

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING**

May 29, 2008

The Regular Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:09 p.m. on Thursday, May 8, 2008 in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey. There were approximately 45 interested persons in attendance.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to the public and the press on January 2, 2008, by delivering to the press and posting at the Municipal Building a copy of the "Annual Notice of Meetings" pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The mayor led the assemblage in the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL

The roll call of council was called and Richard Carson, Glenn McLaughlin, and Austin Carew answered the call. Mayor Carew stated that Councilmember Valerie Seufert was ill and would likely not attend tonight's meeting. Also present were Melinda Carlton, Township Manager, and Michael Witt, Township Attorney. Let it be noted that Councilmember Neil Desmond arrived at 7:14 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mary Ellen Vichiconti, 17 Nutley Avenue, Highland Lakes. Ms. Vichiconti again requested that the council consider passing an ordinance to amend the Township Code to provide for the election of the Mayor directly by voters, as permitted under the Faulkner Act. She clarified that it was a question to ask the voters, not something that she *personally* wanted per se. If the council does not vote affirmatively on this issue, Ms. Vichiconti said she has a petition drafted in an attempt to secure signatures from 20 percent of registered voters in Vernon, to get the question placed on the ballot.

Tim Bingham, veterinarian and former resident of 2 White Oak Drive in Vernon (now a resident in Wantage, with an office in Hamburg). Dr. Bingham spoke on behalf of Vernon Animal Control, which he described as the "gold standard" as compared to facilities in other municipalities with which he has had dealings. He is impressed with the level of commitment of the people who work at the shelter, as well as the cleanliness of the facility. "You have a beauty of a department there," Dr. Bingham said. Mayor Carew concurred and thanked Dr. Bingham for his comments.

Robert Potter, veterinarian and owner of Vernon Veterinary Clinic. Dr. Potter stated that budget cuts in Animal Control could result in the standard of care not being met, which would result in other government groups coming down on the township. He said Animal Control is a necessary service and urged the council to look for cuts elsewhere.

Stephen E. Wanczowski, 4 Travel Rd., Vernon. Mr. Wanczowski, who is part owner of Outkast Sports in Vernon, spoke on behalf of establishing a skateboard park in Vernon and asked the council for its assistance in finding a parcel of land for that purpose. He presented facts attesting to the safety of skateboarding relative to other sports. Mayor Carew suggested Mr. Wanczowski contact Pat Seger, in the Department of Recreation and Leisure, for assistance and to inquire about the schedule of Recreation Board meetings.

Hal Pugach, executive director of Camp Louemma, in Glenwood. Mr. Pugach told the council how pleased the camp is with the Vernon Health Department. He described the department's service as "superb" and "unparalleled" as compared

to that of other health departments he has dealt with. Mr. Pugach said the inspectors and staff have always been very personable, helpful, and reasonable, and he urged the council to take those factors into consideration in making any future decisions.

Rachel McCullough, general manager, Mountain Creek Waterpark. She voiced her company's support for the Vernon Health Department, which she said has been a valuable partner with the water park in terms of the safety of its guests and in helping the water park comply with municipal and state regulations.

Harold MacPeek, 3 Alberta Drive, Vernon. Mr. MacPeek voiced his concerns about possibly reducing the size of the Animal Shelter staff.

Tom McClachrie, Vernon Taxpayers Association. Mr. McClachrie stated his association's opposition to Ordinances 08-10 and 08-11, as well as Resolutions 08-106, 08-107, and 08-110. He stated that the township last increased its fees and fines in 2006, which he feels is "just another way of taxing people." Mr. McClachrie also said a special fire-tax district should be created for the redevelopment zones, as permitted under state law. Regarding fees, he added that the liquor license fees were not increased in 2006 but should have been. Mr. McClachrie also addressed other costs, involving the PAL, Chamber of Commerce, and health insurance for municipal employees, in terms of analyzing these costs more closely and saving the taxpayers money.

Ed O'Rourke, 35 Pond Eddy Road, Vernon. Mr. O'Rourke spoke in support of the Animal Control Department, citing an incident when his wife was bitten by a rabid animal. As a police officer in Hardyston, Mr. O'Rourke has had experience with several animal control departments and he thinks very highly of the township's department.

