

The stated meeting of the Public Works Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday October 5, 2016 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Commissioner Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners HECKER, FARREN, KLINE, MYERS, ROTHMAN

Township Manager LEFEVRE
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Township Engineer POWERS
Planning & Zoning Official PENECALE
Director of W.W.T.P. WRIGLEY

Also Present: Commissioners LUKER, SANCHEZ, MARKMAN, DiPLACIDO, GILLESPIE, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, SPIEGELMAN, KALINOSKI

MINUTES: Commissioner Farren made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Myers to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2016 Public Works Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Request for Proposals – Engineering Services

Commissioner Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren to authorize Township Administration to solicit Request for Proposals for Engineering Services to be received by the close of business on November 4th.

Manager LeFevre explained that this motion is in no way a recommendation in regards to engineering services. Mr. Powers retired from fulltime employment at the end of last year, but he has continued on in a part-time capacity.

The Board previously appointed Mr. Powers for a one-year term as Township Engineer and the Board will revisit that appointment in January 2017. Prior to making that determination, this motion is to provide the Board with the opportunity to gain information and engage the level of interest of an outside engineering firm along with associated costs. Any decision made on engineering services will impact the 2017 budget. First proposed budget will be presented to the Board in their packets on this Friday.

Commissioner Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Myers commented that she thought the Township's engineering department was in tact with Mr. Powers going to part-time status, and if engineering services are contracted out, the Township would be spending twice what we spend for our in-house department as there will certainly be a cost-factor.

Manager LeFevre replied that is the purpose of an RFP and agreed that there were dollar savings when Mr. Powers went to a part-time capacity. If Mr. Powers decide that he does not want to continue on in a part-time capacity, the Township could bring a fulltime engineer in-house, a part-time engineer in-house or contract with an outside engineering firm.

Commissioner Myers commented that Abington residents have come to appreciate our engineering department, and between Mike Powers and Tim Clark, they know every inch of this Township. If anyone has a problem, after hours or on weekends they are available, and she does not know that an outside engineering firm would offer that service. She hopes the Township never has to contract with an outside engineering firm, which will cost twice as much.

Commissioner Markman commented that we have a fiscal responsibility to the Township to look at all options.

Commissioner Farren questioned the timeline for when the RFP's will come in.

Manager LeFevre replied before the budget is finalized.

Commissioner Luker commented that he is in favor of the motion, although Mr. Powers and his staff have served the Township well and have done a wonderful job.

Commissioner Spiegelman commented that all options would be on the table to consider.

Commissioner Hecker commented that he had a number of complicated situations that were addressed through the efforts, hard work and creativity of the engineering department and he is grateful for it. This would be an exercise of due diligence and the Township should be strategic across the board to not miss any opportunities.

He asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-1. Commissioner Myers opposed.

2016-2017 PennDOT – Snow and Ice Agreement

Commissioner Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren to authorize the proper Township officials to enter into an agreement with PennDOT for snow and ice removal on PennDOT highways for the winter season 2016-2017.

Commissioner Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Kline questioned whether the Township follows the same type of agreement with the County, and if so, was it in the same price range?

Manager LeFevre replied it is similar. Two years ago, Township officials approached PennDOT reps about making an adjustment in the Township's allocation for removal of snow and ice, which was significant. Additional funds were received by the County, but he does not know at this time how close it was to the State's numbers.

Commissioner Hecker questioned whether PennDOT is waiting for Board action before they sign off on this agreement.

Manager LeFevre replied yes, PennDOT is looking for confirmation by the Township.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Design/Construction Agreement Sandy Run Environmental Project

Commissioner Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Rothman to approve the Design/Construction Agreement with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, including the project management plan, for the Abington Environmental Improvement Project to provide for an improved riparian buffer and stream corridor improvements along Sandy Run Creek.

Manager LeFevre said previously, the Board approved moving forward with Federal funds for planning purposes of implementing environmental improvements to the Sandy Run Watershed in the amount of \$1,987,500.00 and Township match in the amount of \$662,500.00.

The study has been completed and the Army Corp of Engineers came up with a project management plan for the Sandy Run Watershed. Total cost of proposed project is estimated at \$2,650,000.00.

Previously, the Board supported the idea of a joint effort with participating municipalities to come up with an alternative TMDL plan for the Wissahickon Watershed and the timeline for that plan coincides with the development of this plan. When the TMDL plan is finalized for the Wissahickon, it will involve significant dollars from participating municipalities.

If the Sandy Run Creek Watershed plan falls into place the Township can get the value of a \$2.6 million credit towards the Wissahickon improvement with only having to pay the \$662,500.00 contribution. It would be a major savings for the Township as well as environmental benefits for the watershed.

Eric Rourke, Chief of Program Development Planning for the Philadelphia Division of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, gave a power point presentation on the Abington Township Environmental Improvement Project to the Board.

The team inspected various potential site locations in Sandy Run Creek Watershed and Roychester Park and Grove Park were identified as high priority project locations. He discussed the plan and total estimated cost is in the amount of \$2,650,000.00. Federal costs are \$1,987,500.00 and non-Federal costs are \$662,500.00.

Manager LeFevre noted that the amount of \$2,650,000.00 – Federal share is not in the Army Corp’s budget and they need those funds to be released, but that requires congressional support.

He recognized the efforts made by reps of the Township’s Shade Tree Commission, Environmental Advisory Council, Engineer’s Office, Wastewater Treatment Plant and Parks and Recreation, who worked with the Army Corp of Engineers in getting this project pushed this far. Without their team effort we would have never reached this point.

Commissioner Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Bowman commented that he fully supports this project.

Commissioner Schreiber asked will changes be made just around the Grove property itself or will the flooding potential of the Sandy Run increase, decrease or stay the same after the project is completed?

Mr. Rourke replied both projects are focused on ecosystem restoration and to reconnect the floodplains by taking the concrete out and try to retain floodwaters backward to reduce flooding, but that is not our target, so it will not be any worse than it is now.

Manager LeFevre noted that included in the 2017 budget, Township’s match of \$662,500.00 has been factored in our debt service obligation.

Commissioner Kline clarified that the Township will get full credit for this project and it will not get diluted amongst the participating permit holders. Is that correct?

Manager LeFevre replied that is correct. This project will definitely benefit Abington Township financially.

Commissioner Luker clarified that Congressman Boyle supports this project. Is that correct?

Manager LeFevre replied yes. Congressman Boyle's office indicated they have enough time to provide the support needed to have this included in the Federal government's 2018 fiscal budget.

Commissioner Kline questioned whether there is funding through other means to fund Township's match.

Manager LeFevre replied he will look into it.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Grant of Sanitary Sewer Easement from AQUA PA, Inc.

Commissioner Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren to accept a Grant of Sanitary Sewer Easement from AQUA Pennsylvania, Inc. in and along the rear property line of Montgomery County Tax Parcel No. 300016440009 including Block/ Unit No. 30195-010 and No. 30195-011.

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

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Commissioner Hecker asked for any general comments relating to Public Works. There were none.

Public Works Committee Meeting

October 5, 2016

ADJOURNMENT: 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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