

OPEN SESSION

Mayor Robert Patten called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and read the Open Public Meetings Act statement which stated that adequate notice and posting of the meeting had taken place in accordance with the requirements of P.L. 1975, Chapter 231.

The flag salute was followed by the roll call.

ROLL CALL

	PRESENT	ABSENT
<i>Mayor Patten</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Harinxma</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Quattrone</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Rosenberg</i>		✓
<i>Councilmember Schneider</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Sikorski</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Thompson</i>		✓

Also in attendance: Candace Gallagher, Borough Clerk/Administrator; Carmela Roberts, Borough Engineer; James M. Eufemia, Chief of Police; and Frederick Raffetto, Esq., Borough Attorney.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Added to the agenda was a discussion under Unfinished Business regarding the holding of the August 21 Council meeting, and a discussion under New Business regarding the possibility of regulating garage sales. The agenda was moved by Councilmember Sikorski, seconded by Council President Schneider and unanimously approved as amended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the July 31, 2006 budget meeting, July 17, 2006 regular meeting open session, and May 9, 2006 special meeting open and closed sessions were moved by Councilmember Sikorski, seconded by Councilmember Harinxma and approved by all but Councilmember Quattrone, who abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT I

Mayor Patten opened the floor for public comment.

Eugene Sarafin, 600-628 South Main Street, criticized President George W. Bush and stated that he should be impeached. He objected to reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag "while our nation is being destroyed" and said that he would resume making that pledge when America is "restored to democracy." We have become a "totally intolerant society," he said, and "don't recognize it."

J. P. Gibbons, 602 N. Main Street, noted his support for the Pledge of Allegiance. He went on to say that it is premature to make any determination regarding the benefits of consolidating police services with East Windsor Township prior to any factfinding.

Phyllis Deal, 305 Stockton Street, suggested that the carpeting in the courtroom be cleaned.

No one else came forward and the floor was closed.

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mike Vanderbeck, Chair of the Borough's Economic Development Committee, addressed the Mayor and Council to present the Committee's report, a full copy of which is included at the end of these 8/7/06 minutes. The report's recommendations included the Borough's participation in the [Main Street NJ](#) program and a greater emphasis on sharing services. He noted that the Borough's CY2006 Extraordinary Aid Application "is a fantastic document that really lays out the status of the Borough and all that we are doing."

Committee members Vince Traylor, Mike Wiley and Jeff Bond were present and each spoke briefly.

Mr. Traylor encouraged the Borough to consider participation in the Main Street NJ program and to explore its options with the assistance of the Municipal Land Use Center and the Department of Community Affairs. He said that the Committee's recommendations are not intended to be "confrontational," and go beyond police and fire services.

Mr. Wiley stated that, notwithstanding the Borough's hard work, we find ourselves facing tax increases with each budget cycle. "It may be time to look at using other tools," he said, including consolidation of services and participation in the Main Street program. While participation in that program may require "minor funding," he feels that the Borough would see a worthwhile return on its investment.

Mr. Bond stated that "with double digit tax increases, home rule can't be a priority anymore," and added that, while Borough officials have expressed their support for shared services, "we haven't done that -- not the type we need in this day and age." The EDC members, he said, offer expertise that the Borough could utilize. He urged Council to use them "to try to help bring State, County and other 'think tanks' to the table to help the Borough. You can't do it all yourself." He urged passage of the Resolution listed on this meeting agenda expressing Council's willingness to consider consolidation of police services with East Windsor Township, should that prove beneficial.

Mr. Vanderbeck noted that an informational session with the Municipal Land Use Center, DCA and League of Municipalities could possibly be arranged as early as mid-September, and requested permission to work with Ms. Gallagher to arrange this. There were no objections stated.

Council President Schneider asked how much funding would be required for the Main Street program. Mr. Vanderbeck stated that the municipality is expected to provide 20% of the costs. He estimated that, for the Borough, this would amount to between \$10,000 and \$20,000. The program requires a full-time, sitting director that is trained by the Downtown Revitalization Institute. That, he said, makes up most of the budget.

Mayor Patten and Councilman Sikorski each commended the members of the EDC for their presentation.

ENGINEER'S ITEMS

RESOLUTION 2006-174, AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF PERFORMANCE BOND TO COOLIDGE ELECTRIC AND ACCEPTANCE OF REPLACEMENT BOND FROM PRINCETON POOL AND PATIO

Ms. Roberts reviewed the provisions of Resolution 2006-174. Council President Schneider asked when Princeton Pool and Patio would be completing the outstanding work. Ms. Roberts replied that she is uncertain; however, she added, they appear to be most cooperative and intend to do all that has been asked and more, including "sprucing up the Greenway." Mayor Patten asked if they have posted escrow funds. "Not yet," she replied. "That is the last item to be obtained before the transfer is fully complete."

Resolution 2006-174 was moved by Councilmember Sikorski and seconded by Councilmember Quattrone.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Harinxma, Quattrone, Sikorski and Schneider voted yes. Councilmembers Rosenberg and Thompson were absent.

Resolution adopted, 4-0.

RESOLUTION 2006-174 AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF PERFORMANCE BOND TO COOLIDGE ELECTRIC AND ACCEPTANCE OF REPLACEMENT BOND FROM PRINCETON POOL AND PATIO

WHEREAS in May 2002, Coolidge Electric, Inc. posted a performance guarantee in the amount of \$143,386.20 relative to their Planning Board application for work at 2 Cranbury Station Road (R&R File No. HPB0128); and

WHEREAS on February 21, 2006, the Borough Council approved a reduction in said bond to a total of \$43,015.86, including a cash portion of \$4,301.59; and

WHEREAS the subject property was recently sold by Coolidge Electric to Princeton Pool and Patio, Inc., who will complete the site plan improvements and who has submitted to the Borough a cash bond in the amount of \$43,015.86 to replace that held on behalf of Coolidge Electric; and

WHEREAS the Borough Engineer has recommended that the bond and cash submitted by Coolidge Electric as referenced above be released to them, subject to payment of any outstanding escrow fees, and that the bond submitted by Princeton Pool and Patio be formally accepted by the Borough;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown as follows:

1. The Treasurer is hereby authorized and directed to release to Coolidge Electric the amount of \$4,301.59, representing the remaining cash portion of their performance guarantee as detailed herein, subject to payment of any outstanding escrow fees.
2. The Borough Clerk is authorized and directed to return to Coolidge Electric the non-cash performance bond held on their behalf with respect to this project.
3. The cash bond submitted by Princeton Pool and Patio, Inc. in the amount of \$43,015.86 is hereby accepted as a performance guarantee with respect to the completion of outstanding site plan improvements at 2 Cranbury Station Road.

