

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., on Thursday, October 14, 2021, with President Spiegelman presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 6:43 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners THOMPSON via webinar, BRODSKY in-person, BOLE via webinar, CARSWELL via webinar, ROTHMAN via webinar, VAUGHN via webinar, MYERS in-person, ZAPPONE via webinar, BOWMAN in-person, DiPLACIDO in-person WINEGRAD via webinar, VAHEY in-person, SCHREIBER in-person, HECKER in-person, SPIEGELMAN in-person

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Township Solicitor CLARKE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Spiegelman announced that an Executive Session was held this evening at 6 p.m. regarding a real estate matter.

PRESENTATIONS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Lora Lehmann, Bryant Lane, expressed concern about agenda Item BOC-01-101421.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Vice President Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Vahey to approve Items a.- d. as listed under Consent Agenda as follows:

To approve the minutes of the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of September 9, 2021.

To accept the Financial Reports for August 2021 including Investments, Clearing Fund, Deferred Revenue/Expense Activity; Petty Cash Balances; Travel Expenses and Statement of Conditions.

To name the Park at War Memorial Island, the Edmund R. Micciolo Park at War Memorial Island.

To approve the Minor Land Development for the Rydal Park Medical Center patio located at 1515 The Fairway.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Myers stated that Mr. Ed Micciolo took an eyesore and a barely maintained island, named War Memorial Island, that deserved so much more, and this undertaking was something that Ed did on his own and formed a committee, and she is so proud that her husband was part of that committee, and Ed made it into something that will be there forever for every soldier, Veteran, and everyone who served our country.

We should be so proud and incredibly grateful to Ed, and we all know that when he did this, he was not well at the time. Ed and his committee raised the money and designed it and it was an incredible fete, and if it were not for Ed, it would not be there. And she does not care how anyone felt about Ed Micciolo, it has nothing to do with his service in making this island park possible.

Commissioner Vahey commented that it is so disappointing to hear someone defame the reputation of a deceased individual who gave his life to this Township, which is inappropriate. He is incredibly grateful for everything Mr. Micciolo did for this Township and so should every citizen who lives here.

President Spiegelman shared the sentiments made by Commissioner Myers and Commissioner Vahey.

MOTION was ADOPTED 15-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Item BOC-02-090921:

Commissioner Brodsky made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Hecker to TABLE Item BOC-02-090921 until the next Regular Board Meeting on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, because the parties involved need to meet further to discuss various issues.

MOTION was ADOPTED 15-0.

LAND USE COMMITTEE:

Item LU-02-090921:

Vice President Hecker said he is seeking consent by majority of the Board to postpone this matter until the next Regular Board Meeting on November 10, 2021, as there has been additional concerns raised by the neighbors in which he is working with Township Manager, Township Solicitor, and the Chancellor of Penn State on it.

Vice President Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to TABLE Item LU-02-090921 until the next Regular Board Meeting on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in this boardroom of the Township building.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0. Commissioner Thompson recused himself from voting.

NEW BUSINESS:

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Item BOC-01-101421:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Myers to remove Item BOC-01-101421 from tonight's agenda.

MOTION was ADOPTED 15-0.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:

Item PS-01-101421:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to approve advertisement of Ordinance No. 2185 amending Chapter 65 - Burning.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner DiPlacido thanked everyone for their collaboration on revising the language, and he looks forward to having this item placed on the Board's Regular Meeting agenda and getting it passed.

Commissioner Zappone questioned whether language was included in the ordinance regarding those who have medically infirmities such as asthma, etc.

Solicitor Clarke replied yes, there is language in there that addresses that matter.

MOTION was ADOPTED 15-0.

Item PS-02-101421:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Hecker to appoint candidates Eliana Carino, George Rucker, and Nordia Henry from the Civil Service Eligibility list to the position of Probationary Police Officer provided they successfully complete the Background, Physical and Psychological exams and all entry requirements of the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission for Act 120 Training effective October 15, 2021.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 15-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Receive Treasurer's Report:

Township Treasurer Jay W. Blumenthal reported that real estate taxes collected in September 2021 were \$36,430 representing an increase over prior year of \$1,259; YTD 98% collected with 2% remaining. Revenues deposited into Republic Bank from various Township departments in September 2021 were \$4,849,143 representing an increase over prior year of \$639,348; YTD \$67,577,855 as compared to prior year of \$56,227,707 representing an increase of \$11,350,148.

