

**MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 20, 2010 WORKSHOP MEETING  
HELD AT 7:00 PM  
51 WEST MAIN STREET  
FREEHOLD, NJ 07728**

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**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Mayor Michael Wilson, Councilman Michael DiBenedetto, Councilman Kevin Kane, Councilman John Newman, Councilman George Schnurr, Councilwoman Sharon Shutzer and Councilman Jaye Sims.

**Absent:** None

Also present were Business Administrator Joseph B. Bellina, Borough Attorney Kerry E. Higgins, Captain Glenn Roberts and Borough Clerk Traci L. DiBenedetto.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mike Kruimer, Edison, NJ, stated that he likes to travel to speak about bicycle and pedestrian plans. He asked mayor and council to consider the bicycle and pedestrian plan that is going to be presented to them. He is a bicyclist and uses bicycling as a form of transportation and a means of recreation. Mr. Kruimer stated he has been to Freehold a number of times and likes to see Freehold as a destination point. Mr. Kruimer stated he was involved with the Henry Hudson Trail and works with the NJ DOT and is in the process of working on a State bicycle map that should be out this summer. Mr. Kruimer is Chairman of the New Jersey Committee for the East Coast Greenway Line and that connects the trails from Maine to Florida. Mr. Kruimer commended mayor and council for this plan and made mention when he walked down town to grab a bite to eat he noticed there were no empty stores and stated that mayor and council are doing a fantastic job.

Wally Tunison, owner of Bicycle Hub in Marlboro, NJ. He is a cycling advocate in New Jersey, sits on the New Jersey Trails Council and is an advisor to the DEP on how trails should be used. Mr. Tunison commended mayor and council for thinking of cycling and walking as forms of transportation because around the State cycling and walking are the "red headed stepchild" of the transportation system. Mr. Tunison asked mayor and council to review this plan and what it can do for the population in the future, as far as health issues. Also, what this plan will mean to other area communities in the form of being able to connect up with Freehold. This is something that can be expanded upon and built out as it goes into the other communities. There is also a large childhood obesity issue because children do not get out and exercise enough and people are not riding bicycles enough. Mr. Tunison stated there is a program called Safe Routes to Schools of which this particular plan could be part of, as well as the Henry Hudson Trail.

Mr. Tunison asked mayor and council to think of complete streets as something in the future to relieve the transportation and congestion issues in this town.

Joyce Stapleton, 11 Fulton Street, stated they were told that the Freehold Center Partnership does not want bicycle racks on the street. Bicycle racks should be on the street. There is plenty of room to put bicycle racks on the street near the restaurants. She would like to see a rack put on Main Street by the gazebo. Freehold Borough does have a lot of bicycle racks but they are out of the way and not convenient.

Another issue, Ms. Stapleton wanted to address is safety. It is a law in New Jersey if you are riding at dusk; you have to have a light on the bike. There are many people riding in the dark in the Borough that do not have a light, wear dark clothes and riding the wrong way on the road. It is dangerous to the bicyclist and the driver. Also, children under the age of 17 are supposed to be wearing helmets and this is another law that is not being enforced.

Andrew Besold, North Brunswick, commended mayor and council for going forth and having this presentation plan put together. This is a great plan. Mr. Besold is a recent graduate of Rutgers University Urban Planning School where he specialized in bicycle pedestrian planning. Mr. Besold is also a cyclist with over twenty years experience and certified instructor teaching bicycle education safety. This is one of the more important plans proposed here in New Jersey and Mr. Besold recommended the bicycle parking standards. He stated if you don't provide parking at a destination that the cyclist is going to, they will park illegally. This plan implements some proposals to educate people on how to properly operate their bicycles on the roadway. There are some big safety concerns with bicyclists who ride on the sidewalk. Mr. Besold asked mayor and council to listen to the recommendations that the professionals from Michael Baker Consulting have prepared. Mr. Besold stated Freehold Borough already has an advantage over many other communities. It is a community conducive to walking and bicycling with a beautiful downtown. The household travel survey was just recently released showing travel trends from 2005 – 2009; Freehold Borough has 2% of its population already traveling to their place of employment by bicycle, which is well above the State average.

