

APPROVED: August 28, 2006

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
SPECIAL WORK SESSION
July 26, 2006

CALL TO ORDER: President Geevers called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

This is to advise that the notice requirement provided for in the "Open Public Meetings Act" has been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was properly given and transmitted to The Times and Princeton Packet; filed with the Clerk of the Municipality; and posted in the West Windsor Township Municipal Building at North Post and Clarksville Roads on July 20, 2006.

ATTENDEES: President: Geevers; Vice President: Kleinman; Council: Gambatese (left at 10:33 a.m.), Morgan (left at 11:03 a.m.), Pfeifer (arrived at 9:10 a.m.); Township Attorney: Herbert; Township Clerk: Young

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Ms. Young led the salute to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

COUNCIL PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES AND MUNICIPAL VACANCY PROCEDURES

Mr. Herbert reviewed the outstanding changes to the Municipal Vacancy Procedures.

Mr. Morgan inquired about the need for public comment during the process.

Ms. Young noted that public comment was required at all meetings of the Township Council.

Mr. Gambatese noted his concerns about the public comment portion of the meeting turning into a political campaign for a particular candidate.

Mr. Herbert also noted that executive sessions were not required by law to be taped and pointed out that many other Townships do not tape their closed sessions.

Mr. Morgan noted that the eighty-day law allowing for the destruction of tapes that was instituted by the New Jersey Division of Archives and Records Management were for public meetings and did not include tapes from closed sessions.

Ms. Young spoke about the detail of information provided in the Council closed session minutes.

President Geever and Ms. Pfeifer discussed their concerns with taping the closed session meetings.

Ms. Young recommended that a vote be taken on the issue of taping closed sessions.

Motion to approve the removal of the wording in the Council Procedural Guidelines which requires the Clerk to tape and store all closed sessions: Pfeifer

Second: Kleinman

RCV: aye Gambatese

aye Kleinman

aye Morgan

aye Pfeifer

aye Geever

Ms. Pfeifer expressed concerns about the code of conduct and what documents would be available for public review.

Mr. Herbert suggested not to codify the Municipal Vacancy portion of the Procedural Guidelines.

Ms. Pfeifer suggested creating a packet for the applicant to review and educate the individual about the responsibilities of a Township Council Member. She also suggested that the applicant submit references and that each existing Member of Council make it a point to get to know each individual applying for the position.

Ms. Pfeifer suggested making the process a two-part procedure starting with providing information and a short interview to get to know the applicant. She noted that a private conversation with the applicant would add value to the process.

Ms. Geevers suggested that the packet contain a letter from the President, the Council Vacancy Application, and documentation about the role and responsibilities of a Council Member.

Mr. Gambatese noted that he was adamantly opposed to meeting in closed session to interview potential candidates.

Mr. Morgan noted that the interview should be a public process and the deliberations could affect the outcome or the decision made by Council.

Ms. Pfeifer suggested that the first week of when the vacancy occurs should be the time when the applicants pick up their packets and the Council begins to meet with the individuals, and during the second week the process of elimination should begin.

Ms. Geevers suggested that a generic press release be created so that the Clerk can have it published in the newspapers and posted on the Township website.

Ms. Kleinman noted that the references supplied do not have to be residents of the township, and the applicants should list the top few issues in West Windsor that are important to them and why.

Mr. Morgan stressed the need to have a screening process for the applicants. He also explained that the current Council Members cannot vote on something that could bind the decisions of future Members of Council.

Mr. Gambatese expressed the importance of discussions with the potential candidates and how these discussions should be handled "off line" to assist in building a consensus.

Ms. Kleinman suggested having public comment at the end of the candidates' presentations.

Ms. Geevers noted that she would work with Ms. Young in putting together a Council Vacancy Packet.

Ms. Pfeifer suggested that if there are more than ten applicants for the vacancy that a process of culling the number of individuals qualified for the position should be part of the procedure.

Ms. Kleinman opposed the elimination of individuals and preferred a public presentation to get to know the applicants who have applied for the position. She noted that Council needs to get the most information in a short period of time to make an educated decision.

Ms. Pfeifer expressed the need for a Code of Ethics because the decision-making process could get political. She also noted that the process should not stray from the mandate of the law.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Motion to adjourn: Kleinman

Second: Pfeifer

VV: All approved, Morgan and Gambatese absent

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Sharon L. Young
Township Clerk
West Windsor Township