RESOLUTION 2006-175, AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER NO. 2 AND PAYMENT NO. 3 – JONICO, INC. (GREENWAYS, PHASE II PROJECT)

Following a brief review by Ms. Roberts, Resolution 2006-175 was moved by Councilmember Quattrone and seconded by Councilmember Sikorski.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Harinxma, Quattrone, Sikorski and Schneider voted yes. Councilmembers Rosenberg and Thompson were absent.

Resolution adopted, 4-0.

RESOLUTION 2006-175 AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER NO. 2 AND PAYMENT NO. 3 – JONICO, INC. (GREENWAYS, PHASE II PROJECT)

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2006 the Borough Council awarded a contract for the Greenways, Phase II project to Jonico, Inc. of Lambertville, NJ in the amount of two hundred and one thousand five hundred thirty-three (\$201,533.00) Dollars; and

WHEREAS, Change Order No. 1 to this contract in the amount of \$14,380.00 was approved on July 17, 2006, bringing the total contract price to Two Hundred Fifteen Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirteen (\$215,913.00) Dollars; and

WHEREAS the contractor has submitted Change Order No. 2 to this contract in the net amount of \$14,548.22, as detailed on the attached listings; and

WHEREAS, the contractor has also submitted Payment Request No. 3 for work done in the total amount of \$55,381.00, together with the required certified payrolls; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Engineer has recommended approval of Change Order No. 2 and Payment Request No. 3; and

WHEREAS the Chief Financial Officer has certified that funds are available for the additional expenditure represented by Change Order No. 2;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown as follows:

1. Change Order No. 2 to the contract with Jonico, Inc. of Lambertville, New Jersey, in the net amount of \$14,548.22 is hereby approved, and the Mayor is authorized to execute same.
2. By virtue of the approval of Change Order No. 2, the revised contract price is Two Hundred and Thirty Thousand Four Hundred Sixty-One Dollars and Twenty-Two Cents (\$230,461.22).
3. Payment Request No. 3 by Jonico, Inc. in the amount of \$55,381.00 is hereby approved, and the Treasurer is authorized to issue same.

RESOLUTION 2006-176, AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 AND PAYMENT NO. 2 – S. BROTHERS, INC. (WYCKOFF'S MILL ROAD RECONSTRUCTION – R&R FILE NO. H1727)

Ms. Roberts reviewed the provisions of Resolution 2006-176, noting that there will be one more Change Order coming, and we will likely end up "right at the contract amount." The Resolution was moved by Councilmember Quattrone and seconded by Councilmember Sikorski. Council President Schneider asked if all the paving that is supposed to be done is now in. Ms. Roberts replied that all the paving required under this contract has been done.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Harinxma, Quattrone, Sikorski and Schneider voted yes. Councilmembers Rosenberg and Thompson were absent.

Resolution adopted, 4-0.

RESOLUTION 2006-176 AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 AND PAYMENT NO. 2 – S. BROTHERS, INC. (WYCKOFF'S MILL ROAD RECONSTRUCTION – R&R FILE NO. H1727)

WHEREAS, on November 21, 2005 the Borough Council awarded a contract for the reconstruction of Wyckoff's Mill Road to S. Brothers General Contractors, Inc. of South River, New Jersey in the total amount of One Hundred and Seventy-Four Thousand Five Hundred and Eighty-Five (\$174,585.00) Dollars; and

WHEREAS the contractor has submitted Change Order No. 1 to this contract in the net amount of NEGATIVE One Thousand Three Hundred Nineteen Dollars and Sixty Cents (-\$1,319.60); and

WHEREAS the contractor has also submitted Payment Request No. 2 for work done in the total amount of \$46,970.38 together with the required certified payrolls; and

WHEREAS the Borough Engineer has recommended approval of this change order and payment request;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown as follows:

1. Change Order No. 1 to the contract with S. Brothers General Contractors, Inc. of South River, New Jersey, in the net amount of NEGATIVE One Thousand Three Hundred Nineteen Dollars and Sixty Cents (-\$1,319.60) is hereby approved, and the Mayor is authorized to execute same.
2. By virtue of the approval of Change Order No. 1, the revised contract price is One Hundred and Seventy-Three Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty-Five Dollars and Forty Cents (\$173,265.40).
3. Payment Request No. 2 by S. Brothers General Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$46,970.38 is hereby approved, and the Treasurer is authorized to issue same.

RESOLUTION 2006-177, AWARDING CONTRACT FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF COLE AVENUE AND CLINTON STREET

Following a brief review by Ms. Roberts, Resolution 2006-177 was moved by Councilmember Sikorski and seconded by Councilmember Harinxma.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Harinxma, Quattrone, Sikorski and Schneider voted yes. Councilmembers Rosenberg and Thompson were absent.

Resolution adopted, 4-0.

