Property”); and

WHEREAS, the Property Owner paid 2022 and 2023 property taxes based on the original assessments and; therefore, overpaid the property taxes; and

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2023, the Township Committee adopted Resolution 2023-112 authorizing a refund of such overpayments; and

WHEREAS, however, the Stipulation of Settlement entered in the Tax Court case required such refunds to be provided via credits on future tax bills.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. Resolution 2023-112 is hereby rescinded.
2. The Tax Collector is hereby authorized to execute a credit to property taxes due in the amount of any overpayments of 2022 and 2023 taxes for Block 12, Lot 12.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes**

2024-38 Resolution Authorizing The Tax Collector To Credit Interest Paid To Taxes Due And Waiving Interest As Necessary (Block 62, Lot 1)

WHEREAS, the owner of property identified on the Tax Maps of the Township of Knowlton (the “Township”) as Block 62, Lot 1 (the “Property”) mailed a check to the Township for payment of 2021 fourth quarter taxes on the Property; and

WHEREAS, such check was lost in the mail and not received by the Township; and

WHEREAS, since such time, the owner of the Property has timely paid all taxes due; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee desires apply any interest payments made by the Property Owner to taxes due and waive any accrued and unpaid interest.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Tax Collector is hereby authorized to execute a credit to property taxes due in the amount of any accrued interest paid and waive any unpaid interest on taxes for Block 62, Lot 1.
2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:

Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes

2024-39 Resolution Amending And Updating The Knowlton Township Personnel / Policy Manual

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton seeks to update its Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Township of Knowlton Personnel / Policy Manual is updated as follows:
 - a. Section 1, “Stormwater Training Policy” and “Biometric Time Clock Policy”; Section 2, “Employee Hours,” and “Employee Snow Plowing Policy and Rest Policy; Section 3, “Paid Holiday Policy;”: and Section 4, “Continuing Education Procedure,” “Conference/Seminar/Training Leave,” and “Overnight Hotel Reimbursement Policy” shall be updated in accordance with the attached exhibit (deletions noted in strikethrough ~~thus~~ and additions noted in underline thus).
2. The Clerk and Township Attorney may update the table of contents accordingly after adoption of the update Manual
3. A copy of the updated Township of Knowlton Personnel / Policy Manual shall be on file with the Clerk's office.
4. A copy of this Resolution and updated policies shall be distributed to all Township employees.
5. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:

Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes

2024-40 Resolution Citing Safety Issues Within The I-80 / 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor, Requesting Agencies Make Immediate Short Term I-80 S-Curve Area Safety Improvements And Immediately Initiate The Problem Statement/Study Requested In 2020

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (“NJDOT”) owns the Right of Way for I-80 between mile post 4, the Portland Columbia Bridge/Rout 46/Route 94 I-80 Exit 4 Interchange and mile post 0, the Delaware Water Gap Bridge (the “I-80 / PA 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor”), which travels through the municipalities of the Township of Knowlton (“Knowlton”) and the Township of Hardwick(“Hardwick”), Warren County New Jersey, and is serviced by Knowlton Fire and Rescue and Blairstown Fire and Rescue (the “Fire Departments”); and

WHEREAS, the Fire Departments, through mutual aid agreements serve multiple municipalities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and rely on the I-80 / PA 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor for quick incident response and access to the nearest Emergency Room; and

WHEREAS, since at least 2012, Knowlton has requested assistance from NJDOT, State Legislators, and the Warren County Commissioners regarding the safety of the S-Curves on I-80 within the Delaware Water Gap Corridor (the “S-Curves”); and

WHEREAS, the safety-related issues brought to the attention of NJDOT have included:

- The lack of appropriate warning signs
- Tree trimming
- Maintenance of existing warning signs
- Diversion of I-80 and Route 46 vehicle traffic into the Village of Columbia
- Failure of NJDOT to respond to requests (or actually correct) hazardous conditions; and

WHEREAS, since at least 2012, letters, emails and Knowlton Township Committee meeting minutes reflect Knowlton’s need to solicit assistance from North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (“NJTPA”), state legislators, the Warren County Board of Commissions, and the Warren County Planning Department to address safety-related matters associated with NJDOT’s Route 46 and I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project (the “Rockfall Project”); and

