

The following are my personal notes, not official meeting minutes. For official minutes, please go to the Delanco Municipal Building, 770 Coopertown Rd.

Delanco Township Committee October 15, 2012 started at 7:45

Present: Fitzpatrick, Lord, Templeton, Jass, Dillenbeck

Also Present: Mr. Schwab, Township Administrator, Mrs. Lohr, Municipal Clerk; Mrs. Martin, Deputy Municipal Clerk; Chief DeSanto, Delanco Police; Mr. Rahman, Tax Assessor

****SPECIAL PRESENTATION****

RESOLUTION 2012-129 HONORING a Delanco Resident – RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

BizEd PROGRAM WINNER –Passed unanimously

Fitzpatrick: I read an article that mentioned the junior and asked the Committee to recognize her. She told us about you. It was her information that led to you receiving it.

Templeton: There were only four people in the room when she was honored.

*****SPECIAL REPORT*****

RESULTS OF 2012 TAX APPEALS – Joseph Rahman, Tax Assessor

(Handout was provided by Mr. Rahman. Copies are available at the Municipal Building.)

Jass: After the presentation you will have questions.

Rahman: Handout will be on the website. I'm here to discuss the effects of our tax appeals situation. Then we will present some ideas about moving forward from the appeals. 160 county appeals (10% class 2 residential) 1 state appeal filed .. all but four were settled without hearing. Hearing resulted in judgement. \$145,835 lost in revenue, but the schools get their money. When value of the town goes down, tax rate goes up. That doesn't mean that your taxes necessarily go up. Formula in packet as to how rate is determined. There are a few ways to correct Delanco:

1. Compliance plan – 4 yr term done internally – 25% of the town would be inspected each year.
2. Reassessment by the assessor – time constraints – this is a part time job. It would take more than 1 1/2 times the time I am here.
3. Revaluation like 2007 for 2014 tax year – using outside assessor.
4. Hybrid reassessment – 2005-6 assessments would have to be conducted again. Assessor is intimately involved. That would be for 2014 tax year.

Why is this necessary?

-Director's ratio – 115.71% of assessed value is now market value. When I studied sales from Jan 2011 through this August – true ratio was 127% . 11.55 now – when it approaches 15%, Division of Taxation will want something done.

-2012- tax appeals and administrative changes – 200 completed. So tax burden gets readjusted so those that don't appeal bear that burden. It creates inequities.

-There is an inability to apply added assessments – ex. addition can't be taxed if you are already overassessed. County is looking at putting an order through.

Slide with definitions in packet. Slides regarding equity issue. Descriptions of programs and impact on taxes as well as what is expected of property owners. Formal appeal process.

Because 10% appealed, the Freeze Act – if there is a program, that rate applies.

Floor open to the public for questions. I took a lot of time and care in making offers to the folks in Delanco. 156 out of 160 agreed with the number that I offered. There was diligence applied.

Resident of Russ Farm Way: You've done quite a job of putting this together. Out of 160 appeals, 156 were settled, so assessed value and taxes were reduced. And now the Township is short over \$145,000. Now the tax rate goes up to make up for that.

Rahman: Budgets are passed. Some communities look to their reserves to make up the money. Others can speak to how they are going to recoup this.

Rahman: We lost 7 million in value, so the rates go up. There is a cap at 2%. There are many factors that go into that. This is one of them.

Resident: Reevaluation or hybrid?

Rahman: Township is considering options. After speaking with the township administrator, (missed this)

Resident: (missed this)

Rahman: Hybrid reassessment. I would work very tight with the firm that helps us get through this.

Resident of Pennington Ct: Average appeal was \$4800 per property. Revaluation a (missed this.)

Rahman: Market transactions are used – sold properties at arm's length.

Resident: Looked on website at Pennington Court. 9 or 12 were sold. Difference \$735,000 drop on those properties. I don't know how you pick out the numbers for reassessment. I want people to know that everything is down 20% in my community. Regarding cost, what's the saving of having you involved, if you are having an outside firm involved. Is it an added expense.