RESOLUTION 2006-177 AWARDING CONTRACT FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF COLE AVENUE AND CLINTON STREET

WHEREAS, two bids were received on August 1, 2006 for the reconstruction of Cole Avenue and Clinton Street in the Borough of Hightstown; and

WHEREAS, the bids have been reviewed by the Borough Engineer and it is the firm's recommendation that the contract be awarded to the low bidder, Jonico, Inc. of Lambertville, NJ; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Attorney has reviewed the bids and has determined that the bid submitted by Jonico, Inc. is in order with respect to legal compliance; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has certified the availability of funds for this expenditure;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown as follows:

1. The contract for the reconstruction of Cole Avenue and Clinton Street is hereby awarded to Jonico, Inc. of Lambertville, NJ in the amount of Two Hundred and Ninety-Five Thousand One Hundred and Thirty-Three (\$295,133.00) Dollars.
2. The Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized to execute an agreement with Jonico, Inc. subject to approval of the Borough Attorney.
3. This contract is awarded subject to the approval of the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

ORDINANCES

PUBLIC HEARING AND FINAL READING: ORDINANCE 2006-18,
BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF WATER METERS FOR USE IN AND BY
THE BOROUGH OF HIGHTSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY,
APPROPRIATING \$250,000 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$238,000
BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF

Ms. Gallagher reviewed the provisions of Bond Ordinance 2006-18, which would appropriate \$250,000 to fund the replacement of all Borough water meters with “radio read” meters. This, she said, will allow one employee to do in one day or less what currently takes two men one to two weeks to accomplish. The potential savings in man-hours equates to between \$8,000 and \$16,000 per year. If financed over its useful life of 40 years, the annual cost was estimated by the Chief Financial Officer to be \$13,100 per year.

Ms. Gallagher noted that the Borough’s water meters would need to be replaced in the near future anyway. Most are over 20 years old, and after 10 years, the meters begin to lose their accuracy. It is possible, she said, that the Borough is losing revenues by having the older meters in place.

Mayor Patten opened the public hearing on Ordinance 2006-18.

Eugene Sarafin, 600-628 South Main Street, questioned the useful life of 40 years that is included in the bond ordinance. Ms. Gallagher stated that the Ordinance was prepared by the Borough’s bond counsel, and the useful life is determined by statutory reference.

J. P. Gibbons, 602 North Main street, about funding, suggested that the meters be paid off in 15 or 20 years rather than 40. He added that he likes the idea of installing radio read meters.

Torry Watkins, 68 Meadow Drive, had understood Ms. Gallagher to say that up to 16,000 man-hours would be saved each year, and stated, “if we are saving that many man-hours, I look forward to seeing the workforce reconfigured at the water plant so that we may be able to eliminate an employee through attrition.” Council President Schneider and Ms. Gallagher clarified that the time saved would equate to 8,000 to 16,000 *dollars*, not man-hours, per year.

Mr. Sarafin spoke again to say “get rid of the bonding mentality. No one would object to a \$50 add-on to water-sewer bills for capital expenditures.”

No one else came forward and the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance 2006-18 was moved for adoption by Council President Schneider and seconded by Councilmember Sikorski. Discussion ensued.

Councilman Quattrone stated that he would like to find out more about the actual life of our meters, and the possibility of re-calibrating them.

Council President Schneider stated that he believes the replacement of the meters is a good idea, but said that he may prefer a quicker payoff. Ms. Gallagher stated that the useful life as stated in the Ordinance is based on statute, but actual bonding may be for a shorter period of time. Mr. Schneider asked if the water/sewer rate could be increased to accommodate this expenditure. Ms. Gallagher indicated that this is possible. Mr. Schneider stated that he would be comfortable voting for this Ordinance if there was another way to pay off the debt, including the possibility of having residents directly absorb the cost.

Councilman Sikorski noted that the Ordinance provides that grant monies or other monies received would offset the amount to be bonded. As Richard Redding, financial consultant for the Wolfington Companies, was in attendance, Mr. Sikorski asked him to comment regarding the possibility of funding the meters over a shorter period of time.

Mr. Redding stated that, depending upon the type of bond issued, it may be able to be paid off more quickly. A shorter bond term, he added, would probably result in a more favorable interest rate. Since we will have to replace some of these meters anyway, he noted, the real cost to the Borough is less than the total appropriated. Princeton, he said, is in the process of replacing all of its water meters. Regarding the useful life, Mr. Redding said that meters will last longer if there are not a lot of water main breaks. When water main breaks occur, sand gets in and scores the inside of the meters, and they will not last as long.

Mayor Patten stated that the Borough would be setting a good precedent by committing to pay off bonded debt more quickly. Ms. Gallagher emphasized that the Borough will have the option to finance this over a shorter period of time when it comes time to do so.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Harinxma, Quattrone, Sikorski and Schneider voted yes. Councilmembers Rosenberg and Thompson were absent.

Ordinance adopted, 4-0.

ORDINANCE 2006-18 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF WATER METERS IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF HIGHTSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$250,000 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$238,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHTSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY (not less than two-thirds of all members thereof affirmatively concurring) AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The improvement described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance is hereby authorized to be undertaken by the Borough of Hightstown, in the County of Mercer (the "Borough") New Jersey as a general improvement. For the improvement or purpose described in Section 3, there is hereby appropriated the sum of \$250,000, including the sum of \$12,000 as the down payment required by the Local Bond Law. The down payment is now available by virtue of provision for down payment or for capital improvement purposes in one or more previously adopted budgets.

Section 2. In order to finance the cost of the improvement or purpose not covered by application of the down payment, negotiable bonds are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of \$238,000 pursuant to the Local Bond Law. In anticipation of the issuance of the bonds, negotiable bond anticipation notes are hereby authorized to be issued pursuant to and within the limitations prescribed by the Local Bond Law.

Section 3. (a) The improvement hereby authorized and the purpose for the financing of which the bonds are to be issued is the acquisition of radio read water meters to replace existing meters throughout the Borough, including all work and materials necessary therefor and incidental thereto.

(b) The estimated maximum amount of bonds or notes to be issued for the improvement or purpose is as stated in Section 2 hereof.

(c) The estimated cost of the improvement or purpose is equal to the amount of the appropriation herein made therefor.

