

LAWRENCE PARK TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

6:00 p.m.

April 12, 2023

4230 Iroquois Avenue

In Attendance: Commissioner J. Golden, Commissioner T. Benovic, Commissioner B. Rodemaker, Commissioner S. Trojak, Commissioner J. Moffett, Solicitor A. Martinucci, Engineer A. Holland, Secretary C. Cunningham, Chief J. Morell

~Commissioner Golden called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was performed~

REPORTS:

Engineers Report:

Soudan Lift Station

- Final Plans for WQM Permit submitted to PA DEP on March 13, 2023.
- USDA Coordination
 - ROW Certificate-Resolution.
 - Title Search-Pending

PennDOT Bureau of Public Transportation – Transit and Multimodal Feasibility Study

- Scope is being developed. Proposed use of public transit fund for study.

Cunningham Lift Station Grinder – DCED Grant Application Coordination

- Under review by DCED.

Urban responded to the NFG notification letter re: Municipal Projects.

Solicitors Report:

- We received final comments from Erie County regarding the lease of a portion of the Lawrence Park Municipal Building for new MDJ office and circulated it to the Township. There were a couple of questions that needed to be, and have now been, addressed regarding occupancy. We are awaiting final approval of the lease by Erie County.
- We provided the Commissioners with a draft short-term rental ordinance for review and comment.
- Work continues on draft ordinances regarding rental property registration and inspection and vacant properties.
- We have continued work on Right-of-Way certificates and legal opinions regarding the Soudan Lift Station project.
- We have addressed various personnel issues, including the proposed resolution of a matter concerning an unfair labor practice charge filed by the police chief, which is on the agenda for approval tonight.

~Commissioner Benovic made a motion to approve all reports as presented. Commissioner Trojak seconded the motion; the motion carried~

*Commissioner Golden addressed the residents concerning comments on Social Media.

- Regarding the kitchen that was installed in the Police Department, Golden stated the only Commissioners on the Board at the time of construction were himself and Commissioner Benovic and that the cost of the kitchen was just under \$24 Thousand dollars. In 2021 the building was closed for renovations with a loan focused on renovating the building HVAC/electrical system. After that was completed the remaining money was used for the kitchen.
- The need for the kitchen was brought up and Golden stated that there are police officers on duty 24/7 and the ability to have access to a kitchen within the police department was needed for the safety of the community. Other employees in the building and anyone renting from the Township on the first floor would have access to a kitchen in the hallway.
- The topic of waste pick up was then addressed regarding Bids/Meeting/Advertisement of. The day of opening bid packets, Pro-Waste was the only hauler that had bid on pick up for Lawrence Park. He also stated that Pro-Waste is under PA Act 101 which states that leaves cannot be picked up with regular trash. Residents do not have to use Pro; they can choose their own waste hauler.
- Leaf pick-up with the leaf pick up machine is a privilege and not a service. The Board has been working on a viable solution to more frequent pick-up utilizing biodegradable bags. Other options are burning (following burn Ordinance), mulching, and taking them to Harborcreek.

- In relation to tax dollars Commissioner Golden explained how much money actually comes to the Township. 12.97% goes to Lawrence Park, 17% goes to the County, and 70.03% to the School District.
- Golden said that it is an election year and he encouraged people to run for any of the 3 open positions; even if the primary is done, they have the ability to run as a write in or independent. Golden expressed that he was insulted and disheartened that there is a narrative within the community that the intentions of this Board are not in the best interest of the residents; we are your neighbors, your colleagues and your friends, and we are all here for the right reason.

Visitors: Jim VanDyne, Bud Hughes, Al Renshaw, Rita Nicolussi, Jerry Olson, Karen Olson, Gerard Wodarski, Cathe Pawlik, Bryan Fife, Donna Farabaugh, Tom Buchleitner, Charles Curtis, Craig Noyes, Dale Durst, Karen Barringer, Melissa Weisnick, Meilissa Weismiller, Randy Weismiller, Dale Williams, Kate Griffin, Penny Joint, Kalli Oberlander, Jenna Crotty

Signed in to speak: Jim VanDyne, Bud Hughes, Al Renshaw, Jerry Olson, Bryan Fife, Donna Farabaugh, Tom Buchleitner, Karen Barringer

~Jim VanDyne spoke to the Board regarding the Memorial Day Service and he would keep the Board up to date~

~Bud Hughes presented the Board with a copy of an Ordinance regarding a tax credit to volunteer firemen. Hughes presented two Right to Know requests (a) a line item budget for 2022 & 2023 (b) Solicitor fees with Commissioner and line items for the past 8 months. Hughes questioned that under the sewer budget there is \$50 thousand for police, Commissioner Golden explained that was for patrolling the lift stations. Hughes stated that the Lift Stations are part of the Township property. Hughes also asked that the Solicitor recuse himself with anything to do with personnel matters regarding the Chief of Police due to their friendship, Hughes also stated that he called the Bar Association and he was referred to a disciplinary department to which he will fill out forms for this. With regards to the kitchen Hughes stated that he read the Ordinance and he feels it is a misappropriation of funds and that there was a \$1.6 million dollar loan and the money spent on the kitchen should have been put back onto the principal of the loan. It was an exorbitant amount of money to be spent on a kitchen that cannot be utilized by the entire Community. Hughes asked what kind of action is going to be taken with no Resolution being made for the sale of the service weapons and if anyone got any receipts. Commissioner Golden stated that the Solicitor has been working on it and that it was the Commissioners fault. Hughes stated that the sale of weapons took place before a Resolution was done, that there are rules to be followed, and if the police chief and commissioners don't follow them how do they expect anyone else to do so.~