WHEREAS, copies of such letters, emails, and meeting minutes reflecting the long-history of Knowlton's requests for assistance are attached hereto and made a part hereof; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 Knowlton and Hardwick adopted Resolutions seeking additional assistance from state, county, and federal representatives, partially due to the following:

- NJDOT not responding to a request in 2017 for a public meeting or hearing regarding visual, safety, and economic impacts associated with the Rockfall Project
- The lack of public involvement in the development of a scope and mitigation alternatives for the Rockfall Project
- Concerns related to the purpose of and need for the Rockfall Project, which has changed numerous times since initially presented in 2011
- Concerns regarding the quality of studies related to the Rockfall Project
- NJDOT's failure to provide updates and accurate information concerning the Rockfall Project
- NJDOT's failure to address the ongoing I-80 / PA 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor safety issues,
- NJDOT's failure to address the design issues with the S-Curves
- NJDOT's failure to install warning signs in the I-80 / PA 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor S-curves as requested in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Township's NJDOT experience partially reflected above does NOT appear to match the letter or spirit of NJDOT's Public Involvement Action Plan which states in part:

Public participation is critical to the successful implementation of the New Jersey Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) transportation program and projects. More than just public participation, this policy promotes an on-going public partnership to ensure that the subregional and/or regional transportation benefits are considered within the context of communities directly impacted by the project. This policy also ensures early, frequent and continuous consultation with the public by committing to public notification to the affected parties, citizen input in the identification of the solutions and dedication on the part of NJDOT to make the public's input meaningful and that there is follow through on their input. We strive to include the public in clearly defining services and/or infrastructure options and we will strive to implement construction with minimal impact on people, business and the environment. NJDOT retains the right to advance projects in matters of critical safety needs.

WHEREAS, Knowlton submitted a formal NJDOT Problem Statement Request in 2018 seeking safety improvements to the I-80 WB Mile Post 3.4 Simpson Road Exit/Entrance noting:

"Route 80 is a heavily traveled highway. With summer months and tourist season, traffic will increase on Route 80 through Delaware Water Gap. A new rest area/travel center will be opening this summer which will increase traffic in this area. The entrance and exit lanes should be closed or lengthened as they do not meet NJDOT standards and are unsafe. Tractor trailer traffic from the nearby truckstop should be redirected to use the other access ramp that does meet NJDOT standards".; and

WHEREAS upon completion of the review in 2019, NJDOT did not make any requested safety improvements to I-80 WB Mile Post 3.4 Simpson Road Exit/Entrance Ramp; and

WHEREAS, there are only 2 lanes and NO shoulders from I-80 WB Simpson Road Mile Post 3.4 to Mile Post 2.4 where a vehicle became disabled on February 27, 2024 that was crashed into by a box truck resulting in one fatality and two others transported to the hospital, and ambulances reporting a delay to the site due to the traffic; and

WHEREAS, Knowlton submitted a formal NJDOT Problem Statement Request in 2020 seeking a study of all safety, mobility, and congestions issues related to I-80 Exit 4 to the Delaware Water Gap Bridge, submitted a revision to the request, and memorialized the request in Knowlton Committee resolution No. 2020-166, in accordance with NJDOT's stated policy; and

WHEREAS, when Knowlton's Engineer requested a status update on the request in January 2021, he received an email stating that NJDOT was no longer accepting External Problem Statement Requests as follows:

“per NJDOT policy **we no longer accept external problem statements** from municipalities or stakeholders. We advance projects based solely on our asset management systems and internal reviews”; and

WHEREAS, NJDOT's 2021 claim of a policy change, was **directly contradicted** by NJDOT's responses to comments on two (2) [NJTPA draft 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan \(TIP\), which stated:](#)”

“**there is an established process for an outside agency, official or resident to request** transportation issues be considered for problem statement submission. A letter should be sent to NJDOT Community Relations: The location and explanation of the issue should be included in the letter. ... **An agency, official or resident** can also contact their local MPO to initiate this process.”; and

WHEREAS, Knowlton and Hardwick's OEM Coordinators recently conducted site visits, [reviewed the related memo](#), (attached) and reviewed the [Route I-80 EB Retaining Wall Interim Repairs November 2022 Plans and letter dated December 1, 2022](#) to confirm the following additional S-Curve safety issues:

