

SPARTA ASSESSMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
January 19, 2023

The Sparta Township Assessment Commission Meeting was held in person at Town Hall and was called to order by Chairwoman Parker at 7:01 p.m. with announcement that adequate notice of this meeting was given to the public and the press under provisions of the “OpenPublic Meetings Act”, N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 *et seq.*

Roll Call:

Members Present: Chairwoman Lorraine Parker, Paul Giannoglou, George Zacsek
Members Absent: Kelly McClurkin, David Flynn
Others Present: Angelo J. Bolcato, Esq.
Scott Holzhauser, Expert

Chairwoman Parker led the assembly in a salute to the flag.

This Commission’s November 3, and November 17, 2022, Minutes were approved.

Chairwoman Parker opened the meeting and discussed the report that this Commission will be submitting to the Township Council, starting with draft sent to the Members. Discussion was held amongst the members about minor changes to be agreed on and made to this Report.

Attorney Bolcato advised that he agrees with the changes discussed, as well as recommended other edits as it related to the Supreme Court Decision.

Mr. Zacsek suggested a paragraph be added to the report with this Commission making recommendations for the Township Council to consider before assisting other Lake Associations who ask for assistance for future dam rehabilitation projects.

Discussion was held amongst the Members and the Expert about his justifying the expenditures in his report and how the law is constrained by the valuation benefit which cannot be exceeded. Chairwoman Parker asked the members if they believe a paragraph should be added into the Glen Lake Dam report to Council with certain language about this Commission’s observations during the assessment process.

Mr. Giannoglou understands that adding the paragraph may be out of the scope of what this Commission is supposed to do but he feels it is important that people are made aware of the danger having an assessment where the benefit does not make up for the cost of the project.

Mr. Zacsek shared that NJDEP’s main concern is public safety and that the dam gets fixed without caring about the cost or overspending funds repairing it, explaining that if those funds can’t be justified it will further constrain the Township by having to cover that cost, therefore the Council should try to avoid that scenario and feels the paragraph should be included.

Chairwoman Parker opened the meeting for public comment.

Victor Sucich, 209 Glen Road, asked within these American Rescue Plan or Recovery Acts where State and Federal money could be used for improvements of roads, has anyone looked to see if there is any money in those recovery acts that the Township could use for lakes since it is an improvement.

The Attorney and Chairwoman advised that they didn't know but that this improvement is specifically governed under the NJDEP and unaware if the State uses Federal monies for these loans, reminding everyone though that the recent plans or recovery acts are new and the Glen Lake Dam Rehabilitation Project originated over 20 years ago.

Chairwoman Parker recognized that the new federal funding under the recovery acts is a good thought, then suggested Attorney Bolcato recommend to the Township Council as to whether or not there is any availability of these funds to be looked into.

Chairwoman Parker asked if there were any other changes that needed to be made to this Commission's draft report to Council, seeing none she asked that a Motion be made to accept the draft report with the addition of the language "Recommendations for Future Dam Rehabilitation Projects". Motion passed and the Chairwoman asked the Secretary to include the specific language as described by the Chairwoman.

Chairwoman Parker then asked the Expert Holzhauer for the updates on his report. Expert Holzhauer reported that the reason why we hold the Public Hearings is to allow for the Public to ask questions or give input and make us aware of anything that we may not have been made aware of prior. After the 2nd Hearing on December 6th, we received input from a property owner about a valid condition that as an Appraiser he needed to review this information and take it into consideration as it was not brought to our attention before. The information showed an aqueduct easement from Morris Lake through certain properties which he confirmed with those in charge of Morris Lake that this was a valid easement. This information does make a considerable adjustment for two properties. He then reviewed again all of the proposed assessment values to be sure that something didn't get overlooked in his methodology, but due to the reduction in those two values, he discovered that six (6) properties identified would need to be adjusted. This change is now reflected into his report.

Discussion took place regarding providing notice to the effected property owners.

Expert Holzhauer recommended that that Notice should include the newest proposed assessment amount advising them that it has been based on the recent ongoing review of the properties. He handed the Commission Members an updated spreadsheet and explained the recent changes made in the spreadsheet and in his report, as well as his rationale for doing so.

Discussion was held on what will be included in the Notice to those certain properties that were recently increased and when it could be mailed out to those affected property owners in order to give people time to give Mr. Holzhauer.

Chairwoman opened the meeting to the Public. Mr. Sucich wanted to confirm that the Agenda would be posted on the webpage as to when the Council will act on this Report as well as when it would be made available to the public so that he has the opportunity to review it and ask questions, as well as the timing of when he gets notified that the Report was submitted to the Council.

Chairwoman Parker would like everyone to have the opportunity to be heard and ask questions therefore advised that he should keep an eye on the Council's Agendas. Attorney Bolcato confirmed that it will be

placed on the Agenda when the Council discusses and acts on the Report, but that the Council may have questions on that report as well which the report could get remanded back to this Commission for further review.

Chairwoman Parker thanked the Members for their conscientiousness and participation as well as the Attorney and the Secretary for their assistance and work ethic during this process.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.