

Williams Township Board of Supervisors
October 13, 2021

The monthly meeting of the Williams Township Board of Supervisors, 655 Cider Press Road, Easton, PA 18042 was held on the above date and called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Michael Bryant. Others present were Supervisor Raymond Abert, Township Solicitor Jonathan Reiss, Township Manager Mikal Sabatine, Township Engineer Ronald Madison, Public Works Director Michael Strawn and Assistant Township Manager Melody Ernst.

Michael stated there was an Executive Session held on October 13, 2021 for Personnel Matters and PennEast Condemnation.

Michael asked Ray if he had any corrections to the Minutes of September 8, 2021. There being none, Ray made a motion to approve said minutes, second by Michael. There being no comments, motion carried 2-0.

Melody presented the Expense Report of October 13, 2021 to the Board. Ray made a motion to approve the Expense Report and pay the bills, second by Michael. There being no comments, motion carried 2-0. The August Treasurers Report was not available.

Manager's Report – Mikal submitted his report of October 13, 2021 to the Board for review.

Mikal stated that he received correspondence on September 9, 2021 from Lower Nazareth Township asking that we draft a letter to our State Legislators requesting an overdue and much needed change to existing State municipal planning laws. Mikal stated he is seeking the consensus from the Board and if in favor, he will draft a letter expressing the Townships position. The consensus of the Board is to send a letter.

Mikal commented that on September 30, 2021 a request was received from Meals on Wheels of the LV to provide a letter of support for the Keystone Community Grant to renovate the parking lot and replace the roof on their new centralized headquarters in Allentown. The consensus of the Board is to send a letter.

Mikal stated that our former Chairman of the Board, Mark Ernst has been selected by County Executive Lamont McClure to receive the 2021 City and Municipal Employee/Volunteer Award. Said award will be presented on Saturday, October 16, 2021 at the Louise W. Moore Park at 1p.m. Mikal shared the nomination letter by reading it to everyone in attendance.

Public Works – Mike submitted his report for September 8, 2021 to October 13, 2021.

Zoning Office - It was stated the Report from the Zoning Office was received for the Boards review. Ray questioned illegal apartments in the Township. Suzanne stated that she has discussed the situations with the residents that are in violation.

There will be a Zoning Hearing Board meeting on October 27, 2021 to hear the following:

1. Debby Uhler - 515 Steely Hill Road - Determination of Pre-Existing Nonconforming Use and Validity Variance
2. Carl Zanetti - 15 Bachman Lane - Special Exception

Planning Commission - Alan gave the report for September 15, 2021. Alan stated there is an open alternate member position. Alan recommended that the Zoning Officer be able to attend all Planning Commission meetings. Michael made a motion to allow the Zoning Officer to attend all Planning Commission meetings, second by Ray. There being no comments, motion carried 2-0.

Jonathan stated that a motion will need to be made to comply with the above items and Mel will post an amended agenda to the website and on the Municipal Board. Michael made a motion to include the provision for having the Zoning Officer attend the Planning Commission meetings, second by Ray. There being no comments, motion carried 2-0. Mel will post the amended agenda.

Land Preservation Report- Jim read the report for September.

1. Discussion to Approve an Additional Alternate Member - Resolution 2021-21 - Ray made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-21 to add an additional alternate member to the Land Preservation Board, second by Michael. There being no comment, motion carried 2-0. It was stated that the Board will need to approve the alternate member.

Ray asked with the new descriptions that the Land Preservation is using with properties, how does he know what property is in discussion if he is not familiar with what they are talking about. Jonathan stated that he recommended using descriptions because most committees do not identify the property being discussed for privacy purposes. Jonathan further recommended that he feels it should be described by project number and not a street or road name.

Recreation Board Report - Judy gave the report and stated that Fall Fest was great success.

1. Permission for the Athletic Association to install a mailbox on Gaffney Hill Road - Jonathan said that they do lease the building and asked if anyone has checked with the Post Office. Jonathan asked if 115 Gaffney Hill address is for the whole park or just the building? Mike commented that Emergency Management does not have 115 Gaffney Hill listed and that would need to go to the County to identify. Suzanne stated that the Zoning Office will give out the address and inform the County who in turn

would notify the Post Office. Jonathan stated that if the address is just for the single building that is fine, but if it is for the whole park, that becomes an issue. Michael made a motion to have the Williams Township Athletic Association pursue the installation of a mailbox on Gaffney Hill Road with an address to be determined, second by Ray. Mark Ernst asked if the Lease Agreement will need to be changed to reflect the new address? Jonathan will take a look at the Lease Agreement. There was a discussion of keeping the building separate. There being no further comments, motion carried 2-0.

It was asked if Field Use on the Recreation Agenda be under Fields even if it is not discussed. The procedure was discussed on how to vote and when to post the amended agenda.

Engineer Report– Ron Madison briefly reviewed his October 8, 2021 memorandum. Ron recommended that the HOP (Highway Occupancy Permit) for the Melchor Tract be extended with PennDOT. After a short discussion, it was stated that this will appear on the November agenda.

Solicitor Report - None

Old Business

1. 95 Gaffney Hill Road Authorization to Proceed with Collection of the Lien Amount - Jonathan stated that based on the Court Order and authorization from the Board, the Township Administration worked with Easton Area Metal Recycling to clean and remove junked vehicles from the property as well as across the street. The amount was demanded and the Township filed a lien for the amount that the Township has spent. The property was up for upset tax sale due to unpaid school taxes and a family member entered into an installment agreement with the County Tax Claim Bureau to pay off the taxes. Jonathan is recommending the Township proceed to enforce its lien to try and collect the money that is owed to the Township. Ray made a motion to proceed with the lien, second by Michael. Ray asked if the attorneys' fees are the responsibility of the Township. Jonathan stated it would be the Townships responsibility but may be added to the amount due. There being no further comments, motion carried 2-0.