Rahman: Hybrids are generally less expensive.

Resident: Who determines the value?

Rahman: Joint effort. I have the final say.

Resident of Russ Farm Way: What is the cost of hiring an outside firm?

Rahman: Don't know yet. Generating RFP's for the two options. RFP's will be on the website.

Resident: Will results be published?

Lohr: It will be awarded by resolution with a report of bids received. It can be on the website.

Resident: What has been the cost in the past?

Rahman: \$139,000

Resident: This would be over \$150,000

Rahman: There hasn't been a lot of hybrid done. I don't know.

Resident: I don't see the sense of it.

Rahman: Technically we are bleeding. There are inequities in assessments and tax burden. If you are ordered to do it, then you spend the money to fight it if the community doesn't want to do it.

Resident: Is there a law that says when you need to?

Rahman: Director's ratio, appeals, etc.

Jass: The board is the tax board, not this committee. That's who is determining what we are doing. It has to be approved by tax board and Division of Taxation.

Templeton: State and county. We're out of bounds. We're in the middle of what is true in other communities in the state. Our bad luck is that our revaluation was right before the housing market fell off the cliff.

Resident: Result would be that values would go down, and rates would go up. And if community doesn't look at seeing what can be cut...

Jass: When you come in for a tax appeal, township budget is already committed. When your taxes are reduced, the town is still committed for all that money. That money is lost. That's what makes this figure even higher. There are other entities that we are committed to.

Resident: How much of \$145,000 can we save in other areas? You have the same problem as the federal government.

Jass: Mr. Schwab has asked departments for budgets for next year. He included a statement to be aware of lost revenue.

Resident: Are we going to be looking at cutting.

Jass: Yes, we have in the past and will continue.

Resident of Pennington Court: Hypothetical. When I came in in the spring, I was told that something would be happening over the summer and to wait to appeal. If I were to come in and do an appeal now, is it worth my while considering that some other plan is going to happen? Will it be three years?

Rahman: You have a right to appeal every year. When you get your postcard in January, you can decide. It is your right to appeal.

Resident of Shipp's Way: Houses were revaluated in 2007. At that time, houses were valued high in the market. When you go through revaluation now, our houses will be lower.

Rahman: Depends on whether appeal was filed.

Resident: How many improvements have you seen through permits –

Rahman: 78

Rahman: Monitored improvement – added 78, but not 21. I couldn't defend adding it on if it was already overassessed.

Resident: Rate will go up. Is it worth it to spend \$145,000 if the tax rate will go up anyway?

Rahman: There are inequities.

Resident: Are there delinquents?

Jass: We collect over 95%.

Schwab: 97% are collected

Jass: Very small percentage not collected.

Resident: something should be done about that before anything else is done.

Rahman: Impact could be if we change 20%, those who haven't filed for appeals, may not see taxes reduced. Those who have appealed, may see a positive impact on your tax burden because you have already been relieved.

Resident: Number was based on 2006. I'm questioning if it is possible to just go through the numbers in the neighborhoods and apply a factor. We know there are 78 homes with improvements, work on them first.

Templeton: We've tried a lot of brainstorming. What I did was suggest we file an appeal for everybody, but state limits us to those two options.

Rahman: Monmouth County has a pilot program passed by Assembly – maintenance remedy that accounts for swings in markets. We'll have to see how that flows.

Resident: To clarify – you mean that if you have already had an appeal, a positive impact means taxes will go up.

Rahman: Positive impact does mean that. It can go up. We just did a hybrid in Howell Township. Those who had appealed saw taxes increase.

Resident: It's a positive adjustment, but is the rate as high or higher than it was? Some one

assessed at \$300,000 – appeal to \$260,000. Will he pay as much as it was at \$300,000?

Rahman: Reverted back to what it was with small increase.

Resident: Taxes up 25%. So anyone who has appealed from 2006 on will see a substantial increase.

Rahman: The relief that has been received there has been taken on by other folks.

Resident: What is the filing deadline for reassessment?