Section 4. All bond anticipation notes issued hereunder shall mature at such times as may be determined by the chief financial officer; provided that no note shall mature later than one year from its date. The notes shall bear interest at such rate or rates and be in such form as may be determined by the chief financial officer. The chief financial officer shall determine all matters in connection with notes issued pursuant to this ordinance, and the chief financial officer's signature upon the notes shall be conclusive evidence as to all such determinations. All notes issued hereunder may be renewed from time to time subject to the provisions of the Local Bond Law. The chief financial officer is hereby authorized to sell part or all of the notes from time to time at public or private sale and to deliver them to the purchasers thereof upon receipt of payment of the purchase price plus accrued interest from their dates to the date of delivery thereof. The chief financial officer is directed to report in writing to the governing body at the meeting next succeeding the date when any sale or delivery of the notes pursuant to this ordinance is made. Such report must include the amount, the description, the interest rate and the maturity schedule of the notes sold, the price obtained and the name of the purchaseSection 5. The Borough hereby certifies that it has adopted a capital budget or a temporary capital budget, as applicable. The capital or temporary capital budget of the Borough is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency herewith. To the extent that the purposes authorized herein are inconsistent with the adopted capital or temporary capital budget, a revised capital or temporary capital budget has been filed with the Division of Local Government Services.

Section 6. The following additional matters are hereby determined, declared, recited and stated:

(a) The improvement or purpose described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance is not a current expense. It is an improvement or purpose that the Borough may lawfully undertake as a general improvement, and no part of the cost thereof has been or shall be specially assessed on property specially benefitted thereby.

(b) The period of usefulness of the improvement or purpose within the limitations of the Local Bond Law, according to the reasonable life thereof computed from the date of the bonds authorized by this ordinance, is 40 years.

(c) The Supplemental Debt Statement required by the Local Bond Law has been duly prepared and filed in the office of the Clerk, and a complete executed duplicate thereof has been filed in the office of the Director of the Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs of the State of New Jersey. Such statement shows that the gross debt of the Borough as defined in the Local Bond Law is increased by the authorization of the bonds and notes provided in this bond ordinance by \$238,000, and the obligations authorized herein will be within all debt limitations prescribed by that Law.

(d) An aggregate amount not exceeding \$5,000 for items of expense listed in and permitted under N.J.S.A. 40A:2-20 is included in the estimated cost indicated herein for the purpose or improvement.

Section 7. Any grant moneys received for the purpose described in Section 3 hereof shall be applied either to direct payment of the cost of the improvement or to payment of the obligations issued pursuant to this ordinance. The amount of obligations authorized but not issued hereunder shall be reduced to the extent that such funds are so used.

Section 8. The chief financial officer of the Borough is hereby authorized to prepare and to update from time to time as necessary a financial disclosure document to be distributed in connection with the sale of obligations of the Borough and to execute such disclosure document on behalf of the Borough. The chief financial officer is further authorized to enter into the appropriate undertaking to provide secondary market disclosure on behalf of the Borough pursuant to Rule 15c2-12 of the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Rule") for the benefit of holders and beneficial owners of obligations of the Borough and to amend such undertaking from time to time in connection with any change in law, or interpretation thereof, provided such undertaking is and continues to be, in the opinion of a nationally recognized bond counsel, consistent with the requirements of the Rule. In the event that the Borough fails to comply with its undertaking, the Borough shall not be liable for any monetary damages, and the remedy shall be limited to specific performance of the undertaking.

Section 9. The full faith and credit of the Borough are hereby pledged to the punctual payment of the principal of and the interest on the obligations authorized by this bond ordinance. The obligations shall be direct, unlimited obligations of the Borough, and the Borough shall be obligated to levy *ad valorem* taxes upon all the taxable real property within the Borough for the payment of the obligations and the interest thereon without limitation of rate or amount.

Section 10. This bond ordinance shall take effect 20 days after the first publication thereof after final adoption, as provided by the Local Bond Law.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION 2006-178, RESOLUTION REGARDING CONSIDERATION OF SHARED POLICE SERVICES WITH EAST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP

Resolution 2006-178 was moved by Councilmember Sikorski and seconded by Councilmember Harinxma.

Mayor Patten noted that this Resolution, if adopted, will allow the Borough to move forward with discussions with East Windsor Township, and will identify Council's willingness to consider consolidation of police services if benefits are identified for both towns.

Councilman Quattrone requested that the words "to do so" be stricken from the phrase reading "if it was determined that it would be beneficial to both towns to do so." Mr. Raffetto stated that striking those words would have no legal significance, and there was no objection to doing so. Councilman Sikorski amended his motion accordingly, and Councilmember Harinxma her second. "I am for negotiations," Mr. Quattrone said. "Bring the numbers back."

Roll Call: Councilmembers Harinxma, Quattrone, Sikorski and Schneider voted yes. Councilmembers Rosenberg and Thompson were absent.

Resolution adopted, 4-0.

RESOLUTION 2006-178 RESOLUTION REGARDING CONSIDERATION OF SHARED POLICE SERVICES WITH EAST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP

WHEREAS Resolution 2006-86, adopted by a 5-0 vote on March 20, 2006, authorized "the Mayor and a Council member of his choosing to investigate the possibility of regionalization of police services with Hightstown's neighboring communities"; and

WHEREAS at this time, the Mayor and Council wish to specifically express their willingness to consider the consolidation of police services with East Windsor Township if it was determined that it would be beneficial to both towns;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown, by their affirmative vote on this Resolution, do hereby express their willingness to consider the consolidation of police services with East Windsor Township if it was determined that it would be beneficial to both towns.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolutions 2006-179, 180, 181, 182, 183 and 184 were moved by Councilmember Sikorski and seconded by Councilmember Harinxma.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Harinxma, Quattrone, Sikorski and Schneider voted yes. Councilmembers Rosenberg and Thompson were absent.

Resolutions adopted, 4-0.

