

The regular business meeting of the Northampton Township Board of Supervisors was called to order at 8:00 PM.

Members of the Board of Supervisors present were:

Peter F. Palestina
James E. Kinney
George F. Komelasky
John E. Long, Jr.

Others present were:

Robert M. Pellegrino, Township Manager
Edward Rudolph, Township Solicitor
David W. Connell, Township Engineer

Absent:

Mr. Vincent Deon

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Mr. Palestrina.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Chairman Palestina held a moment of silence in support of our troops serving in dangerous places around the world and in memory of our fallen hero, Army PFC Robert Dembrowski, Jr., who was killed in action on May 24, 2007.

Mr. Palestina announced that Verizon internet customers could view this evening's meeting, which is being streamed live on the Township's Web site, <http://www.northamptontownship.com/>.

BLUE LIGHT CEREMONY

Mr. Palestina said that the Blue Light program was introduced by Police Chief Barry Pilla, and is associated with the Concerns for Police Survivors, Inc (COPS) a national grief support organization for surviving families of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. During the holiday season, residents are asked to include blue lights in holiday decorations and in windows, and to tie blue ribbons to car antennae to show support for law enforcement officers who have given their lives in the line of duty.

In attendance for the ceremony were the Newtown Township Honor Guard, Chief Pilla, Lieutenant Mike Clark, State Representative Scott Petri and Clerk of the Courts Mary Smithson, along with many of Northampton's Police Force.

Mr. Palestina called the roll of honor for Bucks County:

Sheriff Abraham L. Kulp, Bucks County Sheriff's Department, died February 24, 1927

Police Chief Eli M. Myers, Dublin Borough Police Department, died October 31, 1965

Police Sergeant George M. Stuckey, Bristol Township Police Department, died March 29, 1972

Police Officer James K. Armstrong, Bensalem Township Police Department, died April 15, 1975

Police Officer Robert T. Yezzi, Bensalem Township Police Department, died August 12, 1980

Deputy Sheriff Thomas A. Bateman, Bucks County Sheriff's Office, died September 22, 1986

Deputy Sheriff George M. Werta, Jr., Bucks County Sheriff's Office, died September 22, 1986

Ranger Stanley E. Flynn, Bucks County Park Ranger, died June 9, 1993

Police Officer Joseph E. Hanusey, III, Plumstead Township Police Department, died May 18, 2002

Police Officer Brian S. Gregg, Newtown Borough Police Department, died September 29, 2005.

Mr. Palestina asked that the memory of the heroes of the Roll Call of Honor shall never be forgotten. He then turned on the blue light and Township Christmas tree. He thanked those in attendance and the many residents who participate in the program.

AWARD CEREMONY

Mr. Palestina, along with Police Chief Pilla and Lieutenant Clark presented awards to those members of the Northampton Township Police Department who are honored for their outstanding work:

Officer Jack Kenney – Commendation of Heroism for rescue of three individuals from a house fire on August 13, 2007

Officer David Bloom – Commendation of Merit for fire rescue on August 13, 2007

Officer Chris Clifton – Commendatory Citation for fire rescue on August 13, 2007

Officer Michael Rodgers - Commendatory Citation for fire rescue on August 13, 2007

Officer Joseph Rosowski – Commendation of Merit for arrests for criminal mischief/arson

Detective Charles Wyant – Commendation of Merit for arrests for criminal mischief/arson

Detective George Kelly – Commendation of Merit for arrests for criminal mischief/arson

Officer Elifa Soto – Commendatory Citation for involvement in two separate drug investigations/arrests

Officer Steven Kingsdorf – Commendatory Citation for arrest of individuals involved in criminal mischief/vandalism

Officer David Egan - Commendatory Citation for arrest of individuals involved in criminal mischief/vandalism

Detective Charles Wyant - Commendatory Citation for arrest of individuals involved in criminal mischief/vandalism

Sergeant Stephen LeCompte and the third platoon, Officers Rodgers, Ozaresick, Wiggler, Long, Court, and Decker and Officers Hegley and Hamberger, Unit Commendations for involvement in arrest of armed robbery suspects.

