

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE WORKSHOP MEETING – November 25, 2024 – 6:00 P.M.

Mayor York calls the workshop meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and asks the Clerk to call the roll:

Township Committee	Present/ Absent	Professionals	Present/ Absent
Jason A. Jones	<u>Present via Zoom</u>	Gina LaPlaca, Business Administrator	<u>Present</u>
Robert Lane, Jr.	<u>Present</u>	Gabriella Siboni, Township Clerk	<u>Present</u>
Kevin McMillan	<u>Present</u>	Gene Anthony, Township Attorney	<u>Present</u>
Derel Stroud	<u>Present</u>		
Tassie D. York	<u>Present</u>		

Mayor York announces that the notice requirements of R.S. 10:4-18 have been satisfied by the publication of the required advertisement in The Coaster and the Asbury Park Press on January 5, 2024, posting the notice on the Board in the Municipal Complex, and filing a copy of said notice with the Municipal Clerk. In addition, the meeting agenda is posted on the Township web site (www.neptunetownship.org).

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN OPEN SESSION

1. December Meeting Schedule

Committeeman Stroud stated the second meeting in December is scheduled for 2 days before Christmas. Mr. Stroud spoke to Gina and Gabriella that the agenda for the second meeting in December is limited. The Committee agreed change the meeting to December 20 in person at 4PM. The meeting will be set at 4PM with the agenda to be determined. A specific outline for workshop will not be needed.

2. Bert Willis Field Update

Bert Willis Pickleball Courts and Dog Park: The pickleball courts are completed and playable, and the dog park is also now complete with the recent installation of a water fountain for the dogs. All that remains is topsoil that has yet to grow grass – the recent drought conditions have obviously contributed to that. So DPW will be going out tomorrow to spread woodchips over the soil so that the facilities can be properly utilized.

3. Committee Calendars

Jones	No report
Stroud	No report
McMillan	No report
Lane	Mr. Lane stated there is a breakfast with Santa through Neptune Recreation at Summerfield Elementary School December 7.
York	Mayor York stated the Ocean Grove Homeowners Association Holiday Breakfast on December 7.

Res #24 - 440 Authorize An Executive Session As Authorized By The Open Public Meetings Act.

Offered by:	<u>Lane</u>	Seconded by:	<u>Stroud</u>
<i>Vote:</i>	<u>Yes</u> Lane	<u>Yes</u> McMillan	<u>Yes</u> Stroud
	<u>Yes</u> York	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – November 25, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.

Mayor York calls the meeting to order and asks the Clerk to call the roll:

Township Committee	Present/ Absent	Professionals	Present/ Absent
Jason A. Jones	<u>Present Via Zoom</u>	Gina LaPlaca, Business Administrator	<u>Present</u>
Robert Lane, Jr.	<u>Present</u>	Gabriella Siboni, Township Clerk	<u>Present</u>
Kevin McMillan	<u>Present</u>	Gene Anthony, Township Attorney	<u>Present</u>
Derel Stroud	<u>Present</u>		
Tassie D. York	<u>Present</u>		

MOMENT OF SILENCE AND FLAG SALUTE

The Clerk states, "Fire exits are located in the rear of the room and to my right. In the event of a fire, you will be notified by fire alarm and/or public address system, then proceed to the nearest smoke-free exit."

Mayor York announces that the notice requirements of R.S. 10:4-18 have been satisfied by the publication of the required advertisement in The Coaster and the Asbury Park Press on January 5, 2024, posting the notice on the Board in the Municipal Complex, and filing a copy of said notice with the Municipal Clerk. In addition, the meeting agenda is posted on the Township web site (www.neptunetownship.org).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion offered by Committeeperson Lane, seconded by, Committeeperson Stroud, to approve the minutes of meetings of November 12, 2024. All present were in favor.

PRESENTATIONS

Recognizing 11th Annual Pound the Pavement

COMMENTS FROM THE DAIS

Comments from the Dais regarding business on this agenda or any reports on recent events in their respective departments.

