

MINUTES  
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, April 11, 2019  
7:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Craig Repmann at 7:32 PM. Mayor Repmann led the flag salute.

Roll Call: Sebastian Donaruma Present      Craig Repmann Present      Diane Burgess Present  
                 Mike Homulak Present      Phil Koury Absent

Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only: None

Swearing in of new Police Officer, Thomas Caccavale: Katrina Campbell swore in the new Officer Thomas Caccavale.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of March 28, 2019 minutes Regular Meeting & Executive Session

Motion to approve: Mike Homulak      Second: Diane Burgess

Roll Call: Donaruma Aye   Repmann Aye   Burgess Aye   Homulak Aye

Payment of Bills

Approval of Bills List

Motion to approve: Sebastian Donaruma      Second: Diane Burgess

Roll Call: Donaruma Aye   Repmann Aye   Burgess Aye   Homulak Aye

Public Hearings: Rick and Robyn Ramalho, 18 Spring Hill Road, Block 31 Lot 4, Q0293  
Appeal of driveway permit denial

Present for the hearing were Rick and Robyn Romalho, Nicole Voigt (Attorney) and Kelly O'Such (Engineer) Katrina Campbell swore them in as a group to provide testimony.

Voigt stated that the property is currently farmland assessed and 25 acres are farmed in hay. The Romalhos are interested in converting to the Rutgers Hazelnut program. Rutgers is working on developing a tree that can produce commercial quality hazelnuts in the East. The Romalho's briefly described the program. The Romalhos are looking to access their fields with ag equipment and have submitted an application for an agricultural driveway permit to the township. Currently there is no curb cut to the property. The only access to the property at this time is thru an easement on a connecting property. The Romalhos stated that they have no plan at this time to build any structures on the property.

Mr. O'Such stated that the existing easement access does not meet the standards for a 25mph road in relation to site distance. The issue with the driveway being proposed is it does not meet the township code for the grade. Mr. O'Such explained the design of the proposed driveway and that it is a 13.5% grade gravel driveway. There will be drainage swales along the driveway which will discharge water so

that water does not concentrate on the driveway. They received approval from soil conservation. If they were to try and meet the code of 5% they would have to almost triple the length of the driveway which eliminates much of the farming area, eliminates many natural trees, and this would increase the impervious coverage. If they were to have over an acre of disturbance and a ¼ acre of impervious coverage it would trigger a major storm water project which would go well beyond what is necessary for a gravel farm driveway.

The first 75' of the driveway will be paved.

Katrina Campbell asked if the applicants would be willing to enter an agreement that addresses if gravel should wash into the township road that the applicant would be responsible for the clean-up. Katrina stated that there have been issues in the past where driveways consistently washed out and it fell on the town to do the clean-up.

Mr. Romalho was asked if they had a plan to put a well in and he said no. If they needed water they would bring a small tank to water the young trees. He also stated that if he needed power he would use a generator.

Neighbors Philip Roche, Lee Solemo, Lora and Maurice Jones and Paige Burt spoke in support of the application.

Neighbor Leon Hogan stated that he was concerned about the run off and the flooding that the driveway may cause. He explained the past issues that they have had on Spring Hill Road near his property when it rains. He is afraid that building this driveway will create a spill way and the entire road may flood which in turn will effect his property.

Katrina Campbell recommended that the attorneys and engineers go back and forth to possibly create a resolution that addresses how it will be handled if their materials wash out on the roadway and also, in the event that future structures are proposed, that the driveway is reassessed.

Katrina Campbell stated that no one would be committing to anything at this point. Craig Repmann stated that the committee was in favor of the project and would just need to discuss with the professionals.

The plan is to hopefully come up with a resolution and then possibly vote at the next meeting. No additional hearings needed. Nicole Voigt was comfortable with this.

Guest Speaker: Mike Chabra gave an update of the current status of farmland preservation and open space opportunities. (see attached report)

#### Resolutions

1. Proclamation for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of Hunterdon County  
Motion to adopt: Sebastian Donaruma                      Second: Diane Burgess  
All in favor: Aye

Ordinances: none

Staff Administrative Reports

**Police:** Tim Snyder provided the monthly report for the police department. (details in Lt. Snyder's report)

**CFO:** Cameron Keng reported that he was applying for a few grants; one was for signage for the Landsdown Trail, another was for a forestry plan to assist with the Ash Borer issue, and he is looking into possible grant funds for a police vehicle.

We are renewing the BAN

**Budget discussion:** In summary our revenues are 1.38 M, our appropriations at 3.3 M, and 1.9M need to be raised. This could mean roughly a 2.5% tax increase. (details in Camerone Keng's report) Items were discussed such as the evergreen program for computers and the lease program for the police vehicles. He discussed that he placed 100,000 in roads for now. This is the minimum amount needed in order to get things done.

Craig is interested in trying to explore opportunities to raise revenue. Mike Homulak requested a long term forecast. This will assist the committee with their choices. Cam said he has a schedule that breaks this down but will work on the details.

**Administrative:** None

Board of Health: None

Old Business: None

New Business

1. Discuss Community Calendar: Craig Repmann suggested that we have a community calendar on the website that includes events happening around town for instance at the school, fire co.

Comments from the Public: None

Executive Session

Motion to enter executive session: Diane Burgess

Second: Sebastian Donaruma

Possible items to be discussed: Personnel and contractual

Action by the Committee

Motion to increase the salary of the Part Time administrative employee to \$15.00 per hour: Diane Burgess

Second: Sebastian Donaruma

Burgess Aye Repmann Aye Donaruma Aye Homulak Aye

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Sebastian Donaruma Second: Diane Burgess

All in favor: Aye

*Catherine Inella - Deputy Clerk*  
4/5/19, 4/9/19

*Adopted 3-9-19*