

Ross Township Board of Commissioners
Combined Committee/Business Meeting
1000 Ross Municipal Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
January 20, 2020
7:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Stephen Korbel, Jeremy Shaffer, Jason Piring, Jack Betkowski, Sarah Poweska, Daniel L. DeMarco, Joseph Laslavic and William McKellar

ABSENT: Patrick Mullin

SOLICITOR: P. J. Murray, Esq.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER: Ronald Borczyk

RECORDING SECRETARY: Noreen A. Re

**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BOARD
LIAISON:** Dominic J. Rickert

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY - None

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Due to the motion made at the reorganization meeting to advertise for a laundry list of professional services, Commissioner Korbel appointed an ad hoc Professional Services Committee to work with the manager and review responses to the RFP and make recommendations to the Board. The committee will consist of Commissioners Mullin, Poweska and Korbel.

Commissioner Korbel announced that prior to the meeting there was an Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining and personnel issues. There will also be an Executive Session following

the meeting to discuss personnel, litigation and to receive legal advice from the solicitor.

TAX COLLECTOR REPORT:

Mr. Mager was not present to give a report.

INTERVIEWS FOR BOARD AND COMMISSION OPENINGS:

ZONING HEARING BOARD

1 Vacancy & 1 Alternate – 5-Year Term

Tara Howey, Esq., current member of the Zoning Hearing Board expressed her desire to remain on the Board. Commissioner Perring thanked Ms. Howey for her assistance when he was on the Zoning Hearing Board. Commissioner Laslavic also thanked Ms. Howey for helping him with “Zoning 101.”

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

1 Vacancy & 1 Alternate – 6-Year Term

William McKellar, current commissioner, expressed his desire to remain on the Civil Service Commission. Commissioner Korbel stated he is permitted to remain under the First Class Township Code, although there would need to be a minor change in the internal rules in order to allow that to happen.

Commissioner Shaffer inquired as to what happens if no one applies to be the alternate. Commissioner Korbel stated the opening will be readvertised.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY BOARD

1 Vacancy – 5-Year Term

Ms. Sandra Miller outlined her experience and desire to be on the Equal Opportunity Board.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNSEL
7 Vacancies – (3) 1-Year Term, (1) 2-Year Term
3-Year Term, (1) 4-Year Term and (1) 5-Year Term**

Ms. Kim Stelmach outlined her experience and desire to be on the Environmental Advisory Council. In response to Commissioner Korbel, she stated she does believe in climate change.

Mr. Bradley August outlined his experience in the oil and gas industry and his desire to be on the Environmental Advisory Council. He also believes in climate change.

Ms. Susan Hockenberry outlined her experience and desire to be on the Environmental Advisory Council. She also believes in climate change.

Mr. Barry Rush outlined his experience and desire to be on the Environmental Advisory Council. He also believes in climate change.

Ms. Caitlin Klotz outlined her experience and desire to be on the Environmental Advisory Council. She has her degree in Environmental Resource Engineering. She also believes in climate change.

Ms. Kristen Schawalder outlined her experience and desire to be on the Environmental Advisory Council. She is an environmental consultant. She also believes in climate change.

**PLANNING COMMISSION
2 Vacancies – 4-Year Term**

**(MULTIPLE BOARD APPLICANT – Planning Commission and
Environmental Advisory Council)**

Ms. Jennifer Deemer outlined her experience and desire to continue on the Planning Commission, as well as be on the Environmental Advisory Council. She has a master's in landscape architecture. She also believes in climate change.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of Minutes – December 2, 2019, and January 6, 2020

Bill List – January 20, 2020

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS AND POLICY:

Chair: Joe Laslavic; Members – Dan DeMarco and Pat Mullin

Township Manager Report:

Mr. Borczyk stated he is continuing with his orientation to the township. They are scheduling training for a CP Connect system, which is a centralizing hub to manage all citizen communications, and iCompass, which is a system that will allow the meetings to be managed in a paperless fashion. Mr. Borczyk also stated he has been able to secure all department heads' goals in preparation of the strategic planning meeting.

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Purring as to when the meetings will go paperless, Ms. Malsch indicated by the end of February, beginning of March.