Jones	Mr. Jones stated he spoke to Recreation Director to review the numerous activities that are going on in the recreation department.
Stroud	Mr. Stroud stated that residents have received their assessment cards. Mr. Stroud stated if there are any questions on the assessment of the property, an appointment can be made with the Tax Assessor. Mr. Stroud congratulated the Police Department on their successful work on open cases. Mr. Stroud congratulated Neptune High School Scarlet sound on their recognition by Kelly Clarkson and wished them luck on their performance at the tree lighting. Mr. Stroud stated that OEM has updated their website. Mr. Stroud noted that our emergency services such as OEM, CERT and EMS are seeking volunteers. Midtown holiday Tree lighting is scheduled for December 12. November 26 is the Senior Center Thanksgiving Day Luncheon. Mr. Stroud stated that St. Stevens will be hosting a community Thanksgiving on Thursday.
McMillan	Mr. McMillan attended the League of Municipalities and described the seminars that he attended and the benefits he learned about to bring back to the Township.
Lane	Mr. Lane said that November 30 is Small Business Saturday in Ocean Grove. Mr. Lane stated Jersey Shore Dream Center is collecting for holiday donations and there is a box in Town Hall and local establishments in Neptune Township. Mr. Lane stated there has been issues recently with thefts of catalytic converters and told residents to be vigilant and make reports to the police department promptly. Mr. Lane stated Wreaths Across America will be on December 14 where they will place wreaths on over 400 veterans graves.
York	Mayor recognized the Public Works department for the work they are doing and asked residents to be patient as the department is short staffed. United Fellowship Church will be providing dinners on Thanksgiving from 12PM-3PM

REPORT OF THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

The Business Administrator will report on capital projects and matters of general interest.

- **Living Shoreline Project:** As the Committee is aware, the severe storms we experienced earlier in the year did a fair amount of damage to the initial dune plantings and two of the walkover access points. Our Engineering Department is actively working with the American Littoral Society on dune stabilization activities. During the month of November, Public Works employees and volunteers from the community completed sand

Explanatory Statement: The bond ordinance provides for the 2025 Road Repaving and Improvement Program, including but not limited to the paving, repaving, construction, reconstruction, installation of drainage improvements and ADA improvements, and other associated improvements to various roads throughout the Township.

Offered by: Stroud Seconded by: Lane
Vote: Jones Yes Lane Yes McMillan Yes Stroud Yes York yes

Ordinance 24-46 An Ordinance To Amend Volume I, Chapter VII Of The Code Of The Township Of Neptune By Adding And Or Removing A Resident Only Handicapped Parking Zone

Explanatory Statement: This ordinance allows for the installation of two resident handicap parking stalls at 1319 10th Ave.

Offered by: Lane Seconded by: Stroud
Vote: Jones Yes Lane Yes McMillan Yes Stroud Yes York Yes

Ordinance 24-47 Ordinance Authorizing Deed Of Easement And Right-Of-Way Agreement For Sewer Line Purposes With The Borough Of Tinton Falls, Along Hovchild Blvd., Adjacent To Block 4101, Lots 12, 13 And Lot 14 On The Tax Map Of The Township Of Neptune

Explanatory Statement: This ordinance provides Neptune Township easement and right-of-way along Hovchild Blvd. in Tinton Falls, in order to install, operate and maintain a sanitary sewer line; together with necessary fittings, appurtenances and facilities.

Offered by: McMillan Seconded by: Stroud
Vote: Jones Yes Lane Yes McMillan Yes Stroud Yes York Yes

Ordinance 24-48 An Ordinance Of The Township Of Neptune To Amend Chapter 2 Entitled “Administration” By Amended Section 2-44 Entitled “Facade Review Committee/ Facade Improvement Loan/ Grant Program”

Explanatory Statement: This ordinance authorizes ‘The Facade Review Committee’ to accept competitive applications and award up to ten (10) grants per annum up to a maximum of ten thousand (\$10,000.00) dollars.

Offered by: Lane Seconded by: McMillan
Vote: Jones Yes Lane Yes McMillan Yes Stroud Yes York Yes

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor asks if the Committee would like to pull any resolution from the consent agenda for separate consideration.

