

**MINUTES**  
**Work Session**  
**Council Chambers**  
**Monday, February 13, 2017**

**CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

Council President Bromberg called the meeting to order at 8:52 pm in the Council Chambers located at 406 Rivervale Road, River Vale, New Jersey 07675.

**SALUTE TO FLAG**

Council President Bromberg asked all in attendance to rise and join him in a Salute to the Flag.

**SUNSHINE LAW STATEMENT**

Council President Bromberg read the Sunshine Statement into the record, as follows:

*"In accordance with the provisions set forth in the Open Public Meetings Law, notification of this meeting has been sent to all officially appointed Township newspapers and notice is posted at the Municipal Office."*

**ROLL CALL**

Councilman Ben-Yishay, Councilman Donovan, Councilman Criscuolo, Councilwoman Sieg and Council President Bromberg were present.

**Also present:** Mayor Glen Jasionowski, Business Administrator/CFO Gennaro Rotella, Township Attorney Silvana Raso, Township Engineer Christopher Statile and Township Clerk, Karen Campanelli.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Discussion – An Ordinance to Establish a Joint Planning Board**

Council President Bromberg opened the meeting with a brief explanation of the purpose of this evenings Work Session. The discussion item will be about an ordinance being put forth to establish a Joint Planning and Zoning Board. Council President Bromberg explained that due to the reduced schedule for both boards it has been suggested that it would be more convenient and less of an expense for the public to have one board.

The Mayor stated that he is willing to go in any direction as a unified group. The Mayor first made note of the continuing increase in the legal line of the budget; in particular the increasing legal fees of the Planning Board. He has also spoken the Mayors of both Montvale and Hillsdale who have had combined Boards for quite some time. Both Mayors were very positive and noted a considerable increase in consumer experience for the residents; as well as being more productive and less complaints.

Mayor Jasionowski also commented that there are negatives to combining the Boards at the present stage; adding that they have two strong Boards that would have to be consolidated to one. He further stated that this is not going to be a big money saver overall; however, it will be very advantageous for the residents.

Councilman Donovan has served on both Boards for several years. He explained that originally he served on just the Zoning Board and felt there was a need for separation of the Boards. However, he's seen a shift for both Boards and that often there are no applications and therefore no meetings being held. Additionally, there is the same core group of members that attend the meetings and several that do not.

Councilman Donovan explained what really swayed his mind was being an applicant before the Board in Hillsdale. He witnessed how they handled both major applications and small variances; the Board handled everything very well and efficiently. The reason being because they had enough to fill the agenda. Council Donovan also noted that because he's a tradesman he has the opportunity to talk to other architects, contractors and developers who have gone before the Joint Boards in other Towns. Councilman Donovan has yet to hear any negative feedback.

He further explained that in his experience sitting on both Boards; they always seem to struggle to find people willing to put the time and do the homework needed to sit on either Board. Councilman Donovan feels it has been frustrating at times to see how the membership has changed and how they seem to have taken a step away from taking it as seriously and judiciously as a quasi-judicial Board should be taken. He also believes everyone deserves to be heard and treated respectfully and this too has been a struggle at times.

Councilman Donovan suggested taking the truly dedicated members from both Boards and form one strong Board that is willing to take it seriously and put in the time needed. He would also like to see the whole process be a better, more efficient and fairer experience. He added that he truly believes it's time to seriously consider making this change.

Councilwoman Sieg commented that she had spoken to Councilman Donovan knowing his experience on both Boards. She also feels it's time for a change; it makes sense and will be more efficient. Councilwoman Sieg added that the combination of both Boards will provide better results and reduce legal issues; both are big plusses.

Council President Bromberg added that it is relatively easy to dissolve the Boards by resolution and then recreate a new Board by ordinance. However, to undo should it not work out could only be done by referendum. Mayor Jasionowski clarified that none of the communities they've spoken to has even contemplated going back.

Councilman Ben-Yishay feels this is a good idea and the right move to make based on all the positives.

Mayor Jasionowski suggested that if everyone is in agreement the next step would be to next have a public discussion. The Mayor will review with the Township Attorney to ensure everything is in order and also work with the Council President to have on the agenda. The Mayor will also layout a timeline with targets dates.

Councilman Donovan questioned where it is stated in the draft ordinance who makes the appointments. The section of the ordinance that covers appointments was pointed out which are staggered terms appointed by the Mayor.

Council President Bromberg stated that it appears they have consensus in order to move forward.

The Mayor and Council next had a brief discussion regarding an email that was received requesting the Township pass an ordinance banning puppy mill stores. The Mayor commented that he supports what they are trying to accomplish however the ordinance is incredibly restrictive. He reported that there are Towns that hat have passed this ordinance but the majority have not. The Mayor added that the State is considering addressing this issue as well.

Council President Bromberg concurred with the Mayor's comments. He feels this issue should be addressed at the State level and he too felt the ordinance was overly restrictive. Councilman Ben-Yishay also felt that it was overly restrictive and he would not be able to support. The Mayor further commented that he believes when they started their intentions were good. However, the legislation went too far and would make it very made difficult for people with the right intentions to run a business.

Councilman Donovan doesn't want to see ordinances too restrictive without any oppressing need. He also believes the current cultural climate would prohibit most people from going into that business.

Council President Bromberg concluded that they would not be taking any action or moving forward regarding this issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilman Donovan; seconded by Councilman Criscuolo to adjourn the meeting at 9:25pm.

\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST:  
Karen Campanelli  
Township Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council President  
Mark Bromberg