1. Ten (10) of the twenty (20) yellow warning arrows, in the S-Curves, installed in or about 2019-2020 are no longer on their posts.
2. There is no warning arrow on the Mount Tammany slope side of I-80 to warn east-bound travelers of the sharp curve, just before the access point for the I80 EB Retaining Wall Project site, despite many tractor trailer rollovers occurring in this area;
3. The following substandard conditions have been reported and tracked by the I-80 DWG Coalition, a citizen group formed to address safety concerns regarding the Rockfall Project and S-Curve since January 2023:
 - No advanced warning signs on three (3) I-80 Entrance Ramps as specified (Kittatinny Point to EB I-80, River Road to EB I-80, and Dunfield Creek to WB I-80)
 - No construction sign W99-2 (Give Us A Brake) placed in advance of the work zone for the EB Retaining Wall Project
 - No reduction of the speed limit within the work zone of the EB Retaining Wall Project,
 - No Work Zone Plate (Black on Orange) signs added to the speed limit signs within the work zone of the EB Retaining Wall Project,
 - Traffic fines have not been doubled within the work zone for the EB Retaining Wall Project.
 - Daytime and holiday lane closures have regularly occurred during days and hours not specified as allowable under NJDOT regulations; and

WHEREAS, direction signs installed around the I-80 Exit 4 truck stop at the request of Knowlton to help keep I-80 traffic from traveling through the Village of Columbia are confusing and have, instead, directed the flow of I-80 traffic into the residential Village of Columbia, which has exponentially increased the volume of truck traffic and, consequentially, the safety impacts; and

WHEREAS, NJDOT has frequently not limited deliveries of equipment and materials to night off peak hours as specified in the approved Work Plans for the EB Retaining Wall Project;

WHEREAS, the failure to limit deliveries to specified hours is well documented on the I-80 DWG Coalition Facebook Page and is verified by time and material worksheets acquired from NJDOT via OPRA requests; and

WHEREAS, lane closures within the S-Curve often create miles of backups, resulting in secondary crashes, injuries, and property damage; and

WHEREAS, these lane closures create potentially life threatening delays in emergency service response times to crash events and increase travel time to the nearest emergency room; and

WHEREAS, this disruption to emergency services negatively impacts the effectiveness of mutual aid agreements between inter-state Fire and Rescue Departments serving the I-80 S-Curve;

WHEREAS, these lane closures also negatively impact businesses, employment, worship connectivity and lifestyle of the community due to its dependence and reliance on the I-80 / 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor for travel, as evidenced by the over 55,000 daily vehicle trips through the Corridor; and

WHEREAS, these lane closures also negatively affect recreation resources and block access to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Middle Delaware National Wild and Scenic River (via Kittatinny Point), Dunfield Creek trailhead for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, trailhead to the National Natural Landmark Sunfish Pond, and New Jersey Worthington State Forest; and

WHEREAS, since October 2022, there have been multiple hours-long East and Westbound I-80 roadway closures (some in both directions simultaneously), multiple hazardous material clean-ups (one that did reach the Delaware River,) and multiple four-plus mile backups due to crash events in the I-80 EB Retaining Wall Project Work Zone, and

WHEREAS, PA State Route 611 has been closed since December 2022 due to a rockslide and is closed indefinitely while PennDOT and the National Park Service collaborate on mitigation plans as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, Threatened and Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act and other laws and regulations due to the project located in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, next to the Middle Delaware National Wild and Scenic River, in the viewshed of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and on lands sacred to multiple Federally Recognized Lenape Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, in addition the ongoing PA 611 closure and I80 EB Retaining Wall Project , the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) and PennDOT have had a multiyear 611 Retaining Wall Rehabilitation and Replacement Project in the Long-Term Transportation Plan awaiting funding, which will likely require the roadway to again be closed or perhaps at times a single lane for years; and

WHEREAS, the [2020 Traffic Study was deficient](#), and showed NJDOT did not include or assess the impact of the Rockfall Project Work Zone spanning the center lane of I-80 for an extended period of 2 or more years; and

WHEREAS, over the years NJDOT has claimed the following:

- “Constant coordination with PennDOT”
- “No traffic impacts to PA”, then changed that to “Minimal traffic impacts”
- Plans to have 24/7 tow and emergency services
- They will create an Emergency Services Task Force
- Plans to limit trucks to one lane, and create a [diversion route to send I-80 traffic to I-78](#); and

WHEREAS, no records show any coordination has occurred with PennDOT for any work within the S-Curve; and