Resolution – Vacant Property Program for Lincoln Avenue Extension, 611-N-300

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2343 authorizing the acquisition and subsequent disposition of Parcel 611-N-300, which would be in accord with the Comprehensive Plan of Ross Township, made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

**Resolution – Vacant Property Program for Gallagher Avenue,
161-S-336**

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2344 authorizing the acquisition and subsequent disposition of Parcel 161-S-336, which would be in accord with the Comprehensive Plan of Ross Township, made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

Administrative Training Request – Katie Malsch and Jessica Crawshaw are requesting approval to attend the 2020 Civic Summit from May 3-6, 2020, in Buffalo, NY, at a cost not to exceed \$2,514.00 .

Motion to authorize Katie Malsch and Jessica to attend the 2020 Civic Summit from May 3-6, 2020, in Buffalo, NY, at a cost not to exceed \$2,514.00 made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

Administrative Training Request – PELRAS

Motion to authorize Dan DeMarco, Joe Ley and Ronald Borczyk to attend the 2020 PELRAS Conference from March 18-20, 2020, in State College, PA, at a cost not to exceed \$3,500.00 made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner Piring.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

Executive Training Request – ALOM

Motion to authorize Commissioner Laslavic, Commissioner Betkowski, Commissioner Piring, Commissioner Poweska, Commissioner DeMarco and Manager Borczyk to attend the 2020 ALOM Conference from April 2-5, 2020, at Seven Springs, PA, at

a cost not to exceed \$6,500.00 made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner Purring.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

Motion to appoint ms consultants as the Sewickley Oakmont MTF consultant, as approved by Gateway Engineers, made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

**Motion passes – 7 to 0 with 1 abstention
Commissioner Shaffer abstaining**

New Business - None

FINANCE, BUDGET AND PENSION:

Chair: Sarah Poweska ; Members – William McKellar and Jack Betkowski

Finance Director Report

Mr. Berty passed out signature cards for Commissioners DeMarco, McKellar and Korb. Due to the lack of interest in the ClearGov financial tracking system, Mr. Berty suggested not paying the renewal fee of \$5,500. No one expressed opposition.

Mr. Berty went through the December financial statement. Real estate collections ended at 100.3 percent of the budget. Earned Income Tax finished at 113 percent of the budget. Business Privilege, Mercantile, Real Estate Transfer Tax and RAD money all finished above the annual budget. Interest Income finished at 233 percent of the budget. The Fund balance was \$600,000. The number will still change due to the fact department heads can still book purchases made in 2019 back to 2019. The actual number will not be known until later in 2020.

On the expenditures side, the executive expenditures finished at 129 percent of budgeted, due to adding the communication manager and the interim manager. Legal services went up due to the

utilization of special labor counsel and finished at 132 percent of the budget. Engineering finished at 148 percent of the budget.

Public Works was slightly over at 102 percent. Vehicle repairs finished at 111 percent. Road maintenance, snow removal, traffic controls, street lighting and storm sewers were under the budget at 91.3 percent. Due to software not being purchased and third-party fees coming in less than was expected, Community Development finished at 83 percent.

The Police Department came in at 96 percent. Recreation was at 92 percent. Due to paying the North Hills COG in 2019 for 2020 fees, the Intergovernmental expenditures came in at 177 percent of the budget.

The Sanitary Sewer Fund, due to lower connection fees, finished at 81 percent. No Fund balance was used. It was only \$2,000 of revenues over expenditures.

Regarding the Capital Fund, the Road Program went over budget to \$2.5 million. It was budgeted at \$2 million.

There was a balance in the Liquid Fuels money that will be carried forward into 2020.

Commissioner Shaffer inquired if the 40 percent increase in the sewer rate by Girty's Run would affect the 2020 budget related to the Sewer Fund. Mr. Berty responded that it will affect the Sewer budget. The Sewer Fund is finishing 2019 with \$4.8 million in the bank. Commissioner Shaffer questioned the need for Girty's Run. Commissioner Korbel commented any changes would be addressed in the next budget cycle.

Commissioner Shaffer also questioned the reduction in the balance of all funds going from \$15.25 million to \$12.93 million at the end of the year. Mr. Berty stated \$1 million of that was directly related to the Capital account. Mr. Berty stated between Capital and the Operating account that is where the biggest decrease in cash came from. He also indicated it is not really affecting the revenues minus expenditures, but it affects the cash.

New Business – None



PUBLIC WORKS, SANITATION AND SEWERS:

Chair: Pat Mullin; Members – Jason Piring and Jeremy Shaffer

Public Works Director Report

Mr. Funk stated the minimum tons of salt they need to purchase this year is 6,000 tons. So far they have committed to 1,350 tons. If they do not purchase the required amount, they will pay a penalty.

