

FRANK MASCIOCCHI, *Mayor*
LEILA GILMORE, *Deputy Mayor*
GERARD CLAUSS, *Committeeman*
THEODORE COSTA, *Committeeman*
LEE SCHNEIDER, *Committeewoman*

PAULA L. KOSKO, *Administrator/Clerk*



P.O. Box 477
One Hainesport Centre
Hainesport, New Jersey 08036

Phone (609) 267-2730
Fax (609) 261-4762

May 1, 2019

Burlington County Times, Inc.
4284 U.S. Highway No. 130 North
Willingboro, NJ 08046

Dear Editor:

I read with disappointment your Sunday, April 28th Editorial denigrating the Hainesport Township Committee, of which I serve as Mayor, for discussing a resolution that was offered by a member of the governing body, but never acted upon. To say that your Editorial was devoid not only of objectivity, but of any considered thought, would be an understatement. The only sentence in your Editorial which had any accuracy is that which described the governing body as “all-Republican.” Your point of making that observation is, of course, all too obvious. And to conflate our willingness to openly discuss a public issue with a Presidential tweet issued three days after our meeting, is a disservice to your readers.

The resolution to which you refer was not even on the agenda. It was brought to the floor by a member of the governing body after agenda resolutions had been completed. Moreover, he made it absolutely clear that he was seeking to discuss it only, with no intent that it be acted on. Unlike some in the media, our Township Committee has no desire to suppress the free exchange of ideas, nor do we stifle discussion. That we do engage in robust conversation about issues should be applauded, not belittled. But isn't that the state of the press today? Any

thoughts not in lock-step with the political bent espoused by a “free press”, are indeed not free to be discussed at all.

Your Editorial was irresponsible in other ways as well. Rather than presenting to the public as a “fact” a resolution that was not even put to a vote, you apparently relied upon an article earlier in the week from your own newspaper. Had you taken the time to approach the matter honestly, you would have viewed the video of the discussion on our website. Yes, it’s that simple: go to our website, and watch, and listen to, the discussion. It was posted on April 10, more than two weeks before you ran this political opinion piece. That, of course, might have resulted in a different outcome than the one you had obviously preordained for your Editorial.

Nevertheless, I urge you to view the video of our meeting, and you will see that Committeeman Costa presented the resolution “for discussion only.” Because we do believe in a free and open dialogue, we granted Mr. Costa his request. Again, if you bother to watch the video, you will see that there was a twenty minute conversation: that members disagreed about the language and goals of the document, and that no action was taken. But we were indeed willing to address the issue raised by a fellow elected official.

Interestingly, on the same page as your misleading, and factually unsupported Editorial, you ran an apology from your Executive Editor entitled “Moving too fast for our own good”, regarding a headline published in one of your other newspapers, the Doylestown Intelligencer, earlier that week. It will be interesting to see if you acknowledge the shamefulness of not only the inaccuracy of this Editorial, but your evident disinclination to allow the free exchange of ideas at a public meeting. And maybe the next time you’ll take the time to actually view the

recording of the conversation. Or maybe you will call us to find out what really happened. To date, you have done neither.

The *Burlington County Times* can do better. It should do better. Let's see if you do.

Very truly yours,

Frank Masciocchi

FRANK MASCIOCCHI
Mayor, Hainesport Township