- Res#24- 441** A Resolution Of The Township Committee Enabling A Project Agreement With State Of New Jersey Department Of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program Related To The Division Street Acquisition
- Res#24- 442** Resolution Authorizing Agreement Between Neptune Township And Interfaith Neighbors, Inc. For Participation In The Senior Congregate Meals Program
- Res#24- 443** A Resolution Of The Township Committee Of The Township Of Neptune Accepting Resignations
- Res#24- 444** A Resolution Of The Township Committee Of The Township Of Neptune Authorizing A Chapter 159 Budget Amendment To Insert Revenue Received For Fy25 Legislative Grant For Regional Flood Study
- Res#24- 445** Resolution Authorizing Budget Transfers Of 2024 Appropriations #1
- Res#24- 446** A Resolution Of The Township Committee Closing Contract With Spectraserv, Inc. For Shark River Municipal Marina Dredging Contract
- Res#24- 447** Authorizing The Township Committee Of The Township Of Neptune To Execute Change Order #1 For \$25,200.00 With Four Star Developers. For “Tax Office Renovations” For A New Contract Total Of \$393,800.00
- Res#24- 448** Authorizing Payment Of Bills
- Res#24- 449** Resolution Authorizing The Township Of Neptune To Accept A Subgrant Award Of The Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Of Emergency Management Performance Grant And Emergency Management Agency Assistance

CONSENT AGENDA

Offered by: McMillan Seconded by: Lane
Vote: Jones Yes Lane Yes McMillan Yes Stroud Yes York Yes

Res#24- 441 A Resolution Of The Township Committee Enabling A Project Agreement With State Of New Jersey Department Of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program Related To The Division Street Acquisition

Mr. Stroud explained why he voted no on this matter at a previous meeting. Mr. Stroud was under the impression the homeowner was not interested in selling the property. Mr. Stroud has since received confirmation that the

Offered by:	Stroud	Seconded by:	Lanes							
<i>Vote:</i>	Jones	Yes	Lane	Yes	McMillan	Yes	Stroud	Yes	York	Yes

Res#24- 447 Authorizing The Township Committee Of The Township Of Neptune To Execute Change Order #1 For \$25,200.00 With Four Star Developers. For "Tax Office Renovations" For A New Contract Total Of \$393,800.00

Mr. Stroud stated he believes the work on this project was misleading. Mr. Stroud believed the project was only the installation of an additional drive up lane and the current contract is not reflective of that and for those reasons, Mr. Stroud will be voting no.

Offered by:	McMillan	Seconded by:	Lane							
<i>Vote:</i>	Jones	Yes	Lane	Yes	McMillan	Yes	Stroud	No	York	Yes

SEPARATED RESOLUTIONS

Res#24- 450 A Resolution Of The Township Committee Of The Township Of Neptune Authorizing Certain Personnel Actions

Offered by:	Stroud	Seconded by:	McMillan							
<i>Vote:</i>	Jones	Yes	Lane	Yes	McMillan	Yes	Stroud	Yes	York	Yes

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members of the public may address any concern relating to the Township. The public will be permitted one visit to the microphone with a limit of five minutes.

Name and Address	Comment
Rich Robinson Hillside Dr.	Mr. Robinson asked about an update on the summons to 401 Overlook Dr. Mr. Anthony provided an update and stated the representing attorney had requested an adjournment and it was granted. Mr. Anthony has since been in touch with the Attorney of record. Mr. Robinson had asked for clarification on the changes to the Ordinance for Animal House and Mr. Anthony stated the State Law precludes the requirement of the bond prior to substantiated complaint.
Paul Kaplan	Mr. Kaplan asked what the future of federal funding for the living shoreline will be next year with the statements that the federal government will be gutting grants and loans for environmental projects. Ms. LaPlaca stated the Township has confirmed funding for the living shoreline to essentially be completed.
Rich Williams Abbott Ave.	Mr. Williams thanked Ms. LaPlaca for her work to have the pickleball courts completed at Bert Willis. Mr. Williams asked for an update on the West Lake Redevelopment. Mr. Stroud stated there has been progress at West Lake Ave. And there have been meetings with the developers. Mr. Stroud is hopeful the updated plans will be ready for presentation to the full Township Committee. Mr. Williams asked about the widening of Route 66. Mr. Lane and Mr. Stroud stated that is with the County and State Department of Transportation project.
Gary Brown Cardinal Rd.	Mr. Brown wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Mr. Brown wanted clarification on the complaints that are intended to be filed by the property owner of the parcel with the homeless encampment. Mr. Brown stated the property owner should be cleaning the property to remove the left behind supplies that make it easier for new tenants to move in. Mr. Brown expressed continued concern that those who are at the encampment will choose not to leave.
Joyce Klein Mt. Hermon Way	Ms. Klein stated the homeowners association has voted to allow long term renters to join the association and the name may change because of that. Ms. Klein stated the holiday breakfast is December 7 at the Arts Center. January 4, the Ocean Grove Giving Committee will be hosting the night of gratitude to honor the Neptune EMS. Ms. Klein requested an update on the electric charging station in Ocean Grove. Ms. Klein

