

The stated meeting of the Public Affairs Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, February 3, 2016 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Commissioner Spiegelman presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners SPIEGELMAN, SCHREIBER, ROTHMAN, KALINOSKI
Excused: BOWMAN

Township Manager LEFEVRE
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Director of Parks and Recreation WENDELL

Also Present: Commissioners: LUKER, KLINE, MYERS, HECKER, FARREN, ZAPPONE, SANCHEZ, GILLESPIE

MINUTES: Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2015 Public Affairs Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Parks and Recreation Report:

Doug Wendell, Director of Parks and Recreation, announced that he was notified last week by State Senator's Office that Abington was among those who would be receiving the Feasibility Study Grant award in the amount of \$15,000 from DCNR for renovation of the pools.

Commissioner Kline asked about the PECO Green Energy Grants.

Mr. Wendell replied he has only heard from them about updates on a few items in the application.

Recognition of Former State Representative Ellen Bard and Earthright

For Information Only

Presentation by Paul Macht, last President of Earthright, of organization funds to the Abington Environmental Advisory Council in memory of Former State Representative Ellen Bard

Paul Macht said he is a local environmental architect and worked with Ellen Bard for many years at a local nonprofit organization called, Earthright in which he was the last President. We are no longer operating as a nonprofit and there are funds leftover from this organization, so we want to give those funds to a sustainable fund of the EAC in memory of Ellen Bard, who passed away in 2009.

Ellen was an environmental trailblazer for her work on energy and the environment. Ellen served as Chairperson of Task Force for 21st Century Energy Policy for Pennsylvania.

Earthright helped the Township's curbside recycling program and participated with Abington's trails. This is to honor Ellen Bard and her work and vision and see those funds used to continue her vision in whatever programs deemed to meet that challenge.

Ellen was Legislature of the Year and a Republican, who cared vehemently about the environment. Ellen has been missed, but we are happy Ellen's legacy and vision will continue on in Abington Township.

Commissioner Myers commented that Ellen was a real visionary as she brought trails to Abington Township and she actually lived an environmental life. Ellen was called, "Back To Nature Girl," and Ellen was her mentor and taught her about integrity. She thanked Paul Macht for this recognition of Ellen Bard.

Jennifer Sherwood, Chairperson of the EAC, thanked Paul Macht and Earthright and mostly Ellen Bard, whose legacy has affected Abington Township in the most wonderful ways. We look forward to continuing Ellen's legacy helping Abington Township to be a nicer place to live.

Human Relations Commission Report

For Information Only

Presentation by representatives of the Abington Human Relations Commission on their activity of the past year

Representing Abington's Human Relations Commission were Joanne Kleiner, Esquire, Meredith Gill and Shelley Rosenberg, who were present this evening.

Shelley Rosenberg, Secretary for Abington Township Human Relations Commission, said our concentration has continued to be on outreach. We strive to let people know that Abington's HRC exists and inform them that we are committed to working with the public, employees and volunteers.

One of the primary organizations that we have begun to work with is the Abington YMCA and we made a presentation to the Executive Director and his executive staff. They then asked for a presentation/workshop to be held for their department heads in which that was done. In addition, we have been working with the Youth Director to craft a program on diversity and inclusion for the Abington Achievers.

We have also been asked to work with Abington Police Department's Explorers and we scheduled that program for March.

Also, we will be hosting Angela McIver CEO of the Fair Housing Rights Center at our meeting on February 9th.

A program on Community Policing is being planned for the spring and Lt. Kelley Warner has been asked to be one of the speakers at that event.

The HRC continues to be represented at the Tri-State HRC, and they are looking to plan another full-day program in late 2016, early 2017.

In addition, she was appointed to the Montgomery County Advisory Committee of the Pennsylvania HRC and a presentation will take place here in Abington in the spring.

Finally, for the third year in a row, we participated in Abington's Pre-Night Out and made contact with many members of the public, and we have also worked with the STARR project helping to update forms and the Township's employee handbook.

Resolution No. 16-009 – Authorizing the Disposition of Certain Parks and Recreation Office Records

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to adopt Resolution No. 16-009, authorizing the disposition of certain Parks and Recreation Office records as set forth in Exhibit “A.”

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

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented that she submitted a “Right To Know” request to see these documents before they are eliminated.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

“Abington Runs” – For Discussion Only

Commissioner Spiegelman called on Commissioner Farren.

Commissioner Farren provided a copy of his idea on “Abington Runs” to the Board.

He would like to present his ideas and ask for support, guidance and feedback. The first idea is a 5K Racing Series in which there has been eight 5K Runs in Abington this past year with two new ones coming up. There are benefits for the racers as well as the Township such as having a centralized site for the race where racers could sign up and volunteers can participate to help with the race. It will possibly increase revenue for 5K Run sponsors as well as bring more people into the Township who would potentially make food purchases during the day of the race.

Role of the Board of Commissioners would be to assist, support and publicize the events.

He feels this will promote Abington Township as a walkable/running community on a variety of different levels.

His second idea is to bring a new race into Abington and that is the Abington 10K in which there is a huge market for it and a genuine interest for those who want to run farther than a 5K, but may not be ready for a 15K or half-marathon. He feels the benefits are the same where we would bring people into Abington, although, a 10K Run may be a more difficult event as it may take a long time to plan it.

He will update the Board at the April/May Board meeting as to whether or not there is interest in a 5K Racing Series or an Abington 10K. Following updates on his idea will be discussed at the August Board meeting and then at the September/October Board meetings.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Kline commented that he feels the Abington 10K is fascinating as no other Townships have that other than in Philly. His issue with the 5K Racing Series is that the Township would be promoting nonprofits, and if that occurs, then we will not have the ability to say "no" to any other nonprofits. As for the 10K Run, Abington would be the sponsor and that has great potential to promote the Township.

Commissioner Schreiber commented that she feels a 10K race is a great idea, but a lot of work. She suggested the focus of the race becomes the main event and then have links to see other races instead of creating a series of races.

Commissioner Rothman agreed to work with Commissioner Farren on the process for the 10K race as it is a great idea and would be a great way to promote the Township. He would be more comfortable spending time planning the 10K race as he shares the same concerns as Commissioner Kline.

Commissioner Spiegelman also volunteered his services to help with the 10K race.

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

Commissioner Kalinoski announced that last month, meetings began for the planning for the 24-Hour Relay Challenge, which will be held on May 21-22, 2016, and Ellen Bard played a large part in the 24-Hour Relay Challenge. Also, we are looking for volunteers for this event.

Michael Curtis, Sr., 1137 Tyson Avenue, requested that the e-verify program be put in written form for Abington Township for those who want to do business with Abington Township.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented that she is in favor of Mr. Curtis' request. Also, she feels "there needs to be oversight on profits from events." She emailed a copy of an example of what she feels should be revised on the Township website.

Raymond Bell, 2076 Parkview Avenue, suggested that the Township should be cautious on promoting an event that is nonprofit-related that could be considered an endorsement. Also, he thanked Township staff for doing a good job during the last major snowstorm.

Public Affairs Committee Meeting

February 3, 2016

ADJOURNMENT: 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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