

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL RETREAT
COMMUNITY/SENIOR CENTER
JANUARY 25, 2004
2:00 P.M.

The Council Retreat of the Township Council of the Township of Franklin, County of Somerset, New Jersey, held at the Community/Senior Center, 505 DeMott Lane, Somerset, was called to order by the Mayor at 2:00 p.m.

The Mayor read a statement indicating all requirements of the P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, (The Open Public Meeting Act) had been met.

The Township Clerk called the roll.

Present: Ms. Eberle; Mayor Levine; Deputy Mayor McKenzie; Mr. Regan, Mr. Schrum. Ms. Ashley-Williams and Mr. Chivukula were absent at roll call but arrived shortly thereafter.

Absent: Mr. Sumter

Also Present: Kenneth W. Daly, Township Manager & Ann Marie McCarthy, RMC, CMC, Township Clerk.

REPORT ON TRENDS IN FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP

Presenters: Bonnie von Ohlen and Khalilah Stewart

Ms. von Ohlen made the following presentation:

The most outstanding demographic of the region is its rate of growth. Somerset County was the fastest growing County in New Jersey as reflected in the 2000 Census. It's growth rate of 24% was the highest in the State. By contrast, the State grew approximately 9% and is now the ninth most populous state.

Franklin Township grew from 42,780 persons in 1990 to 50,903 in 2000, an increase of 8,123 residents and a growth rate of 19%. The NJ State Data Center recently released the latest 2002 municipal population estimates for the State's municipalities. Franklin Township ranked third statewide of municipalities with population growth of 2,000 or more since the 2000 Census. Only Jackson and Lakewood, both in Ocean County ranked higher. The Township's population increased by 4,755 persons in a two-year period - a 9% increase. The County grew by a factor of 4% in two years.

Census data for the Township reflects two national trends – the graying and the browning of the population. We are becoming older and more diverse than ever before. This is particularly evident in the Northeast United States. These demographic megatrends will have far reaching economic, social and physical impacts of the community, which you have been chosen to lead.

AGE OF RESIDENTS

The tidal wave of baby boomers moving through their life cycles is reflected in the Township's population by age group data. Demographers refer to this configuration of age groups as going from pyramids to pillars. This is particularly striking when comparing the 1990 data with the 2000 data and even more striking when compared with projections for 2008.

This data reflects the growing old of America. Life expectancy has increased. The median age is increasing as the Baby Boomers mature.

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- More than 50% of the Township's population is over 35
- The number of persons 65 + is expected to double to over 70 million by 2030.
- One in five persons will be seniors. The 60+ age group makes up 15% of the Twp population and has increased by almost 50% during the ten year span.
- The fastest growing segment of the senior population is the 85+ age group. This age group increased almost 50% from 624 persons in 1990 to 943 in 2000. A growing proportion of this population resides in nursing and other supportive types of assisted living homes.
- Older households are less likely to move, choosing instead to "age in place." Those that do move, don't go far. Only 22% of seniors moved in the five years before the Census. Of those that did, 60% stayed in the same county and 81% stayed in the same state.
- The Boomers are redefining aging and will have significant effects on every social institution such as housing, government, recreation and health care as they continue to age and live longer within the next decade.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP DIVERSITY

Not only are we living longer and better, we are more diverse than ever before. This slide demonstrates how diverse the Township is in terms of race and ethnicity. The columns are grouped by race – White, Black, Asian, Other, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Two or more races. The first column is the percentage of FT population for each race group from the most recent census. The second column is the Township's proportion from the 1990 Census and the third Somerset County's distribution from the 2000 Census.

The chart graphically illustrates the increasing diversity of the Township as well as how much more diverse the Township is than the County, even since 1990.

A significant increase to note is the doubling of the Township's Asian population from 7 to 14%. This is also substantially higher than the County's 8.4%. New to the Census 2000 was the category of "two or more races". There was no category in 1990 – another sign of increasing diversity.

Ethnic variety has also increased. Those listing themselves as **Hispanic or Latino in the Township have doubled from 4.5% to 8% in the last ten years.**

The demographic sheet at the back of your packet lists some additional indicators of the diverse population such as:

- Almost **one-third of the households reported to speak a language other than English at home in Year 2000.** This is an increase of almost 10% in the previous census.
- Increasing diversity is also reflected in the number of foreign born residents, also up 10% since 1990 to 24% - **almost one-fourth.** Of those foreign born, their region of birth is listed:
 - ◆ **43% from Asian**
 - ◆ **28% from Latin America, and**
 - ◆ **10% from Africa.**

PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE – This chart illustrates persons per square mile by census tract. Not surprisingly, the older developments adjacent to New Brunswick are the most dense followed by the DeMott Lane/JFK area.

HOUSING UNITS – This chart depicts the number of housing units by census tract. There are approximately 20,000 housing units in the Township. Average household size is between 2.5 and 2.7 persons per household. The Township has a relatively small household size compared to our neighbors. This could possibly be from a higher proportion of elderly and single person households.

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL RETREAT – JANUARY 25, 2004**HOUSING**

This chart illustrates the age of the housing stock by decade in which the units were built. – the last decade being the second from the left. **Almost half of the Township's units have been built since 1980. The other growth spur was post World War II boom till the end of 60's.**

The last column is the projected units for the five year span 2000-2005. As you can see, almost as many units as have been built in the last decade are projected in half that time.

Where are these new households coming from? In the 2000 Census, 42% of the Township's residents lived in a different house in 1995. One third of those who moved were from Somerset County while almost half of those relocating into the Twp. were from out of the County but from New Jersey. Another 20% were from a different state while 12% were from 'Elsewhere' – outside the U.S.

In summary, the Township is more becoming more diverse and older and more likely to live in newer homes than our County and State neighbors.

