

Richard C. McCarthy Commission Chamber
Millville City Hall
Work Session Meeting
March 1, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

The Board of Commissioners met in a **WORK SESSION** with Mayor Orndorf presiding. Members present: Hewitt, Sooy, Romanik and McQuade. City Solicitor, Brock Russell was also present.

Salute to the Flag

The Salute to the Flag was led by Mayor Orndorf.

Open Public Meeting Statement by City Clerk

"This meeting is being conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975 and was advertised, posted and made available to the public as required by Statute. The Municipal Clerk is directed to include a statement in the minutes of this meeting."

City Clerk to Review Changes to the Agenda

City Clerk reported that there were no changes to the agenda.

Presentation

Ms. Parkinson stated that there is a presentation scheduled this evening and invited Anthony DeSantis to the podium to address the Commissioners.

Mr. Lou Magazzu, Esq. stated he represents Mr. DeSantis and Mr. Porat. He congratulated the Board of Commissioners on being elected to office and stated the 1st term is always the best. He further stated that he had wished to have this discussion in a Closed Session and felt that this would be feasible considering Mr. Barker is here who represents the City of Millville in on-going litigation. He stated that his clients are prepared to show \$23 Million in cash and feels the Closed Session is a better fit for the discussion.

There was not a response to this proposal made by Mr. Magazzu and he proceeded with the presentation in the open session by passing out documents to the City Attorney, City Clerk and Board of Commissioners. The documents he passed out included resumes of Chris Berardi the President of JDC Demolition Company, Anthony DeLuca the owner of Allcoast Construction Services, Inc., letter from Seth Broder, Esq. on behalf of Regina Porat's sale of real estate in the amount of \$13,500,000.00, and a bound booklet of illustrations labelled "Millville Refrigeration Warehouse."

Mr. Magazzu invited Mr. Anthony DeLuca to discuss his experience with these types of projects. Mr. DeLuca gave his experience and background in these large projects, noting that his concentration has been in Manhattan, New York. He stated he continues to maintain a relationship with his previous clients and contacts from his previous projects. He stated he is really looking forward to getting out of the concrete jungle of New York and come down to the Millville area for this opportunity.

Mr. Magazzu added that Mr. DeLuca has worked mostly with unions and is very familiar with the site, having walked it several times. He then invited Mr. Berardi to come and share his background and experience with the Commissioners.

Mr. Berardi stated his background is in environmental and demolition projects. He stated he has done a lot of work on power plants all over the country including California, New York, and Indianapolis. He informed that his bonding capacity is \$200,000,000.00. He stated his company is Boston-based. He stated he has the availability of \$10,000,000.00 on-hand.

Mr. Magazzu resumed the podium and proceeded to show various slides to the public and City Commissioners the proposed Millville Refrigeration Warehouse project. He stated there were concerns of the previous Commission with regards to the vision of the project, experience of Mr. DeSantis and Mr. Porat, along with financial concerns.

As Mr. Magazzu showed the aerial view and explained how they felt the site is good for rail, energy, demographics, and location. He described the economic development opportunity, employment opportunity and ensured a simple concept without too many uses. He stressed they are looking to turn an

eyesore into something that matters and is aesthetically pleasing. He informed the Commission that the estimated time to complete the project would be 24 months.

Mr. Magazzu also emphasized that his clients are looking for common ground and to stop litigation and resolve the matter without wasting time and resources. He stated he is looking for a new start with this new Commission. He continued that a lot of time can be spent debating the use of the property, issues and merits of how we got to this point, etc. He stated that they are just looking for a fresh start.

Mr. Magazzu ended his presentation by stating that he is deeply experienced with economic development. He stated they were able to put a package together to please this Commission and meet the needs of the city.

Vice-Mayor Sooy asked for a five-minute recess which Mayor Orndorf permitted.

The meeting resumed at 6:18 p.m.

Vice-Mayor Sooy stated he has two questions for Mr. Magazzu. He asked how long it would take to demo the property? Mr. Berardi responded to the inquiry stating 3 months. He then asked how much the demo portion would cost which Mr. Berardi replied that he would need to get back to him with the answer.

Vice Mayor Sooy thanked them for coming and noted that it looked good. He stated they would be in touch.

Mr. DeSantis thanked the Commissioners for their time.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

Mayor Orndorf declared the public comment on agenda items only portion to be open and asked if any person present wished to be heard.

There being no response Mayor Orndorf declared the public comment on agenda items only portion to be closed.

Discussion Items

City Clerk stated there is a discussion item concerning the notion of having a public information portion of the website and deferred to Vice Mayor Sooy for clarification as this was his idea. Vice Mayor stated he would like to include a page on the city's website that would allow the public to pull public documents quickly to help alleviate the large number of OPRA requests which the city receives.

Mr. Russell gave his opinion stating the cost to do this would be well worth it considering our City Clerk spends half her time responding to OPRA requests. He stated to have documents right on the website would be a great feature.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to move forward with this idea.

City Clerk stated there is also a discussion item concerning South Jersey Regional Animal Shelter.

