

UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
July 18, 2022

The regular meeting of the Upper Pottsgrove Township Board of Commissioners was held on Monday July 18, 2022 at the Upper Pottsgrove Administrative Office, 1409 Farmington Avenue, with Commissioners Trace Slinkerd, Cathy Paretti, Dave Waldt, Hank Llewellyn and Don Read present. Also present were Township Manager Michelle Reddick, Police Chief James Fisher, Solicitor Eric Frey, Attorney Celso Leite, Jr. and Township Secretary Jeannie DiSante.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Those assembled pledged allegiance to the flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – The June 20, 2022 minutes were presented for approval. Motion by D. Reed, second by H. Llewellyn and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of June 20, 2022 as presented.

PAYMENT OF BILLS – The July 18, 2022 bill list was presented for approval. Motion by D. Waldt, second by H. Llewellyn and unanimously carried to approve the bill list payment of bills of \$141,584.48.

REPORTS TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE – M. Reddick advised her reports are included in the Commissioners' packets and highlighted that the Township finalized the sale of the sanitary sewer system with PA American Water on June 30, 2022. The proceeds were used to pay off all Township debt. She was happy to announce that Upper Pottsgrove Township is now debt free.

The Township received 28 resumes for the full-time PW Director position. M. Reddick and Chief Fisher reviewed the resumes narrowing them down to ten. She will be conducting phone interviews over the next weeks and will present the final candidates to the Board for in-person interviews.

The Manager continues to work on the 4-year budget plan which will be used for planning purposes only. Since paying off the Township debt, the 2023 proposed budget previously provided to the Board will be revised and provided once updated.

The June financial reports were included in the Commissioners packets however, the finance department had difficulty reconciling the General Fund bank statement and when resolved this day, the General Fund financial report was revised and is provided to the Board at this time.

M. Reddick noted the Mervine Street joint paving project bid was awarded to H & K Group, Inc. When the Township is notified of the pre-con meeting and construction start dates, letters will be sent from the Township and Borough of Pottstown to residents notifying them of the dates of the road closure.

Pastor Bruce Mulberry from Hopewell Community Church is organizing and will be hosting Community Day on Saturday, September 10, 2022 from 10 am to 3 pm at Heather Place Park. The police department along with the fire department will be participating. In addition, I will be participating as a volunteer. The proceeds from their Community Day will be donated to our Veteran's Memorial. Each of you will be receiving a personal invitation to attend.

CHIEF OF POLICE – Chief J. Fisher submitted his report to the Board and noted Officer Crawford attended training and is now a member of the County Veterans Response Team. He is now available should any department come across a veteran that is in need. The team would be dispatched to assist with resources. Also of note, the department lost Officer Ryan Sloan as he has taken a full-time position with a department in Lehigh County. Chief Fisher will begin to pursue a part-time officer. The department will most likely be losing a full-time officer within the next month. Chief Fisher sent out emails to individuals on the 2021 list to see if there is any interest.

Chief Fisher is looking to replace the 2015 Ford Explorer Interceptor with approximately 106,000 miles on it and 20,000+ hours on the engine. In reaching out to the Co-Stars dealers there is a 2022 Ford Interceptor Hybrid available for lease which is in the budget. The cost difference between the hybrid and gas vehicle will be made up within 1½ & 2 years. If no objection from the Board the Chief will work with the Township Manager to move forward with the lease. There were no questions from the Board.

PUBLIC WORKS FOREMAN – G. Churach submitted the monthly report to the Commissioners and noted with not much rain the road crew was busy outdoors getting projects and maintenance tasks and responsibilities completed. During rain events the road crew is refurbishing the picnic tables at Heather place and painting them with the Township maroon color. M. Reddick commented that her family recently used the pavilion and were very pleased with the table upgrades and the overall care taken of the facility. She offered kudos to the road crew.

TOWNSHIP SOLICITOR – Solicitor Frey had no formal report at this time and will discuss items later on the agenda. There were no questions for the Solicitor at this time.

TOWNSHIP ENGINEERING AND BUILDING & ZONING – T. Slinkerd noted that LTL Consultants submitted their reports with the standard updates within the Township and pointed out the zoning issues. There were no questions from the Board.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION – G. Churach submitted his report to the Board and noted the Committee is requesting approval of items listed later on the agenda.

FIRE AND AMBULANCE – D. Raudenbush submitted his reports and noted the call numbers report has not been available for the past few months because a new company bought out Emergency Reporting, which is the system used to download all the statistics from the County. After some difficulty getting it connected to the County, they are two months behind in the reporting. All prior reports should be available by the next Commissioners meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSS & CONSIDER APPROVAL OF POTTS GROVE HUNT ESCROW RELEASE NO. 11 – T. Slinkerd stated this is a usual request for release of escrow funds and it was reviewed by the Engineer, Solicitor and Township Manager. Motion by D. Waldt, second by D. Reed and unanimously carried to approve Pottsgrove Hunt Escrow Release No. 11 in the amount of \$397,424.28.