Chief Pilla and Lieutenant Clark then presented Mr. Palestina with a plaque to thank him for his service as Public Safety Liaison since 1986. They expressed the gratitude of the Police Department for Mr. Palestina's support on their behalf. Chief Pilla also thanked Mr. Kinney for his dedicated service to the community.

WELCOME HOME FLAG PRESENTATION

Mr. Palestina, along with the Patriot Detachment of the United States Marines, welcomed home United States Army Sergeant Michael Pinciotti, who was in attendance with his mother, Marlene, sister, Lauren and his fiancée, Kristen. He presented the service flag of Sergeant Pinciotti to him and thanked him for his service to the United States. This was Sergeant Pinciotti's second tour of Iraq. Mr. Palestina said that of the 49 service flags placed in the display, only five remain. It is his hope to welcome those five still deployed home shortly.

Sergeant Pinciotti thanked Mr. Palestina and the people of Northampton for the support they have shown to him and to his family during his deployment. He said that although there were times during his deployment that he questioned the meaning of his efforts, returning to Northampton reminds him that this is the reason to serve and defend his country.

State Representative Scott Petri presented Sergeant Pinciotti with a certificate declaring him a Northampton Patriot and thanked him for his service. He also thanked Northampton for its efforts in supporting our troops and for the Blue Light program.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of November 28, 2007, were deemed approved by a vote of 4-0.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS

Bill Hanson of 252 Holland Road said that he is very concerned about parking in the fire zone at the CVS shopping center. There is adequate parking in the lot, and yet, cars are frequently parked in front of stores in the fire lane. Traffic is also traveling the wrong way in order to park close to the curb in the fire lane. This has caused many difficult driving situations. He asked that something to be done about the problem.

Mr. Pellegrino said that he will speak to the Fire Marshal about enforcement of the fire lane restrictions. He will also ask the Police Department to monitor and enforce the situation. He thanked Mr. Hanson for bringing the problem to the Board's attention.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Accessory Buildings, Structures and Uses:
Mr. Palestina opened this hearing.

Mr. Kinney said that this hearing had been advertised in the Bucks County Courier Times on November 29, 2007.

The intention of the amendment is to address concerns of the Zoning Officer regarding setbacks, impervious surface and building heights in the hope that there will be a reduction in the frequency of Zoning Hearing Board applications. The amendment modifies the definitions of "accessory building", "accessory use", "garages, carports, accessory building and structures". The Planning Commission has recommended approval of this amendment.

Mr. Komelasky commended the Planning Commission and the Zoning Hearing Board for their efforts to amend this ordinance, to reduce government involvement in residents' lives.

Motion (Kinney – Komelasky) to adopt Ordinance 522, which would amend the Northampton Code, Chapter 140, to amend, delete and add certain sections relative to accessory buildings, structures and uses. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Palestina closed this hearing.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Farm and Agricultural Retail Sales: Mr. Palestina opened this hearing.

Mr. Kinney said that this hearing had been advertised in the Bucks County Courier Times on November 29, 2007. The amendment addresses farm stands. He read into the record from Section 2, §140-8:

“Farm of Agricultural Retail Sales: The sale of farm products, produce, meat products, seeds and similar farm production items within the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) Zoning District, provided that the following condition apply: it is an accessory use to an existing farm or agricultural use; it is operated and maintained by the owners of the property; it has been approved as par of the conditional use application or it has been classified as a preexisting nonconforming use; and it meets the general criteria specified under §140-10B(1) of this Zoning Ordinance

Motion (Kinney- Komelasky) to adopt Ordinance 523, which would amend the Northampton Code, chapter 140, Section 140-8 and 140-10 to amend the definition of “agriculture or agricultural” and “agricultural operation”, the definition of “farm or agricultural retail sales” and modifying or replacing the uses permitted by right in the A-R, Agricultural Residential Zoning District. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Palestina closed the hearing.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Permitted Signs: Mr. Palestina opened the hearing.

