

**CITY OF ESTELL MANOR
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 2, 2011**

Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act adequate notice of this meeting was sent to the Official Newspaper and was posted on the City bulletin board and website. Mayor Venezia called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 pm.

Roll call: Present: Barbetto, Haeser, Teasenfitz, Wiker and Venezia
Solicitor Scerni was also in attendance.

TAX ASSESSOR/REVALUATION ORDER

Mr. James Mancini, Tax Assessor was in attendance to address Council regarding a revaluation order he has received on January 13, 2011 by the County. Mr. Mancini stated there were three other towns sent a similar order they are Somers Point, Longport and Hammonton. He supplied a spreadsheet to Council showing a 5-6 year study done on similar towns which were also ordered to either reassess or reevaluate. The assessed market value ratio has been in the 50% range since 2007, now has increased to 62%. Most people think that a revaluation occurs every ten years; however it is determined by the statistics of a municipality. The last reassessment done in Estell Manor was in 2003 and the County has required this be done by 2014 for Estell Manor. The Mayor suggested Mr. Mancini explain the process of a revaluation for the benefit of the new Council members. Mr. Mancini continued to explain the formula for the ratios and what determines the order for a revaluation. Mr. Mancini stated options are to appeal the order; however with the completion date of September 30, 2013 he does not feel it would benefit us. The Mayor asked if the State has a formula in place to determine when a municipality needs to complete a reassessment or revaluation. Also stated the number of houses for sale in Estell Manor some which have gone into foreclosure or simply abandoned by the homeowner, would this effect the City's assessed market value ratio to increase. The Mayor questioned the costs involved for conducting a revaluation and the need for updating our tax maps and the costs involved.

Mr. Mancini stated there is a five year payment plan available to conduct the revaluation which could be considered emergency appropriations. He also stated the difference between a revaluation and a reassessment. A revaluation could cost upwards to \$200,000 for the City as compared to \$60,000 to \$70,000 to perform a reassessment. Discussion ensued regarding the updating of tax maps.

The last revaluation order was completed in the early 1990's. In 2003 another order was issued but was able to get it reduced to a reassessment. A brief discussion ensued over timelines to make application.

Councilman Barbetto asked if there were any fees involved to appeal the order. Mancini stated the City would have to have legal representation and a hearing date would probably be set.

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More discussion ensued over any concerns Mancini may have that would cause the Board of Taxation to deny us a reassessment instead of a revaluation.

Motion made by Mayor, seconded by Barbetto to Authorize the Tax Assessor to make an application to the County Board of Taxation to allow Estell Manor to complete a tax assessment instead of a tax revaluation.

Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Chuck Fralinger and Mike Fralinger Jr. were present to give the engineer's report. The soccer complex work progressing steadily. A brief discussion ensued over the underground propane tank at the Old Risley School and possibly installing a fence around it for safety reasons. The Mayor stated he would like to move forward with the Maple Avenue road improvement project as soon as possible since there is funding allocated in the 2011 budget for it. Discussion turned to Fifth Avenue maintenance issues and the options for improving this road. Fralinger explained Pinelands would require an application filed for approval if Council wanted to either oil and stone or pave Fifth Avenue.

Residents of Fifth Avenue were present to offer their comments on the condition of the road and inquire as to Council's intentions on improving the road. Discussion ensued regarding costs and options to improve the condition of Fifth Avenue.

Councilman Teasenfitz stated the Second Avenue improvements were done in-house as an experiment using our Public Works Department employees.

The Mayor stated for the record that DPW employees would start repairing the pot holes on Fifth Avenue this week.

Councilwoman Wiker stated one of Council's responsibilities is to keep our streets safe for our residents.

Motion made by the Mayor, seconded by Teasenfitz for Fralinger Engineering to proceed with pre-application process to improve Fifth Avenue.

Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed

Chuck Fralinger stated the CDBG grant application has been submitted on time this year. He also updated Council on various ongoing projects.

Councilman Teasenfitz stated the County roads have really taken a beating this year from the snow storms. He feels we should communicate with them to inquire what their plans are for repairs.

Mayor Venezia stated he was very close with the County Administrator and would make a call to follow up on this issue.

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Councilman Barbetto requested the Mayor also address concerns regarding the speed of the County snow plows and damage to mailboxes.

Councilman Haeser requested a meeting with the City Engineer to discuss irrigation for the soccer fields.

The Mayor stated he would like to introduce the 2011 budget tonight. Barbetto questioned if there was any particular reason why Council was doing this now. Initially was scheduled for introduction because of transitional aid application deadline. Estell Manor does not qualify for this state aid so there is no hurry to introduce the budget. Barbetto questioned codification of the City Ordinance book. The City Clerk stated the funds could come out of the Capital Fund. Mayor responded Council could always make amendments if necessary.