Barry Fulmer, Ramon Blvd., Freehold Township, stated that he quite frequently comes into the Borough on bike through the Henry Hudson Trail. Mr. Fulmer and his wife often shop and dine in the Borough. Mr. Fulmer asked mayor and council to consider finding a way to extend the last part of the trail that comes into the Borough to make it easier for people to come in. Mr. Fulmer stated he has traveled up and down the East Coast to a number of towns and you see bike racks in front of banks, restaurants and shops and the merchants welcome these racks.

Jean Vigeant, 63 Broad Street, stated she bought her house in Freehold Borough because it was such a charming place. Bikes contribute to that charm. She stated that she is constantly on her bike and it is a great new lifestyle to get involved in. Ms. Vigeant stated this plan is something that will benefit the Borough and suggested having some

bicycle/motorist safety clinics so we can work together in showing each other mutual courtesy.

Jeff Surgent, 23 Holmes Terrace, thanked mayor and council for considering the bicycle and pedestrian plan. Bicycle and pedestrian safety is a major concern in this town. Mr. Surgent stated he would like to encourage acceptance of the plan in its entirety with a few suggestions. Attention needs to be given to the traffic nightmare at the corner of Rte. 522 and Rte. 537 and there should be "No left hand turn" signs put up at Marcy and Mclean Streets. Also, enforcement of code is an essential element to the safety of bike riders, pedestrians and motorists. Mr. Surgent thanked Councilman Newman for bringing this issue to the residents and evidently by the number of people at the public forum earlier, this is an important issue to many people here. Mr. Surgent stated he would like to offer his ongoing input and support on this project.

Elizabeth Slade, Kingsley Way, stated that she is a recreational biker and she does go to Zebu's a lot and there is no bike rack there. Trying to go down Main Street is a nightmare and you are not allowed to bike on the sidewalk. Another concern Ms. Slade has is bicycle safety. The bicycle clinics would be a good idea. A lot of people do ride at night without the head light or reflective clothing. Ms. Slade thanked Councilman Newman for proposing all of this and getting all of this great information out to the public.

Gary Gravatt, 43 Kiawah Avenue, thanked mayor and council for what they are trying to do. Mr. Gravatt's major concern is safety. Some of these bicyclists run into the side of a vehicle and just ride away. According to the State of New Jersey Title 39, bicycles have to follow all of the laws that an automobile has to follow. He doesn't see any of this in the Borough and he sees that nobody is enforcing it. Pedestrians are another problem. You constantly see people pushing baby carriages in the middle of the road. Mr. Gravatt sees the children riding to school everyday and maybe 1 out of 20 is wearing a helmet. This is not being enforced. That is the safety issue. Safety is first. He asked that the laws that are on the books now be enforced and then devise a plan.

Delores Malysa, Freehold Township, stated her husband has owned and operated Freehold Bicycle for the past 28 years. Ms. Malysa stated the Borough's size has not changed. The surrounding traffic and flow of people in and around the Borough has changed. It is encouraging to see a plan like this to utilize the space that the Borough does have in a safe way for everyone.

Jim Raleigh, President of Friends of Monmouth Battlefield, stated he is interested in encouraging connectivity for hiking and bicycle trails. He is very disappointed in what he sees in the plan for lack of cooperation with the County and State Dept. of Environmental Protection. There should be more in this plan to connect with the parks, particularly Monmouth Battlefield State Park. Mr. Raleigh stated he lives in Colts Neck and has been involved with the MOM studies since 1996. The MOM line affects the trail plans more than anything else. There are a lot of good things in this plan but it needs to have more cooperation with the surrounding towns.

Richard Gatto, Downtown Freehold, wanted to recognize the PBA and Sgt. Chris Colaner for the wonderful job they did with the Santa Train. They gave away in excess of over 800 toys and took over 450 photos of the children and families. It was an amazing site to watch the whole thing come together. Mr. Gatto thanked the gentleman from Conrail, who gives up his time to help organize this. Mr. Gatto wished mayor and council a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Tom Baldwin, 3 Vought Avenue, gave his annual assessment of the departments in Freehold Borough:

Fire Department: A+ Mr. Baldwin hopes the Borough can find the funds to restore the positions of the dispatchers.

