

**Township of Mount Laurel
Regular Council Meeting
March 8, 2021
Via Zoom**

Mayor Steglik called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance & Traditional Moment of Silence

ROLL CALL

Councilwoman Karen Cohen – present, Councilwoman Fozia Janjua – present,
Councilman Nick Moustakas – present, Deputy Mayor Kareem Pritchett - present, Mayor
Stephen Steglik - present, George Morris, Township Solicitor – present, Meredith
Tomczyk, Township Manager/Township Clerk - present

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Public Announcement, which is required by the “Open Public Meetings Act” of the
State of New Jersey and read at every meeting of the Township Council was read by the
Municipal Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to Move: Councilwoman Cohen, 2nd Deputy Mayor Pritchett

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,219,569.61

Motion to Move: Councilwoman Cohen, 2nd Councilwoman Janjua
Roll Call 5 yes votes

**RESOLUTION #59-2021: AMENDING 21-R-32 SETTING MEETING LOCATIONS
BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.

Motion to Move Resolution #59-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Deputy Mayor
Pritchett

Roll Call 5 yes votes

**RESOLUTION #60-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OR
CANCELLATION OF PROPERTY TAXES BLOCK 304.01, LOT 36**

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.

Motion to Move Resolution #60-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Councilwoman
Janjua

Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #61-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OR CANCELLATION OF PROPERTY TAXES BLOCK 202.05, LOT 20

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #61-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Deputy Mayor Pritchett
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #62-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY (“MLTMUA”) FOR GRASS CUTTING SERVICES

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #62-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilwoman Janjua
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #63-2021: AUTHORIZATION TO INSTALL A FENCE WITHIN A DRAINAGE EASEMENT AREA FOR BLOCK 907.01, LOT 23

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #63-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Deputy Mayor Pritchett
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #64-2021: AUTHORIZATION TO INSTALL A FENCE WITHIN A LANDSCAPE BUFFER EASEMENT AREA FOR BLOCK 401.08, LOT 10

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #64-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilman Moustakas
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #65-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PLACING OF A LIEN AGAINST A CERTAIN PROPERTY PER CHAPTER 65 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT LAUREL

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #65-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilwoman Cohen
Roll Call 5 yes votes

ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE #5-2021: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 66-3 OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE TO AMEND UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE PERMIT FEES

Clerk read Ordinance as entitled.

Mayor opened public participation.

Linda Bobo – Asked what the percentage of the increase for the fees is.

Bryant Curry, Construction Code Official - Explained that the fees were adjusted to compensate for the amount of time it takes the employees, not by a percentage.

Andrew Gaus – Questioned where the money from the increased fees will go and what will happen if there's a surplus.

Jackie – Questioned the satellite dish portion of the ordinance.

Mayor closed public participation.

Motion to move Ordinance #5-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilwoman Cohen
Roll Call 5 yes votes

ORDINANCE #6-2021: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 89 OF THE
CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT LAUREL ENTITLED “HOUSING
STANDARDS”

Clerk read Ordinance as entitled.

Bryant Curry and Manager explained the ordinance.

Mayor opened public participation.

Stephen Schlags, 308 Keatley Drive – Questioned if it is the buyer or seller's responsibility to obtain a CO. Also wanted to know examples of what issues could be found during an inspection and how soon before selling could an inspection be done.

James Hogan, 105 Yorktown Drive – Asked if there is a statistic of how many buyers have come into the town recently and if more employees would need to be hired to keep up with all of the inspections. Stated that he did not know it was code enforcement's job to make sure assessments are fair.

Matthew Verney, 50 Watson Drive – Mentioned that he appreciates the need for safety, but is concerned with the disclosure statement responsibilities. Feels that this is not making Mount Laurel a friendly place to move to.

Heather/David Schor – Stated that they are not getting a response from the building department and are skeptical that the employees will be able to handle the increase in inspections. Also feels that this is unfair to residents.

Richard Bathke, 1 Wood Lark Drive – Understands that these inspections are necessary, but concerned about older homes and issues being found right before a scheduled closing. Requested that homeowners from a certain period be grandfathered in.

June Bilenky – Asked for the different rates to be explained and how the system works. Inquired what other towns have this same requirement.

Deputy Mayor Pritchett – Explained that this is about safety.

Manager – Gave a list of the other towns in the area.

