

**TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON  
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**PUBLIC PORTION/PUBLIC MEETING**

**July 25, 2011**

The Township Council held a Public Portion/Public Meeting in the Municipal Building, Pascack Road. The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Council Vice President Steven Cascio with the Clerk leading the salute to the flag. Members present: Glenn Beckmeyer, Steven Cascio, Joseph D'Urso, Richard Hrbek, Absent: None. Fred Goetz arrived at 8:20pm. Also present: Janet Sobkowicz, Mayor; Kenneth Poller, Attorney. Absent: Lilly Chin

Pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, this meeting was noticed with the Ridgewood News, posted on Municipal Bulletin Board and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

Mayor Sobkowicz began the meeting by announcing that due to adjustments in school aid made on the state level, the tax bills will be mailed late. The town is now waiting for a disc to come from the county which will be available soon. The tax bills will be computed, printed and mailed out hopefully by August 1, 2011. Therefore, residents will have a 25 day extension to pay their tax bills from the date that they are mailed out. Interest rates will be calculated from August 1, 2011 on any tax payment made after the extended time.

**PUBLIC PORTION**

A motion was made by Mr. Hrbek, seconded by Mr. Beckmeyer to open the public discussion.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, D'Urso, Hrbek, Cascio

Nays: None

**Peter Mayer 133 Woodfield Rd** - Mr. Mayer said that there is a "bagel shop" rumor going around saying that the reason the Councilmen are harassing the Mayor and Administrator is because one of the present Councilmen is going to become mayor and that Mr. Goetz is going to be Township Attorney. He asked if the rumor is true and Dr. Cascio that he is not aware of any truth to the rumor.

**Mitchell Rosenthal, 270 Hoover Avenue** - Mr. Mitchell asked what the status of the cell tower is at this time and if there is any consideration being given to an alternate site, which would be the northern side of the municipal property. Dr. Cascio stated that there are only two sites being considered for the cell tower location, the town hall property and the property behind the Dog House. Mr. Poller stated that the three carriers who are going to have locations on the tower are using the same engineer. He said that there is a possibility that some of the equipment needed in conjunction with the tower could be housed within the municipal building. The cell carrier's engineer will look to see if a shed can be located in the old pistol range under the municipal building. The Mayor said that certain criteria have to be looked into before the north side of the building can be considered for the site of the tower. Mr. Rosenthal said the access road on that side of the Municipal building could be fixed up at the time the tower is built and become an appropriate emergency road. The northerly location would be less detrimental to most people. Mr. Poller stated that he will look into the contract in more detail to determine whether the north side of the building is considered part of the municipal town site. Dr. Cascio said that the access road is being addressed now as a project by DMF Director Chris Riedel.

**Al Gillio, Wayne Place** - Mr. Gillio asked if there are any new developments with the Wayne Place school traffic safety issue. Mr. D'Urso said that he asked that the topic be put on the agenda because something needs to be done about the continuing issue, hopefully before school begins again. He made the suggestion again to close the road to parking during school hours. Dr. Cascio reported that Mr. Goetz has been speaking to Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Zoeller, regarding having an engineer do a study and develop a plan that allows traffic to flow at drop off and pick times up as well as allowing people to safely walk up to and around Washington School.

**Peter Philis, 326 Hudson Avenue** - Mr. Philis spoke about what he read in a local newspaper article recently regarding the cell tower. He spoke about the mechanicals that will be part of the cell tower construction, and the danger it may pose plus the imposition it is going to cause those on Hudson Avenue. It is his understanding that the equipment that is necessary to run the cell tower needs to be in a location away from the municipal building for the sake of safety. He said that he was concerned about Hudson Avenue being closed during the construction of the tower. Dr. Cascio stated that the town professionals will make sure that the tower is erected safely. He said that once the Council approves the location, the project still needs to go to the Planning Board. The Fire Department will be involved in the plans of the tower as well. The cell tower project will be well monitored for safety and will follow the code for quality of work. At this time the property next door to the municipal building is not being considered for purchase.

**Rich Skinner, 303 Mountain Avenue** - Lt. Skinner said that he read in the Cliffside Pilot that Washington Township is in negotiations with the county for a shared service agreement in which the county police would help patrol the Township. Dr. Cascio stated that he is on the shared service committee and has no knowledge of any negotiations with the county on this issue. Dispatch is the town's main focus. The committee discusses many ideas and options, including this issue, but there are no negotiations going on. Lt. Skinner stated that he will e-mail the link to Dr. Cascio. Mr. D'Urso and Mayor Sobkowicz stated that a reporter from the Bergen Record called them and asked about the same negotiations. Both Mayor and Mr. D'Urso told the reporter that there are no negotiations of that nature going on. The Mayor spoke about a study done recently that recommended that the county police force could be reduced and that this article may stem from the county police department's desire to negate what the study indicated.

**Julie Lipnick, Finnerty Place** - Mrs. Lipnick said that some time ago Season's wanted to build a parking lot on the corner of Washington Avenue and Pascack Road to be utilized by commuters during the day and the catering hall by night and on weekends. Mrs. Lipnick stated that the owner of Season's was turned down by the town because the town does not allow off site parking. She said that she recently went to TD Bank on Pascack Road, near Season's, and there were no parking spots. She counted 18 cars with wait staff from Season's drive through the bank parking lot while she sat in the drive thru bank window. These cars exited and went to the YMHA parking lot. She asked why Season's employees are allowed to park off site at various locations and why does the town not allow Season's to put up a parking lot on the corner that would benefit residents who take public transportation.