Eloise Ruskin, 33 East Shore Drive, Highland Lakes. Ms. Ruskin expressed concern about back taxes owed by developers associated with the township's redevelopment projects. Mayor Carew said that the taxes must be paid before these developers can present applications. Ms. Ruskin also said she was against more hotels and a water park being built in Vernon, which she said would lead to "congestion" as well as change the nature of the township. She said if Vernon wants to be a true four-season resort it should leave things as natural as possible.

Ed Talmo, builder from Highland Lakes. Mr. Talmo spoke on behalf of the Health Department. He doesn't understand the reasoning behind moving these services to the county, which he said will not give us the level of support that we already have presently in Vernon. Mayor Carew said the council, as elected officials, is responsible to the state and to the township's taxpayers to investigate any possible cost-savings.

Denise Hart, 2 Polk Place, Vernon. In her experience as a real estate agent, Ms. Polk said she gets information faster from local municipalities than she does from county agencies. She said it seems "absurd" to her to have residents go to the county for services that are currently offered here.

Ron Muller, president of the Vernon Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Muller, on behalf of the Vernon Earthfest committee and the Chamber of Commerce, donated \$2,300 to the town, to put toward holiday decorations. He presented a check for that amount to the township clerk, and said an accounting of the money would be given to the township CFO, as requested. He thanked the council and local businesses for their support, and said plans were already underway for Earthfest 2009.

Bruce Zaretsky, 7 Brandywine Drive, Vernon. Mr. Zaretsky said he didn't believe there would be any savings to Vernon taxpayers by moving health services to the county; a reduction in the municipal taxes would result in a proportionate

increase in county taxes. He says he has seen no proof that the Sussex County Health Department is more efficient than the Vernon Health Department. Economics aside, Mr. Zaretsky believes that “service to the community is what local government is all about.” He said it’s a mistake to take the Health Department out of the community.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:50 p.m., Councilmember Glenn McLaughlin made a motion to close the meeting to the public and enter Executive Session for reason of attorney-client privilege. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rich Carson, with all in favor.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matters.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows: attorney-client privilege.
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above-stated subject matter will be made public when deemed appropriate.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

The meeting was reopened to the public at 8:31 p.m. Mayor Carew stated that the Council went into Executive Session for the reason of attorney-client privilege.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no stated changes to the agenda.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Presentations and Special Items

1. Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month – Mayor Carew read the text of the proclamation, a copy of which will be sent to the Garden State Chapter of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation. The original will be placed in the lobby of the municipal building.
2. Health Department Presentation – For the benefit of the Council, Kerrie Scott, Principal Fiscal Analyst, presented a comparison of the Vernon Township Health Department with the County of Sussex Department of Environmental and Public Health Services. The agenda of the presentation included a service comparison, financial analysis, miscellaneous items, and time to take questions from the council. Specific points of discussion among the council included the appointment of a Health Educator, restoning of septic systems, the township Board of Health Advisory Committee, and the availability of information (by block and lot) online. Councilmember Desmond said the township should investigate which other municipalities might like to share services with Vernon (i.e, Animal Control services), to generate revenues. He believes the analysis would be fairer and more balanced if it took into account

these sorts of potential opportunities. Ms. Scott and members of the Council said they have talked to local officials from Sparta, Hardyston, and Wantage, who report good experiences with the county health department and few, if any, complaints. A member of the public asked whether the public would have a chance to ask questions. Mayor Carew explained that the opportunity to ask questions—as well as the presentation itself—was intended for the council.

3. James Oroho: Financial Report. Melinda Carlton reported that Mr. Oroho would appear at the June 12 Town Council meeting to discuss what he would like to see in terms of financial accounting. She passed out a handout to the council members, for their review prior to June 12, and said that Mr. Oroho would discuss the items in detail on that date.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Melinda Carlton said that Bob Benecke, the township's Economic Development and Redevelopment consultant, would be preparing a request-for-quotation for two properties in the Town Center area, hopefully in time for the June 12th regular Town Council meeting.

There followed discussion of the purchase of the United Water sewer system. Ms. Carlton stated that there is some urgency in moving ahead with this. Councilmember McLaughlin inquired about some of the numbers associated with the asking price and if they could be adjusted down. Mr. Witt said that this is a subject matter (contract negotiations) for Executive Session.