Harriette Cohen, 10 Alderton Lane – Stated that she feels this will show that Mount Laurel is more concerned, not unfriendly. Appreciates that the fees have been lowered and agrees with the ordinance.

Jean Capece, 221 Amberfield Drive – Confirmed that this only applies to homes that are for sale. Questioned if there are intentions of requiring an inspection for every homeowner, not just homes for sale.

Linda Bobo, 47 Abington Road – Concerned about the re-inspection rate and feels that the fees are double dipping. Wishes Council would reconsider the ordinance.

Dean Pappas, 104 Wellesley Court – Questioned the need for a separate heating certification, along with a survey, and expressed concerns on the extra costs and additional fees.

Linda Aquino – Stated that a seller should not have to pay for a survey and feels that this is a lot to ask of sellers. Thinks that improvements should be negotiated between the buyer and seller, not the Township.

Dawn Hogan – Discussed all of the inspections required when selling a home and feels that this is costly and outrageous, and would like the ordinance to be voted down.

George Haeuber, 13 Eddystone Way – Considers the fee changes to be major amendments and thinks the ordinance should be re-advertised.

Margie Haeuber – Explained that she feels the ordinance is unfair to sellers and the buyer should have more responsibility.

Harriet Insler, 4 Witherod Court – Stated that she thinks we need this ordinance to protect people and make sure houses are safe.

Maria Giarratano, 32 Crows Nest Court – Questioned if the Township is trying to alter existing contracts between buyers and sellers. Thinks this is putting too much responsibility on the seller.

Mike Johnson, 264 Saint David Drive – Expressed concern with the inspection process and obtaining a survey.

Harriette Cohen - Asked why the ordinance is coming up now.

Andrew Gaus, 154 Kettlebrook Drive – Explained his concerns with contracts that are currently in effect and when the ordinance will go into effect. Suggested that Council come up with a working session with realtors, as it seems to him that their concerns are being dismissed.

Cynthia Astrom, 165 Memorial Lane – Asked for an example of what changes can be made with the CO. Questioned fines, time element for inspections, and handling inspections during COVID. Requested that the reinspection fees be reconsidered.

Louis Antosh, 8 Hanover Court – Commended Council for wanting to protect the people. Questioned the inspection process and cost to the homeowner.

Rickie Cohen – Thinks the buyer should be responsible for the survey. Asked about the date of when the ordinance goes into effect.

Maria Giarratano – Asked about mold inspectors and the cleanliness aspect of the home inspection. Questioned the financial difficulty on sellers with low-income housing.

Mayor closed public participation.

Motion to move Ordinance #6-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilwoman Cohen
Roll Call 5 yes votes

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cynthia Astrom – Wanted verification on the grass cutting shared service with the MUA.

Jackie – Expressed her disappointment that Council already made up their mind on the ordinance.

Andrew Gaus – Asked if the inspection in the ordinance could be done by anyone else besides the Township.

COMMENTS BY COUNCIL

Mayor Steglik – Thanked everyone for attending and for speaking. Encouraged anyone with further questions to reach out.

Deputy Mayor Pritchett – Thanked everyone for their comments and appreciated the suggestions. Continue to be safe.

Councilwoman Cohen – Thanked everyone for participating. Thanked George, Meredith and Bryant for caring about the Township. Everyone needs to follow codes. Stay safe.

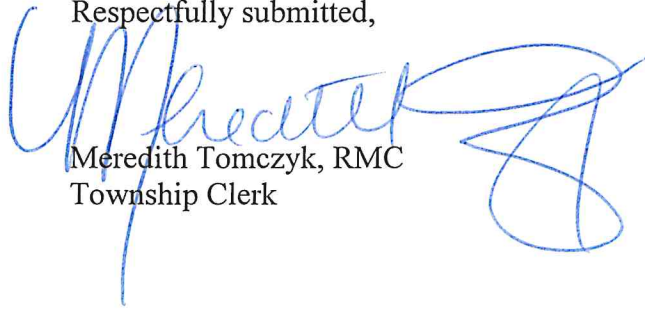
Councilwoman Janjua – Explained that she is here because she loves Mount Laurel and wants what is best for the town. Thanked everyone for speaking. Be safe.

Councilman Moustakas – Thanked everyone for their participation. Thanked everyone working in the pandemic for the amazing work they do. Acknowledged National Women's Day.

Motion to adjourn: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilman Moustakas

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Pritchett', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Meredith Tomczyk, RMC
Township Clerk