Ms. Stewart reviewed the following building permit information:

<u>BUILDING PERMITS – 2003:</u>	<u>Type of Work</u>	<u>No. of Permits Processed</u>
	New Buildings	1,462
	Additions	152
	Alterations	4,900
	Demolitions	97
	Total	6,611

Councilman Chivukula asked if alterations include permits issued for water heater replacements. Ms. Stewart replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Stewart reviewed the following information:

2002-2003 MINOR SUBDIVISIONS*(January 2002 through December 2003)*

Developer Name	Address/Location	# of Units	# of Acres	Type of Dev.	Status	Variance Req.
Bekus, David	Hamilton Street & Wheeler Avenue	2	2.1	Single Family	Approved w/conditions	Yes
Blocker, Paul & Fronscier	21 North Lawrence Avenue	2	0.05	Single Family	Incomplete	Yes
Calafiore, Mark	Viking Avenue	2	0.04	Single Family	Withdrawn	
Center for Great Expectations	5 Dellwood Lane	3	13.5	Residential	Withdrawn	Yes
Chang Sik Park	187 Wilson Road	2	5.44	Single Family	Approved w/conditions	
County of Somerset	Amwell Road and Mettlers Road	3	51.2	Open Space/ Residential	Signed Off	
David Lawrence,, Inc.	Equator Avenue	2	8.59	Single Family	Complete/ Scheduled	Yes
Graham, Leslie	69 Highland Avenue	2	0.1	Single Family	Signed Off	
Grzbek, Gregory & Judith	126 Bennington Pkwy.	2	0.92	Single Family	Signed Off	Yes
Jay Construction, LLC	Amwell Road	2	2.26	Single Family	Approved w/conditions	Yes
Jay Construction, LLC	Archer Avenue	2	0.29	Single Family	Approved w/conditions	Yes
Jay Construction, LLC	Weston Canal Road	2	74.5	Commercial	Complete/ Scheduled	
JMJ 1, LLC	Roosevelt Ave. & Veronica Ave.	3	38.31	Commercial	Complete/ Scheduled	
JP Nash, LLC c/o Eric Bram & Co.	Veronica Avenue & Rt. 27	2	63.23	Commercial	Approved w/conditions	
Lane, Robert & Smith, Robert	40 Thirteenth Street	3	0.75	Single Family	Complete/ Scheduled	Yes
McDougal, Vivan & Arthur	Churchill Ave. & Annapolis St.	3	0.87	Single Family	Complete/ Scheduled	Yes
Nynka, Nester & Nadia	67 Meadow Avenue	2	0.92	Single Family	Incomplete	Yes

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Patti, Steven & Maria	6 Heather Drive	2	1.11	Single Family	Incomplete	
Paula, Henriques	1057 Hamilton Street	2	0.64	Single Family	Incomplete	Yes
Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity	31 & 35 Alex Place	2	0.22	Single Family	Signed Off	Yes
Roemer, William & Helen	513 Wheeler Place	2	0.64	Single Family	Signed Off	Yes
Somerset Assembly of God (Eternal Life Christian Center)	8 Belmar Street	2	0.52	Residential	Withdrawn	
Somerset Jam LLC	Campus Drive & Belmont Drive	2	6.1	Commercial	Complete/ Scheduled	Yes
Tarullo, Robert & Cave, John	36 William Street	2	0.27	Single Family	Approved w/conditions	Yes

2002-2003 MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS*(January 2002 through December 2003)*

Development	Developer Name	Address/Location	# of Units	# of Acres	Type of Dev.	Status
A.J. Sweet	A.J. Sweet, Inc.	Garfield Avenue	7	2.17	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions
Bennetts Village	Bennetts Village, LLC	Dahmer Rd. & Bennetts Ln.	17	29.18	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions
Blackstone Group	Blackstone Group, LLC	Norma Ave.	6	1.702	Two-Family	Open
Brenner, Stephen	Brenner, Stephen	Cedar Grove Ln.	7	2.5	Single Family	Incomplete
Cal Sterling at Franklin, LLC	Cal Sterling at Franklin	Weston Rd. & Cedar Grove Ln.	158	68.4	Single Family	Complete/ Distributed
Canal Walk	Canal Walk Associates, LLC	Constitution Way & Republic Road	46	53.43	Single Family	Incomplete
Canal Walk – Phase III	Canal Walk Associates, LLC	Weston & Mettlers Rd.	101	12.05	SF (Preliminary approval for 811 SF units)	Signed Off
Canal Walk – Phase 5	Canal Walk Associates, LLC	Canal Walk Blvd.	120		Single Family	Complete/ Distributed
Capri, LLC	Capri, LLC	Scalzone Ave (formally West Pt. Ave)	3	1.2	Commercial	Withdrawn
Center for Great Expectations	Center for Great Expectations	Dellwood Lane	3	13.5	Commercial	Incomplete
Morrison Estates II	Barbieri Builders	Route 27	22	70.35	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions
Paddock Estates	Paddock Estates, LLC (Glen Eyre at Somerset, LLC)	Cedar Grove Lane & Wilson Road	9	18.2	Single Family	Signed Off
Pizzo & Pizzo Tract B	Pizzo & Pizzo	Treptow Rd. & Cedar Grove Ln.	51	60.39	Single Family	Signed Off
Princeton Highlands Developers	Princeton Highlands	Winding Way	34	18.7	SF/Open Space?	Transferred to BOA
Princeton Highlands Estates	Princeton Highlands Developers	Route 27	226	138.959	SF; wetland, pump station; detention basin	Signed Off
Princeton Highlands Estates	Princeton Highlands Developers	Treetops Cir. & Goldstar Dr.	12	3	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions
Renaissance at Franklin	Calton Homes, Inc.	Weston Road	455	119.6	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions
Somerset Run	Pulte Communities	Elizabeth Ave. & New Brunswick	755	288.3	Single Family/ Multi-Family	Approved w/ Conditions
Ten Mile Run	Ten Mile Run Developers	South Middlebush Rd. & Old Sta	149	72.606	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions
The Woodlands at Somerset	The Woodlands at Somerset, LLC	Weston Road & Cedar Grove Lane	65	83.4	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions
Viking Avenue Major Subdivision	Somogyi, Somogyi & Schnug	Viking Avenue	9	2.1	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions
West Point Estates	West Point, LLP	West Point Avenue	5	2.1	Single Family	Approved w/ Conditions

AGE RESTRICTED UNITS: 2000-2004

<u>Developer Company</u>	<u>Development Title</u>	<u>No. of Units</u>
Cal-Sterling at Franklin, LLC	Cal-Sterling at Franklin	158
Calton Homes, Inc.	Renaissance at Raritan	455
Canal Walk Assoc., LLC	Canal Walk	811
Pillar of Fire/Anatol Hiller	??????	850
	Total	3029

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<u>Type of Development</u>	<u>No. of Units</u>
Age Restricted	3029
Other Major Subdivision	772
Minor Subdivisions	62
Total	3713

Ms. Stewart stated that she feels that the number of age-restricted units will be much higher. She estimated that it may be as high as 3700.