Rahman: For an appeal, when you get your postcard in January, you must file by April 1. Please email me with other questions. I've met with a lot of folks. I don't mind communicating and answering questions when then are asked.

Jass: Township Committee will keep everyone updated. Will take what is in the Assembly and Senate into consideration.

ORDINANCE 2012-14 TO AMEND CHAPTER 224 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF DELANCO ENTITLED "PUBLIC RECORDS, ACCESS TO" 2ND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING

HEARING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ORDINANCE 2012-14 – none

Templeton: What vital records does this apply to?

Marriage, birth, death, and corrections to all of them.

Templeton: Can you have a different fee structure for each?

Lohr: No

Templeton: So it will be \$25.00 for first copy and \$5 for each copy. I know that the staff has special training and works hard. I feel that this is a service that municipalities should provide at a reasonable fee for residents.

Jass: There's a process. They all go through the same process.

Lohr: I see where Mr. Templeton is going; death certificates take more time. Different records of the same type can vary due to different factors.

Templeton: What if someone needs a death certificate and 6 copies. If they later need 10 more copies would the first cost \$25 again?

Lohr: It would. That scenario usually doesn't happen. Usually the family member will receive several from the funeral director. It's usually later in life – retirement, social security. They won't incur large costs.

Templeton: Thank you.

Jass: \$25 for certified copy and \$5/additional. Is this a normal fee structure?

Lohr: Yes, state sets maximum. Municipalities set local rates. In the county, we are on the low side. State maximum is \$25. State charges \$25 for the first one – varies on second. Sat down with Marie. We charge \$10. When we looked step by step, it costs more than \$10.00 to process an average certified. To say it costs \$25...it probably costs \$15 to \$18. I wouldn't want to see us pay \$100 for an ordinance to change it two dollars in a couple of years. I wouldn't recommend \$25/each as some communities do. This recommendation was based on the results of a survey.

Lord: If someone asks for a record, do they get their request with a copy?

Lohr: They usually get 1 or 2.

Fitzpatrick: I don't think it's unreasonable. Usually if you use the death certificate for probate, they send it back.

Lohr: I always tell people to put it in a safe place.

Fitzpatrick: When you are probating an estate, the funeral parlor gives you as many as you want.

Passed with Lord and Templeton voting no.

2012 BEST PRACTICES SURVEY – MANDATORY REVIEW AT PUBLIC MEETING

Schwab: This year need yes, n/a or prospective for 41 out of 50 questions to keep state aid. Was done on time. Discussing as required tonight. 43 out of 50 this year.

No's:

-Elected officials required to attend (missed this)? no, though you do attend – not legal to require.

-Dedicated revenues to multiyear capital plan? no, small communities don't.

Jass: Doesn't state an amount?

Schwab: May not be a best practice for Delanco. If you decide there is a need to set aside money, generally you borrow. Public policy argument is that you borrow so people who benefit are paying.

Schwab:

-Exclude part-timers from health plan? No

-Exclude all who work less than 25 hours? No, but we do for future employees

-Limit workers' comp payments to 70%? Contracts require us to make up the difference.

We are reimbursed from the JIF. We have virtually no workers' comp issues in Delanco.

Prospective (considering):

-File shared services agreements

-Control processes in writing – most of it is in writing from auditors

-Five year surplus – data will be part of our discussion

-Two year projection of budget – we can put numbers out there

-Revaluation – as of tonight

-Dedicated trust fund for snowfall- Look at amount at end of the year, instead of canceling what we don't use, we put it in the trust fund. Once you put it there, it eliminates the flexibility because you can't use it for anything else.

-Supervisors exempt from overtime when they are working below their paygrade.

-Ordinance eliminating longevity for non-union – simple resolution

-union employees – next contract to eliminate longevity for new employees

-Analyze how we staff police for contractors. Forcing contractors to pay more money for police than they need. Just asking have we analyzed it.