Ms. Carlton said that if everything continues according to schedule with the introduction of the budget the public hearing will be held on June 26th. She mentioned the shortfall from tax appeals, which likely will result in a loss-of-revenue cap waiver to get the township through 2008 and into 2009. Ms. Carlton added that work will begin on the 2009 budget within about four weeks.

Ms. Carlton discussed funding of the canoe trails, and a lengthy conversation ensued among the council with regard to costs (municipal staff time, etc.), grants, signage, and sites. Members of the council expressed a desire to see certain line items to be removed from Ordinance #08-11, but Ms. Carlton cautioned them that if the ordinance is tabled, the introduction to the budget will also have to be tabled. A separate discussion centered on grant monies for the Maple Grange Park Community Building, monies which must be used before the end of 2009 or the grant is no longer available. Ms. Carlton emphasized that monies that would need to be combined with the grant cannot be used to avoid layoffs, because they're from a capital surplus fund. Following further discussion, CFO Monica Goscicki offered her perspective and insight for the benefit of the council, regarding the figures stated in the ordinance.

Mayor Carew then asked for a voice vote from the council for a motion to continue with the canoe launch areas in Vernon Township. Councilmember McLaughlin made a motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Carson. All in favor.

Ms. Carlton said she has decided to deny a food-handler's license to Legends/Metairie Corp., because it is behind in its taxes. Mayor Carew asked for a voice vote from the council in support of this decision. Councilmember Carson made a motion, which was seconded by Councilmember McLaughlin. All in favor.

Ms. Carlton said the artificial turf fields in town have been tested and everything has come out clean. An announcement will be posted on the township website.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

There was no attorney's report this evening.

DISCUSSION OF NEW ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE #08-09

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VERNON TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE CODE SECTION 330-177 DECKS AND PORCHES

The council requested further information and clarification on various sections of the ordinance. Mayor Carew suggested that reports from several boards (Planning, Zoning, Environmental, and Health) would be helpful. Lou Kneip, Township Engineer, discussed the reasoning behind the ordinance in terms of assisting residents who have a simple deck or porch application. The process as it exists now is cumbersome, he said. Nevertheless, the council preferred to get input from the boards and, as Councilmember Desmond suggested, to double-check to see that this ordinance doesn't "step on" the language present in existing ordinances (i.e, the tree-removal ordinance). The council also wanted to see a zoning map, which Mr. Kneip said he will provide. He added that an updated map is being prepared and will be presented to the council in about a month or so.

Councilmember Carson made a motion to table this ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilmember McLaughlin, with all in favor.

ORDINANCE # 08-10

ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS OR PURPOSES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX, NEW JERSEY, AND APPROPRIATING \$889,537.31 THEREFOR FROM THE CAPITAL SURPLUS OF THE TOWNSHIP.

There was no further discussion on this ordinance.

ORDINANCE #08-11

BOND ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,829,683.69, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$1,504,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP, FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS OR PURPOSES AUTHORIZED TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX, NEW JERSEY.

This is not a new bond, Ms. Carlton emphasized. It is taking monies from old bonds and re-appropriating them for capital projects.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meetings: The following minutes were presented for approval: Regular Meetings of Jan. 10, 2008, Jan. 24, 2008, March 13, 2008, and May 8, 2008.

Executive Sessions: The following minutes were presented for approval: Executive Sessions for Feb. 28, 2008, March 13, 2008, and May 8, 2008.

Special Meetings: The following minutes were presented for approval: Special Meetings of Feb. 7, 2008, March 10, 2008, and May 8, 2008.

A motion was made by Councilmember Desmond to approve the above minutes and seconded by Councilmember McLaughlin.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

RESOLUTION # 08-111

Resolution –Authorizing the Approval of Bills List

Be it resolved that the following bills lists are hereby approved:

Current	ck# 28892	to	ck# 28963
Current	ck# 28966	to	ck# 29004
Capital	ck# 2489	to	ck# 2491
Capital	ck# 2492	to	ck# 2493
Grant	ck# 28964	to	ck# 28965
Grant	ck# 29005	to	ck#
Planning & Zoning	ck# 3704	to	ck#
Recreation Trust	ck#	to	ck#
Dog Trust	ck#	to	ck#
Other Trust	ck#	to	ck#
Senior Citizen Trust	ck#	to	ck#
Outside Services	ck# 1431	to	ck# 1434
Unemployment Trust	ck#	to	ck#
Open Space Trust	ck#	to	ck#
PVL Dam Rehab Asm	ck#	to	ck#
PVL Dam Rehab Exp	ck#	to	ck#
COAH	ck# 219	to	ck#
Sewer Operating	ck#	to	ck#
Sewer Capital	ck# 1020	to	ck#
Developer's Bonds	ck#	to	ck#
Road Assessment	ck#	to	ck#
Payroll Deduction	ck#	to	ck#