Deputy Mayor McKenzie questioned the percentage of new homes that are occupied. Mr. Daly replied that they are sold and occupies as soon as built. He noted there is no vacancy rate in new homes.

Ms. Stewart reported that migration trends of seniors is still south. The number one destination to retire remains Florida. She reported that the majority of the country within the next ten years will live in the south.

Ms. Stewart reviewed the following COAH information:

COUNCIL ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING (COAH)**Third Round Methodology:**

- One (1) affordable unit for every ten (10) non-affordable housing units built between 1999 and 2014.
- One (1) affordable unit for every 30 jobs created (jobs created based on square footage.)

Methodology based on an analysis of US Census 2000 data**First and Second Round obligation:**

- 819 units
- Excess of 83 units

Third Round obligation:

- Approximately 371.3 affordable units
- Township to receive 50 units dedicated to Affordable Housing.
- Difference of 238.3 units

Ms. Stewart reviewed the following Work information that was derived from the Census 2000 data:

WHERE WE WORK....

Place of Residence		Top Three Commuting Destination					
% who live & work in same town		% who commute to.....					
Middlesex Middlesex County	17	Bridgewater	8	Piscataway	6	Franklin Twp.	5
South Brunswick, Middlesex County	18	Manhattan	6	Franklin Twp.	6	New Brunswick	6
Bound Brook, Somerset County	13	Bridgewater	11	Franklin Twp.	8	Middlesex	4
Bridgewater, Somerset County	20	Somerville	5	Franklin Twp.	4	Piscataway	4
Hillsborough, Somerset County	19	Bridgewater	7	Franklin Twp.	6	Piscataway	5
Manville, Somerset	14	Bridgewater	13	Hillsborough	8	Franklin Twp.	7

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County							
Millstone, Somerset County	11	Bridgewater	11	Hillsborough	11	Franklin Twp.	7
Montgomery, Somerset County	17	Princeton	6	Franklin Twp.	5	Manhattan	5
South Bound Brook, Somerset County	6	Franklin Twp.	12	Bridgewater	10	Piscataway	8
Franklin Twp., Somerset County	17	New Brunswick	9	Piscataway	8	Manhattan	5

WHERE WORKERS LIVE....

Place of Work		Top Three Places of Residence					
% who live & work in same town		% who commute from.....					
Bedminster Somerset County	16	Bridgewater	6	Bernards Twp.	3	Franklin Twp.	3
Bernards Twp., Somerset County	11	Bridgewater	4	Franklin Twp.	3	Bernardsville	2
Bridgewater, Somerset County	16	Hillsborough	5	Somerville	4	Franklin Twp.	3
Hillsborough, Somerset County	37	Bridgewater	21	Manville	4	Franklin Twp.	4
Highland Park, Middlesex County	23	Edison	8	New Brunswick	7	Franklin Twp.	5
New Brunswick Middlesex County	19	Franklin Twp.	7	North Brunswick	7	East Brunswick	4
North Brunswick, Middlesex County	17	New Brunswick	9	Franklin Twp.	5	East Brunswick	4
South Bound Brook, Somerset County	13	Bridgewater	7	Franklin Twp.	5	Middlesex	5
Franklin Twp., Somerset County	14	Edison	4	Hillsborough	4	South Brunswick	4

Ms. Stewart concluded that Franklin Township is a very dynamic town and is currently undergoing very dramatic changes with regards to population, land use and development. She stated that there are serious policy implications to consider. Mr. Regan asked what serious policy implications were there to consider. Mr. Daly replied that would be discussed in the Economic Development Study (Phase 2) and Master Plan presentations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY (PHASE 2)

Presenter: Sean DiGiovanna

Mr. DiGiovanna reported the following in regards to the Franklin Township Economic Development Study Phase 2 Results:

GENERAL FINDINGS FROM PHASE 1

- ❖ Franklin Township's economic base is strong and diverse
 - Strong performance in wide range of sectors
- ❖ Local economy has strong concentrations of industries that are projected to grow
 - Business Services
 - Engineering and Management Services
- ❖ Employment base is a good match for skills and talents of residents.

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- ❖ General Economic Development Issues
 - Land Use
 - Transportation
 - Business Services
 - Workforce Development
 - Local Government
- ❖ Targeted Business Development by Sector
 - Manufacturing
 - Health Industry
 - Retail Trade
 - Headquarters Activity

DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

- ❖ Land Use
 - Potential conflict between growing industry and residential uses
 - New residential development is located near areas where manufacturing is expanding
 - New residents might object to manufacturing spillovers
 - ◆ Noises/Smells
 - ◆ Traffic
 - Most common concern among manufacturers
- ❖ Transportation
 - Large Commuting population means stress on roadways
 - ◆ 78% of working township residents commute out
 - ◆ 83% of employees in township commute in
 - Residential construction has caused delays
 - Some problem areas
 - ◆ I-287 exits, Davison Avenue
 - ◆ Easton/Landing Lane intersection
 - ◆ Route 18
- ❖ Business Services
 - Plentiful in region
 - Most common complaint is need for more eateries/entertainment establishments
 - ◆ Lunch for workers
 - ◆ Places to entertain clients
 - ◆ Franklin loses out to New Brunswick and Somerville/Bridgewater
- ❖ Education and Workforce Development
 - Not much knowledge among employers about school system
 - Not seen as impediment to development
 - Better linking training programs to employers could offer more opportunity to residents
 - ◆ RVCC
 - ◆ Non-profit training programs
- ❖ Local Government Support
 - Employers generally happy with support from municipal government
 - Many complaints about permitting and inspection processes
 - ◆ Fire inspections
 - ◆ Expansions of structures/parking facilities
 - ◆ Processes lead to long delays

MANUFACTURING

- ❖ Growth continues to outpace state and region
- ❖ Manufacturers like:
 - Connectivity

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- Labor Pool
- Physical Setting (not industrial park)
- ❖ Manufacturers dislike:
 - Adjacent residential development
 - Permitting and inspection processes

HEALTH INDUSTRY

- ❖ New industrial classifications recognize importance of industry
 - Poised to be a strong performer in Franklin Township
- ❖ Benefit from
 - Pharmaceutical industry
 - Local hospitals
 - University
- ❖ Attracting more primary care practitioners will help spur related development
 - Labs, specialists, etc.