Item FC-01-101421:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bowman to approve the August 2021 expenditures in the amount of \$2,167,973.21 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$1,997,441.15, and authorize the proper officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of November 2021.

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

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 15-0.

Item FC-02-101421:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to approve \$23,680.00 for ATFD firefighter physicals for the addition of stress testing and Urine Cytology testing (Bladder Cancer).

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 15-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Paul Morse, Glen Road, commented that these meetings should be in-person for all citizens as well as Commissioners as many organizations are back to in-person meetings. Also, he is very surprised that the PREIT item is on the Committee of the Whole agenda when the EDC meeting was just two days ago, and he is relatively sure that when attendance was taken at the EDC meeting, there was no quorum.

Lora Lehmann, Bryant Lane, expressed concern that PREIT's figures were "out-of-whack" at the EDC meeting, and she does not have the documents to comment on before tonight's decision by the Committee of the Whole. Also, regarding the War Memorial, it requires a three-year wait, and she expressed concern about the patio at Rydal Park; PREIT and the Willow Grove Mall and how many buildings can be built there.

A resident expressed concern about "changing our County from a beautiful place into a place ridden with traffic, smog, apartments and crime."

Natalie Pawell, 1920 Fleming Avenue, commented that she lives three or four blocks from the mall and expressed concern about PREIT building apartments around the mall in a very congested area as well as "lack of communication with citizens who live closest to the mall."

Joe Rooney, Maple Avenue, said he is here to speak about three issues: "free speech, abuse of power in office, and violation of the PA Sunshine Act," and he insisted that until there is discussion and a vote on uniform standards for use of the Township flagpole, that he as well as other residents should be allowed the right to fly their flag from that same flagpole for the same amount of time, and that no flag other than the stars and stripes should fly on it.

Beth Rooney, Maple Avenue, agreed with her husband's comments.

Commissioner Schreiber said that we did not break any laws and we did stand up for your rights, your free speech because you are allowed to stand in front of the building holding your flag. This is not partisan, it is standing up for people's rights, their civil rights.

It is interesting that we are having this dialog tonight because she and Commissioner Spiegelman just left a program event held by Art Haywood called, "Loving Thy Neighbor" where they talked about civility, and civil rights comes from civility, being civil to people, and we are standing up for people, their civil rights and showing pride.

She may not share in your beliefs, but she understands you have a right and she would support your right for your particular cause, but that does not mean your particular flag can be put up on the flagpole. This is something that we are allowed to do, which was explained in writing several times.

Also, she called each of her fellow Commissioners, which she is permitted to do, and no votes were taken, and it is not breaking the Sunshine Laws in any way, and the Township Solicitor can explain the Sunshine Laws if necessary.

Commissioner Myers said that Commissioner Schreiber did call her as well as all the Commissioners, and at that time, she indicated that she had no problem with it, and she still does not. However, in looking back and this becoming somewhat of an issue, although this has nothing to do with what the flag represents or about any other type of flag, but after doing some research, no other flag should be on the flagpole with the American flag except a government flag and that would be State, County, and municipal as well as POW MIA, which is considered a national banner. She does feel that a second flagpole would be very appropriate, and flags could be raised through a permit process, right next to the American flag.

President Spiegelman said he is very proud to work with his close friend and colleague Commissioner Schreiber on getting that flag raised, and Commissioner Schreiber consulted with Township Solicitor who provided a clear answer citing specific court precedent case law about why it was o.k. to join many municipalities in Montgomery County, join Montgomery County itself, counties and communities throughout our Commonwealth, join our Commonwealth as well as many communities throughout our entire country in raising this particular flag in the month of June.

Also, next month's Board of Commissioners Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., and not on Thursday, November 11, 2021, because that is Veterans Day.

Board of Commissioners Meeting

October 14, 2021

ADJOURNMENT: 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary