

The stated meeting of the Public Affairs Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, February 4, 2015 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Commissioner Spiegelman presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:51 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners SPIEGELMAN, FARREN, SR., SCHREIBER, SANCHEZ, JONES, JR.

Township Manager LEFEVRE
Assistant Township Manager WEHMEYER
Director of Parks and Recreation WENDELL
Legal Counsel GALLAGHER

Also Present: Commissioners MYERS, GILLESPIE, DiPLACIDO, KALINOSKI

MINUTES: Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2014 Public Affairs Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Parks and Recreation Report:

Mr. Doug Wendell, Director of Parks & Recreation, reported that we are working on our summer programs. April 15th is the deadline to get discount pool memberships that are being sold now. All ice skating rinks are open now with the exception of Alverthorpe Park.

Human Relations Commission Presentation:

Members of the Human Relations Commission, Joanne E. Kleiner-Levin Chairperson, Shelley Rosenberg and Meredith Gill were present to make a presentation to the Board.

Ms. Kleiner said in the last year, we made presentations to Jenkintown and Glenside Rotary Clubs and we received a grant from the Jenkintown Rotary for mediation training. We also participated in the Tri-State Human Relations Commission continuing education program this past November.

Shelley Rosenberg recently made a presentation to Department Heads of the Township, which is the same that will be presented tonight. We participated in Abington's Night-Out in August, and we have been invited to enter into a work-share brand with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and we are waiting to hear more about it.

We are in the process of preparing material for the Township television channel and the Township website contains updated material.

Shelley Rosenberg and Meredith Gill gave a power point presentation and provided a brochure with information about the Abington Township Human Relations Commission to the Board.

Resolution No. 15-007 – for PECO Green Region Grant fro Jackson Park

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren to approve Resolution No. 15-007, which authorizes the Bureau of Parks and Recreation to make application to the Natural Lands Trust for the 2015 PECO Green Region Grant in the amount of \$10,000.00. The funding will be used for the removal of invasive vines and the establishment of a meadow in Jackson Park.

Mr. Wendell said in accordance with the Master Plan for Jackson Park, the Bureau received capital funding for the removal of invasive vines. The additional funding, if awarded, will go towards removal of vines as well as establish a meadow area on the Amity Road side of the park.

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

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, asked why there is a grant for Jackson Park when the Boy Scout Nature Center is covered in vines.

Mr. Wendell replied Jackson Park has as much invasive vines as Karebrook and the Boy Scout Nature Center. Jackson Park also has more activity than those other areas.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Resolution No. 15-010 – Pool Feasibility Study Grant

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren to approve Resolution No. 15-010, which states that the Township of Abington desires to receive a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to undertake a pool feasibility study for Penbryn and Crestmont pools.

Mr. Wendell explained that to get funding from DCNR (Department of Conservation and Natural Resources) it requires a feasibility study. Both pools are 40 years or older and in desperate need of renovation.

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

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Economic Development Business District Landscape Maintenance Bid

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren authorizing the proper Township officials to contract with Louis F. Biase, Landscape Contractor, for the 2015 service year in an amount not to exceed \$75,000.00 for the Business District Landscape Maintenance Contract. Funds will be drawn from Economic Development Capital Accounts reserved for this purpose.

Assistant Township Manager Wehmeyer said the Township has been in contract with Biase Landscape Contractor and this is a motion to approve final contract year. The funds were budgeted for and were approved in 2015 budget.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Farren commented that this was advertised in 2013 as a potential three-year bid contract and questioned whether this needs to go out for bid again as it may be violating Township procedure for the bidding process.

Manager LeFevre replied this is part of that three year bid contract and reaffirming that bid price.

Commissioner Farren clarified that after year three ends, it will need to put out for bid. Is that correct?

Manager LeFevre replied that is correct.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any general comments relating to Public Affairs.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented that she feels three minutes is not enough time to speak.

General comments made at Public Affairs Committee Meeting.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any general comments relating to Public Affairs.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, expressed concern that she feels “people are breaking the law in the Township with dishonest comments in regards to discussion about Tyson Avenue and that there was a conflict of interest about whether the Solicitor should be doing that; also about not being given the correct information and this is a crime. She was told by Rudolph Clarke that there was no crime and putting false information into the record is covered under that Act.”

Commissioner Spiegelman replied to Ms. Lehmann that if she is accusing someone of committing a crime, who committed the crime?

Ms. Lehmann replied “I just told you that Mr. Powers told a story that was not true and it went into the public record in this Township and the documentation showed that it wasn’t true and when he was called on it, he told another story that was equally not true.”

Commissioner Spiegelman clarified that right now, Ms. Lehmann, before this committee, is accusing Township Engineer Powers of making false statements and committing a crime. Is that correct?

Ms. Lehmann said “to stop interrupting my comments and to stop telling me how I should speak.”

Commissioner Spiegelman said to Ms. Lehmann that she is making an inflammatory charge by accusing a Township Director with committing a crime.

Ms. Lehmann said “Federal funds would also have to be bid out and Township funds have to be bid out and the Township suggested that this did not have to go out for Federal bid and the reason was because the Township was going to take all of the public service funds and pay them, so the Federal part could go out to bid and how the Township got out of the bidding was that Mr. Powers did not submit it in time and that it would hold up the project. If I am in error of something, I am asking to have a response to what I said is in error.”

Ms. Gallagher said the construction part of the project will be bid out, but the services that are of issue are professional services and they are not required to go out to bid by Federal or State law, and there is a local resolution that requires certain professional services to go out for RFP (Request for Proposal). There were circumstances that surround this particular incident and the resolution provides for an exception where there is a time constraint for the project, which was the topic of discussion on Monday.

The Federal requirements are not involved in this particular portion of the project at this time. The construction will certainly be bid out pursuant to all Federal and State requirements.

Commissioner Spiegelman noted that Mr. Powers is not here tonight to defend himself.

Ms. Lehmann said “I will look up 23 CFR, which is Federal regulations on bidding and I am asking for a strong policy that acknowledges that this is the most conflict of interest I have ever seen.”

Ms. Gallagher said this was thoroughly vetted on Monday evening and she does not believe there has been any conflict of interest.

Public Affairs Committee Meeting

February 4, 2015

ADJOURNMENT: 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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