First Aid: A+ Mr. Baldwin hopes the residents can give more financial support and that next year will be better. He thanked the First Aid Squad for their sacrifice and services.

Police Dept: A Mr. Baldwin hopes that whoever takes over the department follows in Chief Roth's footsteps. His policies were fair and even handed. Mr. Baldwin thanked Chief Roth and wished him good luck in the future.

Administration and Clerk's Office: A+

Code: A Mr. Baldwin stated there has been a big improvement over the past year.

Streets and Roads: A+

Mayor and Council: C+

Mr. Baldwin suggested the following to improve the Borough:

- a traffic light at the intersection of Main Street and Throckmorton Street
- a regular street sweeper
- new legal counsel
- term limits
- new mayor

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Sims:

#### RESOLUTION TO CLOSE PUBLIC PORTION.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Kane, Newman, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption, opposed none, absent none, abstain none. Mayor Wilson declared the Resolution adopted.

### **3. ROUTINE TRANSACTIONS-SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA (See Attachment I).**

See the permanent minute book for the minutes and the resolution book for the attachments.

#### **4. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN STUDY PRESENTATION.**

Councilman Newman explained there is a great history with bicycling and Freehold Borough. The bicycling and pedestrian study promotes healthy lifestyles, ease of access for residents to get downtown and people from other towns to get to Freehold Borough. Councilman Newman stated when the County had their summit earlier this year, they noted that Americans want to bike more. 52% of Americans want to bike more than they do now and 55% of Americans prefer to drive less and walk more. Biking and walking are related to community planning and health related issues. Biking and walking reduces health costs for employers, low cost and sustainable form of transportation for all people, living near a biking/walking trail has been shown to increase home values 4% to 6%. Hopefully, this will develop tourism and downtown commercial opportunities and will hopefully free up some parking. It will reduce wear and tear on the infrastructure in town. In New Jersey, the share of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities has risen from 20% in 2003 to 29%. This plan is for safety, reduces pollution and energy consumption, increases community interaction, and reduces traffic congestion and parking needs.

Daniel Kueper, Senior Project Manager, Michael Baker Jr., Inc., presented mayor and council with a power point presentation of the Freehold Borough Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The presentation plan is on file with the Workshop Minutes in the Freehold Borough Clerk's office.

Councilman Schnurr questioned the shared lane concept. He asked if a bicycle can safely share Main Street with vehicular traffic from Elks Point heading west to Throckmorton Street, given the layout of our town.

Mr. Kueper stated he didn't think Main Street was ideal for bicyclists, but if they are going to be downtown, we want them to ride in a way that is safer for them and the motorist.

Mayor Wilson also asked about the shared lane concept. He questioned if it has been utilized in other towns with similar demographics.

Mr. Kueper stated there weren't many examples in New Jersey. It has been used nation wide, in areas more urban than Freehold.

Mayor Wilson asked if the bike lane has been used in other municipalities with similar demographics.

Mr. Kueper stated bike lanes have been implemented in a number of communities similar to Freehold Borough in New Jersey successfully.

Mayor Wilson stated if there are any studies that have shown a reduced number of bicycle vehicle pedestrian accidents.

Mr. Kueper stated this is a fairly new marking. They have not been implemented with enough time. There have been many more studies done with the bike lane because they have been around a lot longer. The studies are very clear that they do improve bicycle safety and reduce the number of crashes.

Councilwoman Shutzer asked Mr. Kueper if he did this study with the knowledge that we have had extensive bike safety education in the Borough and it was not successful.

Kerry Higgins stated we handed out brochures, reflective vests and helmets.

Councilwoman Shutzer asked if this study was done with the knowledge that we have tried for years and discussed the possibility of the light at Throckmorton Street. The DOT didn't really care to entertain the idea.

