

The Regular Meeting of the East Amwell Township Committee of the Township of East Amwell was called to order by Mayor Jenna Casper-Bloom at 7:00 PM on April 13, 2023.

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Mr. John Mills, Ms. Tara Ramsey, Mr. Dante DiPirro, Mayor Jenna Casper-Bloom

Absent: Mr. Michael Dendis

Also present were Township Attorney Frank Whittlesey and Municipal Clerk Linda Giliberti.

There were approximately 14 members of the public present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Ringoes Village Advisory Committee is looking for a part-time secretary. For more information, please see the township website.
- The Parks and Recreation Committee will hold a Township Wide Garage Sale on April 15 and 16.
- Well Water Testing – visit www.raritanheadwaters.org/event/eastamwell to pre-order your kit online (optional). Pick up your test kits at the East Amwell Municipal Building from April 17-21 from 9am-3pm. If pre-ordered, please bring payment confirmation. If purchasing kit at the Municipal Building, payment can be made by cash or check made payable to **RHA**. **Samples must be dropped off at the Municipal Building on April 26th between 7 AM – 9:30 AM.** You will receive results within 2-3 weeks.
- The Annual Spring Clean Up Day will be on Saturday, April 22, 2023 from 8 a.m. until noon at the Municipal Parking Lot. Permits will be available through the Clerk's Office **beginning April 3rd** at a cost of \$20/car, \$35 van or SUV, \$45/truck (additional fees may apply for larger loads at the discretion of the Township Representative). You may also purchase the permit on the day of the event.
- Hunterdon County will hold Ident-a-Shred Days at the Hunterdon County Complex at 314 Route 12, Flemington on April 22, 2023 from 8am until noon OR until the truck(s) are full. See the County Clerk's website for details.
- Roadside Clean Up Day will start on Sunday, April 23, 2023 from 8am until 4pm. Help clean up the roads in East Amwell. Sign up for a road on the Township website.
- The Environmental Commission will hold The Green Scene at Clawson Park on April 23 from 10am - 2pm. There will be local farmers to purchase food from, tree saplings, yoga and more.
- The East Amwell PTO will hold the Color Run at East Amwell School on May 6, 2023.
- Amwell Valley Fire Company will be celebrating 100 years of service with a parade and festivities on Saturday, May 20, 2023. They are also inviting area businesses and supporters to promote their business with an advertisement in their 100th Anniversary Program and History Book. For additional information, please email Jim Hager at jameshager14@gmail.com
- Registration is now open for the 2023 Summer Playground Program. This program is open to East Amwell students only and only 100 will be accepted. Please see the township website for the registration form and more information.

- Residents are reminded that the Grit Yard, located at 4 John Ringo Road, is open for brush collection from 7am to 2pm weekdays and the first and third Saturday of the month from 8am - 2pm. Please see the website for rules and acceptable items.

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

SPECIAL DISCUSSIONS/PRESENTATIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR FORMER TOWNSHIP CLERK, TERRI STAHL

Mayor Casper-Bloom acknowledged the passing for former Township Clerk, Terri Stahl and requested a moment of silence. Mayor Casper-Bloom read some comments from various residents complimenting Terri, both in her personal life and professional career. She then invited the public to come up to the microphone to share their thoughts about Terri.

Mr. Rick Wolfe recalled the years he served with Terri on the Township Committee. He said Terri was a good person and her main focus was the residents. He stated that it would be nice if the Township could do something to honor Terri. He and Ms. Wolfe would be happy to help organize this.

Mr. DiPirro stated that he also knew Terri. She was a friendly face and very helpful. She did her very best for people.

Mayor Casper-Bloom introduced the residents to East Amwell’s new CFO, Yolaika Gonzalez VinaMarte, who was in attendance for the budget hearing.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC- AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

A motion made by Dante DiPirro, seconded by Tara Ramsey to open the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Seeing there were no comments from the public, a motion made by Dante DiPirro, seconded by John Mills to close the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 9, 2023 Regular Session Minutes

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Di Pirro and seconded by John Mills to approve the March 9, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes and were approved by voice vote with Ms. Ramsey abstaining.