**Laurence Bernstock, 286 Woodfield Road** - Mr. Bernstock asked if the Council has any control over the solar panels that PSE&G are putting up on the utility poles. Dr. Cascio stated that our town, like

many others in the area, does not have any control over the project. Mr. Bernstock said that it is diverting birds in his neighborhood. Mayor Sobkowicz said that she spoke to PSE&G about the situation and they have stopped putting any more up at this time. There are a little over 100 of them in the Township. She is also planning a meeting with the Mayor of Hillsdale and the BPU before any more panels go up.

**Linda Murphy, 675 McKinley Avenue** - Mrs. Murphy asked if the Township has spoken to the county about painting in pedestrian walkways at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Pascack Road. Mayor Sobkowicz said that they have not at this time. Mrs. Murphy asked if she could call the county about the problem. Mayor Sobkowicz said that she would first like to speak to Mrs. Murphy about the issue at town hall first.

**Ellen Dogali, 749 Wayne Place** - Mrs. Dogali stated that Wayne Place is still getting a lot of one way traffic going the wrong way. The signage on the corner of White Birch and Wayne Place is obscured by a tree. People are also going up School Street the wrong way as well. She stated that it only a matter of time before there is an accident.

**Agnes Smith, 646 Valley Court** - Mrs. Smith asked the Council if they had tried to discuss the exit 168 situation with the county and the Highway Authority. She said that while she was administrator, she spoke to both entities to explore solutions that would not impede on the residents of the Township. She spoke about the nonobservance of the master plan in regard to two projects in front of the zoning board at this time. She does not want to see the Township become a throughway for other communities in the Pascack Valley area. Mr. Goetz stated that the Mayor has had meetings with the Highway Authority without extending invitations to any Councilmen; therefore little input has been able to be made by Council. Mrs. Smith stated that she spoke to specific people within the county, and she will give the Council phone numbers to call in order to set up a meeting which should include community involvement. Mayor Sobkowicz stated that she met with the Highway Authority, both in their offices and in the Township. She said that she, Mr. Beckmeyer and Mr. Goetz met with the county regarding the county improvements of the Washington Avenue and Pascack Road intersection. Mr. Azzolina will give a report later this evening. The county will not allow a light at the exit although the Highway Authority requested one. The Mayor stated that the county and the Township are working together to get the highway authority to open exit 171 for a trial period. She stated that many people should write the highway authority to ask that exit 171 be opened to allow right turns. Mr. D'Urso said that he has had several conversations with council people in Woodcliff Lake but they do not want to open exit 171 to right turns. He is asking the town to put the question on a referendum on their November ballot. The Highway Authority is open to make the exit 171 change as is the county.

**Peter Mayer - 133 Woodfield Road** - Mr. Mayer asked Mr. Goetz if he is going to be the Township Attorney. Mr. Goetz stated that was news to him. Mr. Mayer asked Mr. Goetz to say no. Mr. Goetz said no.

There being no further questions or comments from the public, a motion was made by Mr. Beckmeyer, seconded by Mr. Hrbek to close the public portion of the meeting.

Ayes: Councilmen Beckmeyer, D'Urso, Cascio, Hrbek, Goetz

Nays: None.

A discussion ensued between Mr. Poller and Council regarding several ordinances that were in the process of being drafted. Mr. Poller explained that it is his practice to discuss with Council any changes that should be made at a meeting before amending ordinances.

Mr. Goetz summarized the Deputy Clerk Ordinance as it has been drafted and the past agreement the Mayor made with the Council regarding the Deputy Clerk's position. The Mayor and Council had compromised on the position increasing to 23 hours with a promise from the Mayor that a personnel action form would be signed before this meeting date. At this time a personnel action form has not been signed and Mr. Goetz asked that the Council move forward with the introduction of the ordinance. Several comments were made by Council regarding the need for more hours in the Clerk's office. Mr. Hrbek stated that more hours are needed but asked for more communication and dialog without introducing the ordinance. Mayor Sobkowicz stated that she does not want to give the Deputy Clerk a full time position as stated in the proposed ordinance. She said that she gave the Deputy Clerk extra hours in the Clerk's office using blue voucher in the past. Mr. D'Urso said that there is money in the budget for the Deputy Clerk to work 25 hours per week and that is the true amount of hours the Council is requesting that she is approved for. The Mayor said that she would have to take the Deputy Clerk out of the position of Acting Planning and Zoning Board secretary if the Deputy Clerk position was raised to 25 hours. Waiving benefits is not agreeable. Mayor Sobkowicz said that she would speak to the Deputy Clerk. She stated that she is paying someone full time to do the minutes for the planning and zoning office.

A motion was made by Mr. Hrbek, seconded by Mr. D'Urso to table the ordinance at this time.

Ayes: Councilmen Beckmeyer, Cascio, D'Urso, Hrbek, Goetz.

Nays: None.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Cascio requested that #1 be pulled for discussion.

A motion was made by Mr. Hrbek, seconded by Dr. Cascio to approve the Consent Agenda

Ayes: Councilmen Beckmeyer, Cascio, D'Urso, Hrbek, Goetz.

Nays: None.

Raffle License #809, #810 and #811 for the Ramsey Public Education Foundation was approved by the Township Council of the Township of Washington.

Raffle License #812 and #813 for the Franklin Lakes Borough Education Foundation was approved by the Township Council of the Township of Washington.

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Mary Ann Ozment, Township Clerk

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Fred Goetz, Council President