REQUEST FOR WAIVER – DELANCO CODE - SECTION 123-4 FARM ANIMALS

Randy Robinson-722 Laurel Street

Mr. Robinson: Asking for a waiver for farm animals. Times are very hard. Inflation rate is 12% - the federal government doesn't include food or fuel in its figure. Tax rates go up but my income doesn't. I work from home. Income for past 10 years has remained flat. I'm a city kid from Brooklyn. I've been learning to raise my own food. I'm willing to comply with any constraints that committee might impose. Code enforcement and animal safety and department of health. Basic finding – no issues with animals. No issues with health and safety of my household. I don't live in somewhere like Newtons Landing. My backyard is about four of these courtrooms. I started with growing roses. Because I work from home, I've been in every single one of my neighbor's houses. They know me and I know them. I was able to get every single one of my neighbors to sign off. I share – carrots, tomatoes, corn, eggs, milk. Everybody on this list also partakes. We exchange food. Some of my neighbors are also growing food. I want more safety in what I feed my child. It's one thing to talk about doing something, and another to help your neighbors. Thanks for your time and consideration. I don't know if the department of health is able to respond to my request to

come out.

Jass: I know that we have talked. I was kind of disappointed. We talked about the need of the community – an article that could be in the paper. We talked about things the community does do and what the churches offer. When I looked at the memo and the attached list, from Hickory to Laurel, there are 16 properties – you have 7 homes that have signed.

Resident: I took every home that intersected with my property. I thought they would be the most important to get first. Then I went to everyone in front of my house.

Jass: House between 727 and 717 haven't signed.

Resident: It is being foreclosed.

Fitzpatrick: Which is it?

Resident: Not sure.

Jass: In actuality, there are 16 homes and only 7 have signed. How long have you had the 9 chickens, 3 female goats and 2 male goats (smallest).

Resident: A couple of months. Goats are Nigerian goats. They are smaller.

Jass: Are you aware of all the ordinances 123-1? Parcel of land has to be 5 acres or more.

Resident: No, that's why I came down about the amendment.

Jass: What kind of chickens?

Resident: Egg layers. No roosters.

Jass: Other regulations in the chapter – 100 feet from doors or windows

Resident: Everybody's house is towards the street. I've situated it to be more than 100 feet away from anyone's window or door.

Jass: Three females. How often are you milking?

Resident: Yes – milk and cheese.

Jass: Have your neighbors been over to assist?

Resident: I have two neighbors who will come over if I am away for the day.

Jass: What type of fencing?

Resident: Regular standard 8 ft wooden fencing.

Fitzpatrick: We got a report. Fencing isn't wood. It's poultry fencing.

Resident: You are talking about the fencing I keep the animals in. It's inside the other fencing.

Dillenbeck: Admire your enthusiasm. I too had chickens, goats, cattle, and everything else. How often do you trim the hoofs of the goats?

Resident: Haven't done it yet.

Dillenbeck: Do you have a stand to milk the goats? How often do you milk?

Resident: Once a day.

Dillenbeck: Chickens – free roaming or in a coop?

Resident: (missed this)

Dillenbeck: Can your coop move? No intention of getting a rooster? They crow 24 hours a day.

Resident: My neighbors didn't want that. No rooster

Dillenbeck: Water?

Resident: Yes, chicken coop water feeder and a small blue one.

Dillenbeck: How do you dispose of the droppings?

Resident: Goat droppings dissolve in the straw and use the chicken droppings in my garden.

Jass: How many sheds do you have?

Resident: One coop and two housings for the goats.

Jass: When you asked for this waiver, did you realize that there are other aspects – set-backs, sheds, accessory buildings?

Resident: Yes. The houses are rather small – like a dog house. They could be combined.

Instead of getting another chicken coop, when I moved there, there was an existing play house that I reused. I am willing to satisfy all the committee's recommendations.

Templeton: You get the eggs and goat milk. The animals aren't raised for consumption.

Resident: That's not my intent.

Lord: Do you have a maximum number of animals you plan on owning?

Resident: No

Lord: My understanding is that for goat's milk, the females have to be pregnant, and the second litter is twins. What will you do with them?