March 27, 2023 Executive Session Minutes

A motion made by Deputy Mayor Di Pirro, seconded by Tara Ramsey to approve the March 27, 2023 Executive Session Minutes and were unanimously approved by voice vote.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

APPOINTMENT OF NOEL WIGGINS – RINGOES VILLAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – TERM TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 31, 2025

Mayor Casper-Bloom tabled the appointment of Ms. Wiggins stating that she would like to discuss another opportunity with her later. Ms. Wiggins agreed.

APPOINTMENT OF JULIET LEONARD – ALTERNATE NO. 2 - BOARD OF HEALTH – TERM TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 31, 2024

APPOINTMENT OF ERICA JOHANSON – RECYCLING COMMITTEE – UNEXPIRED TERM TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 31, 2023

The appointments of Ms. Leonard and Ms. Johanson were confirmed on motion of Ms. Ramsey, seconded by Mr. DiPirro and unanimously approved by voice vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 23-05 – INTRODUCTION/FIRST READING

Ordinance No. 23-05 was read by title by Ms. Giliberti “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 97 “LITTERING” SECTION 97-4 “ILLEGAL DUMPING” AND SECTION 97-11

“VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES” OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAST AMWELL, COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY”

EXPLANATION

Mayor Casper-Bloom explained that this ordinance amends the municipal code of the Township of East Amwell, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, Chapter 97 “Littering” Section 97-4 “Illegal Dumping” and Section 97-11 “Violations and Penalties”. This ordinance is being amended to help us enforce the rules at the grit yard.

Mr. DiPirro asked if a provision could be added to this ordinance to say that one of the sanctions of this amendment would be the cost of removal and proper disposal of materials. He asked if the other members of the Township Committee were interested in adding this provision, if the ordinance could be introduced tonight or if it would need to be reintroduced at the next meeting. Mr. Whittlesey stated that we can introduce the ordinance tonight and modify for the final reading and hearing, adding a provision for restitution.

A motion made by Mr. Di Pirro, seconded by Mr. Mills and carried unanimously, it was moved to introduce Ordinance No. 23-05 with a Public Hearing date of May 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET – PUBLIC HEARING/ADOPTION
RESOLUTION NO. 2023-66 — MUNICIPAL BUDGET OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAST AMWELL, COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY FOR THE YEAR 2023
was read by title.

On motion of Ms. Ramsey, seconded by Mr. Mills and carried unanimously, it was moved to approve Resolution No. 2023-66.

Recorded Vote

Aye: Mills, Ramsey, DiPirro, Casper-Bloom
Nay: XXX
Abstain: XXX

PUBLIC HEARING

A motion made by Tara Ramsey, seconded by John Mills to open the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Frances Gavigan – Ms. Gavigan asked if the \$220,000 collected on a foreclosed property was used to balance the budget. Mayor Casper-Bloom responded that the money was not factored into the budget and it was not used to keep taxes flat. Ms. Gavigan also asked about the 20% amount of legal fees owed back to the insurance company for The Ridge lawsuit. Mr. Whittlesey responded that we are still in negotiations.

Linda Ranft – Ms. Ranft said she attended both budget meetings. She said that she knows the municipal taxes will not be raised, but wanted to know if the property taxes will be. Mayor Casper-Bloom stated that the school and county budgets have not passed yet and she could only speak on the municipal portion.

Rick Wolfe – Mr. Wolfe commended the Township Committee for keeping taxes flat when expenses and inflation have gone up significantly.

A motion made by Dante DiPirro, seconded by John Mills to close the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-67 – ADOPTION OF 2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET was approved on motion of Mr. DiPirro, seconded by Ms. Ramsey and carried unanimously.

