

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, October 13, 2022, via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, VAUGHN, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, VAHEY, HECKER
Excused: Commissioners BRODSKY, THOMPSON, CARSWELL

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Assistant Legal Counsel GALLAGHER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Hecker announced that Abington Township was named by Money Magazine to be one of the top 50 places to live in the United States ranking 24th on the list. It is a testament to the hardworking staff who work closely with the Board of Commissioners to ensure that we provide high-quality of life for residents, and he thanked them for it.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Adele Kubel, resident, expressed concern about “blight and unsafe conditions in Abington and residents want maintenance to be a top priority;” also, about “over crowdedness with more and more land development, and Briar Bush Nature Center has become a shadow of itself.”

Joe Rooney, resident, expressed concern about the public comment policy.

Ryan Valderrama, 2321 Tague Avenue, said regarding the agenda item of parking on Tague, the proposal is for two (2) hour parking for the first five houses, and he deals with Enterprise daily about their customers parking on his street taking up public parking space.

CONSENT AGENDA:

President Hecker announced that Item c. – BOC-02-101322 as listed under the Consent Agenda will be moved to New Business and will be discussed at that time.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve Items a. b. d. e. f. as listed under Consent Agenda as follows:

To approve the minutes from the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of September 8, 2022.

To award the Abington Township 2023 calendar printing bid to the Homer Group in the amount of \$32,000.00 to print 22,000 Township calendars.

To advertise a Traffic Safety Ordinance amending Chapter 156 – “Vehicles and Traffic,” Article II – “Traffic Regulations,” Section 14 – “Stop Intersections, Article III – “Parking Regulations,” Section 25 - “Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping or Standing,” Section 27 – “Parking Time Limited” and Section 28 – “Special Purpose Parking Zones” to add a “Stop” sign on Glen Road at Harte Road, “No Parking Here to Corner” on Miriam Avenue at Birchwood Avenue, 2-Hour Parking on the north side of Tague Avenue between 2315 and 2327 and to add “Handicapped Parking” signs on Tulpehocken Avenue in front of 204 Tulpehocken and Tyson Avenue on front of 820 Tyson Avenue.

To approve escrow release request #2 for LD-16-06, 1235 Meinel Road Subdivision in the amount of \$354,681.14.

To approve escrow release request #1 for SD-20-02, 1231 Susquehanna Road Subdivision in the amount of \$178,401.00.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 12-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-02-101322:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Rothman to award a contract to G&B Construction to complete the CDBG-funded Old Welsh Road Sidewalk Improvement Project in the amount o \$350,000.

Solicitor Gallagher explained that this afternoon the lowest responsible bidder indicated they would not be able to complete the project within the 90-day timeframe, so they requested an extension of time for completion of the project to be in the spring. The Board has a few options in which to proceed such as grant the extension as requested by the low bidder, reject the bids, and rebid the project or proceed with notice of intent to award without the extension and require the low bidder to execute the contract as set forth in the bid documents.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Vice President Vahey asked for the number of bids received for the project and the amounts.

Ms. Gallagher replied there were four bids. The lowest bid was \$349,963.50 and the next lowest bid was \$406,806.00.

Vice President Vahey recommended granting the extension.

Commissioner Winegrad clarified that the Board could decide to go with the next lowest bidder. Is that correct?

Ms. Gallagher replied that the Board could issue intent to award to the lowest bidder, and if they refuse to sign, then the Township could proceed to move against the bid bond submitted and simultaneously award to the next lowest bidder.

Commissioner Winegrad said he would be inclined to allow the extension.

Commissioner Vaughn questioned whether they provided a reason why they cannot get it done within 90-days.

Ms. Gallagher replied she believes it has to do with other projects taking longer than anticipated between the time the bid was submitted and now.

Commissioner Vaughn clarified that if the Township awards to the next bidder they would not be able to get it done within that 90-day timeframe. Is that correct?

Ms. Gallagher replied they would have 90-days from the date the contract is signed. Also, if the Board decides to grant the extension, it will not put the Township in jeopardy of losing any funding due to grant timelines.

Vice President Vahey asked how long will the extension be?

Ms. Gallagher replied until the end of May.

Commissioner Schreiber questioned whether the same price is guaranteed.

Ms. Gallagher replied yes, the price will be the same.

