

The Regular Meeting of the East Amwell Township Committee of the Township of East Amwell was called to order by Mayor Dante DiPirro at 7:00 PM on January 11, 2024.

Ms. Giliberti read the "Statement of Compliance" indicating the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Ms. Jenna Casper-Bloom, Mr. Michael Dendis, Ms. Beverly Entin, Mr. Al Nardi, Mayor Dante DiPirro

Absent: None.

Also present was Municipal Clerk Linda Giliberti and Township Attorney Donald Scholl.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On motion of Mr. Nardi, seconded by Ms. Casper-Bloom and carried unanimously, it was moved to adopt Resolution 2024-34, as filed in the office of the Township Clerk, to enter executive session.

On motion of Mr. Nardi, seconded by Ms. Entin and carried unanimously, it was moved to adjourn from executive session at 6:54 PM.

**REGULAR MEETING RECONVENED**

The Regular Meeting reconvened at 7:00 PM with Mayor DiPirro, Ms. Casper Bloom, Mr. Dendis, Ms. Entin, Mr. Nardi, Ms. Giliberti and Mr. Scholl present.

There were approximately 27 members of the public present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The 2024 Reorganization dates for Boards and Committees are posted on the bulletin board and listed on the Township's website.
- Christmas Trees can be dropped at the grit yard during regular business hours and the first Saturday in January from 9 a.m. – noon. All trim should be removed from the trees.
- Municipal Offices will be closed on Monday, January 15, 2024 in observance of Martin Luther King Day.
- Annual Dog Licenses are now due. \$17 for Neutered/Spayed and \$20 for Non-Neutered/Non-Spayed during the months of January or February. The annual free rabies clinic is scheduled for January 20, 2024 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. in the municipal garage, and payment for licenses will be accepted at that time. Contact the Clerk's Office at 908-782-8536 x 10 for details.

Residents are strongly encouraged to regularly check the East Amwell Township website for updates regarding the Township.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC- AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Mayor DiPirro opened the meeting to the public.

Seeing there were no comments from the public, Mayor DiPirro closed the meeting to the public with no objections.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**December 14, 2023, December 28, 2023 Regular Session Minutes, January 2, 2024 Reorganization Minutes**

Approval of the above-mentioned Meeting Minutes is being carried to the February 8, 2024 meeting.

**SPECIAL DISCUSSIONS/PRESENTATION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

## RAINBOW HILL PRESERVE PRESENTATION BY THE NEW JERSEY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Mayor DiPirro turned the meeting over to Alison Mitchell, Co-Executive Director from the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF). Ms. Mitchell thanked the Township Committee for inviting them to speak tonight and introduced other members of the NJCF: John Watson, Co-Executive Director, Tim Morris, Director of Stewardship, Rebecca Buczynski, Project Manager, Emile DeVito, Manager of Science & Stewardship, Louise Wilson, President and Wendy Mager, Vice President.

Tim Morris gave a slideshow presentation on the history of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and the layout and management plan of the Rainbow Hill Preserve. He explained the current trail map layout of the trail system. Due to the issue of an overflow of cars in the main parking lot, they created a temporary overflow parking lot. In addition, they posted to their website, courteous reminders regarding parking, speed limits, etc. They looked at and identified other options for temporary parking. Going forward, they are going to monitor the parking areas and traffic and have talked to neighbors regarding their concerns. Mr. Morris distributed contact information if residents have concerns or feedback.

Mayor DiPirro explained that a radar sign was placed on North Hill Road for a certain date range to monitor the speed of traffic and went over the results with the public.

Mayor DiPirro opened the meeting to the public with no objections.

Andrea Bonette, East Amwell resident, read a letter that she mailed to the NJCF stating that while she was delighted to attend the opening ceremony of the Rainbow Hill Preserve, soon after, she became aware of a number issues related the property and wonders if there isn't a better use for this property.

Michael, East Amwell resident, commented that he has safety concerns. He asked what plans the foundation had to make sure that people using the trails, stay on the trails. He said that on New Year's Day, there were hikers walking through his yard to get to North Hill Road. Mr. Morris said they can look at the layout of the trail and put up some signage to direct people to stay on the trail. A discussion ensued regarding the parking areas.

Tamara Lee, East Amwell resident, asked why all the parking was in East Amwell and not in Hillsborough. Mr. Morris said that they may take that into consideration if their current solution doesn't work.

Frances Gavigan, East Amwell resident, stated that she appreciates the thoroughness of the presentation and the effort to listen to the residents. She believes that part of the problem is that they are not familiar with the area and how it has been used by local residents and the equestrian community in the past.

Tracey Carluccio, East Amwell resident, commented that she feels that it would be beneficial if the NJCF took the opportunity to involve the community in the long-range and immediate planning for the preserve in a neutral setting.

Emil DeVito, NJCF, commented that as ecological data is received, issues and problems are addressed. They pay close attention to sensitive habitats and sensitive populations to make sure no harm is done.