Recorded Vote

Aye: Mills, Ramsey, DiPirro, Casper-Bloom
Nay: XXX
Abstain: XXX

CONSENT AGENDA

- 2023-68 APPROVAL OF BLUE LIGHT PERMIT - VENEZIALE
- 2023-69 APPROVAL OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS PERMIT – SOURLAND CONSERVANCY
- 2023-70 APPROVAL OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS PERMIT – AMWELL VALLEY FIRE COMPANY
- 2023-71 APPOINTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION SECRETARY – KAVCHOK
- 2023-72 PERSONNEL – SUMMER PLAYGROUND DIRECTORS - VARIOUS
- 2023-73 RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE BILLS AND CLAIMS
- ~~2023-74 TAX COLLECTOR – TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN EXEMPTION – BLOCK 17/LOT 16-14 – NOT ADOPTED~~
- 2023-75 APPROVAL OF REDEMPTION TAX SALE CERTIFICATE – BLOCK 18, LOT 6 – 192 OLD YORK ROAD

Mayor Casper-Bloom commented on Resolution 2023-73 and requested that the payments to Walter Wolf Services, Colliers Engineering and Ferreiro Engineering be checked to make sure that they were paid out of escrow before they are mailed out. Ms. Giliberti stated that she would check on them. Mayor Casper-Bloom asked that Resolution 2023-74 be taken off the Consent Agenda. She questioned the reason that the veteran’s exemption and the refund resolution for the veteran are not done on one resolution. Ms. Giliberti explained that one resolution is done to grant the exemption and another is done to refund what is owed to the veteran. Mr. DiPirro stated that he believes the Township Committee needs more clarity before adopting this resolution. Mr. Di Pirro also requested that Resolution 2023-69 be moved off the Consent Agenda because he needs to abstain as President of the Sourlands Conservancy.

On motion of Ms. Ramsey, seconded by Mr. Mills and carried unanimously, it was moved to approve Resolution Nos. 2023-68, 2023-70 through 2023-73 and 2023-75, as filed in the Office of the Township Clerk.

Recorded Vote

Aye: Mills, Ramsey, DiPirro, Casper-Bloom
 Nay: XXX
 Abstain: XXX

On motion of Ms. Ramsey, seconded by Mr. Mills, with Mr. DiPirro abstaining, it was moved to approve Resolution No. 2023-69, as filed in the Office of the Township Clerk.

Recorded Vote

Aye: Mills, Ramsey, Casper-Bloom
 Nay: XXX
 Abstain: DiPirro

RESOLUTIONS

- 2023-76 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Mayor Casper-Bloom explained that the NJDOT has recommended a conceptual plan for proposed white pavement markings for the route 179 NB shoulder in the vicinity of Boss Road to clarify where motorists can and cannot park. NJDOT will not be revising the existing signs as these “No Stopping or Standing” zones are legally established by a traffic regulation order. They have asked for our review and whether we concur with their recommendation.

On motion of Ms. Ramsey, seconded by Mr. Mills and carried unanimously, it was moved to

approve Resolution No. 2023-76, as filed in the Office of the Township Clerk.

Recorded Vote:

Aye: Mills, Ramsey, DiPirro, Casper-Bloom

Nay: XXX

Abstain: XXX

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Casper-Bloom referenced to an email that the school sent on April 1, 2023, regarding some weapons that were found near school property. The Township Committee became aware of this situation at the same time the email was sent by the school. Mayor Casper-Bloom reported it to the NJ State Police. The investigation is pending at this time, but the police have stressed that they do not believe there is any threat to the school. If any residents have any questions, Mayor Casper-Bloom encouraged them to attend the school board meeting on April 18, 2023 at 7 PM.

Mayor Casper-Bloom stated that it was also brought to her attention that there were bullets flying on properties on North Hill Road last week. She said she understands that people in East Amwell own guns, but she asked that everyone be careful and try to keep the bullets on their own property, so no one gets injured.