RETAIL

- ❖ Franklin is under-represented in retail establishments and employment
- ❖ This despite large increase in residents
- ❖ Opportunities to tie into development trends
 - Food stores
 - Eating and drinking establishments
 - Entertainment and amusements
- ❖ Consider locating retail development close to new housing/industrial development

HEADQUARTER ACTIVITY

- ❖ Franklin is home to several corporate HQs
 - Smaller, multi-locational firms
 - Joint ventures/foreign subsidiaries
- ❖ Opinions expressed similar to manufacturers
 - Connectivity
 - Physical setting
 - Lack of entertainment venues decried (echoed by hotels)

COMMERCIAL OFFICE VACANCIES

- ❖ Closure of Merrill Lynch and AT&T facilities have reduced importance of communications and finance to township.
- ❖ Re-use of these facilities will come in time, but Somerset County vacancies among highest in state.
- ❖ Look for candidates in Health Industry, Business and Engineering Services, as well as Finance.

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

- ❖ Take proactive measures to reduce friction between employers and residents.
 - Communications/marketing strategy
 - Code enforcement
- ❖ School House Road/Weston area needs comprehensive development
 - Retail development can provide services for workers and residents
 - Serve as buffer between competing uses
- ❖ Retail development
 - Recruit food stores
 - Target areas with new residents and workers
 - ◆ Area dining guides in hotels/workplaces
 - Target Davidson Avenue for hotel guests
 - ◆ Pub-type and upscale restaurants
 - ◆ Other shopping (clothing, accessories)
 - Neighborhood areas seem to be doing well
 - ◆ Hamilton Street

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- ◆ Kingston
- ❖ Marking campaigns for:
 - Health Industry
 - ◆ Attempt to link industry through special events
 - ◆ Primary care providers
 - ◆ Laboratories
 - ◆ Healthcare instruments and devices
 - Headquarters Activity/Manufacturing
 - ◆ Franklin a very competitive location and recent recovery should help
 - ◆ Marketing strategy targeted at industry associations, local and regional business press
 - ◆ Low environmental impact
- ❖ Facilitate permitting and inspections process
 - Smaller employers need more assistance
 - Create and publish guides for common issues
 - “What you need to know to expand your parking area”
- ❖ Help link employers with training providers
 - Location of jobs from location of providers
 - Job fairs
- ❖ Develop recreation and tourism
 - Open space preservation
 - ◆ Can make active use of some preserved land
 - ◆ Audubon Tours
 - ◆ Canal Walk
 - ◆ Revolutionary War trail
 - ◆ “Pick-your-own” farms
 - Target residents, hotel guests, Rutgers community

UPDATING THE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Presenters: Kenneth W. Daly
Khalilah Stewart

Mr. Daly reported that the Township is at the point to update its Master Plan. Mr. Chivukula pointed out that Master Plans are required to be updated every six years and the Township’s Master Plan was completely redone in 1999. Mr. Daly recommended the Township begin updating its Master Plan. He further explained that during the last Master Plan process, Council was not involved in the process. He recommended Council be more involved with the process and the recommendations. He stated the previous Council did not participate in the Master Plan process and many issues and recommendations became political issues. He recommended during the next update process, Council should have more direct involvement. He also recommended there be more public involvement above and beyond the minimum hearing requirements.

Mr. Daly stated businesses will avoid coming to the Township if government becomes the source of risk. Mr. Daly used the Tofu Factory as an example.

Mr. Daly stated it will cost approximately \$130,000 to update/modify the Master Plan which results in it becoming a budget issue.

Mr. Chivukula suggested when releasing the master plan, risk management should be address so Council understands and situations such as the Tofu Factory would be avoided.

Mr. Regan recommended issues that need to be addressed immediately should be first priority and Council should look at the top five issues before redoing the entire Master Plan. Mr. Schrum suggested the areas where commercial and residential areas abutt be addressed during this round of modifications.

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Mr. Schrum reported that Planning Board would be discussing modifications to the Master Plan at a Worksession scheduled this week. He stated there are areas that have problems and areas that need to be addressed such as the new age-restricted areas. He stated that when one area of the Master Plan is modified it usually results in other areas needing modification, therefore you end up redoing the entire Master Plan.

Mr. Daly stated the Planning Board initiates the update of the Master Plan and Mr. Schrum as Liaison will keep the Council fully informed of all proceedings regarding the Master Plan. Mr. Daly stated it is important Council is pro-active and involved in the Master Plan update.

Mr. Schrum stated he would provide monthly updates to the Council. Mr. Regan asked when they could start receiving these updates. Mr. Schrum replied in March.

Ms. Eberle stated the Township should enforce the ordinance that requires disclosure of what zone a property is in.

Mayor Levine agreed the Council and public be more involved in the Master Plan process.

PRIORITY OF TRAFFIC ISSUES

Presenter: Kenneth W. Daly

Mr. Daly had previously re-distributed the following memorandum from SFC Robert Vornlocker regarding DVRPC Request - Top Highway Problems dated October 22, 2003:

“Below is my prioritized list of highway problems in Franklin Township as requested in the 1/22/03 letter from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) that was forwarded to me for review. This list was developed after a review of current accident and available volume data, personal observations and consultation with Township Manager Kenneth Daly and Township Engineer Joseph Russo. While the DVRPC requested a list of the top five problems in the Township, I have taken the liberty of adding six more locations to the list because some of the problems I have listed are already being addressed by Somerset County and/or NJDOT or have been the subject of recent studies.

