

The stated meeting of the Public Works Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Monday, September 28, 2015 at the Township Administration Building., Abington, PA., with Commissioner Bowman presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 8:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners BOWMAN, KALINOSKI, SPIEGELMAN, ZAPPONE, HECKER

Township Manager LEFEVRE
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Township Engineer POWERS
Director of Code Enforcement MATTEO
Director of Public Works MICCIOLO
Director of W.W.T.P. WRIGLEY

Also Present: Commissioners LUKER, KLINE, MYERS, GILLESPIE, JONES, SCHREIBER, SANCHEZ, DiPLACIDO

MINUTES: Commissioner Bowman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to approve the minutes of the August 31, 2015 Public Works Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) Transportation & Community Development Initiative (TCDI) Grant Program and Simone-Collins Landscape Architects

DISCUSSION ONLY – Presentation of Draft Township Master Bicycle Plan by Simone-Collins Landscape Architecture

Commissioner Bowman called on Vice President Kline.

Commissioner Kline said creating a master bicycle plan was done through a grant from DVRPC to be used as a blueprint to refer to when street improvements are made. The master bike plan will create a network of safe pathways through the Township connecting commercial districts, schools, transportation hubs and other recreational trails throughout the Township, adjacent municipalities and into the city.

Commissioner Sanchez sits on the Steering Committee along with Traffic Safety Officer Freed, Manager LeFevre, Scott Marlin, and Dr. Fecher from the Abington School District in which it has been a great collaborative effort.

Peter Simone gave a power point presentation to the Board on the draft copy of the Township Master Bicycle Plan by Simone-Collins Landscape Architects. We have been working Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. to put this together. We had a number of meetings with reps of PennDOT, SEPTA, City of Philadelphia and School Districts of Philadelphia and the Borough of Jenkintown as they are partners.

The region is engaged in a bicycle route superhighway called, the "circuit," which is getting tremendous support from the DVRPC, the William Penn Foundation, DCNR and other funding agencies. The superhighway trails that touch Abington are the Pennypack and the cross county trail, etc. Connecting with many destinations making it easy to get to the parks without having to drive vehicles to them is our goal.

Shown on the plan were examples of bike lanes that are five feet wide and marked and there will be shadows that are pavement markings. Also shown were "levels of comfort" mapping of bike lanes. Types of trails will be five miles of off-road routes; bike lanes - two miles; shadows - 27 miles and sign routes -14 miles, so there will be 48 miles of trails in this overall system. Detailed GIS maps will show individual lots as these trails go through the Township. Overall estimated cost is about \$6.1 million to implement this entire bike trail system and there is grant funding for it. Also included in the draft plan are suggestions for priority routes midterm and long-term.

This draft plan will be posted on Township website for the public to make comments on all parts of the plan, and we hope to have the draft plan completed and presented to the full Board of Commissioners in February, 2016 for approval.

Commissioner Bowman clarified that if this is approved, it does not require the Township to finance it. Is that correct?

Mr. Simone replied that is correct. It is just a planning tool and the goal is to obtain grant funding for implementation.

Commissioner Bowman thanked Commissioners Kline and Sanchez as well as Township Manager LeFevre for their work on this.

Commissioner Bowman asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Kalinoski asked who paid for the painting of Susquehanna and Valley Road?

Commissioner Kline replied PennDOT paid for Susquehanna Road when they repaved it, and last year, funds were allocated from Fund Balance to do Valley Road when it was repaved from work done by Aqua.

Commissioner Bowman asked for any public comments.

State Representative Madeleine Dean commented that she stands here tonight as both a resident and as State Representative to commend the Board for being community-building-thinking and engaging in how to connect all people to interesting places in our community. It is delightful that the Township is investing resources to try and make this a more livable and valuable community. As a member of the House of the State Representatives, she is willing to assist the Township in getting funding to implement this plan over time.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented this is a wonderful thing and does make our community better, but she asked for the rezoning “where we are pulling things in and not leaving room for bike trails along major corridors” to be reconsidered.

Commissioner Bowman replied that the Township inherited the major corridors in their current state and those commercial properties are incredibly valuable.

Settlement Agreement – Delaware River Basin Commission – Total Dissolved Solids Penalty

Commissioner Bowman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to authorize the acceptance of DRBC’s “Settlement by Agreement” including authorizing the payment of \$875.00.

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

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Edge Hill Road/Tyson Avenue – Flood Control/Street Reconstruction Project – Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary Use for Drainage

FOR DISCUSSION ONLY –

Commissioner Bowman called on Commissioner Zappone.

