

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CITY OF SEAFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

March 12, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Mayor William G. Bennett called the Real Estate Tax Appeals to Council to order at 7:00 p.m.

City Manager Slatcher explained that the current values are based on the 2008 assessment and they have not been done since that date. The Mayor and City Council along with Mr. Dave Hickey will hear the appeals tonight. Mr. Hickey will then take the information and do any research that is needed and will make a recommendation on each property to the Mayor and City Council. At a later meeting, Mr. Hickey will return to present the recommendations to the City Council and a decision will then be made.

Mr. Clement Tajon came forward to appeal the property located at 8 Robinson Circle. He stated that the home was newly built and he purchased the house in 2011. The current assessed value of the house is \$237,700 and he purchased the lot and house for \$175,000. Mr. Hickey reviewed the information that he had on file for the house and everything was confirmed to be correct. Mr. Tajon asked how his house is based on the 2008 values if his house was not in place at that time. Mr. Hickey explained that a formula is used and he also looks at comparable sales of similar houses during that time to get a value. Mr. Hickey stated that he will review the information.

Mr. Rob Harmon came forward to appeal the lot located on Norman Eskridge Highway – Property ID# 6161, owner's name is under Superior Value Network, LLC. Mr. Harmon stated that when he and his partner, Frank Parks purchased the land it was a total of 2 acres. However, they subdivided the lot and built on one of the lots and the other lot has had no improvements to it. The property was purchased for the total of 2 acres for the amount of \$300,000. Mr. Harmon stated that the one lot that was subdivided has been on the market since July 26, 2010 for \$200,000 and no offers have been made. Mr. Hickey asked when the subdivision was done. Mr. Harmon stated that it was done around 2007.

Mr. Rudy Collins came forward to appeal the property at 742 Rosetree Lane. He stated that he moved into the house last May. When he purchased the house, an appraisal was done of the property for \$128,000 and the current assessment that the City has in the amount of \$158,300. He would like to know why there is a difference between the two. Mr. Hickey stated that the assessment was done in 2008 and was based around the sales of homes in his area at the time. The appraisal that he recently received was more current showing the housing market in 2011 not in 2008. Mr. Hickey asked Mr. Collins what he paid for his house and he stated \$130,000. Mr. Hickey stated that he will review the records.

Mr. Darren Caterino came forward on behalf of Belle Ayre Investments, LLC to appeal the Belle Ayre Subdivision. He stated that the property was purchased in March 2004 consisting of 32.20 acres. In May of 2006, 9.6 acres was sold to Robino-Belle Ayre, LLC and the purchaser partially completed the Townhouse Subdivision before it was foreclosed upon by TD Bank. The existing subdivision is broken into three phases. Phase 1A is approximately

5.69 acres (including storm water) consisting of 17 improved lots and only 10 lots have been sold and constructed upon by Blue Hen Construction. Mr. Caterino added that a lot purchase agreement was executed in May 2010 with Blue Hen Construction. Phase 1B has approximately 3.9 acres consisting of 16 substantially improved lots and these lots require electric utilities to be extended and paid for before any building permits can be obtained. Phase II is approximately 12.19 acres of raw ground. There are no utilities or access to water/sewer. Mr. Caterino did some research for comparative sales with lot and homes around the 2007 time frame and gave the information out. After his research, he is requesting on behalf of Belle Ayre Investments, LLC a retroactive assessment adjustment of \$4,763,000 effective 7/1/12 and a corresponding reimbursement of \$14,289.00 based on payment in full of the unadjusted assessment. Mr. Hickey stated that he will review the information and make any adjustments as needed.

Mr. Mark Stonewald came forward representing TK Holdings, which owns the Governor's Grant subdivision lots. He stated that there are currently 20 improved lots and 24 unimproved lots. They are all assessed around the \$85,000 range and he feels that is too much for the lots. He would like the lots to be adjusted especially the ones that are unimproved. Mr. Hickey stated that he would take a look at the property.

Mayor William G. Bennett called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:27 p.m. with the following present: Councilman J. Rhea Shannon, Councilwoman Grace S. Peterson, Councilwoman Pat A. Jones and Councilman David Genshaw. Dolores J. Slatcher, City Manager, Charles Anderson, Assistant City Manager and Scott Coulbourn, Supt. of Parks and Recreation, were also present. Councilwoman Leanne Phillips-Lowe was not present due to illness.

Councilwoman Jones offered the opening prayer. Mayor Bennett led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Bennett solicited changes to the agenda. City Manager Slatcher stated there were none.

