

**MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP**

The Board of Commissioners of Springfield Township met in regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at 8:00 PM in the Springfield Township Building for the purpose of transacting the general business of the Township. All members of the Board were present. Mr. Harbison presided.

Mr. Harbison asked all to join the Board of Commissioners in a moment of silence honoring the service men and women who have placed themselves in harm's way to help preserve our safety.

Mr. Harbison led the pledge of allegiance.

Motion (Gillies-Peirce) carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as written and recorded in the official minutes book of the township.

Special Announcement

Mr. Harbison provided a summary of planned action at the meeting, and announced that the Commissioners will be conducting a public hearing to present information and receive public comment on amendments to the Springfield Township application to the Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Open Space Program. Following the public hearing, the Board will conduct its regular business meeting, which will include a special report on the completion of a flood protection feasibility study for the Sunnybrook Creek.

Public Hearing

As announced, the Board of Commissioners conducted a public hearing to present projects which are subject of an application to the Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Open Space Program. The projects included the acquisition of the school district bus garage, and amendments to existing green infrastructure projects for the Oreland Park and Sandy Run Park.

Mr. Harbison announced that the Board of Commissioners held a brief executive session earlier in the evening to discuss one legal matter and one matter related to land acquisition.

Correspondence

Mr. Harbison stated that the Board received a letter from Ms. Lisa Hackett, of Philadelphia, on behalf of her 72 year old father who lives in Springfield Township. Ms. Hackett outlined the plight of her father and perhaps other seniors within the

Commonwealth related to the escalation of property taxes and the difficulties seniors have paying those taxes. Ms. Hackett suggested that Springfield Township consider concepts to provide property tax relief for senior citizens. Mr. Harbison suggested that there was currently no enabling legislation from the Commonwealth that would permit municipalities to set multi-tiered real estate tax levies for any particular class of residents. Therefore, at this time, the remedy would be best directed to the locally elected State representatives.

Special Report – Flood Protection Feasibility Study

Mr. Harbison announced that the Township has received the Flood Protection Feasibility Study for the Sunnybrook Creek and its tributaries. This study was conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection at the request of the Board of Commissioners following a flood in 1996. The purpose of the study was to determine if community-wide flood protection projects could be designed and constructed and, to the extent that was possible, whether the Commonwealth would share in the expense of those improvements. The PA DEP study considered community flood control projects, but while the community wide projects do not appear to be economically feasible, PA DEP encouraged local action such as flood proofing, installing back flow check valves, managing stream channel debris, sealing walls and drains, and the like, to help protect private property. Mr. Harbison also reviewed the many steps that the Board of Commissioners has taken over the past 10 years to help reduce flooding throughout the community.

Lisa Hackett, 301 S. 19th St., Phila., addressed the Board to expand upon her letter on providing public support for assistance to senior citizens as it relates to the payment of real estate taxes. Ms. Hackett explained the high percentage of retirement income that must be directed to pay real estate taxes, and the fact that most of the existing programs available from the Commonwealth are not effective to help solve the problem. Mr. Harbison accepted Ms. Hackett's concerns, but explained the local municipalities are legally constrained by authority granted to the municipalities by the Commonwealth.

Amy Kolea, 1604 Cherry Lane, and Lou McCormick, 1610 Cherry Lane, asked the Board of Commissioners for its support and assistance in addressing a mosquito problem that has occurred over the past several summers. Mr. Dailey joined the residents in helping to explain the problem, and also what was done in 2008 to help address the mosquito concern. The Board agreed to seek the assistance of the Montgomery County Health Department for the upcoming season.

Mr. Harbison, Chairman of Internal Affairs Committee, reported:

Motion (Harbison-Peirce) carried unanimously to approve the February check reconciliation in the amount of \$363,837.03 and the March bill listing in the amount of \$632,117.20.

Mr. Harbison announced that during the month of February, Springfield Township residents recycled 179 tons of materials with a householder participation rate of 78%. The net cost for the month was \$773.99.

Motion (Harbison-Schaum) carried unanimously to amend the Springfield Township Right to Know Policy to appoint the Chief of Police as the police liaison for the Right to Know Law, and in his absence, the senior detective shall serve in that capacity. Mr. Harbison explained the Right to Know Law and recent amendments to same.