ORDINANCE

01-2011 *Motion made by Mayor, seconded by Teasenfitz to introduce Ordinance 1-2011
Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed*

RESOLUTIONS

42-2011 *Motion made by Mayor, seconded by Teasenfitz to adopt Resolution 42-2011
Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed*

43-2011 *Motion made by Teasenfitz, seconded by Haeser to adopt Resolution 43-2011
Voice vote, all yes. Motion passed*

44-2011 *Motion made by Mayor to nominate Judson Moore as CFO and QPA with an
amendment not to exceed \$13,000. Motion made by Tesenfitz, seconded by
Barbetto to adopt Resolution 44-2011 with the Mayors amendment
Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed*

45-2011 *Motion made by Mayor, seconded by Teasenfitz to adopt Resolution 45-2011
Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed*

46-2011 *Motion made by Mayor, seconded by Haeser to adopt Resolution 46-2011 subject
to the availability of funds
Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed*

47-2011 *Motion made by Mayor, seconded by Haeser to Introduce the Budget Resolution
Roll call:
Barbetto-no*

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*Haeser-yes
Teasenfitz-yes
Wiker-yes
Venezia-yes*

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Discussion ensued regarding the following items presented for approval

- New Jersey Conference of Mayors Meeting \$175.00
- Atlantic County Mayor's Association Dues \$300.00
- Outstanding bills for Parker McKay (Dec. 2010 & Jan. 2011)
- Heating bill for the Risley School

Mayor motioned to remove the Risley School heating bill. He stated there is nothing in the lease agreement that says the City has to pay for the heat.

Haeser asked if the various community groups who also use the Risley School should collectively pay the bill.

Wiker inquired as to why there are two different office suppliers on the list.

Teasenfitz feels the City has a practice of paying the Risley School bill and feels obligated since the City owns the building.

Resolution 48-2011 transfer of funds.

*Motion made by Teasenfitz, seconded by Haeser to adopt Resolution 48-2011
Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed*

*Motion made by Teasenfitz, seconded by Haeser to accept bill list for the payment of bills in the amount of \$290,202.54
Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed*

*Motion made by Mayor, seconded by Wiker to accept the trust fund list for payment of bills in the amount of \$2,119.95
Roll call, all in favor. Motion passed*

The Mayor summarized a recent meeting he attended with the County Administrator regarding the issue of a County Centralized Dispatch. He stated that if we opt out of the County System we will be charged for it in county taxes. Discussion ensued

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Motion made by Haeser, seconded by Wiker to accept the department reports submitted.

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Voice vote, all yes. Motion passed

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

All minutes presented were tabled for corrections and would be presented again at the March 16, 2011 meeting.

Motion made by Mayor, seconded by Teasenfitz to support the Proclamation Supporting Read Across America

Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed

Motion made by Haeser, seconded by Wiker supporting the annual spraying for mosquito control by the County

Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed

City Clerk, Kimberley Hodsdon announced her resignation with the last day she will work for the City to be March 18, 2011. She stated her appreciation on Council's decision to re-appoint her as City Clerk for another 3 year term however she feels it is time to move on.

Members of Council expressed their sadness in her leaving and commented on the excellent job she has done for the City as well as assisting each member to better perform their duties. Council wished her well in her future endeavors.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Motions made to open the public portion of the meeting.

Jim Owen commented on the frequency of the Sheriff's Department patrolling Route 50. He felt it was almost abusive. As a representative for the Scenic Byway Committee he has noticed a lot of vacant property and is concerned over the possibility of development or clustering. He stated the City should update its Master Plan.

Sheila Myers thanked Ms. Hodsdon for all the help she gave her for the three years she served on City Council.

Creed Pogue commented on Pinelands changes, development and clustering. Stated the deadline for submissions for the newsletter was Friday March 4, 2011. He said so far the City's submission fill too many pages. Also commented on the revaluation issue.

Diane Pogue stated she was very sorry to see Ms. Hodsdon leave and there seem to be a lot of turnover of Clerk's in this town which is very unusual.

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Motions made to go into closed session related to close session minutes.

Motions made to go back into open session

Solicitor summarized closed session discussion for the public. Stated Council discussed the closed session minutes of February 2, 2011. The Mayor wants to have certain contents of the minutes rescinded and the minutes will be resubmitted to Council for approval at the next meeting. Once minutes have been approved they will then be available as public record.

Solicitor distributed to Mayor and Council a legal opinion in response to the Mayor's request regarding his powers to negotiate contracts.

Motions made to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Fern A. Brown, Acting City Clerk

Accepted:

Mayor Joseph Venezia