

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

The Board of Commissioners of Springfield Township met in regular monthly meeting on Wednesday evening, December 8, 2021 at 7:30 PM in the Springfield Township Building for the purpose of transacting the general business of the Township. The meeting was also offered in a live streaming feature. Mr. Standish announced that the video would be made available on the Township's website beginning Thursday, December 9. All members of the Board were present at the start of the meeting, with the exception of Commissioner Maxwell. Mr. Standish presided.

Mr. Standish asked everyone to join the Board of Commissioners in a moment of silent reflection honoring the service men and women who have placed themselves in harm's way in order to help preserve our safety at home and abroad.

Mr. Standish led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion (Wilson-Graham) vote 6-0, dispensing with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting and approving same as written and recorded in the official minute book of the Township.

Mr. Maxwell joined the Board at 7:32 PM.

Mr. Standish announced that this meeting would be Mr. Harbison's last meeting as a Township Commissioner.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Standish announced that the Board of Commissioners conducted an executive session immediately prior to the business meeting to discuss one real estate matter.

Mr. Standish announced that at the December 6, 2021 meeting of the Board of Commissioners, the Board accepted public comment related to the construction of a proposed behavioral health facility at a property located on Haws Lane, Erdenheim as presented to the local planning commission on November 16, 2021. The overwhelming sentiment of the public comment was for the Commissioners to consider preserving the property for open space purposes. Mr. Standish summarized a phone call that he and Commissioner Lee had with the owner of the subject property, wherein they requested additional time for the Township to pursue the availability of grant funds to acquire the property. The request for additional time could not be accommodated for various reasons. The owner was also asked to consider an alternate institutional use and/or a smaller building, as well as the construction of fewer townhomes. These requests were made with the goal of providing a more compatible use for the neighborhood, and the preservation of open space. These requests were also declined. Mr. Standish advised that the owner was provided a series of questions that were previously asked of him the November 16 planning commission meeting, and he agreed to provide answers to those questions after consulting with the behavioral health provider. It is the Board's intention to share the answers with the community once received.

Motion (Lee-Graham) to hire an appraiser to conduct an appraisal of the property located at 380-402 Haws Lane. Vote 4-3; opposed Cobb, Maxwell, Wilson.

Commissioner Cobb opined that regardless of the value of the property, the appraisal process will lead to a path that will incur exorbitant costs to the taxpayers. Furthermore, Commissioner Cobb believes that potentially there may be larger properties on the market in the near future that would be more suitable for the Township's needs.

Commissioner Standish agreed with Commissioner Cobb, but believes that more information is better than less information.

Commissioner Graham believes that it is important to know the fair market value of the property in order to make a decision whether or not to purchase it. He assured that a decision to conduct an appraisal is not a commitment to purchase the property.

Mr. Harbison agreed with Commissioner Graham and stated that it is good to have knowledge before making a decision. Mr. Harbison also believes that the Board should ask the Solicitor to research the law with regard to locating a behavioral health facility adjacent to an elementary and/or secondary school.

Mr. Standish announced that later in the evening the Board would conduct a budget hearing on the 2022 Budget. The Board will also be conducting a special meeting to close out the business of 2021, and to adopt the 2022 Budget.

Mr. Standish invited Bonny Davis, Tax Collector, to the front of the room to be joined by Commissioner Harbison. Commissioner Harbison read into the record Resolution No. 1556, a resolution honoring Bonny S. Davis for 13 years of service as the Springfield Township Tax Collector and Treasurer.

Motion (Harbison-Wilson) carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 1556.

Mr. Standish opened the meeting to public comment.

Richard Metz, Erdenheim, addressed the Board with regard to the proposed development at 380-402 Haws Lane. Mr. Metz expressed his disappointment that a mature woodland may be lost at the expense of development.

Jeanne Williams, Norfolk Rd., thanked the Board for taking a little more time to consider the future of the Haws Lane property. Ms. Williams cited Cisco Park as an example of what could be accomplished at the Haws Lane property.

Samantha and Lilly Koon, Flourtown, read into the record the Girl Scout Law.

Commissioner Lee acknowledged and agreed with Commissioner Cobb's statement about the financial ramifications of the possible purchase of the Haws Lane property by the Township. Mr. Lee read into the record a prepared statement wherein he stated that the institutional project is one that nobody seems to want. Mr. Lee stated he would support a zoning change that would permit up to 16 townhomes, and would support the township helping the developer make that density work. Furthermore, if an institutional use is presented, he vowed to see that all zoning and subdivision/land development ordinances are strictly enforced.

Katie Carruthers, Flourtown, suggested that it would be inappropriate to blame anyone but the landowner in the event that an undesirable institutional use is constructed on the property as he has the ultimate decision regarding its future.