Mayor Orndorf read a letter from Vineland's city attorney regarding the possibility of creating a county animal shelter. She pointed out that this letter is seeking a letter of support from the City of Millville and the other municipalities within the county regarding the possibility of creating a county animal shelter.

Commissioner Hewitt pointed out that Vineland and Bridgeton did not authorize their bill to be paid and stated he is looking to do the same until this is resolved. He stressed that there needs to be a line drawn in the sand.

Vice Mayor Sooy stated he feels the letter of support should be sent out but felt the bill should be paid until we can move forward with a new shelter.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to move forward with supporting the project.

Comments of Commissioners

Commissioner Romanik did not have any comments at this time.

Commissioner Hewitt read a prepared statement concerning the Veterans Advisory Board. His statement in full:

“On February 19th, I made a request to discuss my questions about the proposed Veterans Advisory Board. I left that discussion with the thought that there would be time made to discuss my questions. That did not take place. So, I feel it is my responsibility to ask them on the record. Let me be clear – no one, including myself, is against the board. I just want to be sure it is done properly. Delaying is not denying. It was important to me to understand the concerns that were presented at the last meeting. I took the time to request a meeting at the Veterans Multi-Service Center located at 616 Landis Avenue in Vineland. That was a two and a half hour long meeting with Peter Wine which started with a tour of the facility. The new facility is a major improvement environment from their previous space. There are more offices to meet privately with veterans and more staff available to help. The greatest benefit I saw was a place to just relax and unwind if necessary. The size of the office seemed to be at least four times the available space that was available here and at half the cost. I am aware of the one confirmed homeless vet. With that said, the following are my valid questions and suggestions pertaining to the adoption of the VAB ordinance. Hopefully, they will be answered, as my vote on this will depend on the answers presented. 1. Is there a charter, bylaws, or at the very least, an example of what the VAB responsibilities are? Saying they are here to help veterans is noble, but how will this board help veterans. What services will this board provide? 2. The requirement that a member of this board have a valid DD214 could prevent people who would be valuable resources from being on this committee. For example, I would like to see this changed to include immediate family members of veterans. These are small changes that need to be discussed before myself, and I feel, my fellow commissioners commit to it. Again, no one is against helping veterans. My comments are intended to forward the cause properly.

Commissioner McQuade thanked everyone for coming out and found the presentation by Anthony DeSantis to be very educational. He stated that if this were to come to fruition, the city may need to put a truck stop in place to accommodate all the truck traffic. He also stated he would love to see the building tore down.

Vice Mayor Sooy stated that letters were sent out to residents concerning a new requirement of the DEP for all lead pipes to be replaced by the city.

He also stated that Atlantic City Electric is working to have a build-out of the electric infrastructure for the city to more remote places to accommodate businesses so we will be ready for them to come here. He stated he is just waiting for the petition from Bert Lopez and explained that Bridgeton and Vineland are getting the same enhancement. He questioned who gets it first. He expounded that the city is competing for these businesses and noted that the devil is in the details.

Vice Mayor made final comments on the Veterans Advisory Board, explaining that there has been plenty of time to discuss all issues from first reading to the public hearing. He stated his stance is to proceed with the implementation of the board.

Mayor Orndorf stated that the presentation was helpful and is looking forward to cleaning up that property. She also stated she loves the idea of having a webpage specifically for documents that are public.

Mayor Orndorf stated that the animal shelter is needed here in Cumberland County and wants to see it happen.

She made final comments concerning the Veterans Advisory Board stating it is a great idea. She stated that the details will all be worked out. She shared an experience of her close friend in the military and noted that there are certain things that vets go through that they are not comfortable sharing openly. She stated that this board would be a great place for those veterans to discuss their issues and have others there who can relate to them.

Public Comment

Mayor Orndorf declared the public comment portion open and asked if any person present wished to be heard.

Mary Messick of Millville brought up the increase in price to the agreement with the South Jersey Regional Animal Shelter. She suggested that the increase might be related to the Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, Release Program for the feral cats.

Brock Russell stated that he looked at the bills and it is multiple things increasing, not just one thing.

Marcella Sheppard commented that she feels animal sheltering should be simply shelter for animals without everything else they do on their own which we get charged for.

There being no further comments Mayor Orndorf declared the public comment portion of the meeting closed.

Resolution

City Clerk read the following resolution:

Resolution No. 76-2022 authorizing a Closed Session Meeting to discuss the following matter:
1. Discussion of Fire Chief Contract – Contract Negotiations Exceptions

Commissioner Hewitt moved for the adoption of this resolution. Commissioner McQuade seconded the motion which was carried by the following vote: Yeas: Hewitt, Sooy, McQuade, Romanik and Orndorf.

The Commissioners proceeded to the fourth-floor conference room for the Executive Session. Upon finishing the meeting, they returned to the dais in the Commission Chambers and proceeded to adjourn the meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further comments the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Vice-Mayor Sooy and seconded by Commissioner Hewitt, subject to the call of the chair. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Respectfully submitted,


Jeanne M. Parkinson, RMC
City Clerk