

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

The Board of Commissioners of Springfield Township met in regular monthly meeting on Wednesday evening, April 14, 2021, at 7:30 PM for the purpose of transacting the general business of the Township. Due to social distancing guidelines in effect at the time of the meeting, the meeting was conducted utilizing the Zoom video conferencing platform. All members of the Board were present. Mr. Standish presided.

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

Mr. Standish led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion (Wilson-Cobb), carried unanimously, 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.

Announcements

Mr. Standish announced that the Board of Commissioners conducted a special executive session meeting on April 12, 2021 as part of the regularly scheduled workshop meeting to discuss two matters of litigation, and three personnel matters.

Mr. Standish read into the record the Board's statement condemning recent violent acts against Asian-American individuals. The statement referenced the recent tragedy in Atlanta, Georgia in which six Asian-American females were murdered by a lone gunman, as well as other local examples of xenophobia and violence. Mr. Standish concluded that while our community may not be immune from hateful acts, the Board of Commissioners continues to combat harassment and discrimination of all individuals, and that hate has no home in Springfield Township.

Mr. Standish provided a brief history of the development plans for the property located at 380-402 Haws Lane, Erdenheim. In 2013, the Traditions development received preliminary land development approval for the construction of a 107-unit retirement home. For a variety of reasons, that project did not immediately proceed but in 2019 a proposal was put forth for the construction of a 100-unit age restricted apartment complex on the same site. That proposal was subsequently withdrawn due to negative feedback received from the community. The developer's latest proposal contemplates the construction of between 36 and 41 townhomes. In order to facilitate a public discussion on the merits of the latest proposal, the Board of Commissioners has directed the developer to meet with the Springfield Township Planning Commission on May 4, 2021 to share the details of their proposal, and to solicit feedback from the planners and community members.

Mr. Standish also commented on past discussions regarding the feasibility of making the site a public park. He informed the audience that the property owner had attempted to sell the property to a healthcare operator from the Midwest, to no avail. Mr. Standish commented on the Board's interaction with Patrick Eddis at the workshop meeting on Monday, April 12, and that he felt Mr. Eddis' comments questioned the integrity of the Board and its Solicitor. He apologized for raising his

voice, and stated that he believes that Mr. Eddis and the Board are on the same page with regard to transparency on this issue.

Mr. Cobb noted that the Board conducted exhaustive discussions with the School District in an attempt to find a use for the subject property. Mr. Cobb also commented that Commissioner Wilson has been a leader in trying to find an alternative use for the subject site.

Mr. Lee pointed out that the property is private property, and the owner can present any plan he wishes. The Board is obligated to listen to all proposals, but that does not mean that the Board will approve all proposals presented to it.

With regard to the fact that the matter was being discussed at 10:30 PM on Monday night, Mr. Graham wanted to make it clear that the matter was brought up during an open forum, and after spending a great deal of time on other matters of interest to the public.

Mr. Standish announced that Rothmeyer “Roddy” Davis retired as a School Crossing Guard in 2020. Mr. Davis served the community for 12 years at one of the busiest crossings in the Township. The Board recognized and thanked Mr. Davis for his many years of service and wished him well in his retirement. Mr. Davis will be presented with a service award in the next few days.

Mr. Standish announced that due to limitations on the size of indoor public gatherings, all regular and special meetings of the Board of Commissioners and Township Advisory Boards will continue to occur virtually using the Zoom video conferencing platform until further notice. Meeting details and instructions on how to access meetings can be found on the Township’s website (www.springfieldmontco.org) in advance of each meeting.

Mr. Standish announced that the Board was now open to receiving public comment as part of the current meeting, and drew particular attention to those items listed on the agenda.

Ellen Stevenson, Flourtown, requested that the Board consider hiring Natural Lands to conduct an audit of open space in the township. She believes Natural Lands offers grant opportunities to municipalities to obtain open space. Mr. Ford informed Ms. Stevenson that he has been in contact with Natural Lands to obtain a proposal for such an audit. Mr. Ford informed all that Natural Lands does not offer grants for preservation purposes, but instead offers assistance in obtaining grants from other funding sources. With regard to the Haws Lane property, any grants available would require that the property is free and clear of all structures.