(Bills list from May 8, 2008 that was tabled-Previously numbered R08-98)

RESOLUTION #R08-112

Resolution –Authorizing the Approval of Bills List

Be it resolved that the following bills lists are hereby approved:

Current	ck# 29006	to	ck# 29045
Current	ck# 29049	to	ck# 29096
Current	ck# 29099	to	ck# 29157
Capital	ck# 2494	to	ck# 2500
Capital	ck# 2501	to	ck# 2505
Capital	ck# 2506	to	ck#
Grant	ck# 29046	to	ck# 29047
Grant	ck# 29097	to	ck# 29098
Grant	ck# 29158	to	ck#
Planning & Zoning	ck# 3707	to	ck# 3714
Planning & Zoning	ck# 3715	to	ck# 3725
Planning & Zoning	ck# 3726	to	ck# 3734
Recreation Trust	ck# 748	to	ck#
Recreation Trust	ck# 749	to	ck#
Recreation Trust	ck# 750	to	ck#
Recreation Trust	ck# 751	to	ck#
Dog Trust	ck#	to	ck#
Other Trust	ck# 745	to	ck#
Other Trust	ck# 746	to	ck# 747
Senior Citizen Trust	ck# 1017	to	ck#
Outside Services	ck# 1435	to	ck# 1437
Outside Services	ck# 1438	to	ck# 1440
Outside Services	ck# 1441	to	ck# 1442
Unemployment Trust	ck#	to	ck#

Open Space Trust	ck# 215	to	ck#
PVL Dam Rehab Asm	ck# 235	to	ck#
PVL Dam Rehab Exp	ck#	to	ck#
COAH	ck#	to	ck#
Sewer Operating	ck# 115	to	ck#
Sewer Capital	ck# 1021	to	ck# 1022
Developer's Bonds	ck#	to	ck#
Road Assessment	ck#	to	ck#
Payroll Deduction	ck#	to	ck#
Payroll Checks	ck# 32190 thru ck# 32248 (1 st pay in May)		
Payroll Deduction	ck# 2911 thru ck# 2918		
Total Payroll	\$349,103.73		
Payroll Checks	ck# 32249 thru ck#32303 (2 nd Pay in May)		
Payroll Deduction	ck# 2919 thru ck# 2931		
Total Payroll	\$330,696.28		

A motion was made by Councilmember Desmond to approve the Consent Agenda and seconded by Councilmember McLaughlin.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS FOR SEPARATE ACTION

RESOLUTION # 08-106

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON MAKING APPLICATION TO THE LOCAL FINANCE BOARD PURSUANT TO NJSA 40A:4-45.46

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon in the County of Sussex, desires to make application to the Local Finance Board for its approval of a proposed Property Tax Levy waiver pursuant to NJSA 40:4-45.46 and,

WHEREAS, the Township Council believes that:

- a. it is in the public interest to accomplish such purpose; and
- b. the Property Tax Levy waiver is for the health, wealth, convenience or betterment of the inhabitants of the Township of Vernon; and
- c. the proposal is an efficient and feasible means of providing services for the needs of the inhabitants of the Township of Vernon and will not create an undue financial burden to be placed upon the Township of Vernon;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon as follows:

Section 1. The application to the Local Finance Board is hereby approved, and the Chief Financial Officer, along with other representatives of the Township of Vernon are hereby authorized to prepare such application and to represent the Township of Vernon in matters pertaining thereto.

Section 2. The Municipal Clerk of the Township of Vernon is hereby directed to file a copy of the proposed Property Tax Levy waiver with the Local Finance Board as part of such application.

Section 3. The Local Finance Board is hereby respectfully requested to consider such application and to record its findings, recommendations and/or approvals as provided by the applicable New Jersey Statute.