RESOLUTION 2006-179 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS

WHEREAS, certain bills are due and payable as per itemized claims listed on the following schedules, which are made a part of the minutes of this meeting as a supplemental record;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that the bills be paid on audit and approval of the Borough Administrator and the Treasurer in the amount of **\$2,139,041.00** from the following accounts:

Current	\$ 1,708,114.30
W/S Operating	117,862.06
General Capital	148,545.28
W/S Capital	150,037.23
Animal Control Account	13.80
Trust	3,791.50
Public Defender	550.00
Grant	1,567.93
RCA COAH Escrow	1,800.00
Escrow-Subdivision & Site Plan (First Washington Bank)	6,758.90
Total	<u>\$2,139,041.00</u>

RESOLUTION 2006-180 AUTHORIZING EXTENDED WAIVER OF INTEREST ON THIRD QUARTER TAXES

WHEREAS, due to the delay in adoption of the 2006 budget, the mailing of the Borough's 3rd quarter tax bills has been delayed; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 54:4-66.3 provides that, when the mailing of tax bills has been delayed, the third installment of taxes shall not be subject to interest until the later of August 1, the additional interest-free period authorized pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:4-67, or the twenty-fifth calendar day after the date that the tax bill or estimated tax bill for the third installment was mailed or otherwise delivered; and

WHEREAS, the tax bills must specify the date on which interest may begin to accrue;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown as follows:

1. The Tax Collector is hereby directed to complete the mailing of the third quarter tax bills as soon as it is practicable to do so.
2. The grace period on the third quarter tax bills shall be extended in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 54:4-66.3.
3. The third quarter tax bills shall specify the date on which interest may begin to accrue.

RESOLUTION 2006-181 AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF DONOR AGREEMENT WITH BETTER BEGINNINGS DAY CARE CENTER

WHEREAS, it is the desire and intention of the Mayor and Council to contribute \$8,500 during 2006 to Better Beginnings Day Care Center of Hightstown/East Windsor, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Human Services has been designated to administer or supervise the administration of social services programs as defined in the New Jersey State plans for social services, and requires the execution of a Donor Agreement between Better Beginnings and the Borough of Hightstown; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has certified that funds for this contribution have been provided in the 2006 budget;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that the Donor Agreement which is attached hereto and made a part hereof is hereby approved, and the Mayor is authorized to execute same.

RESOLUTION 2006-182**AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF RAFFLE LICENSE #RL-162 TO HIGHTSTOWN WOMAN'S CLUB**

WHEREAS, the Hightstown Woman's Club wishes to hold an off-premise merchandise raffle at 320 North Main Street on February 24, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the group has submitted application number RA-162 for this raffle, together with the required fees; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Clerk and the Chief of Police have reviewed the application and have determined that the requirements of N.J.S.A. 5:8-53, regarding the applicant, the members in charge of the game, and the game itself, have been met;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that the Borough Clerk is authorized to issue Raffle License No. RL-162 to the Hightstown Woman's Club for their raffle to be held on February 24, 2007.

RESOLUTION 2006-183**AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF RAFFLE LICENSE #RL-163 TO BETTER BEGINNINGS DAY CARE CENTER**

WHEREAS, Better Beginnings Day Care Center wishes to hold an off-premise merchandise raffle at 318 North Main Street on December 13, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the group has submitted application number RA-163 for this raffle along with the required fees; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Clerk and the Chief of Police have reviewed the application and have determined that the requirements of N.J.S.A. 5:8-53, regarding the applicant, the members in charge of the game, and the game itself, have been met;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that the Borough Clerk is authorized to issue Raffle License No. RL-163 to Better Beginnings Day Care Center for their merchandise raffle to be held on December 13, 2006.

RESOLUTION 2006-184**AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF AMOUNTS REMAINING IN ESCROW – DR. PAUL TALMAZAN**

WHEREAS Dr. Paul Talmazan posted funds in escrow with the Borough relative to the vacation of Evergreen Avenue; and

WHEREAS the vacation is now complete, and the Borough Engineer has recommended release of all remaining escrow held by the Borough on Dr. Talmazan's behalf; and

WHEREAS the Borough Engineer and Borough Attorney have certified that no funds remain due and payable to them from these escrow funds;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that the Treasurer is hereby authorized and directed to return to Dr. Paul Talmazan any and all funds remaining in his escrow account as detailed herein.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

REVIEW OF CHANGES MADE TO DEVELOPER'S AGREEMENT WITH D. M. PROPERTIES

Mr. Raffetto stated that, because this agreement was the topic of considerable debate at the last meeting, he and Ms. Gallagher felt that the revised agreement should come back to Council for their ratification. He cannot make the revisions exactly as requested at the last meeting, he said, as this is a private property owner developing their own property. The Borough cannot strip them of their rights (as in redevelopment), and our remedies are more limited. He said that the revisions made do include a provision that, in the event of a violation, the developer would have to come back before Council and could be held in default of the agreement. The Borough does have the ability to take them to court, he said, and the agreement incorporates a per diem penalty. "These types of provisions are more legally justifiable in this situation," Mr. Raffetto added, and said that the Borough will look to include this language in all future developer's agreements.

Mr. Raffetto also noted that language in the agreement has been clarified with respect to the developer's COAH obligations. At the last meeting, it was indicated that the developer would be charged for four COAH units; however, he has reviewed this with Ms. Lee and with COAH, and because there are two *existing* units at the site which will be demolished, our plan and COAH regulations provide that the developer can only be charged for the *net increase* of two units. The agreement has been revised accordingly.