Mr. Kinney said that this hearing had been advertised in the Bucks County Courier Times on November 29, 2007. The amendment addresses permitted signs. The Planning Commission has recommended the amendment.

Mr. Komelasky said that the Planning Commission has been reviewing Ordinances to bring them up-to-date. This amendment addresses permitting signage in the recreation district.

Motion (Kinney- Komelasky) to adopt Ordinance 524, which would amend the Northampton Code, chapter 140, Section 140-85 to include the Recreation District in these regulations for permitted signs.

Discussion of motion: Mr. Palestina noted that the date on the signing page should be changed to 2007.

The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Palestina closed the hearing.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Patios, Decks and Similar Structures: Mr. Palestina opened the hearing.

Mr. Kinney said that this hearing had been advertised in the Bucks County Courier Times on November 29, 2007. The amendment clarifies the permitted locations of patios, decks and similar structures to be no more than 12 feet from any rear wall of a townhouse dwelling unit. The Planning Commission has recommended approval.

Motion (Kinney- Komelasky) to adopt Ordinance 525, which would amend the Northampton Code, chapter 140 to revise certain provisions for patios, decks and similar structures accessory to townhouse dwelling units..

Discussion of motion: Mr. Palestina noted that the date on the signing page should be changed to 2007.

The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Palestina closed the hearing.

Mr. Komelasky thanked the Planning Commission, Zoning Officer and Zoning Hearing Board for their hard work in amending these ordinances to provide some relief to residents.

Public Hearing: Ordinance Amending Chapter 130, Section 130-7 of the Traffic & Vehicle Code of Ordinances, Establishing a 25MPH Speed Limit the entire length of Merry Dell Drive, in Both Directions: Mr. Palestina opened the hearing. He said that this hearing had been advertised in the Bucks County Courier Times on December 6, 2007. In response to a complaint by a resident, it was discovered that the posted speed limit of 25 MPH had never been put into the ordinance, and was therefore not enforceable by the Police Department. This amendment will correct this situation.

Motion (Palestina – Long) to adopt Ordinance number 526, amending Chapter 130, Section 130-7 of the Traffic & Vehicle Code of Ordinances, establishing a 25MPH speed limit the entire length of Merry Dell Drive, in Both Directions. The motion passed 4-0.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT – JAMES E. KINNEY

Hidden Creek – Extension of Improvement Agreement and Substitute Letter of Credit: Mr. Connell explained that developers enter into development agreements with the Township and establish escrow accounts for certain public improvements. The MPC allows for a review of these accounts to adjust for inflation from time to time. This particular account has been reviewed and the Township is allowing an extension of the time for completion of improvements and requesting an additional \$34,918.54 to be added to the escrow account.

Motion (Kinney – Long) to authorize the Chairman to execute an agreement to extend the subdivision improvement agreement for Hidden Creek to September 2008 and to execute an amendment to the improvement agreement for Hidden Creek, substituting the letter of credit from Harleysville National Bank with a letter of credit from the First Federal Savings and Loan of Bucks County. The motion passed 4-0.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES REPORT – JOHN E. LONG, JR.

Accounts Payable: The accounts payable listing of December 12, 2007 was deemed approved by a vote of 4-0.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT – PETER F. PALESTINA

Mr. Palestina announced that, because of the Christmas holiday, the Board of Supervisors meeting schedule has been changed. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 19, 2007, and the regularly scheduled fourth Wednesday meeting is canceled.

Mr. Kinney noted that he has had some inquiries from residents who wish to attend the meeting, as it will be the last meetings at which Mr. Palestina and Mr. Kinney will sit as supervisors.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. Long, Jr., Secretary