1. Easton Avenue/287 interchange – This location was the subject of an extensive study undertaken by Somerset County, Middlesex County, Franklin Twp., Piscataway Twp. And NJDOT. That study report was completed in September of 2003 and it is my understanding that it is to be presented to the New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program. If this location is included in the “top 5” list it is my recommendation that the problems identified in the study and the associated solutions be supported.
2. South Middlebush Road – The intersections of Amwell Road and Blackwells Mills Road were identified as congestion/safety problems in the Middlebush Traffic Study completed in December 2001. It is my understanding that Somerset County is presently considering both of these intersections, along with the intersection of Amwell Road and Cedar Grove Lane, for improvements, including but not limited to the installation of traffic signals. It is my recommendation that the Township support these intersection improvements as it is my belief that these improvements will not only make these locations safer, it will also improve traffic flow and remove some traffic from secondary side streets presently be used as “short-cuts”.

Mr. Daly reported that Somerset County working on the design for item #2. He stated that a traffic study was completed in December 2001 and recommendations were sent to the County in 2002. This project had to be added to the County’s capital plan and they are currently working to award a

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contract for the design of the project. Mr. Daly reported this project probably won't be completed until 2005 at best.

3. Weston Canal Road/287 interchange – This location experiences sever congestion problems daily during both the am and pm peak periods. Additionally, a safety problem exists at the intersection of Weston Canal Road and the southbound 287 exit ramp, which is stop sign and yield sign controlled. The problems associated with this ramp recently resulted in a motorist passing the long line of traffic waiting to make a left turn onto Weston Canal Road in the right turn lane and attempting to make an illegal left turn. This action resulted in the motorist being killed when his vehicle was struck by a northbound dump truck on Weston Canal Road. As a possible solution to both congestion and safety issues it is my recommendation that the southbound 287 exit ramp be signalized at Weston Canal Road. Additionally, the signals at the northbound exit ramp and Cottontail Lane, along with the new signal, should be synchronized so that the backups on both the ramps and Weston Canal Road are minimized.

Mr. Daly stated that this is part of the 287 Study which is connected to item #1.

4. Easton Avenue between Foxwood Drive and Franklin Blvd. – This section of Easton Avenue experiences extreme volume problems during peak periods and has many safety problems associated with the intersecting side streets and driveways, as well as limited sight distances. While it would be a major undertaking, it is my recommendation that a center concrete barrier be installed on Easton Avenue. To facilitate the numerous side street “jughandles” would also have to be constructed at or near the intersections of Franklin Blvd. And Foxworth Drive. This would eliminate the problems associated with left turns into and out of the side streets and driveways, as well as rear end collusions associated with vehicles stopped to turn where limited sight distances exist.

Mr. Daly reported that presently no action is taking place on the aforesaid item.

5. Route 27 & Cozzens Lane – This intersection is deficient on the southbound side. Traffic frequently backs up beyond Skillmans Lane due to the fact that there is insufficient width to allow an adequate left turn land for Cozzens Lane. Route 27 should be widened north of the intersection to allow for dedicated left and through lanes. This would allow motorists to legally pass vehicles waiting to turn left. At present, numerous vehicles pass on the shoulder, which is both dangerous and illegal.
6. Easton Avenue between Willow Avenue and Cedar Grove Lane – This section of Easton Avenue experiences problems similar to those identified in item 4, but to a slightly lesser degree. The recommendation for a center concrete barrier is also made for this section, but it is not believed that there would be a need for any additional “jughandles”. All of the side streets in this area could be serviced by the existing “jughandles” at Willow Avenue and DeMott Lane in addition to the existing grid-type street network to the south of Easton Avenue (Hollywood, Walnut, culver, the “number streets”, etc.)
7. Route 27 & Franklin Blvd., Veronica Avenue and Bennetts Lane – These intersections are included in the Renaissance redevelopment plan for Route 27. NJDOT has designed a plan for the roadway that will correct the existing deficiencies at these intersections. I have reviewed the plans for this portion of the highway and it would appear that the recommended improvements will alleviate the associated problems.
8. Route 27 & Beekman Road – At this intersection southbound traffic frequently backs up due to the high volume of left turns into Beekman Road. As a possible solution the road could be widened north of the intersection to allow for a longer left turn lane.
9. Route 27 & South Middlebush Road/Sand Hill Road – Traffic frequently backs on both South Middlebush Road and Sand Hill Road in South Brunswick. The specific problem here is the inability to make a left turn from these roads due to the steady stream of cross traffic.

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As a solution, lead green left turn arrows could be installed for both South Middlebush Road and Sand Hill Road. This would create a slightly longer signal pattern for the intersection but would not be expected to seriously effect Route 27.

Ms. Eberle stated she previously recommended that #9 be moved to the Top 5 problems.

10. Route 27 & Princeton Highlands Blvd./Allston Road – When the Princeton Highlands development was originally approved NJDOT took the position that a signal was not warranted at this location. This intersection needs to be re-evaluated for the installation of a traffic signal. Due to the volume on Route 27 it is difficult to turn left from these side streets during peak periods, creating a safety issue.
11. Rural road commuter traffic – To eliminate “cut-through” traffic on roads such as Canal Road, Blackmills Road, Cortelyous Lane and the like would be extremely difficult. It is my opinion that the only way that this could be accomplished without merely moving to other already over-burdened roadways is to build new roads specifically designed for this purpose, such a limited access highways.”

As a result of a brief discussion by Mayor Levine and Mr. Chivukula, it was the desire of the Council to reactivate the Traffic Management Subcommittee to address these issues. This item will be added to the January 27, 2004 agenda.

PROPERTY TAXES

Presenter: Burnham Hobbs

Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Daly reviewed the a chart entitled, *Certification of State Fiscal Year Tax Billing Levies – 1st and 2nd Installments 2004.* Mr. Daly stated that this chart illustrates how taxes are arrived. Mr. Hobbs explained how taxes are configured. Mr. Daly gave Council samples of letters that were sent to the taxpayers explaining their taxes. Mr. Daly explained the January bills are the remainder of the tax bill and July bills are an estimate. This is a result of being on a fiscal year. Mr. Regan stated that there are slightly over 50 municipalities that are on a fiscal year out of 566 municipalities. Mr. Hobbs explained in the early 1990’s the State recommended that municipalities change to a fiscal year with the incentive that there would be a cost savings. After a brief discussion, Council members expressed their desire to look into going back to a calendar year.

