

MINUTES**May 7, 1997**

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in regular session in the Greenwich Township Municipal Building, 321 Greenwich Street, Stewartsville, New Jersey on Wednesday, May 7, 1997 at 7:16 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Stone and upon roll call the following members were in attendance: Freeholder Ann Stone, Freeholder Susan Dickey and Freeholder Stephen Lance.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Director Stone.

Director Stone read the following statement: "ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT BY FORWARDING A SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS TO THE WARREN COUNTY CLERK, THE STAR/GAZETTE, BLAIRSTOWN PRESS, THE NEWS, STAR-LEDGER AND THE EXPRESS-TIMES AND BY POSTING A COPY THEREOF ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS AT THIS MEETING. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED. IN ORDER TO ASSURE FULL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO WISH TO ATTEND THE MEETING SHOULD SUBMIT ANY REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE".

Mrs. Stone indicated that there were no set agenda items, and acknowledged that Mr. Dech and Mr. Hicks were asked to be present.

Lois Markle, Harmony Township, updated the freeholders on the activities regarding Harmony Township and the sludge issue with New York.

There is no current permit for Hydropress or Harmony Dale Farms. The review process is ongoing, but the permits have expired. Harmony has a resolution asking the facilities be closed until a permit is reissued. She also referred to the potential health impact of the operations. The trucks pass within 25 feet of the local school on their way to the businesses. The township is going to test water within a five mile radius of the facilities, and is presently looking for a lab to perform the tests. This is being coordinated through the County Health Department, and the testing will be available at a lower than normal cost.

Harmony has hired its own environmental lawyer. They are upset with the ruling of Judge Diana, and have been in contact with Mayor Guliani in New York City, Governor Whitman and Congresswoman Roukema. They want the Board of Freeholders to pass a resolution in support of their efforts to stop the importation of New York City sludge. They also want support for a session for all counties to talk. She referred to the damage being done to the buildings in Hope from the truck traffic and the destruction of the roads. They are looking at the regulations for trucking.

Harmony would like to see a tipping fee if they are forced to take the sludge. These funds could be used for open space and roads. They do not want the contract to be put into effect, but if it does become a reality, they should be compensated in some way. The NYC contract must comply with all the federal, state and local laws and

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regulations.

David Dech, County Planner, said the SWAC is not involved as the county never had a certified plan for sludge. It is regulated only by the DEP. DEP said a sludge management plan cannot be used to regulate out an existing facility. We need a way to get input into the permit process and get DEP to enforce the regulations. Because Hydropress and Harmony Dale Farms applied to renew their permits in 1996, they can continue to operate pending renewal. New regulations only cover land application and ocean dumping, not processing.

Mrs. Dickey said she thinks we need to ask for a hearing to be held in Warren County, not in Trenton. She asked Mr. Hicks if he believed Warren County should follow Hunterdon to direct truck traffic.

Mrs. Markle said if NYC can direct traffic of trucks, we should be able to do the same. In the future, more sludge will be coming in as this is a large company.

Mrs. Dickey said she has ordinances from California where they had trouble with the same company. Ohio stopped the process, pending writing of laws to regulate the business. We need to enforce all trucking laws and push the State. This type of facility falls between the cracks of definitions. It is not solid waste and is not sewer authority, so there are no tipping fees. The purpose of the recently created task force may be to concentrate on the health issues.

Mrs. Markle stated that if sludge is so beneficial, why are they paying for someone to take it rather than ask for bids for people to buy it.

Mr. Lance said if we could find a way to make the project economically unfeasible, it might stop the program.

Mrs. Markle responded that the contract said NYC would raise rates if necessary to get rid of the sludge. She has valuable information from the attorney that will help.

Mrs. Markle also said the township passed a resolution against the bill to changes planning, the so-call "Builder's Bill". Mrs. Dickey said the BCF already opposed it. However, the Board could pass another resolution to stop it now that the bill has a sponsor.

