

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP REGULAR SESSION OCTOBER 10, 2024

The Township Committee met on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 295 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road, Chesterfield, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Matt Litt at 7:00 p.m.

The Open Public Meetings Act Statement was read and compliance noted.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Present: Belinda Blazic, Shreekant Dhopte, Denise Koetas-Dale and Matt Litt
Rebecca Hughes(7:23 PM)

Also present: George Jackson, Administrator; Caryn M. Hoyer, Township Clerk;
Rachel Fryc, Deputy Clerk; Dominic P. DiYanni, Township Attorney;
Michael Davison, Chief of Police and Troy Ulshafer, Public Works

AGENDA MATTER(S) REQUIRING RECUSAL(S) – None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to approve the September 26th regular session meeting. All were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to open the meeting to public comment for matters on the agenda. All were in favor.

Susie Mahon, 16 Chesterfield-Crosswicks Road thanked Ms. Blazic for getting the “Opt out of HPC” on the agenda for tonight. She stated that this topic has been brought up before but never any action taken.

Steve Hazen, 447 Main Street stated the HPC is like an HOA however they were never notified that they never had a choice. He stated a planning board variance requires all neighbors to be notified. The Historic District residents should have been asked prior to the HPC being formed; however they were not.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to close public comment. All were in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-10-1. Voice vote - All were in favor

**RESOLUTION 2024-10-1 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE
OF 2025 FORD EXPLORER UNDER THE
BERGEN COUNTY COOPERATIVE CONTRACT
#BC-BID-24-43**

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to approve Resolution 2024-10-2. Voice vote - All were in favor

**RESOLUTION 2024-10-2 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
CHESTERFIELD ADDING SECTION 321-
DONATED LEAVE POLICY/PROCEDURE TO
THE PERSONNEL POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-10-3. Voice vote - All were in favor

**RESOLUTION 2024-10-3 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXTENSION OF
AWARD FOR BID FOR AERATION SYSTEM
FOR STORMWATER BASIN**

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to approve Resolution 2024-10-4. Voice vote - All were in favor

**RESOLUTION 2024-10-4 RESOLUTION APPOINTING DAN BROWN AS
FIRE POLICE OFFICER**

ORDINANCE FOR INTRODUCTION

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to introduce Ordinance 2024-20. Public Hearing will be October 24th. Voice vote - All were in favor.

**ORDINANCE 2024-20 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PORTIONS OF
CHAPTER 42 ARTICLE ii OF THE CODE OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD
ENTITLED "OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT OF
POLICE OFFICERS"**

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to introduce Ordinance 2024-21. Public Hearing will be October 24th. Voice vote - All were in favor.

**ORDINANCE 2024-21 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PORTIONS OF
CHAPTER 110 OF THE CODE OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD ENTITLED
"FEES"**

Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to introduce Ordinance 2024-22. Public Hearing will be October 24th. Voice vote - All were in favor.

**ORDINANCE 2024-22 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 110-130
OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
CHESTERFIELD, ENTITLED: "LAND
DEVELOPMENT" TO AMEND AND UPDATE
FEES**

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to introduce Ordinance 2024-23. Public Hearing will be October 24th. Voice vote - All were in favor.

ORDINANCE 2024-23

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 130
ARTICLE XII OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP
OF CHESTERFIELD ENTITLED “DESIGN AND
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS”**

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to introduce Ordinance 2024-24. Public Hearing will be October 24th. Voice vote - All were in favor.

ORDINANCE 2024-24

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND
SUPPLEMENTING THE TOWNSHIP CODE
WITH THE CREATION OF CHAPTER 167
ENTITLED “SPECIAL OCCASION EVENTS ON
PRESERVED FARMLAND”**

BILL LIST

Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to approve the bill list. Voice vote – All in favor.

REPORTS & DISCUSSION

- A. **Harvest Festival** – Ms. Fryc thanked everyone that supported and donated towards the Harvest Festival and said it was a success despite the rain. The Township Committee thanked everyone that helped with the event and agreed it was a success.

