

The stated meeting of the Public Affairs Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Commissioner Spiegelman presiding.

**CALL TO ORDER:** 8:26 p.m.

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

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

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

**MINUTES:** Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2016 Public Affairs Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Parks and Recreation Report:

Mr. Doug Wendell, Director of Parks and Recreation, reported the conversion to online registration for programs is now active and he encouraged everyone to setup their account.

Also, Briar Bush Nature Center is holding a public viewing of their Master Site Plan on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> from 8-10 a.m.

Resolution No. 17-004 – HOME Program Application – Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to adopt Resolution No. 17-004 authorizing the filing of an application to PA DCED in the amount of \$500,000.00 for the Owner Occupied Rehabilitation program. No Township match is required.

Commissioner Spiegelman called on Community Director, Mr. Van Strother.

Mr. Strother explained that this is a request to submit an application to Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for a grant in the amount of \$500,000.00 to be used for Township's existing owner-occupied rehabilitation program.

This program is available to income-qualified Abington Township residents and the goal is to repair any code violations and any major energy efficiency systems. Upon completion of repair, a lien is placed on the property until it is sold and then those funds are returned back to the Township to be repurposed for the next candidate.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Luker asked for an estimate of how many properties in Abington Township have taken advantage of this program since its inception, and how long is the waiting list and how many repairs approximately are done every year?

Mr. Strother replied the program has been in existence for over 15 years and his estimate is about 200-300 homeowners who have benefited from it. Currently, we are working with applicants from 2012, so it is a long waiting list, and about five repairs are done each year.

Commissioner Spiegelman questioned whether this grant would help to get to those properties more quickly or is it just a further supply of resources.

Mr. Strother replied moving forward, he feels the pace will pick up and increase the amount of repairs done each year.

Commissioner Kalinoski asked is there a priority list?

Mr. Strother replied there is no priority list. To maintain integrity, it is first in and first out.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked does this cover zoning issues and sidewalks, etc.

Mr. Strother replied no zoning issues, but there is a tripping hazard that is deemed a violation and all code violations are corrected.

Commissioner Myers said when a property is improved and that homeowner moves on, is there any way to recoup those funds used for improvements?

Mr. Strother replied there are two avenues to fund this program; one is through annual allocation of CDBG funds and this is the other source of funds for this program. At the completion of renovation, a lien is placed on every property so that when the property is sold, the lien is satisfied and the funds come back to the Township and used for the next applicant on the list.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Ordinance No. 2135 – Snow and Ice Removal – Chapter 137-4

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to adopt Ordinance No. 2135 amending Chapter 137-4 of the Township Code (Snow and Ice, Violations and Penalties) increasing the fine per violation up to a maximum of \$1,000 per offense.

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

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

C2P2 Grant Application - Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to approve acceptance of the \$40,000 DCNR C2P2 (Community Conservation Partnership Program) development grant for improvements to the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary, guided by the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary Land Management Plan and the Abington Township MS4 Program, with Abington Township match of \$20,000 derived from the 2017-2018 MS4 budget.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff.

Mr. Wendell said originally, staff of the Engineering Department made plans for the MS4 improvements that were reviewed by members of the Shade Tree Commission, and in working together with staff of the Engineering Department, they came up with a better plan for that area. The Shade Tree Commission submitted the application for the grant and received the funds.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Mowing Contract for 2017, 2018 and 2019

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to approve M & M Lawncare East in Zones No. 2 and No. 4 and Gorecon, Inc. in Zones No. 1 and No. 3 as the lowest responsible bidders for the mowing contract for the years 2017, 2018, 2019. The total for this contract will be \$83,327.00 per year for the years noted above.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff.

Mr. Wendell said this was sent out for re-bid with the bid tabulation included in the Board's packet. After checking references, the bid has been awarded to the lowest responsible bidder.

Commissioner Rothman questioned whether the previous business owners re-bid for the contract.

Mr. Wendell replied yes.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Policy on the Naming of Township Facilities

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to approve the adoption of a written policy on the naming/renaming or dedication of municipal property, buildings, park elements, streets or other facilities.