Mrs. Markle commended the County Health Department. She said it is not biased, and responds to the concerns raised. She is proud of the help, provided by good, knowledgeable people.

Mrs. Stone indicated that every time DEP issues a permit, it makes more work for our Health Department.

Mrs. Markle said the facilities are always questioning the staff of the department. She commended the creation of the task force, and the support of eco-tourism. Harmony

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expects two lawsuits. One on quarry rejection, and the other on the number of towers on the mountain. She is becoming concerned with the potential for violence in the township over the problems.

Greenwich indicated they are concerned with the sewer authority which is being proposed, as they might lose control in the future. DEP is not supportive of the PCFA issues, and actually not supportive of Warren County at all.

Mrs. Dickey said they don't have an office of the Public Advocate or Environmental Prosecutor any longer, having been closed three years ago.

Mrs. Markle said ten years ago the township supported these facilities, and the county was also supportive. But what we were told is not what is happening.

Bob Shandor stated he had problems with DEP fourteen years ago. He finally had to enlist the aid of Senator Dumont to get DEP to come to Warren County instead of having to go to Trenton to resolve the problems.

Mrs. Markle said the state is protective of the sludge issue.

Bob Shandor provided an update for Greenwich on the Morris Canal. He said the committee is considering several areas near the Lee property, and the Santini property in Lopatcong and Harmony. Some other areas are under negotiation. They can provide aerial photos and maps of the sites. Dave Dech is to send these to Greenwich.

A resident of Frelinghuysen Township stated that he was pleased that the BCF passed a resolution opposing the proposed pension bond issue. He lamented what he considered to be an inappropriate note on his recent pension check, which supported the bond. He stated that he sees institutional anarchy. You don't refinance loans or take from disability funds to balance a budget. He is concerned when politicians push "wacky" ideas. The next problem will be the incinerator. He stated he was glad the board put themselves on the line on this issue. He does not want to mortgage the youth any more. Maybe it is time to sue New Jersey to enforce its own laws.

Mrs. Stone thanked him for his stated support. She said she was proud of her fellow freeholders for standing up for what is right, even against their party leaders. The municipalities can send their opinions to the Governor.

The resident said that the supporters complain that those opposed have not read the bill, but he has tried to obtain a copy and has been unable to do so.

Mrs. Dickey said she would provide a copy, but that does not make the proposal any better.

Mrs. Stone brought David Hicks, County Engineer, to explain about the bridge closing in June.

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Mr. Hicks said the DOT project is for orphan bridges. North Main Street will be reconstructed and widened. There are three other bridges in the plan. The bridge should be closed about June 18th. The contract calls for the project to take eighty calendar days to keep the bridge closed. November 1st is the tentative completion date. There may be other problems found and that might extend the date. He left copies of the detour plan, and others were left for the Clerk's Office.

A question was raised about the Shackletown Bridge. Mrs. Stone reported that the deck of the bridge is to be repaired in June. Mr. Hicks said the county will put up signs about the closing two weeks in advance.

Mrs. Dickey said there is nothing in the Gibson Bill to prevent Warren County from getting a \$90 million debt. A-50 could make the County liable for the bonds. PCFA is trying to cut costs to be competitive. They are not depending on the state. The PCFA and county will meet in the near future to discuss actions and options.

Mrs. Stone reported receipt from the State Department of Health that they cannot make the scheduled May 21st meeting, and she wanted to have PCFA come in on that date instead.

Mrs. Lance was told we could franchise the haulers, and specify the location for disposal. He expressed appreciation to Mr. Dech for reviewing the open space committee applications.

Mrs. Stone said the County EMC has dropped off information on inundation areas from Merrill Creek to the municipalities. There will be a work session for mayors on June 5, 1997.

On motion by Mrs. Dickey, seconded by Mr. Lance, and there being no further official business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.
ROLL CALL: Mr. Lance: yes Mrs. Dickey: yes Mrs. Stone: yes

ATTESTED TO:

Naomi J. Stout, Deputy Clerk