Mayor Bennett called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Council meeting of February 26, 2013. Councilman Genshaw made the motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Council meeting of February 26, 2013. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion. Motion so passed, with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett then asked for any correspondence. City Manager Slatcher stated a letter was received from Frank D. Cannon, Jr. in regards to his request for action at the March 12, 2013 meeting to remedy code and code enforcement practices. City Manager Slatcher stated that it will be deferred so the City can confer with the City Solicitor, Mr. Jim Fuqua and the Code Department.

City Manager Slatcher presented New Business #1, Dr. Shawn Joseph to discuss the Seaford School District's plans for the future. Dr. Joseph came forward and introduced Mr. Mike Kraft, Dr. Mike Smith and Mr. Frank Parks who are Seaford School District Board

members who are present tonight. Dr. Joseph stated that they have been going around to different community events, churches and holding public meetings listening and trying to get an understanding the needs of the community for the past year. He would like any feedback of what is needed for the schools in order for the Seaford School District to be the choice school in the area. A Strategic Plan has been developed for the Seaford School District that includes five goals. Goal One is for all students to be taught in a manner which fosters critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and effective communication to ensure that they meet/exceed the standards set by the Seaford School District and State of Delaware. Dr. Joseph stated that the New Tech Academy that has been put in place offers deeper learning models that are being developed in the high school level. This is a project based learning technique that allows students to do project and work into groups to learn. He added that there are different subjects combined into one class.

Goal Two is for all students to meet/exceed high standard, as established by the Seaford School District and the State of Delaware. Dr. Joseph stated that it is important to ensure that all students are excelling in all of their content areas and to monitor the performance of all subject areas as well.

Goal Three is for all students to be educated in a safe, positive, and supportive learning environment. Dr. Joseph added that it is important for children to foster a safe citizenship in order to build their character. They are reinforcing positive behavior in the schools and taking extra steps for security measures.

Goal Four is to strengthen family-school relationships and continue to expand civic, business, and community partnerships that support improved student achievements. This would include for students to do internships outside of the classrooms in order to experience real-life, practical experiences. The school district plans to work to expand the learning opportunities for all children through building business and civic partnerships.

Goal Five is to strive for workforce excellence by working to recruit and retain a diverse, highly qualified workforce and to collaborate with employee organizations to foster and sustain systems to support and improve employee effectiveness. Dr. Joseph stated that it is a goal to have the highest qualified staff and for teachers to get feedback and show a standard of professionalism in the classroom.

Councilman Genshaw asked Dr. Joseph what is currently being done to retain the children after the elementary school level which seems to be when students are choosing to go to other schools. Dr. Joseph stated that it has been shown that the students are actually staying in the school district in the middle school level; it has been more at the high school level when they are losing the children. He added that the middle school currently has 900 children and only 12 children have chosen to go to another school. Dr. Joseph said that more open houses have been set up and coordinated to promote parents to come in to see what is happening and to promote programs. They are also listening and making adjustments as ideas have been given.

Councilwoman Jones asked what security measures are in place and if any have been discussed recently due to national news that is occurring in other schools. Dr. Joseph stated that a buzz-in system has been put in all schools; before the incident that recently occurred in PA about half of the schools did not have them. He added that the buzz-in system is where there is a button that is pushed which rings into the office. At that time, the office has a camera and can see who is outside and they are then let in. There is also a State Trooper that is employed through the School District but is housed at the High School. It has also been discussed to hire security officers for some of the other schools.

The Mayor praised Dr. Joseph and the School Board for their work and their plan for the future. He added that it is a well thought out plan and he wished them good luck and thanked Dr. Joseph for his time. Dr. Joseph thanked the Mayor and City Council for their support and their time.

City Manager Slatcher presented New Business #2, Clean-up week to be set for May 13 – 17, 2013. City Manager Slatcher stated that a request has been made by Berley Mears, Director of Public Works to set Clean-Up Week for May 13-17, 2013 this year. Councilwoman Jones made a motion to set Clean-Up Week for May 13-17, 2013 as recommended by the Director of Public Works, Berley Mears. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion; motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett presented New Business #3, appointing the Election Board and the Standing Board for the Municipal 2013 Election. Mayor Bennett stated that the following people have agreed to work the Municipal Election on April 20, 2013 for the following times: Mr. Donald Tull, all day (Election Judge), Mrs. Elaine Vincent, all day (Officer), Ms. Jean Briggs-Johnson, all day (Officer), Mr. Charles Butler, all day (officer), Mrs. Arsie Burton, all day (Officer), Mrs. Jeanne Sapp, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Ms. Annette Cole, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Ms. Tracy Torbert, 2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m, Mrs. Erica Colegrove, 2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Mrs. Dolores Slatcher, all day, relief and Mrs. Sharon Drugash, all day, relief. He added that the Standing Board will consist of Mr. Al Temple, Ms. Carolyn Calhoun and Mr. John Leverage. If everyone is in agreement of this, he would like to have the board approved. Councilman Shannon made a motion to approve the Municipal Board of Election and the Municipal Election Officers and staff support to work the April 20, 2013 City of Seaford Election. Councilman Genshaw seconded the motion; motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