WHEREAS, no records indicate an Emergency Service Task Force has been created to date; and

WHEREAS, at a February 2023 meeting regarding the PA 611 emergency closure with FHWA-PA, NJDOT, PennDOT, with representatives for the offices of: Congressman Cartwright, Congresswoman Wild, Congressman Kean, PA Senator Rosemary Brown, Representative Tarah Probst, Assemblyman DiMaio, officials from Warren County, Northampton County and Monroe County and all area municipalities, NJDOT claimed they were researching a Global I-80 Delaware Water Gap Detour/Diversion Route, a way to trigger activation of this detour/diversion route, and plans to use the states Variable Message Board system for detour/diversion events;

WHEREAS at such meeting, NJDOT stated it would follow-up with all attendees and has failed to do so; and

WHEREAS, Delaware River Toll Bridge Commission Daily Traffic Counts at the Delaware Water Gap bridge increased from 49,800 in 2022 to 53,200 in 2023; and at the Portland-Columbia Bridge they increased from 7,100 in 2022 to 7,900 in 2023, likely due to the PA 611 closure; and

WHEREAS, traffic counts for the I-80 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor will likely be exponentially increasing in the next 5 years due to Upper Mount Bethel Industrial development traffic experts forecasting 24,000 additional daily vehicle trips at full build out, and Monroe County Industrial development with the similar volume of industrial square foot in development, much dependent on the I-80 / 611 corridor; and

WHEREAS, the indefinite closure of PA 611 has increased traffic within the I-80 Delaware Water Gap Corridor and; therefore, has exponentially exacerbated the existing safety, mobility, and congestion issues in the S-Curve;

WHEREAS, NJDOT has further increased the safety risks within the S-Curve by:

- Allowing I-80 EB Retaining Wall lane closures during unpermitted daytime hours,
- Not erecting and maintained sufficient Work Zone signage
- Not maintaining existing warning signage,
- Not lowering the speed limit within the I-80 S-Curve in the work zone; and

WHEREAS, the Knowlton supports all necessary safety, mobility, and traffic improvement projects in the I-80 / 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor provided:

- Such projects follow all applicable regulations and standards
- Knowlton is involved in early and frequent consultation as required
- Knowlton is provided with the ability to provide input on impacts
- It is clearly demonstrated that such input is considered

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Township of Knowlton declares the I-80/ 611 Delaware Water Gap Corridor issues persist; negatively impacting and creating undue risk to the lives, property, livelihood, and lifestyles of all who depend on it; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Township of Knowlton implores the New Jersey Department of Transportation, The Northern New Jersey Transposon Planning Authority, and Federal Highway Administration to immediately:

- Remove ALL new I-80 sign installed near the Truck Stop area of Exit 4 that are directing vehicles to enter the Village of Columbia and continue to seek other solutions such as turning Decatur Street into a one way.
- Replace all missing I-80 S-Curve warning signs.
- Bring all current signage in the EB Retaining Wall Project Work Zone up to project plan specifications.
- Lower the speed limit within the EB Retaining Wall Project Work Zone.
- Collaborate with PennDOT to create an I-80 / 611 DWG Emergency Services Task force to establish protocol for events that disrupt corridor travel and to ensure reasonable emergency services response, detours etc.
- Notify Knowlton Township of every lane closure within the I-80 EB Retaining Wall and I-80 WB Rockfall Project Work Zones by providing the date, time, and duration of such closures.
- Stop daytime and holiday lane closures and adhere ONLY to allowable Work Plan specified allowable lane closures.
- Initiate the Problem Statement Request to study all the Safety Mobility and Congestion issues between Exit 4 to the Delaware Water Gap Bridge.
- Provide all MPT plans for review during development, and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED a copy of this Resolution and all Exhibits is to be submitted to all I-80 Delaware Water Gap Projects Tribal Nations, Federal, New Jersey and Pennsylvania Agencies, Organizations, Counties, Municipalities and other interested parties, so informed support action may be considered, all stakeholders are aware of the history, and this request.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes**

2024-41 Resolution Authorizing Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

WHEREAS, the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse established the Municipal Alliances for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in 1989 to educate and engage residents, local government and law enforcement officials, schools, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, parents, youth and other allies in efforts to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse in communities throughout New Jersey.