Mayor Casper-Bloom attended the Mayor’s Convention in Atlantic City today. She spoke to someone who gave out information on how to work with dilapidated houses and she passed that information to Dante and John. She also spoke to someone from the NJDOT about options to get funding for the town to help with road work. She also spoke to Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Brennan regarding police reports. He said that their system is not helpful and they are going to move away from it. Hopefully, once that happens, we will start receiving reports again. She also brought to his attention that speeding has been an issue in the Township.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Bills of the Evening – April 13, 2023

A motion made by Tara Ramsey, seconded by Michael Dendis to approve the bills of the evening was conducted by roll call vote:

Recorded Vote:

Aye: Mills, Ramsey, DiPirro, Casper-Bloom

Nay: XXX

Abstain: XXX

APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A motion made by Dante DiPirro, seconded by John Mills to approve the Administrative Reports was unanimously approved by voice vote.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. *NEW JERSEY LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES*
2. *UNITED STATES*
3. *STATE OF NEW JERSEY*
 SUSPECTED HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE DISCHARGE
 NOTIFICATION: NJDEP INCIDENT NOTIFICATION NUMBER: 23-03-20-1154-29
 SUSPECTED HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE DISCHARGE
 NOTIFICATION: NJDEP INCIDENT NOTIFICATION NUMBER: 23-04-07-1048-21
4. *HUNTERDON COUNTY*
5. *EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP*
6. *SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES*
 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ADOPTION OF AMENDED HOUSING
 PLAN ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN-HILLSBOROUGH
 TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
7. *MISCELLANEOUS*

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

A motion made by Dante DiPirro, seconded by Tara Ramsey to open the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Will Harrison – Mr. Harrison was following up on the Kleinschmidt House Demolition and wants to know if the Township Committee is willing to vote to make this problem a goal and come up with the plan.

Mr. DiPirro responded that the Township Committee, Historic Preservation Committee and Ringoes Village Advisory Committee are working on this issue and that we would not want to take ownership of the property as that could create a liability for the taxpayers. He hopes that a Township Planner would help us know what is available regarding funding or grants. Mr. DiPirro assured Mr. Harrison that these committees will continue to work on this issue.

Mr. Mills commented that Katrina Campbell, County Counsel, is also working to try to find funds or grants.

Mr. Whittlesey reiterated that it would be irresponsible for the township to take ownership of the property without knowing if there are any issues with it.

Noel Wiggins – Ms. Wiggins inquired about whether there would be a time limit on parking on Route 179 as she is concerned that people will take advantage of the parking spots. Mayor Casper-Bloom said she understood her concern and that we would have to keep an eye on it. Ms. Wiggins asked if there had been a certified title search done on the Kleinschmidt House. Mr. Harrison stated there was and that there is no current owner. Ms. Wiggins commented that she knows someone who does Community Outreach and performs environmental testing and asked permission to contact this person regarding the Kleinschmidt House on behalf of the township. Mr. DiPirro answered she could certainly contact this person as a resident and ask for information to pass on to Township officials.

Frances Gavigan - Ms. Gavigan stated that last summer she went to the County about the Kleinschmidt House. She said that no one wants to take on liability for it and unless the County can help find grant money, no one wants to take responsibility. Ms. Gavigan questioned why the first open to the public session on the agenda was only open to agenda items only and asked why there is now a ten-minute limit. Mr. DiPirro responded that this is so the public has an opportunity to ask questions about agenda items before the Township Committee acts on them. Mayor Casper-Bloom stated that the ten-minute time limit has not changed. Ms. Gavigan commented that it was a privilege knowing former Township Clerk, Terri Stahl, and hopes that something will be done in her memory.


Rick Wolfe – Mr. Wolfe commented that what Mr. Harrison described regarding the Kleinschmidt House was called a Phase I assessment, where an environmental company comes in and looks at the prior records for the property to get a sense if there was anything on the property such as oil tanks. After a Phase I assessment is done, there is still not enough information to know if there are worse environmental concerns. He also commented that the problem with trying to get a grant from the county is that if they give us a grant, they’ll have to give it to all other properties in the county in the same situation. He agrees with Mr. Whittlesey that it would be very irresponsible to take ownership of the property. He commended Mr. DiPirro for all of the work he has done and is putting into this. He believes NJDEP should be involved to deal with the tear-down costs or at least to deal with the ramifications of what may be found in the soil.

Seeing there were no further comments, a motion made by Dante DiPirro, seconded by John Mills to close the meeting to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion made by Mr. DiPirro, seconded by Ms. Ramsey to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,


Linda Giliberti, RMC
Township Clerk

5/11/2023
Date Approved