Patrick Eddis, Erdenheim, addressed the Board on various topics. Mr. Eddis would like all meeting videos posted to the Township website for transparency purposes, and asked the board to make a motion in that regard. He also suggested that the Board adopt a Code of Ethics for the purpose of disclosing any conflicts. He questioned why individual Board members desired to serve as elected officials for long periods of time.

Mr. Standish agreed to include on next month’s agenda the matter of posting meeting videos on the Township website for discussion.

Mr. Graham stated the Pennsylvania State Ethics Act requires all Commissioners to fill out and file a Statement of Financial Interests on an annual basis. Mr. Graham stated that all commissioners adhere to the State Ethics Act. Mr. Garrity provided a brief explanation of the State Ethics Act.

Chris Weth, Oreland, asked for clarification as to the purpose of the placement of stop signs on Paper Mill Road at Edann Road. He asked if the stop signs were to reduce the speed of vehicles. Mr. Weth was informed that the stop signs were recommended by a traffic engineer to address a sight obstruction at the intersection. Mr. Garrity reminded everyone that stop signs are not permitted to be utilized as a means of reducing vehicle speed.

Richard Metz, Erdenheim, expressed his disappointment that the township did not have the will to preserve the property at 380-402 Haws Lane. Mr. Metz stated the environmental benefits of the woodlands on the property. He expressed his concern for the traffic associated with development of the property on Haws Lane. He would like to see the Zoning Code amended to include a provision that would advance the environment and preserve green space.

Kelly King, Oreland, asked that the video recordings of the workshop meetings be made available to the public. Ms. King also asked the Board to consider continuing to meet via Zoom or other virtual means once the indoor gathering restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic are lifted by the Governor. Mr. Garrity stated it is likely that the State will require in-person meetings upon conclusion of the pandemic.

Rod Davis, Oreland, thanked the Board for the award in honor of his retirement as a school crossing guard. Mr. Davis enjoyed seeing the children at his corner and seeing them grow and mature over the years. He thanked the police department for the opportunity to serve the community in this capacity.

Michael Varzally, Haws Lane, stated his recollection of the possible joint purchase of the property at 380-402 Haws Lane by the Township and School District. Mr. Cobb stated there were a few meetings between the two parties to discuss the possible joint purchase but that the School District was not inclined to move forward with such a purchase. Mr. Varzally expressed his concern for additional traffic on Haws Lane as a result of the development of the subject property. He opined that the Township should work harder to save open space.

Betsy Wallace, Wyndmoor, asked Mr. Garrity if the Board could adopt a more stringent Code of Ethics than the State Code. Mr. Garrity responded that the problem would be enforcement of the more stringent code.

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

Motion (Standish-Cobb), carried unanimously, that in compliance with Section 512.1 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the Board waive the formal land development review process for Sandy Run Country Club, 200 Valley Green Road, Oreland. The subject of the land development is the construction of a 420 square foot patio enclosure located to the rear of the existing club house. The waiver is conditioned upon the Club cooperating with

Springfield Township to perform stormwater management improvements on the golf course to resolve long-standing drainage problems experienced by the residents of the 400 block of Burton Road as outlined in a letter dated March 10, 2021 from John Livingood, President of Sandy Run Country Club, to Springfield Township.

Mr. Cobb expressed his appreciation that the Club is willing to work with the Township to help resolve the long-standing stormwater issues that impact the residents of Burton Road.

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

Motion (Harbison-Lee), carried unanimously, to approve the March check reconciliation in the amount of \$429,491.24, and the April bill listing in the amount of \$833,427.38.

Mr. Harbison announced that earlier this year, the Internal Revenue Service extended the tax filing date for 2020 personal income taxes to May 17, 2021. In accordance with state law, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania subsequently extended the filing date for state income taxes as well. Since most individuals and businesses prepare and file their federal, state and local taxes simultaneously, it is the desire of the Board of Commissioners to extend the tax filing deadline for the payment of all 2020 local enabling taxes.

Motion (Harbison-Wilson), carried unanimously, to adopt Resolution No. 1531, a resolution waiving any fees or penalties associated with the filing and/or payment of 2020 local earned income taxes, local service taxes, business privilege taxes, and mercantile taxes if filed and paid in full by May 17, 2021.