Rick Wolfe, East Amwell resident, stated that nearly half the land in East Amwell is preserved and the NJCF has been a great partner over the years in helping to accomplish this. He agreed with Michael that people don't respect other people, but stated that the issue of trespassing is an issue everywhere, not just on this parcel. He said if you want people to support tax dollars going towards open space, you need to let people appreciate open space. He believes this property is much more likely to be protected by the NJCF than it was by the private owner. He is very confident that this property will do much better, environmentally, by the NJCF.

Brendan Phair, Hillsborough resident, questioned if there are any properties in New Jersey that meet the criteria of a wildlife preserve without human encroachment? He asked if the NJCF only develops trails on all its properties or does it actually manage any wildlife preserves?

Louise Wilson, NJCF, deferred to staff as to whether there are any properties owned by the NJCF where they do not provide public access at all. She stated that their mission is to preserve and protect land and natural resources for the benefit of all and they take that very seriously.

Virginia Hagerty, East Amwell resident, said she has concerns about not having a permanent parking solution and concerns regarding the lack of respect for the preserve by the public.

Jessica Wysocki, East Amwell resident, thanked the NJCF for allowing community input regarding the work on the trails. She said she attended as many meetings as she could and said that the NJCF was very willing to listen to their input.

Judith Glassgold, Hillsborough resident, commented that she has used the trails for years and feels that the preserve is in a much better condition since the NJCF took it over.

Mayor DiPirro closed the meeting to the public with no objections and called a short recess.

The meeting reconvened at 9:03 PM.

Paul Hutchins from Amwell Valley Ambulance Corp stated that since they have begun their plan of having 36 hours staffed each weekend, they have answered 19 calls. Their response time has been under 7 minutes. They have been in discussion with the State Police and once the renovations at their station are complete, they are going to open their station up to the State Police for their use. He also noted that Ethan Stanley is now the new President of the Amwell Valley Ambulance Corp.

**ORDINANCE NO. 24-01 – INTRODUCTION/FIRST READING**

Ordinance No. 24-01 was read by title by Ms. Giliberti “AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE THE 2024 SALARY AND WAGE SCHEDULE”

**EXPLANATION**

Mayor DiPirro explained that this ordinance is an annual administrative ordinance required by the State that provides for salary increases for employees of the township.

A motion made by Ms. Nardi, seconded by Ms. Casper-Bloom and carried unanimously, it was moved to introduce Ordinance No. 24-01 with a Public Hearing date of February 8, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

On motion of Mr. Nardi, seconded by Ms. Entin and carried unanimously, it was moved to approve Resolution Nos. 2024-35 and 2024-37 through 2024-42, as filed in the Office of the Township Clerk. Resolution No. 2024-26 was removed from the agenda and not adopted.

- 2024-35 APPOINTMENT OF ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER
- 2024-36 ~~PERSONNEL – FINANCE ASSISTANT – NOT ADOPTED~~
- 2024-37 REFUND OF DRIVEWAY PERMIT APPLICATION – BLOCK 23/LOT 16
- 2024-38 RESOLUTION TO AFFIRM THE EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY WITH RESPECT TO ALL OFFICIALS, APPOINTEES, EMPLOYEES, PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS, AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THAT COME INTO CONTACT WITH MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES, OFFICIALS AND VOLUNTEERS
- 2024-39 SUPPORT FOR AN APPLICATION TO THE STATE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION GRANT FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

- 2024-40 FINANCE – 2024 RESERVE APPROPRIATIONS
- 2024-41 FINANCE – RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE BILLS AND CLAIMS
- 2024-42 APPOINTMENT OF GROUNDWATER HYDROGEOLOGIST

Recorded Vote

Aye: Casper-Bloom, Entin, Nardi, Dendis, DiPirro  
Nay: XXX  
Abstain: XXX

**APPROVAL OF BILLS  
January 11, 2024**

A motion made by Jenna Casper-Bloom, seconded by Michael Dendis to approve the bills of the evening was conducted by roll call vote:

Recorded Vote

Aye: Casper-Bloom, Entin, Nardi, Dendis, DiPirro  
Nay: XXX  
Abstain: XXX

**APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

A motion made by Al Nardi, seconded by Michael Dendis to approve the Administrative Reports was unanimously approved by voice vote.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- *NEW JERSEY LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES*
- *UNITED STATES*
- *STATE OF NEW JERSEY*
  - NJ CONSERVATION FOUNDATION REGARDING RAINBOW HILL PRESERVE
- *HUNTERDON COUNTY*
- *EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP*
- *SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES*
- *MISCELLANEOUS*

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC- (LIMITED TO 10 MINUTES PER PERSON)**

Mayor DiPirro opened the meeting to the public.


**Angelo Lovisa** – Mr. Lovisa asked about the status of his blue light permit application.

Seeing there were no further comments, Mayor DiPirro closed the meeting to the public without objection.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, a motion made by Mr. Nardi, seconded by Ms. Casper-Bloom to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Linda Giliberti, RMC  
Township Clerk

2/8/2024  
Date Approved