

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT CONSOLIDATION STUDY COMMISSION OF
WANTAGE TOWNSHIP AND SUSSEX BOROUGH,
HELD AT THE WANTAGE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
ON JANUARY 7, 2009**

Commission Chairman Earl Snook called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, and requested Secretary Lee Abbott to call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the Commission were present:

E. Snook, S. Laguttuta, W. Dunn, P. Flynn, S. Hosking, A. Jacobs, G. Kresge, A. Little, C. McKay, and E. Meyer

Also present: G. Fehrenbach, consultant and J. Doyle, NJDCA liaison.

Mr. Snook led the assembly in the Salute to the Flag.

Mr. Snook stated, "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, Public Laws 1975, Chapter 231. It has been properly noticed and posted to the public, and certified by the Secretary."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Ms. Hosking, seconded by Mr. Little and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Consolidation Study Commission of Wantage Township and Sussex Borough held on December 3, 2008.

CHARTER STUDY COMMISSION REVIEW

Dr. Ernest Reock from Rutgers University was scheduled to present forms and types of local government in New Jersey. Because of the weather conditions, Dr. Reock asked to reschedule. He will make the presentation at the February meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration - report to be reviewed at the special meeting in two weeks.

Finance - no report at this time.

Planning / Zoning - no report at this time.

Public Safety - Commissioners Kresge and Meyer are organizing a meeting with the fire and EMS departments from the Borough and the Township. Mr. Fehrenbach and Mr. Doyle will be included. Mr. Snook asked to be notified of the meeting date and time.

Public Works & Water / Sewer Utilities - no report at this time.

Public Relations - no report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Vouchers - Wantage Township received an advertising invoice from the *New Jersey Herald* for \$15.90 for the notice of the special meeting. Approval for payment was moved by Ms. Hosking, seconded by Mr. Jacobs and unanimously carried. Mr. Snook will notify the Township of the approval.

Ken Nelson was notified by the secretary that the Commission had tabled his voucher for \$242 pending further clarification. Mr. Meyers explained that because the Borough had been in compliance with the first COAH round, Sussex did not have to meet the December 31 deadline. Thus the information the consultants were requesting wasn't yet completed, and Mr. Nelson had to prepare the information specifically for the consultants. This has been confirmed in writing by the Borough Clerk. It is likely that some of the information will be duplicated in the final report to the Borough. Mr. Fehrenbach clarified that COAH had put out new requirements and that he had anticipated that both the Borough and the Township were preparing for the December deadline. Approval for payment was moved by Mr. Lagattuta and seconded by Mr. Meyer. Commissioners Lagattuta, Dunn, Flynn, Hosking, Kresge, Little, and Meyer voted for approval. Voting no were Commissioners Jacobs and McKay. Mr. Snook will notify the Township of the decision to approve payment.

Special Meeting on January 21 - A special work session has been scheduled and publicized for January 21, 2009 at 7 PM at the Sussex Borough Hall. At the last meeting, an Executive Session was suggested to discuss the Administration Subcommittee report. Mr. McKay stated that the report will use position titles, not names. The information to be discussed is already public, and an Executive Session should not be necessary. The *Profile of a Consolidated Community* was distributed previously and provides suggestions for organizational structure.

Mr. Fehrenbach suggested that the concerns raised at the October 8th public meeting be reviewed to be sure all concerns are addressed.. He noted that the delay in Dr. Reock's presentation, which is essential background information, shortens the time allocated for drafting the Commission's report. Mr. Fehrenbach will provide the table of contents from other studies to serve as a guide.

Contact has been made with the New Jersey Department of Education. If responses are received in time, the preliminary report could be available for the special meeting.

Mr. Jacobs reported that because of his desire to listen to all the citizens, he had attended the meeting on December 27 organized by Mr. Gettler. He suggested that the information presented at that meeting be distributed to the Commissioners and that Mr. Gettler be given time at a Commission meeting to present his concerns. Mr. Snook noted that Mr. Gettler has the right to present information at the open public session of any Commission meeting. Mr. Gettler stated that he provided the library with a copy of his information. Mr. Snook will give all Commissioners a copy of Mr. Gettler's report by the end of the week, and time will be allotted for Mr. Gettler to present his concerns at the beginning of the January 21 meeting.

Clarification of Public Works Employees in Two Municipalities - Because this ties in with Administration Subcommittee report, it will be discussed at the January 21 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Report on Population Growth (draft) - This report was sent to the Commissioners via e-mail. It is a compilation of census data and information from other sources, primarily the County Division of Planning and Statistical Forecasting LLC (prepared for the High Point Regional High School district). Projections from the two sources were similar. Separately or consolidated, there is little difference in growth or rankings. A population of 15,000 in 68 square miles is in the lower quartile for density.

Discussion included:

- impact from the Highlands Act - none; Sussex and Wantage are outside the boundaries of the Act
- master planning - must fulfill statutory requirements, and the timelines for Land Use rules and the consolidation study don't coordinate
- current growth for the county is flat, and wastewater requirements from the DEP has restricted recent building; but growth tends to go in cycles

It was moved by Mr. Lagattuta, seconded by Ms. Flynn and unanimously carried that this report be accepted as final and made available to the public. Mr. Fehrenbach will provide a final copy.

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

It was moved by Ms. Flynn, seconded by Mr. Dunn and unanimously carried to open the session to the public.

Jim Doherty, Wantage resident and Township Administrator, suggested that a new public notice may be needed because changes were made to the topics for discussion. The Chairman and the Secretary will revise the notice.

Bill Gettler, Wantage resident, stated that he had come specifically to hear the speaker. He questioned whether there would be justification for going into Executive Session.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Fehrenbach suggested that he and Mr. Doherty provide a brief overview of the types of municipal government in New Jersey. The consensus of the Commissioners was that this would be helpful. Items covered included:

- Five forms: city, town, township, borough and village (borough most common in NJ, followed by township)
- History: Walsh Act, Municipal Manager Act, Faulkner Act

- Structure: mayor / council, council / manager, mayor / council / administrator, etc.
- Choices: partisan, non-partisan, wards, elected at large
- Issues: responsibility / accountability, administrative / legislative

ADJOURNMENT

With no other items for consideration it was moved by Ms. Flynn, seconded by Ms. Hosking and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Snook declared this meeting to be adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Lee Abbott, Secretary