

**10/06/05**

**TITLE:** CL TWP PL BRD BLOWS A GASKET - Approves Windy Acres Settlement while public sessions continues - board chair overly aggressive

**DESCRIPTION:****Time:** 10:45:20**ARTICLE**

HC - Scratch your chin, shake your head and then try and figure out what the heck is going on in Cl Twp related to the Windy Acres mess. It gets more and more confusing everyday and with the latest action of the planning board it is hard to tell whether the tail is wagging the dog or vice versa.

The council and committee met last night in another round of public hearings on the proposed Windy Acres settlement. This was not a regularly scheduled meeting, it was a special meeting. Last week the council voted to keep the public hearing open until October 26, 2005, with only the mayor voting against that. So one would have imagined that unless that vote was amended to another date, that the entire body present at these public hearings, council and planning board, would wait until that October 26, 2005 meeting to make a decision one way or another, although many have shrugged their shoulders as to why the planning board is sitting in on these meetings anyway since the only people that can truly bind the township regarding such a settlement is the governing body. Appointed boards that are non elected can approve settlements for recommendation to the governing body but cannot bind the municipality without governing body approval.

The Planning Board however felt the need to act out on its own and vote on the settlement anyway before the public hearing period is over - yes you read that right, they have already made a decision before the public has had its ability to have its final say on the matter. Yes scratch your chin and shake your head again. What in the world could be the purpose for this division from the governing body when their end of the "Settlement" really means nothing. Is it a political statement against the governing body, one would hope that such an important issue such as this has boiled down to back room whining, that would indeed be pathetic. So what's the reason for such an interesting chasm. What would give these board members the audacity to say essentially, we have heard enough from the public, well who in their right minds do they think they represent. This is not their PERSONAL decision; this is a decision for the community.

Then we have the other factor of last night's meeting, it was run poorly. Someone came up with a three minute rule for people speaking when at other meetings it has been said by the mayor that "We want to hear everything that everyone has to say." Part of the reason for the extension was so that people would have a longer time to speak and a longer time to formulate their idea. I mean it would be simple to say everyone has thirty seconds to speak so obviously we only need to provide for a small amount of meetings.

Then we have board chair Imbriaco and he is really making me wonder if he just hasn't burned out on this thing, and frankly I wouldn't blame him, it has been going on forever, but he seems to have lost touch with the reason he started doing the job in the first place. And for background to all of you people who think we are being agitators in this process, a few years ago I wrote an article on Imbriaco naming him the volunteer of the year in our county. I respect the guy, especially how he is so helpful to residents who come before the board and are nervous and unsure of procedures etc... Last night however he seemed to let frustration get the better of him - here is what I mean -

He - 1. Exclaimed that the letter from the freeholders asking for more public comment time was the result of an illegal meeting of the freeholders rather than considering what they were saying. Like it or not the freeholders are elected by the entire county and their view should at least be considered. 2. He said of the letter submitted by DEP Commissioner Campbell "I don't care what he thinks. He is ill-informed." Well the settlement is out there in black and white for all to see. One would think that a reviewing body would want to know what DEP thinks. They sure did appreciate what Mr. Campbell had to say when he reclassified the stream to C-1 and at that point he was somehow well informed. 3. He tried to have Wilma Frey - director, highlands coalition - arrested by the officer working the event - is that type of show really necessary??? 4. He continually interrupted speakers, who were given but that stringent 3 minutes each to speak. Why anyone can't have their full say over a month's time is still unclear. 5. Very simply - He yelled at people - that's just not proper behavior for civilized people. 6. He actually told an attorney who was speaking that if he wanted to speak longer he'd have to pay the planning board

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members for their time. If members of the planning board are not dedicated enough to sit and listen on such an important topic then they should simply resign. Really. Being a volunteer is sometimes a royal pain in the Tuckish, we know that, but its part of the gig and if you don't want to do it anymore then just resign, you haven't signed a binding contract, you can walk at any moment. So I've got a feeling that the chair has simply had enough. I'd wager that if he goes back and listens to the tape in two or three months he'd be surprised how he related to his fellow community members, but sometiems one just gets caught up in the moment I suppose.

Then the planning board votes to approve the settlement. That makes no sense whatsoever and I guess what that means is that the planning board will no longer be present at the public meetings to be held on this issue because they will just then be tainting the meetings. You have to wonder why they just couldn't sit there mum for another 20 days and vote then, but that might makes too much sense, so scratch your chin, shake your head and see what happens next, sometimes, you never know.

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