~Jerry Olson addressed the Board thanking them for trying to take care of the leaf situation. Olson then asked where the kitchen is located and who can have access to it. Commissioner Golden said that it is in the police department and only police officers have access to it. Olson asked why police officers needed a kitchen, he stated that he was in the police department for 28 years and he didn't feel there was a need for a kitchen. He then addressed Chief Morell and asked if he needed a kitchen, Morell responded "I did not request a kitchen." Olson said it is a yes or no question to which Morell responded "I don't think we need what is in there". Olson stated that it was not the police who made the choice (in his opinion) it was everybody on the Board as they make the decisions. Olson stated Elbow Tree park needs to be taken care of. Commissioner Golden said that this has been discussed and it is going to be taken care of. Next he discussed the leaf situation and that he was glad to hear that an alternate plan is being looked into. Olson then stated regarding the kitchen that he didn't know if it was water over the dam, Commissioner Golden said that it is as the kitchen has already been installed, and stated at that time nobody on this Board was over buildings and had nothing to do with the design of the kitchen; it was designed by Lowe's and that ultimately we need to move forward which is the ultimate goal of the Board.~

~Brian Fife approached the board to announce he is running for MDJ. Solicitor Martinucci let him know that he could not speak regarding candidacy. ~

~Donna Farabaugh spoke to the Board concerning the condition of the burned-out home on 438 Harvey Avenue. She stated it has been 110 days since the fire. She is worried about the state of the structure; it is collapsing and parts of the house are blowing around the neighborhood. She knows that the Township has sent letters to the property owner. She would like to purchase the property but cannot do so due to the fact there is litigation with a contractor and the property owner. Farabaugh would like to see if this process can be expedited due to the horrible conditions. Solicitor Martinucci

stated that the Township does not have the means to step in quickly and cheaply go in and knock the building down. Farabaugh asked the Township could please help her out. Martinucci gave Farabaugh his card and said that he would see what he could do, that he would reach out to possibly the Board of Health or whatever authority could possibly help in this situation. Code Enforcement Officer Charles Clorley stated that he has been walking around the property quite frequently and that he will continue to do so.~

~Tom Buchlietner asked if the leaf machine was totally broken down. Commissioner Moffett stated it is not but when it rains they cannot pick up leaves or it would cause a major breakdown. He said that if a Sewer lift station goes down or emergency calls come up or broken lines happen then the Maintenance crew is pulled off leaf pick up. This causes a delay in pick up and it is almost impossible to make up that day as there are only 2 full-time maintenance men. Commissioner Golden did reiterate that the Board is looking into changing leaf pick up and hopefully extend the pick-up period and possibly use biodegradable bags.~

~Karen Barringer said on a positive note this past weekend there was a toddler missing and the Lawrence Park and Wesleyville police were helpful and kind to the little boy. She thanked the police department for their help.~

Bills:

- Commissioner Moffett made a motion to pay bills as presented, Commissioner Rodemaker seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Minutes:

- Commissioner Benovic made a motion to approve BOC Minutes from March, 2023, Commissioner Trojak seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Resolution:

- Commissioner Golden read aloud Resolution 2023-08 a Resolution to approve a Right-of-Way Certificate in regard to the Soudan's lift station with the following roll call VOTE taken by Secretary C. Cunningham; Commissioner Rodemaker; "aye"; Commissioner Benovic; "aye"; Commissioner Golden; "aye"; Commissioner Trojak; "aye"; Commissioner Moffett; "aye" with all in favor, Resolution 2023-08 was duly approved.

Old Business: N/A

New Business:

~Commissioner Benovic stated that National Fuel will be updating their fuel lines in the Lake Cliff area. With the project there are 2 of their regulator stations being located in the Lake Cliff area; one being near Joliette and East Lake the other is on Commissioner Benovic's front yard. These regulators will move from above ground and be put underground.~

~Commissioner Moffett motioned to approve those National Fuels Easement proposals; Commissioner Trojak seconded the motion; the motion carried.~

~Commissioner Benovic stated that Lawrence Park, North East, and Wesleyville will be entering a multi-modal agreement for Civil Service Testing so that they may acquire a larger list as well as sharing the costs of such testing. Also happening this Summer, a former parks staff will be putting on a 3-day Shakespeare play in August at no cost to the Township. Benovic said the Maintenance Crew has been working on the tennis courts/Elbow Tree Park/Lake Cliff improvements/Basketball Courts will be repaired as well. All Summer programs available are listed on the LP Website. Safetytown will take place again this Summer June 12-15.

The Board Excused for an executive session

~Commissioner Benovic motioned to approve a Settlement with John Morell of Unfair Labor Practice Charge, Commissioner Trojak seconded the motion, Commissioner B. Rodemaker opposed; the motion carried.~

~The Meeting reconvened at 7:03, Commissioner Moffett motioned to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Trojak seconded; the motion carried. ~

Respectfully Submitted:

Cindy Jo Cunningham
Board of Commissioner's Secretary