WHEREAS, The Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton County of Warren State of New Jersey recognizes that the abuse of alcohol and drugs is a serious problem in our society amongst persons of all ages; and therefore, has an established Municipal Alliance Committee; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee further recognizes that it is incumbent upon not only public officials but upon the entire community to take action to prevent such abuses in our community; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has applied for funding to the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse through the County of Warren;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey hereby recognizes the following:

1. The Township Council does hereby authorize submission of a strategic plan for the Knowlton Township Municipal Alliance grant for fiscal year 2025 in the amount of:

GCADA GRANT	\$1,640.00
Cash Match	\$410.00
In-Kind	\$1,230.00

2. The Township Council acknowledges the terms and conditions for administering the Municipal Alliance grant, including the administrative compliance and audit requirements.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes**

2024-42 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 Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes**

NEW BUSINESS

Planting at Tunnel Field

Ms. Marie St. Andre will continue to plant at tunnel field. The committee advised Ms. St. Andre to turn in any vouchers for planting supplies she has purchased.

Township clean up dates

Mayor Shipps announced spring clean up dates are April 29- May 4. Vouchers will be made available at the municipal building 2 weeks prior to the start of the event. Elderly residents are encouraged to call the municipal building to get on the schedule for pickups if they are unable to bring their items to the landfill.

FEMA AFG

Tabled until April's meeting.

SWAC membership

Mayor Shipps has designated Committeeman Van horn as the Solid Waste Advisory Council representative for the Township. Committeeman Van Horn represented the Township over the last year and his happy to continue to do so for 2024.

Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Council – Appoint New Knowlton Representative

Tabled. Attorney St. Angelo suggesting drafting a formal resolution for the next township committee meeting.

Security system proposals

The clerk's office received 3 proposals from AB Code Security, WSS Integrated Technologies and CSI Security Systems. CSI quoted the Township \$2850.00 for 3 desktop ports to see and communicate with residents at the main door. A larger monitor will be mounted in a common area of the office for employees to better see the camera security already in place.

The committee agreed to move forward with CSI.

Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:

Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes Approved CSI proposal of \$2850.00.

KTFR driving age requirement

KTFR would like to lower the driving age requirement of their ambulances as their volunteers start younger than the recommended age of 25. Acting Clerk Molion reached out to Statewide prior to the meeting and was advised that 25 was the suggest driving age but it is up to the Township to put a set age policy in place. Mayor Shipps asked for acting clerk Molion to reach out to Statewide regarding any possible increases in premiums if the committee decided to lower the age. This is to be discussed further at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

KAA Shed

Mayor Shipps states two quotes were received for the shed replacement at tunnel field. Committeewoman Cuntala asked what the large shed in the front field is currently being used for as it is in great condition. Mayor Shipps stated she will be speaking with recreation director Dennis Lembeck on whether that shed could be utilized.

MEETING MINUTES

February 12th Public Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:

Bates-absent, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps yes

PUBLIC COMMENT- AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Pamela Rusweiler addressed the committee regarding resolution 2024-36 2024-36 authorizing release of performance bond of petroleum marketing group, inc. (block 28, lots 7, 8, 9 & 10). Ms. Rusweiler asked where property is was located. Mayor Shipps advised Ms. Rusweiler this was the new 7/11. They have completed their project and will not receive their performance bond back.

Ms. Michelle St. Andre asked how Tunnel Field will be policed now that overnight parking is prohibited.

Mayor Shipps advised Ms. St. Andre that there are cameras currently set in place around Tunnel Field.

Ms. Allison Baley addressed the committee regarding accidents near the I80 project and if the State police were listing the non-conformities of the project in their incident reports. Ms. Mezzanotte advised Ms. Baley that the State police do not necessarily know the standards for area signage. As of today, any accidents that have occurred, all signage have been up to standard.

Mayor Shipp states Senator Steinhardt's office reached out with any requests that Township needs. Mayor Shipp suggests help with renovations and the DPW garage, Municipal Building and tennis courts at Tunnel Field. The committee agreed prioritizing updates on the Municipal building would be the first request but Mayor Shipp will provide Senator Steinhardt with all three needs.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

2024-43 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session

Motion by Shipp, Second by Cuntala and carried to go into executive session at 8:30 p.m.

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. Attorney Advice

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 by Shipp, Second by Cuntala and carried to come out of executive session at 9:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Shipp, second by Cuntala and carried to adjourn tonight's meeting at 9:00 pm