Motion (Harbison-Gillies) carried unanimously to appoint Jennifer W. Brown, of Brown and Silbergeld, as the special business tax counsel for Springfield Township. Ms. Brown's discounted rate is \$160 per hour. It was noted that Ms. Brown has been performing this function for many years, but has recently formed her own law firm.

Mr. Schaum, Chairman of Public Safety Committee, reported:

Motion (Schaum-Heller) carried unanimously to authorize a letter be sent to PennDOT requesting PennDOT to conduct a traffic study at the intersection of Germantown Avenue and Thomas Road as it relates to the determination of whether this intersection meets the PennDOT warrants for the installation of a traffic signal.

Motion (Schaum-Peirce) carried unanimously to amend the Springfield Township Code, Section 107-35, Schedule XII, Special Purpose Parking Zones, by rescinding the handicapped parking space on the north side of New Street from a point 155 feet east of its intersection with Pleasant Avenue to a point 22 feet easterly thereof.

Mr. Gillies, Chairman of Library Committee, had no report.

Mr. Gillies stated that the current draft Cresheim Trail plan provides for the trail to parallel Route 309 expressway as it crosses Willow Grove Avenue near or on the Harkins property on Willow Grove Avenue. The current proposal is a modification to the original plan and provides for a walking structure in excess of 500 feet in length adjacent to route 309. Mr. Gillies believes this is not a workable solution and suggested that the Board of Commissioners provide notice to those involved in the trail to consider another alternative.

Mr. Dailey made comment that the feasibility study for the Cresheim Trail has been presented to the Cheltenham Township Board of Commissioners and is interested in when the proposal will be formally presented to Springfield. He also noted that he and other residents have attended meetings regarding the Cresheim Trail and provided comments to the designer, but to date, no information or feedback has been provided. Mr. Harbison explained that the Cresheim Trail is being proposed by a private committee

that is managing the process through the municipalities and counties. There is a draft plan dated January 2008, but as stated, the final plan has not been presented and Mr. Harbison thought it may be best to make comment on the plan at that time. Ms. Peirce and Messrs. Standish and Heller agreed with Mr. Harbison's comments as well as the concern for the manner in which the trail might be constructed adjacent to the Harkins' property.

Motion (Gillies-Schaum) to place the Cresheim Trail Committee on notice that the link to Springfield Township in the area of the Route 309 expressway and Willow Grove Avenue is not workable and another alternate route must be sought. Vote 3-4; Harbison, Heller, Peirce Standish opposed. The motion did not pass.

Mr. Standish, Chairman of Public Works and Facilities Committee, reported:

Motion (Standish-Schaum) carried unanimously to enact Ordinance No. 897, an ordinance amending the Springfield Township Code Chapter 92, Streets and Sidewalks, by establishing regulations to help manage the public rights of way, regulate the construction, reconstruction, installation, operation, maintenance and removal of telecommunications systems within the public rights of way, and to provide for compensation to the Township for occupation and use of the public rights of way.

Motion (Standish-Schaum) carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 1200, a resolution establishing fees to compensate Springfield Township to manage and regulate telecommunications systems that occupy the public rights of way in Springfield Township. The resolution provides for new application fees, renewal of application fees, construction permits, and fees associated with the type of equipment and improvements located within the public rights of way.

Motion (Standish-Heller) carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 1198, a resolution authorizing the submission of an application to the Montgomery County Open Space Program to acquire a parcel of land on Montgomery Avenue, Erdenheim, Springfield School District bus garage, and to amend the existing green infrastructure application to perform additional recreation improvements at the Sandy Run Park, on Walnut Avenue, and the Oreland Park, on Alison Road.

Mr. Standish announced that during the month the Township solicited proposals from seven companies that provide a variety of lawn care and tree care services. While there will not be an actual contract awarded, Township staff will utilize the service of the lowest bidder for the particular service needed.

Motion (Standish-Peirce) carried unanimously to award a contract to Puppy Dog Landscape Corporation, of Sellersville, for their low bid price of \$15,231.50 to perform lawn cutting services at specified Township parks. The bid proposal also provides for an optional contract in the year 2010 for the bid price of \$15,702.57.