Mr. Hobbs went over the following commonly asked questions along with answers to the questions:

1. *Where do real estate taxes come from?*

Real estate taxes come from the need to meet that portion of the budget required to be raised by taxation for: Franklin Township; Franklin Township Open Space Tax; Franklin Township Board of Education; Somerset County; Somerset County Open space and Fire Districts #1, 2, 3 and 4.

Each year, non-exempt properties in Franklin Township are billed taxes for each of the before stated governments.

The amount of money to be raised by taxes is determined each year by the following governing bodies:

- Franklin Township (Township Council)
- Franklin Township Open Space Tax (\$0.05 per \$100 of assessment as determined by referendum)
- Franklin Township Board of Education
- Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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- Somerset County Open Space (\$0.03 per \$100 of assessment as determined by referendum)
- Fire Districts #1, 2, 3, and 4 (Fire Commissioners for each Fire District)

2. *Why are my taxes higher than my friend who has the same assessment as mine but lives in another section of Franklin?*

There are four fire districts in Franklin Township, and even if two properties are assessed at the same value but are located in two different fire districts the amount of taxes paid will differ.

During the 2003 tax year, all properties paid the same \$2.190 base tax rate. The following is a breakdown of the base taxes:

Franklin Township	\$0.420
Franklin Township Open Space	\$0.052
Franklin Township Board of Education	\$1.371
Somerset County	\$0.318
Somerset County Open Space	<u>\$0.029</u>
Base Tax Rate	\$2.190

Fire District taxes are based on the needs of the various districts, and total ratables found within the district. These rates are:

Fire District #1	\$0.051
Fire District #2	\$0.080
Fire District #3	\$0.086
Fire District #4	\$0.040

The actual tax rate varies depending on the fire district that a property is in. Tax rates for each district are as follows:

Fire District #1	\$2.241
Fire District #2	\$2.270
Fire District #3	\$2.276
Fire District #4	\$2.230

If property is assessed for \$250,000, the taxes would be as follows depending on the Fire District:

<u>2003 Taxes Based on Fire District</u>	<u>#1</u>	<u>#2</u>	<u>#3</u>	<u>#4</u>
Franklin Township	\$1,050.00	\$1,050.00	\$1,050.00	\$1,050.00
Franklin Township Open Space	130.00	130.00	130.00	130.00
Franklin Township Bd. of Education	3,427.50	3,427.50	3,427.50	3,427.50
Somerset County	795.00	795.00	795.00	795.00
Somerset County Open Space	72.50	72.50	72.50	72.50
<i>Subtotal Before Fire Tax</i>	<i>5,475.00</i>	<i>5,475.00</i>	<i>5,475.00</i>	<i>5,475.00</i>
Fire District	127.50	200.00	215.00	100.00
Total	\$5,602.50	\$5,675.00	\$5,690.00	\$5,575.00

3. *I pay my taxes to Franklin Township; do they keep all the money?*

No! While all taxes throughout the State of New Jersey are paid to the municipality only a small portion of the total taxes actually are used for municipal purposes. Based on an assessment of \$250,000 in Fire District #1, the amount of taxes paid for municipal purposes is:

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<u>2003 Taxes Based on Fire District</u>	<u>#1</u>
Franklin Township	\$1,050.00
Franklin Township Open Space	130.00
Franklin Township Bd. of Education	3,427.50
Somerset County	795.00
Somerset County Open Space	72.50
<i>Subtotal Before Fire Tax</i>	<i>5,475.00</i>
Fire District	127.50
Total	\$5,602.50

In this example, only \$1,050.00 of the total \$5,602.50 is used for municipal purposes. The remaining \$4,552.50 is paid by Franklin Township to the other governments that this municipality is responsible to collect taxes for.

4. *What do I get for my taxes from Franklin Township?*

Tax dollars pay for the following services:

- Police Protection
- Road Repair & Maintenance
- Street Lighting
- Various Recreation Programs
- Building Inspectors
- Recycling
- Municipal Court
- Water Line Maintenance
- Snow Removal
- Various Health Programs
- Animal Control
- Mini Dump
- EMS
- Street Sweeping
- Various Senior Programs
- Health Inspectors
- Rabies Clinic

5. *But I live in a condominium or town home complex and have to pay monthly association fees, what do I get for my taxes?*

Besides all of the before stated services, the Township contributes to help offset the costs of snow plowing and streetlights.

6. *Why are the taxes for the second half of the year always higher than the first half?*

Taxes paid in the first half of the year are ½ of the prior year. If your tax obligation in 2003 was \$5,500, then the taxes due in the first half of the year are \$2,250 paid over the first and second quarters.

In May or June, after all 2004 budgets are presented to the Somerset County Board of Taxation, this board strikes the tax rate for each municipality in the County. Since the 2004 tax rates are not available until the mailing of the second half tax bills, budget increases appear in the second half of the year taxes.

For example, if the tax paid in the first half of 2004 are \$2,250 (1/2 of the prior year's \$5,500 taxes) and the actual 2004 taxes (based on 2004 tax rates) is \$5,650 then the second half taxes are \$3,400.

Total Taxes	\$5,650.00
First Half Year Taxes Paid	-2,250.00
Second Half Year Taxes	\$3,400.00

In this example, the actual increase in taxes is \$150.

2004 Total Taxes	\$5,640.00
Less 2003 Total Taxes	-5,500.00
<i>Tax Increase</i>	<i>\$150</i>

Unfortunately, many property owners double the second half taxes and determine that their 2004 taxes are \$6,800 and an increase of \$1,300 and not the actual taxes of \$5,650.