Motion: Council President Schneider said that he is happy with these changes, and moved that the revised agreement be approved. The motion was seconded by Councilman Sikorski and **unanimously approved.**

REVIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENTS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING BOARD

Ms. Roberts reviewed in detail with Council the changes proposed by the Planning Board to the Borough's adopted Redevelopment Plan. During the review and discussion, it was noted that:

- The adequacy of parking was "a big item of discussion" at the Planning Board, Ms. Roberts said. At the end, the consensus was that the revised plan provides adequate parking. Most of the Fire Company's functions take place on weekends or at night, and municipal court parking needs are periodic. Chief Eufemia noted that, even now, alternate parking has to be used during court and fire company functions. Ms. Roberts said that parking on Bank Street has been eliminated in this plan, as there is adequate parking without it, according to the traffic studies. The roadway would be too narrow for parking *and* two-way traffic. This plan includes a statement, which the prior plan did not, regarding the need for 60 to 80 "shared" parking spaces. It also states that, when the actual plan is being reviewed by the Planning Board, the traffic study and shared parking analysis could potentially change the plan. "There is a bit of circular movement in this that is not in the original," she said.
- The revised plan specifies that COAH units must be built onsite. The previous plan was unclear about that.
- The new plan includes a greater emphasis on green space and encourages the use of roof top spaces for passive and active recreation uses, such as patios, gardens, swimming pools and sunbathing areas. It also encourages the redeveloper to evaluate the potential for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accreditation of the Bank Street Sub-Area I Redevelopment District¹.
- The revised plan provides that the maximum number of residential dwellings permitted within the Bank Street Sub-Area, including all affordable units, shall not exceed eight (8) townhomes/duplex units and 122 multi-family condominium-type units. It also provides that a minimum of one hundred fifteen (115) residential units (townhomes/duplexes and multi-family dwellings) shall be required, and adds that the minimum and maximum requirements may be amended by the Redevelopment Agency based on a recommendation from the Planning Board, and the final number of approved units shall be based on the traffic and parking studies submitted to and approved by the Planning Board during site plan review.
- At the recommendation of Tamara Lee, parking requirements were reduced for retail, commercial and office uses. This plan requires one (1) parking space for every 500 square feet of retail or commercial building area,

¹ Clerk's note: The official LEED website describes it as follows: "*LEED provides a complete framework for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals. Based on well-founded scientific standards, LEED emphasizes state of the art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. LEED recognizes achievements and promotes expertise in green building through a comprehensive system offering project certification, professional accreditation, training and practical resources.*"

and one parking space for each 400 square feet of office space. The prior version of the plan required one space for each 400 square feet and 300 square feet, respectively.

- Lighting requirements were made slightly more flexible in this plan so as to allow the Borough to obtain the best lighting use and obtain the lowest usage price.

Councilman Quattrone asked if the Borough was within its rights to limit COAH units to two bedrooms. The Mayor asked Mr. Redding to respond. Mr. Redding stated that it was always anticipated that the condominiums would have two bedrooms and the townhouses would have three. COAH, he said, has a "stratification rule," where 60% of the affordable units must be two-bedroom units, 20% one-bedroom, and 20% three-bedroom. Technically, he said, you could build a two-bedroom unit and sell it as a one-bedroom unit. The requirement for three-bedroom units, would create more of a problem. He suggested that the Plan could be amended to refer to COAH regulations.

Ms. Roberts stated that this issue came up for discussion at the Planning Board, and Tamara Lee echoed Mr. Redding's remarks. It was understood by the Board, she said, that, for the affordable units, whatever COAH requires would have to be provided. All of the market rate units, however, would have to be two-bedroom units. Mr. Rosensweig, she said, felt that the Plan was adequate as written, as it cannot override COAH rules.

Mr. Redding noted that COAH rules apply to the town as a whole, and not to individual projects. All of the affordable units in this project could conceivably be two-bedroom units, and that would factor into the overall calculation for the Borough, but in total, 20% of the affordable units in the Borough must be three-bedroom units.

Council President Schneider asked what would happen if there was a deficit of affordable housing in the Borough. Mr. Redding stated that the Borough would then go back to COAH with a modified plan showing how we would remedy that shortcoming. "If you are trying in good faith," he said, "I don't think they'd deny your entire efforts. But [the affordable units] would have to be worked into your plan somewhere." Mayor Patten noted that, within the Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, there is a provision for "buy downs," where the Borough could purchase a home and designate it for affordability. "There are other ways we can satisfy our obligation rather than at just one location," he said. Mr. Redding noted that it is important to keep track of this. Our current obligation, he said, represents the obligation from 2004 to 2014. Any net increase in housing units will affect our obligation, and will be ultimately measured in 2014. It is important to come up with the right mix and type of units overall.

Council President Schneider asked what percentage of the affordable units could be rehabilitated units. Mr. Redding stated that this is related to the Borough's substandard housing. Under the new COAH rules, the bulk of the Borough's obligation is growth share. Rehabilitation credits are related only to substandard housing, and will not help with growth share. However, the Borough could purchase a unit and renovate it to make it affordable.

Councilmember Harinxma asked if the units in the proposed development could be purchased and then rented out. Ms. Roberts stated that these would be condominiums rather than apartments, and there was some discussion at the Planning Board regarding prohibiting or restricting rentals. Mayor Patten stated that this would be an issue for the Planning Board's review during the site plan application. He noted also that the DCA must approve the bylaws of the homeowner's association.

The Mayor asked Council if they wished to introduce an ordinance at this meeting to amend the Redevelopment Plan in accordance with the Planning Board's recommendations.

Council President Schneider stated that, while some of the recommendations have merit, he feels that to adopt all of them "would tie our hands further." He disagreed with increasing the minimum number of residential units, and said that he is not yet convinced of the need for 15,000 square feet of municipal office space, or that any part of the existing building must "go away." He expressed concern about the impact of this Plan on our emergency services, and said that

he “still has issues” with the parking numbers. “I would like very much to see a named redeveloper,” adding that he attended a “Green Building” seminar, where he learned that in order to do create a green building, it would be necessary to increase the number of units in order to make it feasible for the developer. “I am hoping this will be a green building,” he said.

Mayor Patten and Ms. Roberts noted that the Plan is not written to require this, but rather to encourage it. “If we want to entice a developer,” Council President Schneider said, “we’d want to allow them to increase the density. We’re only allowing a maximum of 130 units. To make those kinds of things a reality, we would need to increase the density.” Ms. Roberts stated that the Planning Board was happy with establishing a maximum of 130 units. If it is possible to build a “green building” within those parameters, she said, they would be pleased, and if not, they wanted to make a statement that they feel that it is important.