- B. **Memos from CFO regarding Bond Ordinance Funding** – Mr. Jackson stated that Ms. Wulstein sent the Township Committee memos based on questions they had at the last meeting regarding tax impact to the resident for the DPW funding proposed. Ms. Wulstein is available to meet with anyone who may have any further questions. Ms. Koetas-Dale met with Ms. Wulstein and said she has a much better understanding about how the Bond Ordinance process works and encouraged all committee members to reach out to the CFO. Mayor Litt agreed and he will have that conversation with Ms. Wulstein soon.

ADMINISTRATION

- A. **MAYOR** – Reported the Harvest Festival was a big success. Reminded everyone about the Crosswicks House Tour this Saturday and the 5K Race next Sunday and said tickets are still available for both events.

Mayor Litt stated he has been discussing with Mr. Jackson about having “work sessions” prior to the Township Meetings. This would be open to the public but in a different room and less formal. The work sessions would be to discuss items rather than “debate” them during a meeting. Mr. Jackson stated he has participated in workshops sessions in other towns and is a better place to kick ideas around. Mr. DiYanni stated it gives the committee the opportunity to discuss issues before they are on the agenda. Mayor Litt asked the Township Committee members to email Mr. Jackson their suggestions before the next meeting.

- B. ADMINISTRATION** – Mr. Ulshafer stated he visited the cricket pitch area and he suggests planting a staggered row of 40 arborvitae trees to help buffer the noise of the home that had complaints about the Cricket Pitch behind their home. Mr. Jackson said he spoke to the home owner and they are happy with the suggestion. Ms. Koetas-Dale and Mayor Litt thanked Mr. Jackson and Troy for acting so quickly. Ms. Hughes asked what the cost is and what budget it will come from. Troy said the cost will be under \$3,000.00 and we have a line item in the budget for trees every year as well as grant money that may be used.

Mr. Jackson reported that he and Ms. Hoyer signed off this week with the final design for the new website and he is very happy with the final appearance. Mayor Litt suggested releasing the front page to the public to let them know it is coming soon.

Mr. Jackson stated that he and Mr. McMahon are planning to meet with the Burlington County Engineering office next week to look into issues in Crosswicks that were brought up at the meeting with Mr. Czhus such as traffic, sidewalks and curbing issues in Crosswicks.

Ms. Hoyer reported that no bids were received for snow plow and we will need to go back out to bid.

C. TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE COMMENTS –

Ms. Blazic – She thanked Susie Mahon for bringing this to her attention and providing the minutes from the HPC meeting. Ms. Blazic stated that in one of the HPC meetings Ms. Kelly had suggested there be an option for residents to opt out and supply justification why they should not be included. This never was acted on by the Township Committee. Ms. Blazic said there has been a lot of complaints among the residents that they did not get notified that they were in the HPC when it was established or when purchasing a home. There is no deed restriction so someone purchasing a home would not know. There are letters mailed but maybe all the homeowners are not getting them. We keep hearing the same complaints year after year. Ms. Koetas-Dale stated that the boundary issues is going to be addressed with the new ordinance. She stated the HPC issues are being politicized. Volunteer members on our boards and committees should not be verbally attacked. Ms. Koetas-Dale stated that a letter goes out every year to the residents subject to the Historic Preservation Ordinance. After much discussion, Mayor Litt stated we are the point where we need to reconcile the points. He has been reviewing a lot of ordinances which historic preservation. The current ordinance has 21 areas the HPC are charged with. He thinks maybe the focus should be on the other 19 categories that are not controversial. We need to decide what we are trying to gain from the HPC. He stated he believes the ordinance should focus on demolition, new construction, major alterations and additions all of which require construction permits. He understands the issue of vinyl siding and maybe other materials the HPC believes would be detrimental to the character of the Historic District. Awareness does need to be addressed. This should be done at the CO. He believes the ordinances needs to be simplified so it is easy to understand. Ms. Koetas-Dale stated

the HPC tried to do some of the other things. She stated the town paid \$10,000 to create the design guidelines and she doesn't want to just throw them out. There was a lot of discussion. Mayor Litt stated we need to get something that works for the community. All agreed that Mayor Litt will put something together for the committee to review.