Mr. Standish clarified that Resolution No. 1531 did not include the payment of real estate taxes. Mr. Harbison also noted that the resolution does not include quarterly estimates, which are due April 15.

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

Mr. Wilson announced that during the month of March 2021, Springfield Township residents recycled 207.91 tons of materials with a householder participation rate of 79.2%. The net cost for the month was \$26,941.46.

Motion (Wilson-Cobb), carried unanimously, to appoint Melissa Brookes, Wyndmoor, 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, and when a vacancy occurs on the commission, the Board typically selects an associate member to fill that vacancy based upon their experience and environmental interests.

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

Mr. Graham announced that on Saturday, April 24, from 10 AM to 2 PM, the Springfield Township Police Department will accept all unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications as part of Drug Take Back Day. The event is organized by the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office and the Police Chiefs Association of Montgomery County, and coincides with the Drug

Enforcement Agency's National Drug Take Back Day. Items that are acceptable for collection include prescription and over-the-counter tablets and capsules, inhalers, creams, ointments, nasal sprays, pet medicines and vaping products. Mr. Graham asked that residents not bring needles and intravenous/injectable solutions for disposal.

As part of the Drug Take Back event, Mr. Graham noted that the Springfield Township Opioid Action Committee will be accepting donations of gently used clothing, and will be offering Narcan kits on a first come, first served basis.

Mr. Graham thanked the Springfield Township Opioid Action Committee for the Narcan giveaway held on March 27 at the former library on Willow Grove Avenue. The event was well attended and 47 Narcan kits were distributed. He thanked all committee members for their work in this regard.

Commissioner Lee reported on behalf of Mr. Maxwell, Chairman of Public Safety Committee:

Motion (Lee-Maxwell), vote 5-2 (Harbison, Wilson opposed), to amend the Springfield Township Code Section 107-24, Schedule I, Speed Limits, by establishing a speed limit of 25 MPH on Paper Mill Road from Church Road to Golf Road.

Mr. Harbison commented that the Board hired a traffic engineer to evaluate the traffic conditions in the area. The traffic engineer recommended an all-way stop sign but not a reduction in the speed limit. He opined that if the Board is going to spend money on a study, the recommendations of the traffic engineer should be accepted. Mr. Wilson concurred with Mr. Harbison. Mr. Cobb stated that he appreciated the comments of those residents who addressed the Board on this matter and thanked the Board for entertaining the idea. Mr. Lee commented that when he asked the engineer a hypothetical question regarding the road speed if it were being opened for the first time, it was her recommendation to post the speed limit at 25 MPH. Mr. Wilson clarified that the traffic study did not identify speed as a problem on the roadway and therefore he does not believe the speed limit should be reduced. Mr. Graham stated that the neighbors in the area are the ones who observe the speeding and the Board has the responsibility to address safety issues that are brought to their attention.

Motion (Lee-Wilson), carried unanimously, to amend the Springfield Township Code Section 107-28, Schedule V, Stop Intersections, Subsection C, by authorizing an all-way stop condition at the intersection of Paper Mill Road and Edann Road, Oreland.

Mr. Lee noted that the aforementioned modifications are consistent with the recommendations received by the Board of Commissioners from Sandy Koza, Professional Traffic Operations Engineer, at their workshop meeting conducted on Monday, April 12, 2021, in order to remediate sight distance deficiencies identified at several locations along Paper Mill Road, between Church Road and Golf Road.

Motion (Lee-Maxwell), carried unanimously, to award a contract to McMahan Associates, Inc., Transportation Engineers and Planners, of Fort Washington, PA, to complete Phase I School Zone Speed Study, and Phase II School Zone Flasher Design, to facilitate the installation of school zone warning signals for the new Enfield Elementary School, Paper Mill Road and Montgomery Avenue, Erdenheim. The fee for services for Phase I is \$4,250, and Phase II is \$9,300. Phase II shall only proceed if the results of Phase I determine that warning signals are indeed warranted. The cost of all work shall be reimbursed by the School District of

Springfield Township pursuant to the land development approvals for the new elementary school.