“Why lock ourselves in?,” Mr. Schneider said. He expressed concern that, if the Borough’s requirements are unrealistic, it will delay the project “for another 20 years.” “We’ve seen several plans and a market study,” Ms. Roberts replied. “Four or five months ago, a plan of 98 units was presented, including a contribution to the Borough. That was a real possibility. A market analysis indicated that it could work. Then there was another plan of about 120 units with no contribution to the Borough. The Planning Board is not certain what the situation will be at the end of the day.” She said that the Planning Board did not want to have too much density because of quality of life issues.

Council President Schneider stated that he does not want to see the range of units restricted any further, and sees nothing to be gained by increasing the minimum number of units. Councilman Sikorski pointed out that the Plan includes the provision that the minimum and maximum number of units may be amended based upon the recommendation of the Planning Board, and that the final number will be contingent upon traffic and parking studies. “The numbers indicated here,” he said, “are more consistent with the Sockler and Redding reports, but are not the final numbers.” He added that including affordable housing onsite serves to increase the original numbers. “To go back to 80 would be next to impossible for any developer,” he said. “Dranoff had actually suggested 143 units, and did not accommodate the affordable housing.” Council President Schneider stated again that there is no reason to rewrite the minimum number of units. “We had an actual developer – now the owner of this building – propose 98 units, so why establish a minimum of 115?,” he asked. “Council blew it,” Councilman Sikorski replied, “and didn’t want to accept that, then we received another proposal for a higher number.”

Councilmember Harinxma noted that Dranoff made a compelling argument for increasing the density, saying that it “drives the town.” “It made us more open to more units,” she said. Ms. Harinxma questioned the need for 15,000 square feet of municipal space. “What we have now is not enough?” she asked. “No,” Ms. Gallagher replied emphatically, noting that offices right now are very cramped. The plan proposed by Feitlowitz & Kosten several years ago, she said, included a total of over 12,000 square feet, which accommodated our needs at that time. She feels that we need at least that much space.

Councilman Quattrone asked if the basement space noted previously by the developer would be included in the calculation of living space. Ms. Roberts stated that this space is not included in the Plan.

Mr. Quattrone recommended that no action be taken on this until the full Council is present, and this was generally agreed upon.

AUGUST 21 COUNCIL MEETING

It was discussed and agreed that, there being no pressing need for same, the Council meeting scheduled to take place on August 21 would not be held. The next regular meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 5.

NEW BUSINESS

REGULATION OF GARAGE SALES

Ms. Gallagher reported that her office has received several complaints about an ongoing garage sale in the Borough. Currently, she said, there are no ordinances in place to regulate garage sales. Many towns do so, she said, and she had the opportunity to review several sample ordinances that day which she obtained from the League of Municipalities. Regulations range from simple regulations regarding time, frequency, hours, signage, items which can be sold, any exemptions to the ordinance, etc., to requiring the registration of each sale, to requiring registration AND payment of a fee (generally \$5 to \$15). It was generally agreed that Ms. Gallagher would compile information regarding regulations in other towns and report back to Council at the next meeting.

COUNCIL COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilmember Harinxma reported that the *Springzville* concert scheduled for the prior Wednesday at Association Park was postponed due to excessive heat. It will take place on the coming Wednesday.

Councilman Quattrone reported on activities of the Public Works department during July. He noted that, so far this year, the Department has performed 215 mark outs, which take time and must be carefully done. These are mandatory when one is digging near the street. There is no charge to the property owner for this service. Mr. Quattrone also noted the Borough's savings during July as a result of recycling yard waste (\$592), grass clippings (\$215) and woodchips (\$2,711). The Department assisted in the replacement of water-damaged flooring in the Police Department, and has replaced lighting fixtures in Borough Hall and the firehouse with new, energy efficient lighting. In addition, he said, our Public Works department repaired a water leak for Roosevelt as part of a shared services arrangement with that municipality. Lastly, Councilman Quattrone reported that during the recent extreme heat, Mr. Blake brought his crew in from 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. rather than from 8 to 4:30.

With respect to the First Aid Squad, Councilman Quattrone said that he would like to have them present a report at the next Council meeting regarding their status. Council had no objections to including this on the next meeting agenda.

Ms. Gallagher reported that she has been contacted by a professor at Rutgers University who would like to include Hightstown in a project she is working on regarding "municipal transparency." She said that Heather Taylor of Common Cause recommended the Borough as a great example of open government. Ms. Gallagher will be meeting with the professor during the coming week.

Councilman Quattrone asked Ms. Gallagher how the Borough's summer schedule was working out. "Great!," she replied. Employees and residents alike seem to appreciate the summer hours, and she feels that the program has been very successful.

Chief Eufemia advised that if a solicitor comes to one's door, they need not be invited in. If one is concerned, they can call the Police Department and we will check them out, he said, adding, "We do find that solicitations take place at times without the proper permits. Don't be afraid to ask for ID." He noted that approved solicitors should have a copy of their permit with them. Councilman Quattrone asked Chief Eufemia about phone solicitations by the PBA. "They never do that," he said. "The PBA is not affiliated with any groups calling by phone. It's a scheme." He added that those calls often originate from the Midwest or elsewhere. Mr. Quattrone asked the Chief how the department is making out with the maintenance of their vehicles this year. "So far, so good," he replied.

Mr. Raffetto, following up on the EDC's presentation earlier in the meeting, asked Council if their consensus was to support Mr. Vanderbeck's request to work with the Borough Administrator toward arranging a meeting with the DCA and Rutgers. Council had no objections to proceeding in this way.

Mayor Patten noted that the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission will be presenting an outdoor movie (*E.T.*) on August 11 at Rosedale Park in Hopewell, and that the Latino Women's Council of Mercer County, of which he is a member, will be selling food to raise money for a scholarship to be presented to a student at Hightstown High School.