DISCUSS & CONSIDER RELEASE OF STORMWATER ESCROW IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000 FOR ROTELLE DEVELOPMENT – M. Reddick explained the Township requires from a homeowner requesting a permit, an application fee, escrow deposit to cover inspections during the process and financial security which guarantees the homeowner will build the stormwater facility as per the plan. Once completed the owner or developer or builder will make a request for release of the funds. Once the engineer has verified that everything has been received, a stormwater agreement is signed and recorded, and final plans are submitted to the Township to be filed. Motion by D. Waldt, second by C. Paretti and unanimously carried to approve the release of the stormwater escrow in the amount of \$5,000 for the Rotelle development. There were discussions concerning on-going inspections, payments and repairs.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 747 OUTLINING THE DISBURSEMENT OF THE PROCEEDS OF THE SEWER SALE – T. Slinkerd explained the items listed in the Resolution. Motion by D. Waldt, second by H. Llewellyn and unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 747 outlining the disbursement of the proceeds of the sewer sale.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSS & CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION TO THE ZONING HEARING BOARD ON ZHB #03-2022 ~ MICHAEL FOX, 1337 N. STATE STREET – T. Slinkerd explained this is a request for a recommendation from the Commissioners to the Zoning Hearing Board for a variance to permit a pole barn to be erected in the front yard of a property. Motion by H. Llewellyn, second by C. Paretti to defer to the Zoning Hearing Board, with no recommendations, approval of zoning application No. 03-2022 - Michael Fox, 1337 N. State Street. Aye votes: T. Slinkerd, C. Paretti, D. Waldt, H. Llewellyn. Nay vote: D. Read. Motion carries 4-1.

DISCUSS & CONSIDER APPROVAL FOR GREEN ALLIES TO INSTALL SIGNS AT THE ALTHOUSE ARBORETUM - T. Slinkerd noted the Open Space Committee approved this request and asked G. Churach for details. He explained there are five laminated 8½" x 11" signs, a. through e., outlined for approval on the submitted meeting notes from Althouse Arboretum. The signs will be placed on the farm fence explaining what the area is and they will be removed after the growing season. M. Reddick read each sign description. There was discussion on the partnerships with Green Allies and the financial support contributors. Motion by C. Paretti, second by D. Waldt and unanimously carried to approve the installation of the listed signs at the Althouse Arboretum farm, detailed in the Althouse Arboretum Update letter submitted to the Open Space Committee 07-05-2022.

DISCUSS & CONSIDER APPROVAL TO INSTALL TRAIL AT PROUT FARM PARK – T. Slinkerd asked G. Churach to explain the details of this trail. G. Churach said this is temporary until the developer comes through with a permanent trail per an agreement with the Township. The area was mowed by the farmer leasing the field and the public works crew can mow it lower to make it walkable. Motion by C. Paretti, second by H. Llewellyn and unanimously carried to approve the temporary trail at Prout Farm Park.

CONSIDER RATIFYING THE AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT A ARLE GRANT FOR THE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ON GILBERTSVILLE ROAD AT THE ALTHOUSE ARBORETUM

– M. Reddick explained this project has been researched for many years and there has been significant cost increases. The Township found a grant to apply for funding and the application deadline was such that the Manager had to submit for it prior to the Board meeting this month. Motion by C. Paretti, second by H. Llewellyn to ratify the authorization to submit the ARLE grant application for the pedestrian crossing on Gilbertsville Road at the Althouse Arboretum. There was discussion on matching funds and C. Churach explained the Township will pay the costs upfront and will be reimbursed. D. Waldt noted Senator Mensch and Representative Pennycuik provided letters of support for the grant. Motion unanimously carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Capinski, 1958 Yarnall Road made a comment about his address.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS – None at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

T. Slinkerd announced an Executive Session was held on July 1st and July 13th to discuss personnel and litigation.


The Board convened in Execution Session at 7:37 pm to discuss matters of litigation, collective bargaining, personnel and real estate purchase with action to be taken. The Board reconvened at 9:02 pm. Motion by C. Paretti, second by D. Waldt and unanimously carried to add the following to the Board's agenda: (1) Community day; and (2) Fox Trail Easement taking.

Motion by H. Llewellyn, second by C. Paretti and unanimously carried to sanction the planned Upper Pottsgrove Community Day event scheduled for September 10 at the Heather Place Park, to allow the event to take place at Heather Place Park, and to allow soliciting, sound amplification and entertainment at the event.

Motion by C. Paretti, second by H. Llewellyn and unanimously carried to authorize the Solicitor to prepare the necessary documents to begin eminent domain proceedings for the trail easement on the lands of Kyle A. Laverty and Varah J. Laverty, to authorize the execution of the same by the proper officers and staff of the Township, and to file the same in Montgomery County Courthouse.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Jeannie DiSante, Township Secretary