Mr. Wilson requested that the scope of the study include the potential impacts of the school signals on feeder roads within one mile of their proposed placement.

Motion (Lee-Graham), carried unanimously, to adopt Resolution No. 1529, a resolution supporting Pennsylvania House Bill 606, and Senate Bill 419, authorizing the local use of radar for speed enforcement activities.

Mr. Lee stated that Pennsylvania is the only state in the United States that prohibits municipal police from utilizing radar and LIDAR which are considered the safest, most efficient and economical speed timing devices available to law enforcement.

Mr. Lee encouraged residents to contact Representative Napoleon Nelson and Senator Art Haywood to voice their support for the passage of House Bill 606 and Senate Bill 419, respectively.

Mr. Standish stated that this Resolution is in support of a State law. Mr. Cobb stated it is important for residents to contact their State representatives and senators in support of this important matter.

Motion (Lee-Graham), carried unanimously, to authorize the appropriate Township officials to execute a grant agreement with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency pursuant to the Commission's Body Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program. The principle purpose of the program is to support the development and implementation of body worn camera programs by police agencies. The value of the grant secured by Springfield Township is \$32,500 and will be utilized to purchase 29 body worn cameras and associated equipment for the Springfield Township Police Department. The total cost of the body worn camera program is approximately \$65,000.

Mr. Wilson asked if the Township's share is included in the 2021 budget. Mr. Taylor responded in the affirmative.

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

Motion (Lee-Cobb), carried unanimously, to adopt Resolution No. 1530, a resolution proclaiming Saturday, May 1, 2021 as Arbor Day in Springfield Township.

Mr. Lee announced that the Board of Commissioners urges all citizens to join with the Springfield Township Shade Tree Commission to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to plant new trees. He also noted that due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Shade Tree Commission is unable to conduct its traditional, in-person Arbor Day celebration and instead will be participating with the Free Library of Springfield Township to conduct an Arbor Day poster contest to decorate the library. Later this year the Shade Tree Commission also hopes to introduce a "seed library" to the community where residents can contribute, swap and borrow seeds. Additionally, when conditions permit, the Shade Tree Commission plans to conduct a tree planting ceremony and tree giveaway.

Motion (Lee-Graham), carried unanimously, in accordance with Section 1501 of the Pennsylvania First Class Township Code, to authorize the sale of one (1) 2012 Chevrolet Tahoe via the Municibid online public auction site. The vehicle to be auctioned presently has 119,127 miles and 20,400 hours.

Motion (Lee-Cobb), carried unanimously, to authorize the advertisement of Public Bids for the Township's 2021 Highway Resurfacing Program. A total of 14 streets are proposed to be resurfaced in 2021 at an estimated cost to the Township of \$353,862.50.

Mr. Cobb, Chairman of Zoning Committee, reported:

Mr. Cobb announced that the Springfield Township Zoning Hearing Board will meet on Monday, April 26, 2021 at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be conducted via the Zoom virtual meeting platform. Mr. Cobb summarized the Zoning Hearing Board Agenda.

Motion (Cobb-Lee), carried unanimously, to authorize the advertisement of an ordinance and public hearing to amend Chapter 114, Zoning, of the Code of the Township of Springfield, by imposing a 45-day deadline for the issuance of Use & Occupancy Certificates, and to provide for the extension of the expiration of zoning relief in certain circumstances. A copy of the proposed ordinance will be posted to the Township website.

Motion (Cobb-Wilson), carried unanimously, to authorize the Township Solicitor's Office to defend the Zoning Officer's decision denying the use of the single family dwelling located at 7914 Cheltenham Avenue as a "sober living house" for up to 23 individuals. The solicitor's office is further authorized to engage such expert witnesses as may appear necessary to effectively oppose that application.

Mr. Standish once again opened the meeting to public comment.

Kelly King, Oreland, inquired how the Covid relief money that is available to municipalities might be utilized by the Township, and how/if community members might have input on this. Messrs. Taylor and Ford explained that details on the relief program are unclear at the moment and the township is awaiting additional guidance from the Federal government on how the funds may be utilized.

Motion (Lee-Wilson) carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Taylor
Township Manager

AMT:cmt
4/23/2021