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Total Taxes	\$5,650.00
First Half Year Taxes Paid	-2,250.00
Second Half Year Taxes	3,400.00
Times 2 for two half years taxes	x2
Incorrectly calculated 2004 taxes	\$6,800.00
Less 2003 Total Taxes	-5,500.00
2004 Tax Increase	\$1,300.00
Actual Increase in Taxes	-150.00
<i>Difference caused by incorrect</i>	<i>\$1,150.00</i>
<i>Calculations of tax increase</i>	

7. *How can the tax rate decline when the budget goes up?*

The tax rate can go down when budgets increase and there are increases in the Franklin Township ratable base. The formula for calculating tax rates is:

$$\frac{\text{Budget}}{\text{Assessed Value}} = \text{Tax Rate}$$

Or

$$\frac{\$1,000,000 \text{ (budget)}}{\$6,000,000,000 \text{ (ratable)}} = \$1.67$$

If the budget and ratable base increase the rate may decrease.

$$\frac{\$105,000,000 \text{ (budget)}}{\$6,400,000,000 \text{ (ratable)}} = \$1.65$$

In this example, the budget increased by 5% and the value of the municipality increased by 7%.

8. *How can the municipal ratable base increase by 7%?*

There are two factors that affect the ratable base, they are:

- a) Increases caused by new construction, subdivisions, properties that are no longer farmed and properties that become taxable after being exempt. In Franklin, because of new residential construction, increases between 2003 and 2004 in the range of \$175,000,000 to \$200,000,000 have occurred.
- b) Annual reassessment program. Franklin has undertaken an annual reassessment program since 1995. This program insures fairness in taxation, by keeping properties at market value.

9. *What happens if budgets decrease?*

If budgets decrease, then the tax rate will decrease.

Budget	<u>\$100,000,000</u>	=	\$1.67 rate
Ratables	\$6,000,000,000		
Budget	<u>\$95,000,000</u>	=	\$1.58 rate
Ratables	\$6,000,000,000		

10. *Will budgets decrease?*

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Probably not! Over the past 11 years, the budget for each of the three major governments that Franklin Township bills and collects for on the average increased. The attached spreadsheet (See page __ at end of minutes.) shows a comparison of the three different budgets from 1992 to 2003. 2004 has not been included because the budgets for the County and School are not yet certified.

11. *How can the amount of money to be raised by taxation be decreased?*

The amount can be reduced by three ways:

- a) Increase revenues such as cost of copies, maps, etc.
- b) Reduce expenses.
- c) Increase funding by the State of New Jersey.

The question “how to explain taxes” is difficult because there are many aspects to the question. The reality is, if a property owner’s total taxes are \$5,650, the amount of taxes that the Township is responsible for is \$1,050. This fact gets lost when the property owner has to pay \$5,650 to Franklin Township.

Mr. Regan asked questions regarding the computer program for assessment. Mr. Hobbs replied Somerset County has a contract with Vital Computer for the software. Somerset County provides the software to the municipalities and the municipalities provide the hardware needed to run the software. Mr. Hobbs stated Franklin Township is presently using the newest version of the software. Mr. Hobbs explained it is not a sophisticated program. Mr. Regan asked how the programs creates neighborhoods. Mr. Hobbs replied that Franklin Township manually creates neighborhoods.

Mayor Levine suggested this topic be scheduled as a discussion item at a worksession. Mayor Levine suggested the February 3rd Worksession. Deputy Mayor McKenzie suggested a community forum be held on this topic and taped for viewing on the Township’s access channel. He also recommended the questions and answers provided by Mr. Hobbs be placed on the website. Mr. Chivukula stated in addition to providing this information to the public, Council should retrieve input from the public. He recommended the breakout session tape be placed in the Library for public viewing. Mayor Levine agreed.

At this time (4:37 p.m.), Mayor Levine recessed the meeting. The meeting resumed at 4:45 p.m.

Mr. Chivukula referred to a letter dated January 12, 2004 from Taxpayers United in Franklin Township (TUF) regarding a brochure explaining the assessment and appeal process. He stated that the brochure has been edited by the Tax Assessor. He cautioned Council that anything coming from the Township should come from Council. Mayor Levine agreed.

CRITICAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Presenter: Kenneth W. Daly, Township Manager

Mr. Daly reviewed the following goals for the coming year, as discussed by the Township Council Evaluation Committee and the Township Manager on July 8, 2003:

1. Establish good working relationship with new directly elected mayor. Associated goal would include new council members. *Mr. Daly stated he has been working with Mayor Levine.*
2. Establish good working relationship with new Municipal Clerk. *Mr. Daly stated he has been working with Ann Marie McCarthy.*

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3. Resolve internal management deficiencies. *Mr. Daly stated this will be discussed in Executive Session on Tuesday night (1/27/04).*
4. Negotiate affordable PBA/SOA contracts while maintaining morale and productivity in Police Department. *Mr. Daly stated that this will be discussed in Executive Session on Tuesday night (1/27/04).*
5. Continue and improve long-range financial planning. *Mr. Daly stated the 5-year plan will be discussed at a March Worksession.*
6. Develop Capital Plan within prudent debt limit. *Mr. Daly stated the capital plan will be discussed at a March Worksession.*
7. Resolve Franklin Park water situation. *Mr. Daly stated Council has received memorandums providing updates of this situation. He stated it has been found that the contamination has resulted from dry-cleaning establishments and not gasoline stations.*
8. Development a financially feasible senior affordable housing program.
9. Complete open space and farmland preservation acquisitions. *Mr. Daly stated that he will continue to close on current acquisitions with John Loos.*
10. Sign ordinance. *This amended ordinance is currently with the Planning Board and is scheduled to be discussed at their February worksession.*
11. Programs to deal with deer, bear and geese problems. *Mr. Daly stated this will be addressed. In response to Council's questions regarding bear problems in the Township, Mr. Daly stated the State's policy is to place bears at 6 Mile Run. Mr. Daly stated this policy will be addressed.*
12. Development checklists and associated ordinances. *Mr. Daly reported the ordinances and checklists are not consistent. Staff has been working to amend the ordinances and checklists in order for them to be consistent with one another. One issue being addressed is that smaller applications do not involve escrows and would be handled by Township Staff. This will be discussed at a February Planning Board worksession.*
13. Improve customer access to tracking development applications.
14. Timely, cost effective renovations to municipal building.
15. Stormwater Management Plan. *Mr. Daly reported this will be discussed at the February 3rd Council worksession.*
16. Keep library construction on time and on budget. *Mr. Daly reported the contract has been awarded at the January 13th Council meeting.*
17. Improve communications with public: government access channel and programming, newsletters, website. *Mr. Daly stated Joyce Miller is in charge of public information and she will be working with Mike Gallagher regarding access channel policies, meetings and programs.*
18. Complete economic development plan. *Mr. Daly reported when the plan is completed, it will need to be implemented.*
19. Get tenants for AT&T and Merrill Lynch buildings. *Mr. Daly stated this is a long-range goal that should be followed up because both properties will appeal their taxes in the future.*
20. More businesses located on Hamilton Street. *Frank Hasner and Efren Dado continue to work on this issue.*