Resident: Give them away.

Lord: I'm trying to see what will happen next year.

Resident: The person I got them from will reabsorb them.

Lord: You put us in a quandary because we have conflicting ordinances. There may be zoning issues. Our own rules are in conflict. We have to somehow reconcile them. Just giving you a permit leaves you in zoning limbo. There are rules for accessory structures like the coop and the sheds. That's the kind of stuff we have to find out.

Resident: Who writes that?

Jass: Joint Land Use Board recommends and approves and then sends to township committee.

Resident: One of the people on the JLUB used to live next to me.

Jass: It's a conflict. I would like to consult a little more before making a decision.

Templeton: There's a whole set of regulations. We would be giving you permission to violate all those things that are in the books. We need to talk with the planning board and our solicitor.

Resident: You guys and the JLUB are the deciding folks. You have to speak to the solicitor to review?

Fitzpatrick: When you put in for the waiver, did you look at what is on the books?

What section are you referring to? In 110, there are several items in there that are prohibited uses. I don't know how the Township Committee can give you a waiver for all of this and you have poultry wire, how can we-

Resident: Can you read it off?

Fitzpatrick: 110-11. Agricultural uses ...poultry prohibited. 110-12 # of accessory buildings - 2 per lot in residential. Can't exceed 500 sq.ft or a total of 700 ft. total 110-13 fences - poultry fences and turkey wire 110-8 prohibited uses - keeping or maintaining poultry and livestock other than 2 adult dogs and cats. I'd be glad to give you this. Health department did inspect and found no problems. To me, as a member of this committee, I don't believe I have the right to give you a waiver. That's my suggestion without having our solicitor look at this

Resident: Some of the first statements you brought up are vague. It says about cats and dogs.

Fitzpatrick: It says you can't have poultry. I know what you are asking for.

Resident: I know that there are safety issues involved, but who is it hurting? Is it benefitting the community? There is a law that has been approved by this committee. The buck stops here. I would ask for you to look deeper and have a little bit of compassion. I can reduce a structure. I understand rules and regulations.

Jass: We are really in conflict with the zoning aspect. I commend you for what you are doing. We have to look at the area and the law.

Resident: You wrote the law and can change it. We are in changing times. As inflation goes up, my income isn't going up. I know that everyone here is part of the community as well. I ask for your compassion and understanding.

Lord: We will table it until we get our solicitor to look at it.

Jass: Please look at the information we gave you.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS:

Township Administrator Schwab:

- Leaf Collection Nov. 5 – schedule on website – two sections every other week.
- 2013 budget is out

COMMENTS - DEPARTMENT HEADS

1. Police

- Sept - 96 hours – special officers – Sat/Sun. assisted with 51 calls. 3 arrests for warrants and local ordinances and traffic. Officers detailed to Camp Meeting Grounds – parks. Increase in police presence. 4 hours of security for court.
- Letter from Dept. of Justice – denied our grant application – only 17% were funded
- Resolution re: Service agreement – 16 arrests, 23 violations, Riverline – increased police presence. Let's people know that they can't get a free ride on the train. It's a little crazy on off peak hours.
- Successful program – fatalities
- Regarding costs – my first year as chief. 8 full-time officers is a historic low. In 2003, there were 10. We have more homes and more people. It's about quality service - not numbers.
- New car is in service –working great. Just about ready to turn over Fire Department for \$1.
- Dillenbeck: All the lights off the vehicle were saved. We're using them. Everything is recycled and nothing is wasted.

2. Municipal Clerk

- Sat. Nov. 3 10-12 Rabies Clinic at Public Works
- Thanks to Kitty and Cindy for attending Community Day.
- Requesting a motion to start RFP for professional appointments for 2013.
- Motion passed unanimously.