Ms. Peirce, Chairwoman., of Communications and Cultural Resources Committee, reported:

Ms. Peirce noted that in 2006, the Board established an ad hoc communications committee to help with a number of communications issues, including the redesign of the Township web site. Now that the Township web site has been redesigned, she suggested that the committee be re-established to review and comment on the web site. Mr. Gillies questioned the need for the committee to be re-established as opposed to simply asking the individuals or any member of the community to comment on the new website. Mr. Dailey asked if the Board might first discuss the concept of re-establishing the committee at a future workshop meeting, and to the extent the committee was re-established, limit comments on the existing website to the technical capabilities of the site as it exists today.

Motion (Peirce-Heller) to re-establish the ad hoc communications committee to review the new Township website. Vote 6-1, Mr. Gillies opposed.

Mr. Dailey, Chairman of Zoning Committee, reported:

Mr. Dailey announced that the Springfield Township Zoning Hearing Board will next meet on Monday evening, March 16, 2009 at 7:00 PM in the Springfield Township Building. Mr. Dailey summarized the Zoning Hearing Board Agenda.

Mr. Heller, Chairman of Community Development Committee, reported:

Mr. Heller announced that prior to the meeting, the Commissioners hosted an open house for residents, business owners, and other interested parties to review the Bethlehem Pike Streetscape Master Plan, and to meet with the professional consultants who helped create the plan. The Bethlehem Pike Streetscape Master Plan is to further advance the concepts developed in the Flourtown Erdenheim Vision Plan. The Plan intends to give the Township a general blueprint for improvements within the Bethlehem Pike corridor with a goal to incorporate consistent streetscape elements for a positive image in the community. It was noted that the presentation was videotaped and would be aired on the School District cable TV channel following the March business meeting.

Motion (Heller-Gillies) carried unanimously that in compliance with Section 512.1 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the Board of Commissioners waive the formal land development review process for Kurtz Roofing Inc. as it relates to their property at 1100 E. Mermaid Lane, Wyndmoor. The subject of the land development pertains to interior alterations of an existing 24,800 sq. ft. office/warehouse building which is being subdivided into two separate occupancies. The waiver was granted in conjunction with plans entitled "Interior Alteration to Existing Building Kurtz Construction", dated November 20, 2008, last revised January 21, 2009. The applicant is required to secure all permits and approvals, and comply with all state and local construction codes.

Motion (Heller-Peirce) carried unanimously to approve the land development plan for John McClelland, 204 Lynn Avenue, Oreland. The subject of the land development is the construction of a single family detached dwelling. The approved plans are dated July 3, 2008, last revised November 3, 2008. The approval is subject to the applicant resolving all outstanding issues outlined in a letter dated January 5, 2009 from Amy Montgomery, Township Engineer, to Robert Dunlop, Code Enforcement Officer.

Motion (Heller-Peirce) carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 1197, a resolution authorizing and endorsing an application to the Montgomery County Community Development Block Grant Program for the project known as the Erdenheim Pedestrian Accessibility Project, Phases I and IA. The project includes the installation of sidewalks and handicapped accessible ramps on an as-needed basis on portions of Bethlehem Pike and Paper Mill Road, in Erdenheim.

Motion (Heller-Peirce) carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 1199, a resolution authorizing the proper Township officials to execute a reimbursement agreement with PennDOT as it relates to construction costs of the Flourtown Erdenheim Community Gateways Project. The Gateways Project includes cosmetic improvements at three locations where motorists will enter either the Flourtown or Erdenheim business districts. Mr. Heller identified the specific locations of the improvements.

Michael Harkins, 1799 Willow Grove Avenue, thanked Mr. Gillies and the other Commissioners who appreciate his concern for the proposed Cresheim Trail being located adjacent to his property. Mr. Harkins reviewed the spatial limitations of his property to accommodate the trail, and earlier misconceptions of where his property line exists as it relates to a fence line adjacent to the route 309 expressway. Mr. Gillies reiterated his point with regard to placing the trail designer on notice now with regard to the worthiness of constructing a bridge or walkway adjacent to Mr. Harkins' property for the Cresheim Trail.

Mr. Heller wished to clarify the inaccuracy of a rumor that he was supporting the construction of trails throughout the Township that would be built with the use of Township funds.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Donald E. Berger, Jr.
Secretary