Commissioner Wilson encouraged residents not to lose hope. The process will be long and there will be numerous approval and licenses needed to operate the institutional facility. Mr. Wilson stated he will continue to advocate for open space.

Mr. Garrity wished to clarify that notwithstanding anything said by the commissioners this evening, the Township will evaluate any land use application in accordance with the laws of Springfield Township and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania fairly and carefully, and without any prejudice whatsoever.

Commissioner Cobb thanked Commissioner Lee for his comments, even though he does not completely agree with those comments. Commissioner Cobb expressed his frustration that everyone has the same goal of wanting what is best for the township as a whole, but cannot agree on how to get there. He hopes that future debates might occur without personal attacks on anyone or the assessment of blame. He suggested that the better alternative for the site was for a residential development to include a residential development that might include a walking path, additional stormwater management improvements, and the preservation of open space as part of any approvals. He further stated that Springfield Township is a small community with a limited tax base, and limited financial resources, and the eyes of the Board are always on how best to utilize the limited resources that we have.

Commissioner Standish noted that the Planning Commission is undertaking the large task of updating the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. He further stated that he is dedicated to revising the township zoning regulations, as is the Planning Commission and Zoning Officer.

Beth McNamara, Flourtown, asked Commissioner Cobb to clarify his comments about a development that would preserve trees and include a walking trail. She asked Mr. Cobb if such a development had actually been proposed. Commissioner Cobb stated that the initial proposal showed a large grove of trees in the back of the property preserved. Other comments were aspirational. He suggested that the township, through a zoning change, would have significantly more leverage with a residential development vs. an institutional one.

B. M. Standish, Chairman of Community Development Committee, reported:

Motion (Standish-Lee) carried unanimously to accept a letter dated November 24, 2021, from Craig R. Lewis, counsel for Federal Realty Investment Trust, extending the 90-day subdivision/land development plan review period up to and including February 9, 2022. The extension of time will provide Federal Realty the opportunity to revise their land development plans to be in compliance with the Springfield Township Code.

Motion (Standish-Graham) carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 1555, a resolution updating the fee schedule for building, plumbing, mechanical, fire protection and electrical permits. The fee schedule has been adjusted in order to ensure the recovery of costs incurred by the Township for the review and inspection of construction activities as required by the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code.

Motion (Standish-Graham) carried unanimously to reappoint David Sands and Joseph Devine to new, three-year terms of service as members of the Springfield Township Historical Commission. The new terms of service shall expire on December 31, 2024.

Mr. Harbison, Chairman of Internal Affairs and Library Committees, reported:

Motion (Harbison-Wilson) carried unanimously to approve the November check reconciliation in the amount \$957,620.20 and the December bill listing in the amount of \$496,317.95.

McCarthy & Company, PC, of Lafayette Hill, PA, is the Township's business tax auditing firm. In a letter dated October 20, 2021, McCarthy requested an increase in their hourly rate from \$90 per hour to \$115 per hour. A survey was subsequently conducted to determine the rates paid by other municipalities for similar work, and it was determined that the increase is appropriate.

Motion (Harbison-Graham) carried unanimously to approve an increase in the rate charged by McCarthy & Company, PC to \$115 per hour to perform business tax auditing services on behalf of Springfield Township. The increase shall be effective January 1, 2022.

Mr. Harbison announced that the 2022 agency meeting schedule will remain substantially the same as the 2021 meeting schedule of the Board of Commissioners and Township agencies, with the exception of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee will begin their meetings at 6:30 PM instead of 7:00 PM. The Board of Commissioners will continue to meet each month on the second Wednesday at 7:30 PM, and on the Monday preceding the second Wednesday at 7:00 PM, in the Springfield Township Building.

Mr. Harbison announced that Section 701 of the Pennsylvania First Class Township Code requires the Board of Commissioners to organize through the election of officers and the designation of the financial institution of the Township on the first Monday of January in each even-numbered year. In 2022, the first Monday in January is January 3. On that date, the Board of Commissioners will meet for the purpose of organizing at 7:00 PM. Prior to any new business of the Board, all newly or re-elected officials will be administered the oath of office by District Justice Kate McGill at approximately 6:45 PM.

Motion (Harbison-Cobb) carried unanimously to reappoint Arthur Walters and Marianne Sunderland to new, three-year terms of service as members of the Springfield Township Library Advisory Committee. The new, three year terms of service shall expire December 31, 2024.

Mr. Wilson, Chairman of Cultural and Environmental Resources Committee, reported:

Mr. Wilson announced that during the month of November 2021, Springfield Township residents recycled 159.36 tons of materials with a householder participation rate of 60.6%. The net cost for the month was \$17,584.82.

Mr. Wilson announced that the Chairman of the Springfield Township Environmental Advisory Commission, Aaron Stemplewicz, lost his wife last month to cancer. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Wilson extended condolences to Mr. Stemplewicz.