2. Authorization to Advertise for a Public Hearing Amendment to Chapter 15 Ordinance 2021-3 - It was stated that Frank D'Amore from Jonathan's office has been working on the draft Ordinance. Mike has some revisions he would like to discuss with Frank. This matter has been tabled until November.

New Business

1. Accept Resignation of Mark Ernst, Chairman Board of Supervisors - Michael made a motion to accept the resignation of Mark Ernst, second by Ray with regrets. Ray commented that he is sorry to see Mark leave, it's been a pleasure having him on the Board and he will miss him. There being no further comments, motion carried 2-0.

2. Accept Resignation of Polly Clark, Alternate Land Preservation Board - Ray made a motion to accept Polly's resignation, second by Michael. Ray thanked Polly for her

time serving. Michael thanked Polly for the work that she put into serving on the Board. There being no further comments, motion carried 2-0.

3. Authorization to Prepare Amendment and Advertise for a Public Hearing – EAJSA Rules and Regs – Jonathan stated that he was contacted by the Engineer for EAJSA and they thanked the Township for adopting the Rules and Regulations Ordinance with local limits. There has been some conflicts found between rules and regulations and some information that is set forth in the Ordinance. They are asking the Township to amend the Ordinance to remove the conflicts. If the Board authorizes the amendment, Jonathan will prepare the draft Ordinance and advertise it for a public hearing for the November meeting. Michael made a motion to authorize Jonathan to prepare the amended Ordinance for advertisement for a public hearing, second by Ray. There being no comments, motion carried 2-0.

4. Kressman Bridge Petition – Michael commented this is a County Bridge and everything is already in the works with the County. Mr. Rusu resident of 615 Kressman Road asked if everyone has had a chance to read the petition that he submitted. He stated that with the current situation there is authorization for the replacement of the bridge and if that moves forward his mill property will not stand for another 200 plus years. Michael asked Mr. Rusu if he has contacted the County to discuss his concern. The discussion continued regarding the project and the contract that is ready to start at any time for the bridge repair. Michael suggested the resident contact County Council and thanked him for coming. Matt Donovan resident of 630 Kressman Road shared his experiences with the bridge and how it mechanically dams up. He stated that he has talked with the County. He asked if we need a bridge. Mike stated that it was never discussed to abandon or remove the bridge. After a brief discussion, Ray asked if it would benefit the Township to send a letter to County Council. Ron stated that you could certainly have the Township send a letter to request suspension of the start of construction so the Township can re-evaluate the need for the bridge. Mikal asked the Board if they wished for him to reach out to Mr. Emili, Director of Public Works for Northampton County to discuss the situation with him and then inform the Board. There was a discussion that if the road was vacated and how many residents would be affected. Jonathan stated that the Board could authorize the Township manager to have a verbal discussion and then send the appropriate letter based on Ron's recommendations to request suspension of the construction for six months until the Township can explore options. Mark Ernst commented as a taxpayer, he feels the Township should not expend taxpayers money for the residents on that road as they should hire their own attorney and engineer and go through the process at their expense. Bob Rafinski commented that Mark has valid points and feels nothing should be discussed until the letter is signed. Ray commented right now the County has a contract and if the Township postpones it we could be talking more money. Ray further commented that he does not want to make a quick decision. Ray would only send a letter asking them to postpone the project as long as it doesn't involve the Township to spend money. Ray made a motion to have Mikal send a letter to the County requesting postponement of the construction of Kressman Road and have Jonathan review, second by Michael. There being no further comments, motion carried 2-0.

5. Traffic Study for Speed Limits Enforcement - Michael made a motion to have Mike proceed with the Technical Assistance Program regarding the speed limit enforcement, second by Ray. There being no comments, motion carried 2-0.

6. Authorization to Hire Appraiser to Appraise Melchor Right-Of-Way Condemnation - Jonathan stated there is a small area of property that when Mr. Melchor subdivided it was offered to the Township as right-of-way. The Township never adopted a Resolution accepting the property nor did the Township have a right-of-way easement prepared and recorded at the recorder of deeds office. Now that the Township has built the park and needed an updated PennDOT permit for the new parking lot, the right-of-way needs to eventually be dedicated to PennDOT for clear title. A Deed was prepared for Mrs. Melchor and her son to sign and if the deed is not signed then the Township will have to condemn the property in question. In order to condemn the property an appraisal is needed. Jonathan is seeking authorization for the Township Manager to hire an appraiser to appraise the Melchor right-of-way condemnation and to only go ahead if the Deed is not signed by Mrs. Melchor. Ray made a motion to hire an appraiser as stated above subject to if the Deed is signed then no appraisal will need to be done, second by Michael. There being no comments, motion carried 2-0.

7. Approval of Well Waiver for 45 Moyers Lane - Resolution 2021-20 - Ray made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-20, second by Michael. There being no comments, motion carried 2-0.

Supervisors Remarks

Michael thanked Mark for the time that he has worked with him on the Board as well as Zoning Hearing Board.

Audience Comments

1. Mark Ernst - Thanked the residents for having him serve as a Supervisor for the last almost 6 years and stated it was not as fun as serving on the Zoning Hearing Board. Hopes everyone appreciates the quality of the personnel that we have at the Board table as well as every Board and Committee. Thanked everyone.

2. Alan Kirby - Asked if anyone has any knowledge of the construction of Rout 611.

3. Fred Mebus - Stated local rumor is that PennDOT contracted the work out to another company and it would be completed by the end of November.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melody A. Ernst, Asst. Manager/Secretary
Williams Township Board of Supervisors