A motion was made by Councilmember Desmond to approve the above resolution and seconded by Councilmember Carson.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #R08-107

INTRODUCTION OF YEAR 2008 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, New Jersey, that the following statements of revenues and appropriations shall constitute the Municipal Budget for the year 2008.

GENERAL REVENUE

Total Revenues \$21,181,118.67

GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS

Total Appropriations \$21,181,118.67

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the said budget be published on June 4th in the New Jersey Herald and that a hearing on the Budget and 2008 Tax resolution will be held at the Vernon Municipal Building on June 26 2008 at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter may be reached.

A motion was made by Councilmember Desmond to approve the above resolution and seconded by Councilmember Carson.

The council discussed removing some items from the budget related to the Maple Grange Park Community Center, but in the interest of time the Township CFO and attorney advised them to introduce the budget in its present form this evening and amend the figures in the capital ordinance for second reading.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION # 08-108

Township of Vernon

Amendment To 2008 Temporary Budget

		S/W		O/E
APPROPRIATIONS WITHIN "CAPS"				
ENVIRONMENTAL COMM.	10519500		10519520	300.00
HISTORIC PRESERVATION	10519900		10519920	
FIRE SAFETY	10534000	12,000.00	10534020	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			10535020	
RECYCLING			10553120	9,000.00
EXECUTIVE	10570100	20,000.00	10570120	5,000.00
MAYOR & COUNCIL	10570200	1,200.00	10570220	
PERSONNEL	10570300	14,000.00	10570320	2,000.00
CLERK	10570400	8,500.00	10570420	

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION	10570500	16,000.00	10570520	
AUDIT			10570620	
ASSESSMENT OF TAXES	10571000	19,500.00	10571020	5,500.00
COLLECTION OF TAXES	10570800	30,000.00	10570820	5,000.00
LEGAL SERVICES			10571220	
ENGINEERING	10571500	20,000.00	10571520	
PLANNING BOARD	10572000	8,000.00	10572020	
ZONING BOARD	10572200	11,000.00	10572220	
BUILDING DEPT.	10572510	45,000.00	10572520	
TECHNOLOGY			10572620	
GROUP INSURANCE			10573320	300,000.00
OTHER INSURANCE			10573520	
WORKERS' COMP. INS.			10573620	33,542.44
POLICE DEPARTMENT	10574500	360,000.00	10574520	10,029.40
RADIO COMMUNICATIONS	10574600	55,000.00		
VOL. EMERG. SERVICES			10575220	
MUNICIPAL COURT	10575500	18,000.00	10575520	
TOWNSHIP PROSECUTOR			10575720	
ROAD REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	10576500	123,000.00	10576520	
FLEET MANAGEMENT	10576700	38,000.00	10576720	10,000.00
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS	10577200	6,000.00	10577220	5,000.00
SENIOR CITIZENS	10578200	1,000.00	10578220	
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH	10578500	46,000.00	10578520	5,000.00
ANIMAL CONTROL	10578800	25,000.00	10578820	500.00
MAINTENANCE OF PARKS	10579400	7,500.00	10579420	
RECREATION	10579500	3,000.00	10579520	12,000.00
MUNICIPAL SERVICES ACT			10580820	26,000.00
UTILITIES			10582020	125,000.00
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM			10563020	75,000.00
TOTALS		887,700.00		628,871.84
TOTAL TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS				
WITHIN CAPS			1,516,571.84	
APPROPRIATIONS EXCLUDED FROM "CAP"				
9-1-1 COMMUNICATIONS	10680100	14,000.00	10680120	
TOTALS		14,000.00		0.00
TOTAL TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS				
EXCLUDED FROM CAPS			14,000.00	
TOTAL TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS				
2008 (40A: 4-19)			1,530,571.84	
Add: BAN payment principal	10690120			
TOTAL TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS - 2008				
			1,530,571.84	
BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the above Temporary Budget amendment be approved for the year 2008 in accordance with 40A: 4-19				

A motion was made by Councilmember McLaughlin to approve the above resolution and seconded by Councilmember Carson.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

Resolution #R08-109

DECLARING THE STRUCTURE LOCATED AT 14 PINE STREET, BLOCK 159.02, LOT 26, AN ABANDONED PROPERTY AND UNFIT BUILDING

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 130 of the Vernon Township Code, the Public Officer is authorized to regulate and administer abandoned properties and unfit buildings; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon Township Manager is the appointed Public Officer pursuant to said code; and