Commissioner Bowman said he supports the extension as well.

Commissioner Spiegelman said he is also in favor of granting the extension and would like the contractor to begin earlier in the spring due to the weather for this type of work.

President Hecker asked for confirmation on the ward this project is located.

Ms. Kim Hamm, Director of Community Development, replied Ward 5. The contractor provided notification this afternoon that they would not be able to meet the deadlines set forth in the contract. They expect to begin work in March 2023, and the request for extension is due to the rainy weather this fall, and they do not want to start work and have open sidewalks all winter causing a safety hazard.

Commissioner Vaughn said she is not comfortable with this as it has been an ongoing issue for a while. They indicated they cannot get to it due to other projects and whose to say that will not happen again in March, so she is not o.k. with it.

Manager Manfredi clarified that the extension would not cause any difficulties with respect to the timeliness of the program. Is that correct?

Ms. Hamm replied that is correct. There would be no negative impact on CDBG compliance including timeliness.

Commissioner Schreiber clarified that we have not spoken with the second lowest bidder. Is that correct?

Ms. Gallagher replied that is correct.

Mr. Hassan, Township Engineer, recommended that the Board grant the extension as the amount of time that it will take for the second lowest bidder to meet the contract requirements will be too late. He is familiar with G&B, and they are a reputable contractor who can do the job properly.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION to AMEND the MOTION to award the contract to G&B Construction to complete the CDBG-funded Old Welsh Road Sidewalk Improvement Project in the amount of \$350,000 and grant an extension for completion through the end of May 2023, seconded by Commissioner Rothman.

MOTION as AMENDED – PASSED 11-1. Commissioner Vaughn opposed.

Item BOC-06-101322:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Rothman to advertise an ordinance for a Zoning Text Amendment to create the AR-Age-Restricted Carriage Home Overlay District and a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone certain parcels on the northeast side of Fox Chase Road as AR – Age-Restricted Carriage Home Overlay.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Rothman asked about the process going forward if this is approved.

Manager Manfredi explained that the text and map amendments would give the property owner the ability to begin working on land development plans that would go through the entire SALDO process including review by the Planning Commission as well as all other agencies ultimately coming back before the Board of Commissioners for consideration.

Commissioner Rothman added that this is another step in the process prior to any formal submissions that would address concerns previously discussed regarding the St. Basil's property.

MOTION was ADOPTED 12-0.

Item BOC-07-101322:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to appoint candidates ranked 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 from the Civil Service Eligibility List to the position of Probationary Police Officer provided they successfully complete the background investigation, physical and psychological exams and all entry requirements of the Municipal Police Officer's Education and Training Commission for Act 120 Training effective October 31, 2022.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 12-0.

Item BOC-08-101322:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to grant amended final subdivision approval for 629 Roslyn Avenue, such that the following additional waivers are granted with respect to newly created Lot 2, also known as 625 Roslyn Avenue, Tax Map Parcel Number 30-00-59356-01-4, subject to the conditions set forth in the Executive Summary:

1. Section 146-27A – Sidewalks
2. Section 146-27F – Curbs

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Bole said back in March 2019, the resident subdivided a property and built a home, and at that time, it was required to install sidewalks and curbing and now the time has come to complete the project.

After review of the Township's Stormwater Management Plan as well as the grading of the property, it makes sense not to require the resident to install the curbing and sidewalk as it would be the only one on this portion of the block.

However, going forward, if it is required by future stormwater management plans, then this resident or whoever assumes ownership of the property would be required to install sidewalks and curbing. So, the plan is to return approximately \$14,000 in escrow to the resident and not require them to install curbing and sidewalks currently. He asked for the support from his fellow Board members.

MOTION was ADOPTED 12-0.

Item BOC-09-131022:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Ordinance No. 2197 amending the Code of the Township of Abington at Part II [General Legislation], Chapter 146 [Subdivision and Land Development], by amending and restating Article III [Plan Application Requirements] and Article IV [Plan Review Procedures] and adding Article VIII [Waiver of Land Development] to create additional exemptions of the land development process, to create a process for notification of property owners and residents regarding the review of land development applications by the Planning Commission, and to create a process for a waiver of land development.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 12-0.

Item BOC-10-101322:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Rothman to adopt the substantial amendments to the 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 CDBG Annual Action Plans as presented at the July 14, 2022 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 12-0.