Commissioner Zappone said that a meeting was held last Friday to discuss the progress of the project. Our team, who is currently working on this project, is outstanding and the majority of the properties and the scope of the project have been appraised.

Mr. Powers said previously, during the reimbursement stage of the project, we negotiated the right-of-way from PennDOT and the right-of-way monies for the agreement. We discussed using the cemetery property, but the cost was in the amount of \$500,000, and it was difficult to find the money, so we relocated the pipe about 100 feet along the railroad and that pipe would take the water through the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary. Prior to this property being used for the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary, the Township bought it to be used for stormwater management and there are four basins on the property and the fourth basin is what would be utilized by this pipe that was designed years ago to hold water.

The question is whether to use the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary property and save the Township \$500,000 plus additional costs for engineering to move the pipe back to the cemetery side as well as some loss of time as it would need to be negotiated with PennDOT. He spoke with reps of PennDOT about covering the costs of the right-of-way, but the approval process takes time, and in order to keep this project moving, we would like to use the Township property for stormwater management, but there has been opposition from the Shade Tree Commission.

Debra Ferrara, of Pennoni Associates, Project Manager for the Edge Hill Road/Tyson Avenue – Flood Control/Street Reconstruction Project, introduced Matt Stalsitz from Pennoni Associates, who is a stormwater management expert and working on the drainage design and stormwater management for the project.

Tyson/Edge Hill Roads are being reconstructed for a drainage system to be installed. Currently, the drainage flows overland and conveyed through the tracks through preexisting pipes and preliminary design is to replace those pipes and extend our project north of the tracks in an effort to improve some of the flooding on private property adjacent to the railroad tracks and control the water.

Mr. Stalsitz added that there is an existing culvert crossing #3 that crosses over SEPTA tracks and there is limited amount of drainage on the roadway now and water simply flows north ultimately towards the Sandy Run Creek. Part of the design process is to run a new pipe to discharge water between the sanctuary and the cemetery. We developed a swale design to convey the flow from the discharge point at the north side of the tracks down to the location shown on the plan so we can direct flow through the pipe to enter into the wetland stream that would be conveyed into the Sandy Run.

The swale was designed to convey the 100-year flow and meetings were held onsite to discuss trying to shrink the footprint to minimize the loss of trees and the impact of the sanctuary.

Previous design was a four foot wide bottom, two foot deep swale with 3:1 side slopes with berms on top that tapered back down to existing grade so that the entire area would convey the 100-year flow. We came up with a narrower, deeper ditch design that would provide additional area for grading.

Commissioner Kline asked for the depth of the new design as well as the old design.

Mr. Stalsitz replied new depth is 2 ½ feet deep and the old depth was two feet. He provided photos showing the area of the project.

Mr. Powers said the question is whether or not to use Township property or try to get reimbursement from PennDOT and put it back on the cemetery's property and that needs to be addressed by the Board.

Commissioner Bowman asked prior to this proposal, how was the water going to be handled at Tyson/Edge Hill Roads?

Mr. Powers originally, we were going to use Township property.

Commissioner Zappone clarified that any deviation from original approved plan will cost the taxpayers more money and will delay the project. Is that correct?

Mr. Powers replied that is correct.

Commissioner Zappone said since these plans were approved some time ago, has anyone ever stepped forward to challenge the plan?

Mr. Powers replied no, but the Shade Tree Commission was not involved with the plan, and regardless, trees will need to be removed on Township property.

Commissioner Zappone said this is a flood-control project that will save lives and will save property, and that is our job.

Commissioner Gillespie asked will the new narrow design delay the project?

Mr. Stalsitz replied no, it is still a stormwater feature.

Commissioner Kline clarified that the plan was to use existing watercourse going through the cemetery property and get easements. Is that correct?

Mr. Powers replied no, we looked at using the existing cemetery property and the cost of the right-of-way is \$500,000 and PennDOT was struggling to find the money, so in 2010, when we made the reimbursement agreement, we decided to move it from the cemetery property to Township property. However, the Shade Tree Commission is concerned about removing trees in the sanctuary and requested that we go back to original design using the cemetery property.

Commissioner Kline asked when will construction begin for this project?

Mr. Powers replied he hopes by spring 2017.

Commissioner Kline suggested investigating other options with owners of the cemetery property.

Mr. Powers replied it will not be an easy process.

Solicitor Clarke added that since this is a PennDOT project; we are waiting for appraisals to be completed before approaching any of the property owners.

Commissioner Kline suggested finding out whether or not owners of the cemetery would be remotely interested in the Township using the existing drainage way on their property.

