

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
September 26, 2019**

A Regular Monthly Meeting of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors was called to order on Thursday September 26, 2019 at 7:00PM in the Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania.

Supervisors Present: Missy Sterling, Chair; Amy Grossman, Vice Chair; Michael Drossner, Laura Boyle Nester and Fran McCusker

Also present: Richard L. Mellor, Jr., Township Manager; Dave Sander, Township Solicitor; Krista Heinrich, P.E. Township Engineer and Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisors Grossman announced:

Whitemarsh Township's website has a fresh new look! Be sure to visit WWW.whitemarshTWP.org for news, announcements, and information.

We're also pleased to announce the introduction of the Whitemarsh Weekly, a once-per-week electronic newsletter with valuable information for residents. Residents may sign up for the e-newsletter on the Township's home page.

Finally, Electronic Recycling Day will be held on Wednesday, October 16, 2019. Residents are asked not to place items curbside until after 7pm the day prior. Additional information is available on the Township's website.

Butler Pike and West Valley Green Road Bridge Update

John Corcoran, Communications Director for Montgomery County and Tom Bonner, Director of Assets and Infrastructure gave an update on the West Valley Green Road Bridge. They stated Montgomery County awarded a contract to Loftus Construction Co., Inc. of Blue Bell for \$960,000 to perform the work needed to temporarily reopen West Valley Green Road Bridge to weight restricted traffic until construction on a permanent replacement of the bridge can begin (anticipated being Spring 2022). The work is expected to be completed by late Winter 2020, depending on weather conditions, and the bridge reopened to most passenger vehicles and emergency vehicles that weigh less than 3 tons and are below a height of 7 feet. The bridge will continue to be inspected by PennDOT every six months to insure its structural integrity. Access by emergency vehicles is especially important during severe weather events that may require emergency medical or emergency management response. Replacement of the bridge has been under review by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), a process that typically takes years. Under the terms of the agreement the County reached with PennDOT to move the project forward, the County will eventually relocate the historic steel truss bridge, built in 1884 over the Wissahickon Creek in Whitemarsh Township, to another County-

owned property. The relocation and reuse of the historic structure has two significant benefits. It will reduce by at least a year the federal review process to replace a bridge deemed historic. It also means improvements made to the bridge to reopen it to traffic will likely be useful for years to come, possibly as a trail bridge at another location. Replacing the structure entirely will allow the county to design a new bridge with wider lanes for vehicle traffic and sidewalks for pedestrians. It will also be designed to reduce the impact of flooding on the bridge and surrounding areas during storm events.

Supervisor Grossman asked how they propose to stop the large vehicles this time. Mr. Bonner spoke about the previous headache bars and the safety issues presented to the walking trail. He said the plans include building structures that will literally stop a truck and won't get knocked over into the trail. He stated there will also be a series of traffic control measures on both sides of the bridge. Chair Sterling stated one of the biggest problems is when a vehicle got too far and didn't realize until they got to the bridge that they couldn't cross and she asked that the traffic control measures are enough to give the greatest amount of warning that the vehicles aren't be able to cross.

Butler Pike

Mr. Corcoran spoke about the closure of Butler Pike. He stated on August 15 the county hired Gannet Fleming to design the permanent repairs for Butler Pike. They will coordinate with the five utilities and the PUC the design and review moves as quickly as possible. He said they are doing everything they can to safely reopen Butler Pike as quickly as possible. He spoke about the types of utilities and the design that needs to be provided to open the road safely. He said the design will go until December of 2020. He gave the history of the closure. Chair Sterling asked why it will take so long to get a plan. Mr. Corcoran stated all of the utilities need to review the plans. Chair Sterling asked if it could be expedited and he stated they are working with the PUC, including the railroad to move as quickly as possible. Chair Sterling asked that they expedite the process and what does it mean for construction. Mr. Corcoran explained construction is planned to start in January of 2021 and go through June 2021. Chair Sterling asked that they take back to the county that the Township and the residents are requesting to expedite everything.

Sydelle Zove (Harts Ridge Road) thanked the County for their update. She raised a concern about the stormwater runoff upstream that is causing the sinkholes along Butler Pike. She asked what is being done to address the source of the water. Mr. Corcoran stated that the county is working with Butler Pike but cannot access private property. She asked whose responsibility it is to look at the source of the water.

Richard Abraham (Bethlehem Pike) stated the stormwater that will be caused by the Hovnanaian project on Butler Pike will put a burden on the water system. He asked if there is a way to enact a large fine for trucks who attempt to go over the Valley Green Road Bridge.

Brett Saunder (W. Valley Green Road) she said she is disappointed in the township and the county. She stated she owns the property adjacent to the bridge and has not received any communication from the county or the township. She spoke about the removal of the bridge. She spoke about trucks turning around on her side of W. Valley Green Road. She spoke about the history and the amount of money being spent. She asked the Board of Supervisors to hold the County accountable.

Bob Sague (Kottler Drive) spoke about his idea to move the bridge to across from Creek Lane and through Magarity's on Bethlehem Pike.

Orville Wilson (Butler Pike) stated he believed this is an engineered sinkhole, on Butler Pike, caused by the box culvert on Butler Pike.

Terrence Martin (Basswood Drive) asked the townhomes being built adjacent to Abolition Hall will it make the stormwater issue worse. Ms. Heinrich explained the process of stormwater during land development.