City Manager Slatcher presented New Business #4, present for approval the extension of the Mearfield – Section II final subdivision plan through March 24, 2015, another two year extension. City Manager Slatcher stated that Josh Littleton, Building Official received a request from the property owners for another two year extension. Mr. Littleton is recommending granting the extension contingent on that no permits would be issued for the project until the developer has renewed all of the required State agency permits. Councilwoman Peterson made a motion to approve the extension of the Mearfield II final site plan approval through March 24, 2015 contingent on that no permits would be issued for this project, from the City of Seaford, until the developer has renewed all of the required

State agency permits. Councilwoman Jones seconded the motion; motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

City Manager Slatcher presented Old Business #1, Second reading of the amended Chapter 15, of the Municipal Code of Seaford, Delaware relating to "Zoning", Division 3 - Riverfront Enterprise Zone. Councilman Genshaw made a motion to adopt the ordinance to amend Chapter 15, of the Municipal Code of Seaford, Delaware relating to "Zoning", in reference to Division 3 - Riverfront Enterprise Zone as presented. Councilman Shannon seconded the motion; motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett then called for a Roll Call Vote:

Councilman Genshaw voted in favor;
Councilman Shannon voted in favor;
Councilwoman Jones voted in favor;
Councilwoman Peterson voted in favor.

Mayor Bennett confirmed that the motion passed with all voting in favor.

REMINDER OF MEETINGS & SETTING OF NEW MEETINGS:

- Chamber Rise and Shine breakfast on March 13th @ 7:30 a.m. at Pizza King

Annual Municipal Election Information:

Election date is Saturday, April 20, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.
Candidate filing deadline and Voter Registration deadline is March 22, 2013 by 5:00 p.m.

All interested candidates must file with the City Manager before the filing deadline.
Only on Council Member's position is up for election. The position is currently held by Councilwoman Leanne Phillips-Lowe.

To date only Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe has filed.

Real Estate Tax Appeals were ended at 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Bennett called Ms. Judy Schwartz from GMB forward. Mayor Bennett recognized Ms. Schwartz for an award that was given last month for the Washington Avenue Storm Water project. He presented her with a Proclamation for a job well done. Ms. Schwartz thanked the Mayor, City Council, City Manager Slatcher and Assistant City Manager Anderson for their help with the project and for allowing her the opportunity to work with them.

Mayor Bennett then called Mr. Scott Coulbourn, Supt. of Parks and Recreation forward to recognize his DRPS George Sarris award that he recently received.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Councilman Shannon reported that Chief Morris has recently been out of sick but he has returned and everything is running smoothly.

Councilwoman Jones reported that June Merritt is working on budget along with personnel and worker's comp paperwork. She is also working on spreadsheets for projects and retirees questions about pension. Mrs. Merritt has been assisting with job candidate's information and conditional job offers. Water meters are scheduled to be read March 25-27 and electric meters are scheduled to be read March 28-29. Delinquent notices will be going out around March 25th and disconnects are scheduled for April 8th. Councilwoman Jones added that Sharon Drugash reported that tax letters and information were sent out in preparation for tonight's tax appeals.

Councilman Genshaw reported that they are working on the sports complex getting it ready for softball. Winter basketball will end this weekend. Scott is currently working on organizing a horseshoe league and an adult basketball league. He added that the Easter egg hunt will be on March 23rd at the Ross Mansion starting at 10:00 a.m.

Councilwoman Peterson reported that the electric department has been working on tree trimming and budget work. There were two people from the department who recently attended chain saw training. She added that due to the wind storm last week there were two customers without power for approximately 30 minutes due to a branch on the line.

Mayor Bennett called for a motion to move into an Executive Session. Councilwoman Peterson made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Jones seconded the motion. Motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett adjourned the Regular meeting to move into an Executive Session at 8:13 p.m.

Mayor Bennett reopend the Regular meeting following the Executive Session at 9:25 p.m. and called for a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Councilman Shannon made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Peterson with all present voting in favor.

By: _____
Dolores J. Slatcher, City Manager

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