COMMENTS - TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Dillenbeck:

- Community Day was a success though not as well as attended. We cut down advertizing. We had a tremendous number of people from outlying communities previously. Thanks to Jesse for being there – well received.
- Fire Department visited schools, talked to the children and let them see the gear. Brought Sparky the dog so the children aren't afraid of us during a fire.
- Attended Sewerage Authority
- Thanks to Public Works for work at firehouse
- Fall Fest next Saturday

Fitzpatrick:

- Missed Community Day and Field of Dreams due to class reunion. Emailed Phil to find out how everything went. Turned out great.
- Oct. 23 at 9AM – mock election for seventh graders here.
- First Wednesday open – Republican Club meeting here as per website calendar – they meet elsewhere.
- Question about payment for police vehicle lease
- DeSanto- Check couldn't be cut until purchase order was signed.
- Fitzpatrick: payment is for a year.

DeSanto: Yes

Fitzpatrick: Article in newspaper about buyers' remorse re: solar panels

Lord:

- Attended Community Day and Family Day at Living Springs. Second building – will start looking for renters there.
- Attended field opening – fields look good- better than they were. Kids enjoyed them.
- Library – Oct. 23 meet the author event at 7:00.

Templeton:

- Won't repeat things that have been mentioned
- JIF inspection – commendation to Mrs. Bray for organization as well as for safety meetings.
- Met with Mr. Heinold regarding Dunes evidence collection
- Signed up for conference to discuss FEMA flood maps.

Jass:

- Exciting to be at Field of Dreams opening– long time dream since 1998. Phase 2 will be another asset.
- Attended Senior Academy
- Living Springs – 10 units to be occupied – will notify us. Supposed to be for veterans.

CONSENT AGENDA:

RESOLUTION 2012-130 AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION AND EXECUTION OF GRANT APPLICATION AND CONTRACT WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE HERITAGE TRAIL SHARED USE BIKEWAY PROJECT

RESOLUTION 2012-131 AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION AND EXECUTION OF GRANT APPLICATION AND CONTRACT WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE MAPLE AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

RESOLUTION 2012-132 AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION AND EXECUTION OF GRANT APPLICATION AND CONTRACT WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE SAFE STREETS TO TRANSIT, PHASE II PROJECT

RESOLUTION 2012-133 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF BORDENTOWN TO ENTER INTO A SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR THE "BURLINGTON COUNTY RIVERLINE TASK FORCE" PROGRAM

PAYMENT OF BILLS
ACCOUNT AMOUNT
GENERAL \$ 857,049.67
PAYROLL 136,040.53
PUBLIC DEFENDER 341.50
DOG TRUST 30.00
TRUST 4,163.25
ACCUM ABSENCES 2,122.00

MCPL OPEN SPACE 19,051.89
APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 9/17/2012
APPROVAL OF DEPARTMENT REPORTS
APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA – Passed unanimously

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Resident of Burlington Ave: Read May 21st minutes -under Chief's report suggesting weight limit on Perkins Lane. Update on that? Every day I watch trucks making that turn unsafely. They are on the sidewalk or on my front lawn. It's completely unsafe. When they get to Edgewater Park, they aren't allowed to go further.

DeSanto: Kitty helped out and we got the state involved as well.

Jass: Mr. Denton will be at our next meeting.

Resident: Why the state?

DeSanto: The state will oversee it because Burlington Ave is a county road.

Resident: Lot of talk on quiet rails. Late night train 1:00, midnight, 4 in the morning, laying on the horn. They could hire a flagman since there's no traffic. Since Boise moved in there, it's gotten worse.

Templeton: This is difficult to ask of you. We've gotten complaints about trains blocking Perkins Lane, and we've followed up with calls. They say they don't have any record of a train being there. Conrail and NJ Transit would like a number off the engine. If there is any evidence that you can get...

Resident: When it started, I spoke with the general manager and it did lower the volume for a month or so.

Fitzpatrick: That volume is sporadic. I hear it between 11:30 and 12 and another between 4:30-5:00. It seems to depend on who is driving. Some of them lay on the horn.

Resident: I've lived here for five years and it was great up to then.

MEETING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

CORRESPONDENCE –none

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

ADJOURNMENT

Submitted by Maureen Barrett