WHEREAS, an existing structure located at 14 Pine Street, Block 159.02, Lot 26, has been unoccupied for a number of years, and has received numerous zoning and building violation notices that have gone unanswered; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon Construction Official issued a Notice of Unsafe Structure to the owner of record on May 6, 2008, which notice required remedial action be performed on or before May 16th, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the notice went unanswered, and the repairs have not been made; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon Health Department has determined that the structure permits entry by the public, including children, and/or wildlife and, therefore, poses a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the public; and

WHEREAS, the Public Officer has reviewed the information regarding this property, and has determined that this property is abandoned and the building is unfit; and

WHEREAS, the Public Officer recommends the building be boarded up and secured as short-term security measures; and

WHEREAS, the Public Officer may determine that the long-term security measures require demolition and removal of the structure by the Public Works Department, which demolition may be reimbursable through a lien to be placed on the property; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The property located at 14 Pine Street, Block 159.02, Lot 26, is an abandoned property; and

2. The structure located at 14 Pine Street, Block 159.02, Lot 26, is an unfit building and poses a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Vernon; and

3. The Township Manager shall take such further action with regard to the property and/or any structure located there upon as may be appropriate pursuant to law.

A motion was made by Councilmember Carson to approve the above resolution and seconded by Councilmember Desmond.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION # 08-110

APPOINTING A MUNICIPAL HOUSING LIAISON

WHEREAS, Vernon Township was granted substantive certification of its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan by the Council of Affordable Housing (COAH), second round, on December 15, 2004; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township petitioned for third round certification from COAH on December 16, 2005, which is still pending; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township's Fair Share Plan promoted an affordable housing program pursuant to the Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A.52:27D-301, et. seq.) and COAH's Third Round Substantive Rules (N.J.A.C. 5.94-1, et. seq.); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5-94-7 and N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1 et. seq., Vernon Township is required to appoint a Municipal Housing Administrator and liaison, as per Chapter 130 Section § 133-3 of the Vernon Township Code and COAH requirements, for the administration of Vernon Township's affordable housing program to enforce the requirements of N.J.A.C. 5:94-7 and N.J.A.C. 5-80-26.1 et. seq.; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the governing body of Vernon Township in the County of Sussex, and the State of New Jersey that John Hanlon, PLS, is hereby appointed by the Governing Body of Vernon Township as the Municipal Housing Administrator and liaison for the administration of the affordable housing program, pursuant to and in accordance with Section § 133-3 of Chapter 130 of the Vernon Township Code.

Mayor Carew asked if an appointment of a liaison is required by law, and Melinda Carlton said Yes. It was agreed that there should be further discussion among the council, the township manager, and township attorney about the possibility of leaving COAH and the ramifications of such a decision. Mayor Carew asked if the above resolution could be tabled, and Ms. Carlton said that would be acceptable.

A motion was made by Councilmember Carson to table the above resolution and seconded by Councilmember McLaughlin.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion to table carried.

Resolution #R08-113

AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION TO THE NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY FOR AN 'OBEY THE SIGNS OR PAY THE FINES' SPEED ENFORCEMENT GRANT OF JULY 1 THROUGH JULY 31, 2008

WHEREAS, there were 740 motor vehicle fatalities in New Jersey in 2007; and

WHEREAS, one-third of all crashes on our nations roadways, and two-thirds of the resulting fatal crashes, can be attributed to aggressive driving, the key violation of which is **speed**; and

WHEREAS, consider this estimate in light of the number of motor vehicle crashes that occur each year in New Jersey, as well as the number of fatal crashes that occur annually, you begin to understand the great devastation that aggressive driving and speed is causing on the roads of our state; and

WHEREAS, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ranks New Jersey ninth in the nation in population, and is in fact the most densely populated state, with a vast system of local, county, state and federal roads and highways; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey will participate in the *Obey the Signs or Pay the Fines* speed enforcement during July 1st through July 31, 2008 in an effort to raise awareness that impatient drivers often make poor decisions, which in turn place themselves and others in dangers; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Highway Traffic Safety conducted a Tri-State Pilot Speed Enforcement Crackdown, where 115 police agencies participated in the campaign within four target counties, which resulted in 26,894 summonses were issued by the participating departments, including 6,357 for speeding; and