PUBLIC COMMENT II

Mayor Patten opened the floor for public comment.

Mike Vanderbeck, 342 Stockton Street and Chair of the Economic Development Committee, acknowledged Council for adopting the Resolution regarding the consolidation of police services, and said that he hopes it will lead to other possible savings.

Eugene Sarafin, 600-628 South Main Street, stated that the Resolution regarding police services "is a piece of crap" and that Mayor Mironov "is out of her mind to waste time with you people." All Borough services should be consolidated, he said.

J. P. Gibbons, 602 North Main Street, stated that Mr. Vanderbeck "made a compelling presentation." He suggested that, rather than hire a paid full-time director, as would be required in order to get funding from the State through its Main Street program, the Borough create a mechanism whereby residents and businesses could contribute directly to the project. "If we have volunteers willing to coordinate this," he said, "all we need is money." He applauded the concept of using the expertise of Borough volunteers to help make the Borough a better place.

No one else came forward and the floor was closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Borough Clerk read aloud Resolution 2006-173, authorizing a closed session for the purposes of discussing possible litigation and obtaining the advice of counsel. The Resolution was moved by Councilmember Sikorski and seconded by Council President Schneider.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Harinxma, Quattrone, Sikorski and Schneider voted yes. Councilmembers Rosenberg and Thompson were absent.

Resolution adopted, 4-0.

RESOLUTION 2006-173 AUTHORIZING A MEETING WHICH EXCLUDES THE PUBLIC

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that this body will hold a meeting on August 7, 2006 at approximately 9:30 p.m. at Borough Hall that will be limited only to consideration of an item or items with respect to which the public may be excluded pursuant to section 7b of the Open Public Meetings Act.

The general nature of the subject or subjects to be discussed:

Advice of Counsel Possible Litigation

Stated as precisely as presently possible the following is the time when and the circumstances under which the discussion conducted at said meeting can be disclosed to the public: November 7, 2006 or when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

The public is excluded from said meeting, and further notice is dispensed with, all in accordance with sections 8 and 4a of the Open Public Meetings Act.

Upon reconvening, adjournment was moved by Councilman Sikorski, seconded by Councilmember Harinxma and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace B. Gallagher, RMC
Borough Clerk

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

August 7, 2006

Hightstown -- "one square mile of Paradise," to use the phrase coined by the late Mayor Skip Cox -- has enjoyed much praise from all around the state. Hightstown has been referenced both in meetings and in print, as a model for a successful downtown revitalization. These well deserved accolades are the result of many long hours of devoted service by Mayor and Council, past and present.

Volunteer groups, boards, committees and commissions can take pride in these remarkable advances.

The question facing Hightstown today is how we continue this magnificent progress. We all understand economic development does not occur in a vacuum, and as much as we all want the downtown and borough to exceed all expectations we can not ignore the impact of year to year exorbitant tax increases on Borough residents and businesspeople. Yet despite the increase in taxes the Borough infrastructure remains at best in a status quo position. The Downtown Revitalization Institute compares a municipality's revitalization efforts to a car going up hill, that is, if a town is not continually progressing up hill it will quickly begin to slide back down losing all that hard earned progress.

We believe without linkages to regional opportunities, and especially those relating to our closest neighbor East Windsor, our future as a vibrant and economically successful community is threatened with this backward slide because of our inherent inefficiencies of size and structure. Progressive communities across the country are looking for efficiencies that allow them to identify services that are best served by government and to shed services that can be best provided through interlocal agreements, mergers, transfers, public/private partnerships or privatized outright.

One example of Hightstown being stalled on our uphill progress is our inability to establish a Main Street program. The EDC has researched this program which is sponsored by the State of New Jersey and finds its origin in the Historic Preservation Act. The Main Street program is a proven approach to a successful and sustainable downtown. We visited Mount Holly, Lawrenceville and other Main Street communities to witness first hand how this program synergistically brings together existing volunteer groups into a coordinated effort to make a town vibrant, successful, and exciting. Hightstown is blessed with many committed volunteers and active committees who would greatly contribute to such an organization. All the State requires of the Borough is to make a minimal contribution to indicate a commitment to its own success.

Knowing Hightstown cannot afford this minimal financial contribution to this program or similar programs that would advance further the uphill progress of the Borough, we did not formally request funding. Hightstown's bare bones budgetary situation is dire. Relying on state largess (extraordinary aid) each year, that is not guaranteed, places a strain on levels of the community and government services. This budget crisis affects all quality of life issues in the borough. Our ability to provide increased pedestrian safety, adequate sidewalks and curbs, trees, proper maintenance and a clear vision on what Hightstown's future holds, is what is at stake.

With this in mind we implore the Borough Council to continue in its efforts toward efficiency and pursue regional opportunities whether it is outsourcing, more shared services or consolidation. We believe the recent gains of the Borough, the Historic District, the Greenways, and all the efforts of the revitalization are threatened. To let the situation deteriorate further is unnecessary. Now is the time for active discussions on regional opportunities, as there is every reason to believe this can only result in a win/win situation.

We applaud the efforts of Mayor Patten to secure a strong and unanimous commitment from Council to pursue exploration of these opportunities. We encourage Council to unanimously pass tonight's resolution. Hightstown Borough and East Windsor Township currently have the best working relationship in recent memory.

Additionally, we have identified technical and financial programs, which will assist the Borough Council to evaluate opportunities and determine our optimal economic future. As a first step we offer to work with the Council to organize an information meeting with representatives from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey League of Municipalities. The Municipal Land Use Center of NJ has offered to partner with the Borough to coordinate and facilitate this meeting possibly by mid-September. This meeting will help our community understand some of the successful strategies employed by other communities in NJ. After this information session we can work toward developing an action plan.

The EDC recognizes and respects the complexity and gravity of Hightstown's situation. We stand ready to work collaboratively with Mayor and council to devise community supported solutions.