Mayor Wilson explained the DOT has put a road block on this for about 15 to 20 years and the reason that they stated was they would never allow a traffic light in that close proximity to the rail line.

Mr. Kueper stated a couple years ago there was a law passed in New Jersey that gave more power of traffic controls over to municipalities.

Mayor Wilson stated the Borough recently installed about 10 additional bike racks in the last six months or so for approximately 100 bikes. Mayor Wilson asked if the plan would recommend how many racks you think we need.

Mr. Kueper stated that would be part of the plan.

Councilman Kane stated some of the problem areas we have were identified. The Finance Committee has been meeting frequently over the past few months with the budget constraints. Councilman Kane questioned if Mr. Kueper has come up with any kind of estimate of what it will cost to effectuate the improvements in this plan.

Mr. Kueper stated the bicycle improvements is a broad range and it could go up to \$110,000.00. Sidewalk improvements could range up to several hundred thousand dollars.

Councilman Sims stated there is a severe curb cut by the Elks on East Main Street, which would probably cut into the proposed bike lane. He questioned if there was any given thought to moving that just east of the bend in the curb.

Mr. Kueper stated he will look into that.

Councilman DiBenedetto stated the plan proposed to put bike racks on Main Street in front of the restaurants. He questioned why they would be put there.

Councilman DiBenedetto suggested putting them where the monument is and the bicyclist would still be able to see their bikes.

Mr. Kueper stated bicyclists like to have their bikes in close proximity of where they are going. This whole plan is conceptual recommendations, it is not a design plan. We do want to be sensitive to the issues of the business owners.

Councilman Kane asked if any of the field studies were done on a Friday or Saturday night in the summer. The sidewalk on Main Street is packed with people on those nights. Bike racks on that side could be an issue.

Councilwoman Shutzer stated mayor and council did determine that they didn't want anymore bike racks on Main Street and our thinking was that we did not want Main Street cluttered with bicycles. We have to look at this realistically. We have two different types of bicyclists in town.

Kerry Higgins stated there was a very heavy investment into the downtown business district with the sidewalks and promenade and the governing body thought having a lot of bike racks would defeat the purpose of creating that look. Ms. Higgins thought there were some compromises that could be made. Ms. Higgins stated she was intrigued with the mid-block crosswalks. That is something we have been looking for.

Mayor Wilson thanked Mr. Kueper for the presentation and stated the governing body looks forward to the final plan.

## **5. COMPLETE STREETS POLICY. (SEE ATTACHMENT II.)**

Councilman Newman stated the State, County and several towns in New Jersey have adopted a complete streets policy. The policy states when you are doing infrastructure improvements you consider all users that will be using the street and not just vehicles. When we are looking at a street in the future, we might consider putting in a bike lane. Instead of having to retrofit things later, you are doing it as you go forward. Councilman Newman provided council with some sample resolutions from other towns. This policy is pretty new. Montclair was the first town to adopt this policy last December.

Mayor Wilson asked if this was separate from the bicycle and pedestrian study.

Councilman Newman stated this is something separate.

Bill Wentzien, Cranmer Engineering, explained when the Borough is looking at next years road programs, this would request that we look at it in a different way. You might end up doing less number of streets in a given year to accommodate all of that. Some of it might just be in striping or signing.

Mayor Wilson stated council can decide what they want to do with this.

Councilman Kane stated we need a little more information on this.

Joseph Bellina, Business Administrator, suggested that he and Mr. Wentzien meet with the appropriate people from the State and get more information to share with the governing body.

Councilman Newman suggested putting it on this agenda because of having the experts here at this meeting.

Councilman DiBenedetto offered to enter into Executive Session, seconded by Councilman Sims:

**6. EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

**A. PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

**B. LITIGATION.**

**C. CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS.**

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Kane, Newman, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption, opposed none, absent none, abstain none. Mayor Wilson declared the Resolution adopted.

**7. ADJOURNMENT.**

There being no further business to discuss, Councilman Kane moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 PM, seconded by Councilwoman Shutzer, with All in Favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Traci L. DiBenedetto, RMC  
BOROUGH OF FREEHOLD