WHEREAS, as part of the statewide priority of reducing speed-related crashes, the 2006 pilot program was expanded into 2007 to include 171 police agencies in seven NJ counties of which 51,843 summonses were issued, 10,898 were for speeding;

WHEREAS, there are monies available under the Highway Safety Grant with the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety for a *Obey the Signs or Pay the Fines* Speed Enforcement Program; and

WHEREAS, it would be in the interest of the Township of Vernon to apply for said monies; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Vernon Township declares its support for the *Obey the Signs or Pay the Fines* speed enforcement crackdown from July 1st through July 31, 2008 and pledges to increase awareness that impatient drivers often make poor driving decisions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Mayor and Township Clerk are hereby authorized to execute and sign any and all documents in order to effectuate the receipt of the Grant monies between the Township of Vernon and the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety for the *Obey the Signs or Pay the Fines* speed enforcement program in the amount of \$4,000.

The effective dates for this program will be from July 1, 2008 through July 31, 2008.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption according to law.

A motion was made by Councilmember McLaughlin to approve the above resolution and seconded by Councilmember Carson.

Councilmember Desmond asked what the difference was between this grant and the "Click It or Ticket" program," which was not approved at the March 27, 2008 Town Council meeting. Mayor Carew said this grant can help law enforcement protect otherwise safe drivers from unsafe drivers (i.e., speeders), whereas the choice to not wear a seat belt is an individual choice that would not necessarily affect another driver. Councilmember Carson said if the speed-enforcement grant "saves one life, it's worth it."

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, no; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE #08-09

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VERNON TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE CODE SECTION 330-177 DECKS AND PORCHES

The above ordinance was read by title only. Councilmember Carson made a motion to table this ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilmember McLaughlin, with all in favor.

ORDINANCE # 08-10

ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS OR PURPOSES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX, NEW JERSEY, AND APPROPRIATING \$889,537.31 THEREFOR FROM THE CAPITAL SURPLUS OF THE TOWNSHIP.

The above ordinance was read by title only. A motion was made by Glenn McLaughlin to introduce the above ordinance on first reading. The motion was seconded by Rich Carson.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE #08-11

BOND ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,829,683.69, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$1,504,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP, FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS OR PURPOSES AUTHORIZED TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX, NEW JERSEY.

The above ordinance was read by title only. A motion was made by Glenn McLaughlin to introduce the above ordinance on first reading. The motion was seconded by Rich Carson.

A roll call vote was taken. Rich Carson, yes; Neil Desmond, yes; Glenn McLaughlin, yes; Austin Carew, yes. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

There were no appointments this evening.

OLD BUSINESS

The council discussed possible ways to save the township, as well as taxpayers, money on garbage collection and recycling.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Carson announced that Skylands Park in Frankford would be holding “Vernon Day” on Saturday, June 7th. He suggested posting more information about this on the township website.

Mayor Carew said the Vernon Township Environmental Commission would be sponsoring a “streams cleanup” on June 7th. He asked Melinda Carlton to look into the possibility of combining the Planning and Zoning boards into a Land Use Board, which would have to be done by referendum. Mayor Carew said there could possibly save money and eliminate some redundancies. The council expressed interest in having the township attorney explore this further.

The mayor also gave a recap of what’s happening with the development of the canoe launches in the township, based on a recent meeting that included Lou Kneip, Township Engineer, and Pat Seger, Recreation Director. The mayor spoke, too, about the Beautification Committee’s recent progress, as well as the activities of the Plan Endorsement Committee, whose actions relate directly to protecting the Town Center plan. He also talked briefly about a water tax proposed by the Highlands Council, which he described as a “controversial issue.” He asked the council members to look into this in terms of deciding whether to craft a letter in support of the proposed tax.

Mayor Carew attended a transportation stakeholders’ meeting in the county. At this meeting, he voiced Vernon interest in getting a bus to come into the township; Mayor Carew followed this with a letter that the clerk’s office will prepare for the transportation consultant and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority representative who were at the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business on the agenda, a motion was made by Councilmember McLaughlin to adjourn the meeting. All in favor.

The Regular Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis G. Murray
Acting Municipal Clerk

Presiding Officer