Motion (Wilson-Harbison) carried unanimously to appoint Patrick Hynes, of Wyndmoor, to fill an unexpired term of service as a member of the Springfield Township Environmental Advisory Commission. Mr. Hynes' term of service shall expire June 14, 2022.

Motion (Wilson-Lee) vote 6-1; Maxwell opposed, to appoint Richard Metz, of Erdenheim, as an associate member of the Springfield Township Environmental Advisory Commission. Mr. Wilson noted that associate members do not have voting privileges, but are encouraged to attend and participate in all meetings of the commission. Associate members also assist with educational programs, research, and special assignments.

Mr. Graham, Chairman of Parks and Recreational Resources Committee, reported:

At the December 1, 2021 meeting of the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, the committee recommended the adoption of an updated policy regarding the naming and renaming of parks and other recreation facilities. The new policy outlines a systematic and consistent procedure for processing requests to name and re-name parks, open space, trails and other facilities.

Motion (Graham-Maxwell) carried unanimously to approve the Springfield Township Parks, Open Space, Trails and Facilities Naming and Re-naming policy dated December 1, 2021.

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

Motion (Maxwell-Lee) carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 1557, a resolution adopting an updated fee schedule for towing services pursuant to Section 107-39 (B) of the Code of the Township of Springfield. The fee schedule was last updated in 2014, and includes modest increases to towing, storage and road service fees charged by the Township's authorized towing providers.

Mr. Cobb, Chairman of Zoning Committee, reported:

Mr. Cobb announced that the Springfield Township Zoning Hearing Board will meet on Monday, December 20, 2021 at 7:00 PM at the Springfield Township Building. Mr. Cobb summarized the Zoning Hearing Board Agenda and announced that copies of applications and plans are on file in the Code Enforcement Office and may be viewed during normal business hours.

Motion (Cobb-Maxwell) carried unanimously to reappoint Jennifer Guckin and James Brown to new, three-year terms of service as a member, and alternate member, respectively, of the Springfield Township Zoning Hearing Board. The new, three year terms of service for both individuals shall expire December 31, 2024.

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

Motion (Lee-Wilson) carried unanimously to authorize the advertisement of bids for the Bridge Street Guiderail Replacement project. The project includes the installation of approximately 125 linear feet of galvanized metal guiderail along both sides of Bridge Street, between Bruce Road and the bridge spanning the SEPTA railroad line. The new guiderail will replace an existing cable guiderail system that no longer complies with PennDOT requirements. Bid documents and forms for submitting a proposal can be found on the PennBid online bid service, and bids will be accepted through January 5, 2022.

Motion (Standish-Graham) carried unanimously to temporarily adjourn the business meeting and to convene the 2022 Budget Hearing.

Following the conduct of the 2022 Budget Hearing and Special Meeting to adopt the 2022 Budget, Mr. Standish re-opened the meeting to public comment.

Carol Lockard, Flourtown, asked if the Board would be formally thanking and recognizing Commissioner Harbison upon his retirement. Ms. Lockard was informed that the Board would be adopting a resolution honoring Mr. Harbison at the January 12, 2022 business meeting. Ms. Lockard thanked the Board for making the agenda materials available to the public.

Mr. Harbison read into the record a prepared statement in which he thanked his fellow commissioners, township employees and residents. He thanked Baird Standish, Mike Taylor, Don Berger and Glenn Schaum for their commitment and guidance. He thanked his family for their commitment to his position as commissioner. He pointed out a few accomplishments that he is particularly proud of: (1) construction and financing of the new municipal complex, (2) the replacement of all street lights with energy-efficient LED streetlights, (3) redirection of pension funds from active management to indexed funds, and (4) the passing of a non-discrimination ordinance signaling to the world that any and all persons are welcome in Springfield Township.

Mr. Maxwell thanked Jeff for his guidance and mentorship. Mr. Maxwell said Jeff was always accessible and he appreciated that. He wished Jeff well.

Mr. Cobb thanked Jeff for being accessible at all times and for leading by example.

Mr. Standish stated that he and Jeff served together for a long time and he considers Jeff a great friend. He stated that he and Jeff sing together in a choral group and he hopes that activity continues.

Mr. Taylor thanked Jeff for his leadership over the past 16 years. Mr. Taylor stated that Jeff led by example and the Board, staff, and community all benefitted greatly from his knowledge and expertise, particularly in financial affairs.

Mr. Wilson stated that 16 years as a commissioner is a long time, and thanked Jeff for his commitment. He wished him well and stated that he will be missed.

Mr. Graham wished Jeff well in the future.

Mr. Lee stated that serving 16 years as commissioner is very impressive and a tremendous commitment. Mr. Lee stated he will miss Jeff's institutional knowledge and expertise.

Motion (Harbison-Cobb) carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Taylor
Township Manager