Commissioner Spiegelman called on Township Manager LeFevre.

Manager LeFevre said previously, there was considerable discussion over the lack of the defined process in naming of facilities, so he came up with a written policy for the Board to approve. Several individuals reached out to his office about naming certain facilities and he drafted a policy and submitted it to the committee for consideration.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff.

Commissioner Kalinoski questioned whether there was a policy like this previously in Abington Township.

Manager LeFevre replied not on naming of facilities, and this is rather unique because after researching similar policies, there were not many out there.

Commissioner Kalinoski said he likes the way it is written, but expressed concern that he does not want everything in Abington Township being named.

Manager LeFevre said if the Board needs additional time to review draft policy and to offer suggestions, he would be happy to make alterations and come back next month for consideration by the Board.

Commissioner Sanchez referred to Page 2 of draft policy under Procedure, and agreed it would be a good idea to check with ward Commissioner, although “after receipt of ward Commissioner’s support it would be listed on next Public Affairs Committee meeting for discussion and public input,” that may be better so as not to provide one Commissioner with “super veto power.”

Manager LeFevre said the issue would be that if the Commissioner is completely against it, should it still be brought before Public Affairs Committee because one person could stop the process.

Commissioner Schreiber questioned whether there would be a rubric of guidelines and who would judge whether it should go forward to the Public Affairs Committee.

Manager LeFevre replied it would not be stopped at the Manager level unless it was completely inappropriate. It would move forward to ward Commissioner and then Public Affairs Committee.

Commissioner Kline commented that he would like see to a certain timeframe for a specific person before being considered naming a Township facility after that person.

Commissioner Kalinoski agreed with a certain amount of time, but how much?

Commissioner Luker questioned the clause in the policy that says, “The cost of signage will be assumed by the initial requestor.” Would that be a “hard-fast” rule adhered to?

Manager LeFevre replied he is open to suggestions by the Board; however, some responsibility of covering the cost or costs associated should be on the part of the initial requestor.

Commissioner Luker agreed; however, he feels the requestor would assume they would not have to pay for the entire request.

Manager LeFevre replied that language can be revised to soften it so that we would consider contributions to cover a portion of the cost.

Commissioner Spiegelman commented that if the requestor was not in the position to pay a large dollar amount, they could take it to social media such as a “GoFundMe” page or some type of outside source.

Commissioner Luker commented that we would not want the taxpayers of the Township to assume responsibility of the cost.

Commissioner Bowman disagreed. If we are going to name a facility after someone, the sign could be made in-house by Township employees. “If we are going to honor someone, let’s step up and honor them.”

Commissioner Spiegelman clarified that when someone wants to erect a memorial bench, is that something the requestor pays for?

Mr. Wendell replied yes. They have two options; one is to find a bench that is not already dedicated or they can purchase the bench themselves for a cost of \$550. Cost for bronze casting ranges between \$175 and \$500.

Commissioner Rothman agreed with Commissioner Bowman. If we are going to honor someone, we should not make them pay for it; however, the policy should reflect if it is requested by the public, there might be some shared costs. Also, he agreed with Commissioner Sanchez that not one Commissioner should be able to make that decision unilaterally, and it should come before the Public Affairs Committee and then onto the full Board of Commissioners for approval.

Consensus by committee was to table this until next month.

#### KMS/Alta Contract

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to approve the contract assumption agreement between KMS Design and Alta.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff.

Mr. Wendell said that Alta is a national company that purchased KMS Design, who was the firm performing the feasibility study on Township pools. All principals involved in the feasibility study will continue to be responsible and all contract items will remain with Alta.

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, expressed concern that she feels she does not get information she has requested.

Manager LeFevre replied that he always responds to the speaker's daily emails.

Commissioner Kline announced that Montgomery County has begun its Master Bike Plan, and they are looking for comments on a Wikimap, which is located on the Montgomery County Planning Commission's website under Initiatives.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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