

Minutes Special Joint Meeting of Mayor and Council and Environmental Commission – September 11, 2013  
Town Hall Council Chambers, 100 Central Avenue  
Public Session 7:30 P.M.

**Agendas & Minutes can be viewed at [www.townofhammonton.org](http://www.townofhammonton.org)**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor and Council ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL

Councilpersons:

Bachalis - Present  
Carpo - Present  
Esposito - Present  
Furgione - Present  
Pullia - Present  
Rodio - Present  
Mayor DiDonato - Present

Environmental Commission ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL

Robert Reitmeyer, Chairman - Present  
Terri Caruso-Cafiso, Vice Chair - Present  
Angela Donio - Present  
Dr. Michael Hozik - Present  
Dr. Kathy Sedia - Present  
Marty Matro - Present  
Chris Jage - Present  
Amy Menzel (Alternate) - Present  
Steven Carr (Alternate) - Absent

PRESENT ALSO

Brian Howell, Town Solicitor  
Bob Vettese of ARH, Town Engineer  
Jerry Barberio, PWM/Business Administrator

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this meeting has been posted and given to official newspapers. Please familiarize yourselves with the fire exits to the right and rear of the Council Chambers. Please do not proceed beyond the front benches without invitation from the Mayor to do so.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN RECOGNITION OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>

PRESENTATION GRAPE, PRATT, PACKARD, AND SECOND STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Mr. Bob Vettese of ARH gave a power point presentation to once again review the proposed project in full for those in attendance this evening. He specifically focused on the tree removal which is the reason for the joint meeting this evening. He advised that the Town of Hammonton is seeking 50% of project costs in grant funding.

Councilman Bachalis stated he would like to take necessary action to save the maximum amount of trees possible. He thanked Environmental Commission for allowing this joint meeting and asked for their professional input on handling this project in a more environmentally sensitive manner.

HEARING GRAPE, PRATT, PACKARD, AND SECOND STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Mayor DiDonato opened the meeting to the public.

Lou Mascola

Mr. Mascola questioned traffic flow?

Mayor responded there will continue to be two way traffic flow. However, there will only be one way parking.

Mr. Mascola also questioned funding for trimming trees?

Mr. Vettese responded yes, there will be trimming of trees that are hanging in the roadway.

Rocco Fucetola

Mr. Fucetola stated he does not understand why the town pays professionals to study traffic patterns and then the governing body asks the public for their opinion on the matter. He also questioned replacements of trees being removed.

Mayor DiDonato advised the one way parking will allow two way traffic to flow.

Mr. Vettese stated the total number of trees to be removed for this project is 65 and each will be replaced. He continued they anticipate funding availability in April 2014.

Councilman Pullia advised that the Municipal Utility Superintendent strongly suggests that all utilities are replaced.

Mr. Vettese advised the public if they wish to extend gas service or have any other projects done at their property that would require a roadway opening permit, they should do this before the project begins. Once the project is finalized and the roadway is paved there is a 5 year road opening moratorium per town code.

Linda Esposito

Mrs. Esposito stated she has been in conversation with Councilman Bachalis concerning the 40 trees marked for removal on Grape Street. She understands the reason for removal but is asking for clarification as to how some trees are savable and others are not.

Mr. Vettese responded that in his presentation this evening he indicated reasons for the tree removals such as utility replacement, roadway reconstruction and curb reconstruction. He also reiterated that Town Officials have given the utmost attention to saving as many trees as can be saved.

Councilman Furgione questioned if a tree dies after completion of project who is responsible for the cost?

Mr. Vettese stated when a tree falls, the Town of Hammonton removes same from roadway. However, the homeowner is responsible for trees from curblines back on their property per town code.

Councilman Rodio, referring to Fourth Street project, stated that some trees that were not marked for removal did eventually die and there is no way we can anticipate what will happen with each and every tree.

Mr. Barberio, PWM/BA, stated that most trees that are currently marked for removal died during previous roadway projects.

Mayor DiDonato advised Councilman Furgione that if and when a tree dies or falls, the current Governing Body will need to determine if this happened due to a town project. If this is the case, in his opinion, he would aid in removal of the tree from the property.

Councilman Bachalis questioned the age of the utilities?

Mr. Vettese advised some are in excess of 80 years. There is still terra cotta pipe in some areas.

Councilman Bachalis questioned what steps can a construction company take to avoid tree destruction.

Mr. Vettese stated the construction company often applies a silk fence to protect tree roots during construction. However, if roots are growing into or around the utility pipe, they will need to be cut.

Mayor DiDonato stated there are roots growing in the terra cotta sewer pipes.

Councilman Rodio questioned if there is anyone in the audience this evening who is concerned with a tree located on their property that is marked for removal?