Ms. Hughes apologized for being late but it was back to school night. She was happy to report that the Chesterfield BOE recently received a 5 year grant for free full day preschool.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Hughes made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to open the meeting to public comment. All were in favor.

Susie Mahon, 16 Chesterfield-Crosswicks Rd is upset that the topic of "opt out of HPC" just got hijacked. This has been going on since 2021. She would like a formalized process of opting out of the HPC for homes built after 1900. In 2015 Ms. Fegley was supposed to outline the area and present to the Township. She stated she would not have known she was in the historic zone if she did not receive a letter in 2016 after the fact.

Steve Hazen, 447 Main Street stated that the HPC was never properly noticed to the residents and said we should not have the HPC since the majority of residents do not agree with it. The material list from Anderson 200 & 400 windows. They are vinyl coated wood. It is going to cost him \$25,000 more just to see wood inside my house. You can't have vinyl siding but you can have vinyl windows. It would be better to have the vinyl siding than to let the house get rundown. The May 30th meeting was not political. Everyone was sent a letter advising them of the meeting and given an opportunity to speak. He does not feel the residents in the historic zone were properly noticed about the HPC ordinance.

Molly Hazen, 16 Chesterfield-Crosswicks Rd would like to see the new HPC ordinance. She agrees with Ms. Mahon. Mayor Litt responded that the option to opt out will be in the draft ordinance. She asked what right the Township has to tell them what they can and cannot do with their homes. She stated the HPC has nothing to do with the ordinance. The Township Committee is responsible for writing the ordinance they are just guided by them. This is causing a division.

Deanna Perrotto, 424 Ellisdale Road stated she bought her home 2 years ago and it was never disclosed that her home was in the Historic District. Her home was built in 1983. The restrictions are basically an HOA. She has siding with water and insect damage and now she is restricted on what she can do. She stated it is a farm. It just blows her mind that she needs approval to replace her fences. She bought the property because of where it was located and planned on fixing it up. If she can't afford to fix it up in accordance with the restrictions then she may have to sell. She stated that is a 14 acre property and sure a developer would be happy to buy. That is not what she wants to do but may have to.

Brian Mahon, 16 Chesterfield -Crosswicks Rd is upset because his home is in the historic district even though he was assured it was not when he purchased his home. He stated that at the meeting, no one was being threatened and everyone was allowed to speak pro or con. He stated he agrees with most of what the Mayor said and wished Belinda would have stayed on the Board.

Roseann Greenberg, 17 Iron Bridge Road gave an update on the Community Garden. October 7th she rototilled the plots. October 9th Herman's delivered 83 cubic yards of compost which is 4 dump trucks. The team is very grateful to Marilyn Stelljes, the owner of Herman's, who donated the compost which would have cost \$1,992.00. On October 19th, SEWA will help do the final spreading of the compost so that she can rototill again and seed a winter cover crop of crimson clover.

David Freeman, 22 Chesterfield-Crosswicks Rd. said he purchased a home just outside of Crosswicks. He did his due diligence regarding the property prior to purchasing his 1953 home and was assured it was not in the HPC but later found out it is. Spent thousands of dollars on. He stated that if a committee person or someone on a board cannot handle scrutiny, then they should be in that office. Everything he hears in May was very respectful. He stated that a number of people spoke out against the ordinance and to act as though there was some silent majority that was afraid to speak is a joke. He has dealt with the HPC on small improvements that have limited what he wanted to do. He replaced fencing and had to pay 70% more use a specific material which he had to have special made that in the end looked just like the vinyl fencing.

Jocelyn Grey, 13 Crosswicks-Chesterfield Rd does not understand why her home built in 1964 is included in the historic zone. She went to a meeting where a lot of people spoke out against the ordinance and not sure why it hasn't been updated. She hopes there is an "opt out" portion. She stated those just starting a family are going to have a hard time if they need to do improvements. She asked for a more straight forward and friendly ordinance.

Hearing no further public comment, Mr. Dhopte made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to close public comment. All were in favor.

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Caryn M. Hoyer, RMC
Township Clerk