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21. Get Gateway Project under construction. *This project is moving along.*
22. Get Somerset-Henry and Somerset-Douglass projects under construction. *Mr. Daly stated he will receive a report on this tomorrow.*
23. Timely, cost effective construction of Middlebush Park. *Mr. Daly reported there have been contamination issues and the NJDEP has required wetlands and stream encroachment permits. Schoor DePalma has designated Stan Schrek to work on this matter and he will be submitting a proposal to Council regarding the design specifications shortly. Mr. Daly expressed his hopes that the Park would be ready to open in Spring 2005.*
24. D&R Canal area redevelopment plan. *Mr. Daly reported if Council designates this area as a plan area, it will become a redevelopment entity. This will result in the power of eminent domain and may force the property owners of the Onka property to negotiate. He stated there are two (2) Trap Rock Houses which are historic and the D&R Canal Commission is supportive. Mr. Chivukula announced Franklin Township will now have a representative on the Commission. The representative is John Loos.*
25. Move to resolve certified status of historic commission. *Settlement of this issue will result in more power to the Commission in regards to historic areas.*

Mr. Daly recommended Council consider a Citizen Survey. He stated that if so considered, it would be a budget item. Mayor Levine and Mr. Chivukula both expressed the importance of getting public input.

Mayor Levine spoke on customer service improvements such as software to track development applications and computer terminals located in the municipal building for applicants to track their applications. He also spoke on the possibility of web access to a development application.

Mr. Chivukula suggested a video tape be made providing questions and answers regarding the permit process. Mr. Chivukula recommended Council address the drafting and implementing of a deer management plan. Mr. Chivukula suggested Council take a proactive stance regarding affordable housing by addressing needs of Habitat for Humanity and Rutgers' students. He recommended an entertainment district in the Township be looked into. Mr. Chivukula requested monthly updates regarding long-term projects in a spreadsheet format.

Mayor Levine supported the work being done regarding historic houses. He stated that incentives should be addressed in getting retail and recreation businesses to come to Franklin Township. Mayor Levine expressed his desire of a smooth transition regarding the master plan process.

Mr. Regan suggested Council address 5 or 6 issues regarding economic development. He reported the open space fund is down to \$4 million. He recommended Council work with John Loos regarding what properties are to be acquired. He stated Council may need to address the option of going back to the voters by referendum to increase the open space tax.

Mr. Chivukula stated the hotels do not have a listing of entertainment and retail businesses in Franklin Township. He recommended a listing be created to see what Franklin has available.

Mayor Levine expressed the need for Hamilton Street to attract other upscale restaurants. A brief discussion by Council members regarding how to attract businesses to Franklin Township and as a result, they charged the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to address this issue and to provide recommendations to Council by June to be discussed at a future worksession. Mr. Chivukula spoke of a business open house that was held in 1999 and recommended the Committee work to improve on this idea.

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Mr. Regan stated it is important to receive financial reporting, noting in the past the cash management plan was not being followed. He recommended the plan be formalized and become a standard practice.

Mr. Chivukula reported the State has mandated new stormwater management regulations and is providing \$3 million in grants. Mr. Daly replied the Township has thirty days to apply for approximately \$6,000. Mr. Daly stated he would direct the Township Engineer to research the County's role in this matter.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Chivukula, seconded by Deputy Mayor McKenzie and unanimously agreed, Council opened the meeting for public discussion.

There being no comments made by the public at this time, a motion was made by Mr. Chivukula, seconded by Deputy Mayor McKenzie and unanimously agreed, the public discussion be closed.

COUNCIL GOALS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Schrum noted:

1. Be a more effective Council Liaison of the Planning Board and provide written monthly reports.
2. Formulate ideas from Council for the Master Plan and provide updates to Council.
3. Complete the skateboard park.
4. Be active and a team player.

Ms. Ashley-Williams noted:

1. Work with Council members.
2. Keep library project on target.
3. Continue 2-way dialog with public.
4. Speed up redevelopment process.
5. Open communications between various departments.

Ms. Eberle noted:

1. Complete Historic Ordinance.
2. Clean up Kingston School business and start planning programs.
3. Address traffic issues.
4. Start recovery of wells in Franklin Park area.
5. Griggstown Bridge flooding issues addressed. (Meeting scheduled for 1/26/04).
6. Cell Tower Ordinance – Planning locations not near residences – be more selective of location.
7. More recreational and retail business in Township.

Mr. Regan noted:

1. Firm understanding of finances and how it works – be able to explain it to residents.
2. Ability to fund more open space acquisitions. Address population concerns in master plan revision.
3. Impact Fee Ordinances – require developers to address school population impact from developments.
4. Provide enough recreation programs to residents.

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Mr. Chivukula noted:

1. Address Easton Avenue Traffic Issues – left turn problems.
2. Increase Public Transportation – shuttles.

Deputy Mayor McKenzie noted:

- Contribute, improve and support what has been presented at today's Retreat.

Mayor Levine noted:

1. Keep open dialog with public.
2. Integrity issues.
3. Fiscal responsibility.
4. Work together with Council.

Mayor Levine recommended written reports be provided from Council members to keep Council as a whole informed. Mayor Levine asked Mr. Daly thank staff members who attended today's retreat on behalf of the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion made by Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Chivukula and unanimously agreed, the Retreat was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie McCarthy, RMC, CMC
Township Clerk

Approved: *As submitted.*

Date: *February 10, 2004*