Lorraine Caruso
Pittman

stated her neighbor at 127 Mt. Hermon Way. Ms. Siboni stated the property is not assigned to an individual, but the spot is a general handicapped spot. This was sent to the Police Department for review and it was stated it was not recommended for removal Ms. Caruso stated she is a resident over 20 years. Ms. Caruso stated over the last few years, the tax increase are very high. Ms. Caruso said she has had a 20% increase each year over the last 2 years. Ms. Caruso does not believe the taxes are sustainable. Ms. Caruso asked what happens if the state continues to gut the budget, what impact will they have in Neptune and Ocean Grove specifically. Mayor York stated the Tax Assessor presented at the Ocean Grove Homeowners Association meeting to address and discuss the reasons for the assessment. Ms. Caruso stated she understands that for assessments it is based on the fair market value. Ms. York stated that if adjustments can be made, Ms. Crozier would be the person to speak to on the matter. Mr. Stroud encouraged residents to speak at the School Board since 8.5% of the increase was due to the Board of Education. It is incredibly important to stay involved in all facets of local government. Mr. Jones stated that the school board funding formulas are not always equitable which is part of the reason the Neptune budget was so affected.

Dawn Crozier Freeman

Ms. Crozier introduced herself as the Neptune Tax Assessor. Ms. Crozier stated the budgets are adopted by the schools, library, municipality, etc. Ms. Crozier stated once the budgets are adopted, the money must be raised by taxed. Ms. Crozier stated the assessments are based on the value of homes and the tax rate is what establishes the amount to be paid for each homeowner. If a resident believes the property is valued lower than the assessment stated, the resident can work with the Assessor or file an appeal on the property.

Julie Hekker
Pilgrim Pathway

Ms. Hekker stated that the Tax Assessor is always blamed for high taxes. Ms. Hekker stated the budget needs to be reviewed. Ms. Hekker is requesting the list of roads and improvements to be funded by the 2025 Road Paving Project and the roads in 2024. Ms. Hekker stated there is a curbing project that is underway for an underused walkway. Ms. Hekker was hoping to add more speed limit signs in Ocean Grove.

Marissa Austin
Stockton Ave.

Ms. Austin stated her assessment has increased 19% and if the tax rate stays the same, she can expect a 19% increase in the taxes. Ms. Austin has concerns about not being able to afford the taxes on her property and there will be a mass exodus. Ms. Exodus asked if the Township has been reviewing or adopted the 2025 budget and encouraged stopping programs and making cuts.

Barbara Burns
Ocean Ave.

Ms. Burns stated the budget is not in the control of the Tax Assessor, but in the hands of the Township Committee. Ms. Burns stated she is frustrated by the tax renovation project because it is a waste of money. Ms. Burns stated that the short term rental industry in Ocean Grove is driving up the cost of homes. This is changing the area from a residential area to a commercial renting area. Ms. Burns stated there are things that the Township Committee can address and have an impact on. Ms. Burns asked why we even have a marina and why do we spend tax funds on it. Mr. Lane stated the marina is a self funded utility.

Joan Venezia
Mt. Hermon Way

Ms. Venezia publicly apologized that she had said that Ms. Kepler did not respond, but Ms. Kepler went to IT to prove she did in fact send an e-mail. Ms. Venezia asked for an update on the Ocean Grove North End Development. Ms. Venezia asked for an update on 63 Cookman Ave. Ms. Venezia hoped there are discussions underway for the Parking Permit Pilot in Ocean Grove. Ms. Venezia said there have been 3 transformer fires. Ms. Venezia does not agree in the handicapped space at 127 Mount Hermon Way. Ms. Venezia thanked Mr. Stroud for voting no on a \$300,000 Stucco Roof.

Robert Ingato
Seaview Ave.

Mr. Lane stated that the transformer fires in Ocean Grove have been caused in part because of the drought and the salt deposits from the Ocean cause an issue with shorting out the transformer and causing issues.

Mr. Ingato stated he understands the Township Committee does not have any say on tax assessments or all budgetary costs. Mr. Ingato stated the Township is slow on bringing in avenues for revenue, such as improvements and commercial properties in town.

ADJOURNMENT

Offered by Lane Seconded by: Stroud Time Adjourned 8:28PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriella Siboni
Township Clerk