Item BOC-11-101322:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to reject the 2022 Recycling Services Paper Hauling, Processing, and Marketing bid submitted by Newman and Co. on September 19, 2022, and authorize the Township to participate in the Montgomery County Recycling Consortium pending Consortium approval.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad asked for further explanation.

Mr. Mike Jones, Director of Public Works, explained that the bids were sent out in September and only Newman Paper Company submitted a bid that was extremely lower than expected, so therefore we recommend rejecting it. In looking at the consortium, there would be a much higher value to take the Township's paper and cardboard to Republic as opposed to Newman.

Commissioner Schreiber questioned whether there will be any lag time between contracts.

Mr. Jones replied that it will be a smooth transition. We are currently working with Republic in hauling commingled plastics to them.

Vice President Vahey said if we are to work with the consortium on recycling paper, he sees no reason to continue separating it from commingled recycling, and he asked Mr. Jones and Manager Manfredi to consider how we can make the process of sorting recycling easier and more convenient for residents.

Manager Manfredi replied we will look into it.

MOTION was ADOPTED 12-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Receive Treasurer's Report:

Township Treasurer Jay W. Blumenthal reported that real estate taxes collected in September 2022 totaled \$26,979 with 97% collected, 3% remaining. Monies received from various departments deposited into Republic Bank in September 2022 totaled \$4,862,882; YTD \$74,015,069.

Item FC-01-101322:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Rothman to approve the August 2022 expenditures in the amount of \$2,286,452.23 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,155,850.92, and authorize the proper officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of November 2022.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 12-0. Commissioners Brodsky, Thompson and Carswell were absent during roll call.

Item FC-02-101322:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to select The Hartford as the Life and Disability Insurance provider for the Township effective November 1, 2022.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 12-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Adele Kubel, 1848 Ambler Road, expressed concern about "rapid land development and commercial blight." Also, she asked not to "destroy" resident's ability to use Zoom to attend these meetings.

Deb Burns, Guernsey Avenue, expressed concern about not being notified about the plans for Susquehanna and Old York Road intersection and about traffic issues on her street.

President Hecker replied that he will follow up on it.

Joe Rooney, resident, expressed concern about the public comment policy.

Trevor Lee, 1601 Upland Avenue, requested that the Township begin exploring enacting the vision of a park from the Noble TOD Plan, and it would be nice if the parking lot had a green-planted buffer to create a better threshold between the neighborhood and the station, and it would be a tremendous asset for children.

Nora Salzman, 1627 Upland Avenue, expressed her support for increased walkability and bicycling in the Township that could be done by making the corridor down Rydal to The Fairway have a sidewalk as well as other improvements for recreation.

Ross Abel, Upland Avenue, commented that he also supports the TOD regarding green space at Noble Station and he would like to see that connection enacted.

Also, he asked for an update to the Master Bicycle Plan to get more protection for cyclists as well as the Township's ADU (Accessible Dwelling Unit) code to provide flexibility for homeowners to be able to use it as an income stream or house aging family members.

Lora Lehmann, resident, commented that Zoom is important so everyone can attend the meetings. She expressed concern about "turning shopping centers into apartment complexes and train station neighborhoods into triplexes and duplexes."

Hamam Aldouri, Upland Avenue, commented that he recently learned there was a public park for pedestrians and cyclists that ran along the railroad tracks from Noble to Easton Road, and he asked whether the Township is planning on reconsidering that pedestrian and cycle pathway, which would be a fabulous addition to the neighborhood fostering a strong relationship between the two areas. Also, Zoom would be greatly beneficial to the democratic nature and health of the Township if it continues to be used.

President Hecker clarified that there is no intent on the part of the Board to do away with the virtual participation option for residents.

Eric Kerchner, 1618 Upland Avenue, expressed his interest in moving forward with the plan for green space at Noble Station, which would be a great improvement to the neighborhood. He appreciates everything the Board does for the community, and he is happy to be able to call into these meetings via Zoom.

Commissioner Winegrad asked residents of Upland Avenue to get in touch with him as he would like to explore their ideas in further detail.

Board of Commissioners Meeting

October 13, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary

Ordinance No. 2197 was adopted by the Board of Commissioners on October 13, 2022.