Steven Skarani

Mr. Skarani stated he has a problematic tree on his property that is interfering with utilities and he would like the tree removed.

Linda Esposito

Mrs. Esposito stated there is a tree across the street from her property that is marked for removal and she feels it should not be removed.

Mr. Vettese stated they are not moving the roadway at this location in order to avoid tree removal.

William Esposito

Mr. Esposito questioned if town does not receive funding, will the project be cut to lower cost and is there a less expensive plan ready?

Mr. Vettese responded the most expensive portion of the proposed project is the utility replacement and that is what we are seeking funding for. He reiterated that the utilities need to be replaced.

Councilman Rodio stated this Governing Body will try our best to obtain necessary funding in the form of grants. However, in order to obtain funding for the remainder of the project, we must adopt a bond ordinance which requires 5 yes votes out of the 7 members of council. He assured the property owners that he would vote to move forward on the project. He also advised, if anyone is interested to obtain a copy of all roadway projects completed the last several years, they may contact him.

Tony Gatto

Mr. Gatto questioned will residents have a choice of the type of tree that will replace the one removed from their property?

Mr. Vettese responded we have identified approximately 4 types of trees that can replace the trees removed and we certainly could allow somewhat of a choice.

Paul Raffa

Mr. Raffa questioned will the dip in the roadway at Packard and Grape be corrected.

Mr. Vettese responded yes, we will elevate that section of the roadway to eliminate the dip.

Betty Megargel

Mrs. Megargel questioned which side will the one way parking be located?

Mr. Vettese responded one way parking will be located on the side of Grape Street closer to downtown as that is the side that allows ample parking spaces.

Robert Reitmeyer, Environmental Commission Chairman

Mr. Reitmeyer thanked residents for their input and attendance. He assured the residents that the Environmental Commission performed a detailed onsite investigation of this project and the ratio for tree replacement is one to one. All trees marked for removal will be replaced. It's also important to point out that the trees marked for removal are currently dead already or in some instances just stumps and the trees that could be saved were. He also advised that some tree removal is to correct the Second Street drainage problem. He questioned if Atlantic Electric cannot fund the tree removal will town fund it?

Councilman Pullia stated we have a good relationship with Atlantic Electric and he believes they will handle all tree trimming and removal that abuts their electric lines. The town can then handle the remainder of the tree.

Mayor DiDonato advised Atlantic Electric wants to be a friend to the town and aid in this project, however, if they feel there is animosity they may not want to be a part of the project at all.

Councilman Rodio stated he feels after hearing from the residents this evening that everyone is on the same page with this project.

Dr. Michael Hozik suggested that when a large reconstruction project is proposed in the future, the Town reach out to Atlantic Electric to ascertain their feelings on relocating their lines underground at that time.

Councilman Pullia agreed that that is an excellent idea and asked if Mr. Barberio, PWM/BA can reach out to Atlantic Electric in this regard?

Mr. Vettese advised that Atlantic Electric, Verizon and Comcast all have lines that would need to be relocated underground and did not feel they would be in agreement with this. He also advised that relocating lines underground may indeed directly affect tree roots as well.

After a discussion of Mayor and Council and the Environmental Commission and a showing of hands by those property owners in attendance this evening, it was decided that any relocation of electric line requests be for future projects as not to postpone the Grape, Second, Pratt and Packard Street reconstruction project.

Environmental Commission Project Endorsement

Motion by Mrs. Donio, seconded by Dr. Hozik, that after thorough review, the Environmental Commission endorses the Grape, Pratt, Packard and Second Street Reconstruction Project.

ROLL CALL

Robert Reitmeyer, Chairman - Yes  
Terri Caruso-Cafiso, Vice Chair - Yes  
Angela Donio - Yes  
Dr. Michael Hozik - Yes  
Dr. Kathy Sedia - Yes  
Marty Matro - Yes  
Chris Jage - Yes

Chairman Reitmeyer declared the motion carried.

Mayor and Council Approve Tree Replacement

Motion by Councilperson Pullia, seconded by Councilperson Esposito, that each and every tree removed for the Grape, Packard, Second and Pratt Street Reconstruction Project will be replaced.

ROLL CALL

Councilpersons:  
Bachalis - Yes  
Carpo - Yes  
Esposito - Yes  
Furgione - Yes  
Pullia - Yes  
Rodio - Yes  
Mayor DiDonato - Yes

Mayor DiDonato declared the motion carried.

THE JOINT MEETING IS ADJOURNED

Motion by Councilperson Rodio, seconded by Councilperson Furgione, the meeting is adjourned.  
Motion carried.

April Boyer Maimone, Municipal Clerk