Solicitor Clarke replied until we have documents to present to the owners of the property, we cannot plan based on what they may say until we can lock down the right-of-way.

Ms. Ferrara added that it is not just the coordination for the right-of-way take with owners of the cemetery; using the existing channel falls into a higher level of DEP permitting.

Commissioner Gillespie expressed concern that if the original plan is changed it will delay the project and the possibility of having to purchase land from the cemetery in which they consider burial sites, will be expensive. This is a large project with many homes involved and flooding is an issue and whenever there is a small change, there is a six-month delay.

Rita Stevens, Chairperson of the Shade Tree Commission, 115 Stanley Avenue, said the Shade Tree Commission and the EAC has been working on this together and she will present our analysis and recommendations. We believe the needs of both the natural environment and stormwater management can be served while keeping this project on tract.

She presented a map of the woodlands of the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary; the railroad tracks; the area of the Edge Hill/Tyson project; and the stream that flows to the Sandy Run Creek. This is a mature hardwood forest with the highest quality woodlands and photos were shown of trees that work for the Township in a stormwater context as well as photos of the wetlands. The Township's Comprehensive Plan recognizes that since the Township is almost developed it is essential that both green space and tree canopy are preserved. The Open Space Plan says that woodlands are a high priority for conservation because it is recognized that it is vital to remaining vestiges of Township's natural environment.

Glenn Stevens, 115 Stanley Avenue, retired Chief of Hydrology and Hydraulics for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, who has been assisting the Shade Tree Commission, presented slides of conceptual alternatives to the Board.

Ms. Stevens continued that the recommendation is to use one of the stone-lined channels using one of the natural waterways and that would minimize the disruption of the woodlands relative to doing a grass swale. There is credit for implementing natural BMP's and we believe this will not delay the project.

Mr. Stalsitz said whatever the end result of design is it has to go through the permitting process. Whether it is using existing watercourse that was mapped, which is the channel on the cemetery property or a wide swale using the natural channel; we need to show the reviewing agencies that the design works and meets all design criteria. We can work with the Shade Tree Commission to plot a course through the woodlands if that is an agreeable solution that will satisfy the reviewing agencies to get a permit issued to move construction forward.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked can that be done without delay of the project as well as massive costs to the Township?

Mr. Stalsitz replied yes, if we remain within Township property and develop a stormwater management feature, a conveyance channel, then we will not need permitting from DEP and Army Corp of Engineers for making modifications to the waterway.

Jennifer Sherwood, Chairperson of the EAC, said we have been working closely with the Shade Tree Commission on this project, and we are looking at this from an environmental point of view and do care about trees, but really it is an issue about water and flooding. The proposed design would remove some of the natural stormwater controls making the situation worse.

We recommend that one of the Shade Tree Commission's alternatives is used because a straight swale design will make flooding worse. If we divert around the forest, which is the best way to absorb water, it would be a better system that will help control the water with fewer failures.

The forest is an umbrella and a sponge, and if you remove the sponge, you would be exasperating the situation. It is a natural resource that helps controls flooding and will help downstream residents.

Commissioner Zappone said Pennoni's plan was presented to the residents at numerous meetings and there was no issue. He requested that Mr. Powers work with the Shade Tree Commission on this matter so there are no further delays or any more costs for the taxpayers'.

Mr. Powers replied that he will work with the Shade Tree Commission about using Township's property.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, asked what area of development is located in the wetlands?

Commissioner Bowman replied the streets of Jackson, Monroe and Hamilton Avenue.

State Representative Madeline Dean commented that both the Shade Tree Commission and the EAC offered valuable alternatives and we need to take advantage of the natural flow patterns and she supports their proposal.

Michael Jones, 725 Tyson Avenue, clarified the water will flow into three large basins and then soak into the ground versus impacting the Sandy Run. Is that correct?

Commissioner Kline replied basins discharges water over the weirs into the natural flow of the creek.

Mr. Powers added the basins have a discharge pipe that slowly discharges into the system and basins hold back the water and the flow into the stream is controlled, so there is no flooding downstream.

John Sorrentino, 819 Edge Hill Road, member of the EAC, commented that the retention part of the plan was not known to the EAC until last August.

Commissioner Bowman asked for any general comments relating to Public Works.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, expressed concern that she feels more building and more development is overburdening the stream.

Mr. Powers replied that every new development is required to have stormwater management onsite providing more stormwater control in the Township than ever before.

Public Works Committee Meeting

September 28, 2015

ADJOURNMENT: 9:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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