Chair Sterling urged the County to have a Town Hall meeting as the plans move on so the residents are kept aware of all that is going on with both the bridge and Butler Pike.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Conditional Use #03-19 - Argos Associates/Adelphi Land Associates/Polergodom Group; Longfield Farms/Butler Pike

The Board of Supervisors continued the Public Hearing for a Zoning Amendment - Remove 11 Conditional Uses from VC-4.

A court reporter was present, and the notes of testimony are available for review at the Township Building.

The following individuals presented information/testimony/comments/questions at the Public Hearing:

Dave Sander, Solicitor
 Carolyn Edwards, Attorney for the Applicant
 Robert Downs
 Richard Collier
 Patricia Sheinman
 Christopher Lee Miller

On a motion by Supervisor Drossner, seconded by Supervisor Nester (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors continued the public hearing until Thursday, October 10, 2019, at 7:00 p.m., at the Whitmarsh Township building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, Pa 19444

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. September 12, 2019

On a motion by Supervisor Grossman, seconded by Supervisor Drossner (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors approved the August 8, 2019 meeting minutes.

BOARD PUBLIC DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Review SLD #03-19; Sunnybrook Golf Club/398 Stenton Avenue – Preliminary/Final Plan

On a motion by Supervisor Drossner, seconded by Supervisor Grossman (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors voted to TABLE the Board Public Discussion Item Review SLD #03-19; Sunnybrook Golf Club/398 Stenton Avenue – Preliminary /Final Plan.

ACTION ITEMS

Ordinances

1. Ordinance Amendment - Handicap Parking – 722 E. Hector Street

Mr. Mellor explained the Traffic Safety Unit of the Police Department sent a request for handicap parking at 722 E. Hector Street. They stated Kim Jackson contacted the Traffic Safety Unit for a sign request. Mrs. Jackson would like the installation of a handicap parking space in front of or as close to her residence on E. Hector Street. Mrs. Jackson forwarded a copy of the handicap placard, and a letter requesting the new sign. PennDOT records were checked and the handicap placard is registered to Kim Jackson. He stated the Police Department is requesting an ordinance to the Whitemarsh Township Code Section 111-22. I Reserved Parking, for the handicap parking as close to or in front of 722 E. Hector Street. Mrs. Jackson understands only vehicles with handicap placards will be allowed to utilize this parking space. This reserved parking space will be open to anyone who has a handicap placard on their vehicle.

On a motion by Supervisor Drossner, seconded by Supervisor Nester (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors adopted **Ordinance #996** amending Chapter 111, “Vehicles and Traffic” Section 111-22.1 “Handicapped Parking Only Between Signs” for 722 East Hector Street.

Resolutions

Motions

1. Trash Disposal Contract Extension - Exercise 3-year Renewal Option with Covanta 4Recovery, LLC

On a motion by Supervisor Grossman, seconded by Supervisor Nester (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors TABLED a three year extension option with Covanta 4Recovery, LLC for the disposal of trash from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Eli Glick (Whitefield Drive) asked the Board to give ample notice when the discussion regarding Covanta comes up again. He stated there are many residents and nonresidents who would like to weigh in on this.

Mike Ewal (Energy Justice Network) asked what the contract is up for renewal. He gave information on pollution from Covanta and his research into this. He spoke about his background and his findings on Covanta. He spoke about working with the residents of Plymouth Township regarding Covanta. He spoke about pollution controls. He asked the township look into other ways to get rid of the trash.

Supervisor Drossner stated cost is an issue. Mr. Ewal stated it tends to be less going other ways. There was a discussion regarding the costs of different disposal ideas. Chair Sterling suggested he go to the Environmental Advisory Board and share the information.

Dr. Derstarious (Plymouth Township Resident) stated she lives close to the Covanta Plant and after December 2018 there was a malfunction at the plant and afterward she had a burnt plastic smell in her home. She said there was another major malfunction in June 2019 and had a plume come over her and made her physically sick. She is asking for the Township to consider alternatives. Chair Sterling asked again for the doctor to share the information with the Environmental Advisory Board.

Richard Abraham (Bethlehem Pike) spoke regarding the Hovnanian project on Butler Pike and the Boards participation in the Conditional Use Application. He spoke about the Mr. Kilkenny, the solicitor and his campaign funds in his bid for Sheriff.

David Sharp (Conshohocken Road) area asset manager for Covanta stated the contracts with all of the Townships are through a public bid. He spoke about the odors and the complaints.

Sydelle Zove (Harts Ridge Road) said the information from Mr. Abraham is disturbing. There was a discussion regarding the campaign funding of Sheriff Kilkenny. She suggested the Township seek outside attorney advice for the Hovnanian project going forward. She spoke about the Conditional Use hearing on the property on Longfield Farm/Butler Pike. She said the issue of waivers is critical.

Julie Simon (Plymouth Township) also spoke about the odor in June and the physical reaction of herself and her son were severe.

Bob Sague (Kottler Drive) asked about the property at 505A Germantown and Westway Drive. He asked if the property has been through land development. He asked about the trees in the property. Mr. Guttenplan stated it is through land development and has final plan approval. He explained they have been through Shade Tree Commission.

Eli Glick (Whitefield Drive) spoke stated the project Mr. Sague talked about went through Shade Tree and did not get all the waivers they requested.

Perry Schwartz (Silver Bell Lane) spoke about the stormwater from the property and it should be preserved at all cost.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

ANNOUNCE EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Sterling announced the Board of Supervisors held an Executive Session prior to this meeting to discuss Real Estate, Personnel and litigation.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Supervisor Grossman, seconded by Supervisor Nester, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard L. Mellor, Jr.
Township Manager