Regarding the sinkhole at the church on McKnight, Mr. Funk stated they have a meeting this Wednesday at PennDOT with the property owners. There is also a sinkhole down from the bookstore.

The four new hires have started, and there have been no issues. The night crew is up and running. The Road Program needs to go out for bid. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Betkowski if the township has any responsibility for the sinkholes, Mr. Fund stated no. The township's involvement is for public safety.

Commissioner DeMarco commented that he only saw positive comments on social media about snow removal. Mr. Funk stated another route was added. There are 15 trucks that go out.



Speed Humps

Mr. Funk stated he reached out to Richland, Hampton and Indiana Township regarding “traffic calming.” Richland had a policy of speed humps and abandoned it. Mr. Funk stated if the township wanted to move forward, a traffic consultant or traffic engineer would be needed. Police would also need involved. Commissioner Shaffer suggested this might be a topic for the Environmental Advisory Council. He stated there are some other traffic calming-type things that can be done with just the design of a road and the width of the road and the geometrics of it. Commissioner DeMarco addressed concerns of emergency service providers in regard to speed humps/bumps.



New Business - None

PLANNING, ZONING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Chair: Dan DeMarco; Members – Sarah Poweska and Jack Betkowski

Community Development Director Report

Mr. Rickert had no report this evening.

Ordinance to be Introduced – Rezoning of Parcel 216-L-115 from an R-2 to an R-3 Zoning District for a future residential development

PUBLIC HEARING TO HELD IN THE FUTURE

SP-19-1 – Perry Shops – Kossman Development Company is requesting Preliminary Site Development Plan approval for a proposed Mixed-Use Development on property located at Lot & Block 611-L-60, 7910-7920 Perry Highway, in a C-1 Zoning District of the 9th Ward.

Richard Moses, Esq., and Curtis Kossman were present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Moses stated the Zoning Hearing Board granted a de minimis variance as to the way the perpendicular buffer yard in McCandless was calculated. Solicitor Conley also advised the Zoning Hearing Board that the variance wasn't necessary, because they did calculate the buffer yard correctly in accordance with the Code.

Mr. Moses also commented that they did settle with Comco before Judge James. The Consent Order, Settlement Agreement and Easement Agreement have been recorded with the Recorder of Deeds. There are no further open issues.

Commissioner Korbelt noted a letter received from Scott and Deborah Metzger. He stated it was his desire, as well as the Board's, to make sure the trails are pulled away from the McCandless residents as much as possible. He stated he would expect to see

that on the final plans. Mr. Kossman indicated they would make revisions to the plans based on the residents' concerns. Mr. Kossman went through the proposed trail in detail.

In response to inquiry by Commissioner Laslavic regarding a traffic study, Mr. Kossman stated they have completed a comprehensive traffic study in conformance with the requirements of PennDOT. He also indicated they are in conformance with the township ordinance. Mr. Kossman stated the traffic study indicated that the level of service “is not only acceptable, it performs at a high level.”

Commissioner Purring stated he is “not a big fan” of storage units. He inquired if Mr. Kossman would be willing to donate to the volunteer firemen. Mr. Kossman stated historically he has done that in every community he has worked with.

Commissioner Betkowski thanked Mr. Kossman for his “design with more of a vertical element to it.”

Ms. Gail Hischar, 162 Kaylor Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, a McCandless resident, expressed that she did not want a walking trail butting up against her backyard. She also expressed concern about parking and the coffee shop exit. Ms. Hischar also questioned if the driveway along the side of her property would be one-way. Commissioner DeMarco stated parking concerns would have to be addressed with McCandless. Mr. Rickert stated the parking that Ms. Hischar is concerned about is going away.

Mr. Tad Parkhill, 118 Violet Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, expressed concern regarding the curb cut that accesses his property. Mr. Kossman stated he would work with Mr. Parkhill on this issue. Mr. Kossman also discussed stormwater management.

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Shaffer, Mr. Kossman indicated there would be a dedicated turning lane into the development.

No further public comments for or against

Motion to grant Conditional Approval of the SP-19-1 Preliminary Site Development Plan, with Final Approval thereof to be granted upon the submittal of revised Preliminary Plans addressing and correcting all comments in Gateway Engineers' review letter dated September 24, 2019, except those required for final site approval as noted and except those additionally authorized by the appropriate officials of Ross Township and the outcome of any pending court findings/rulings made by Commissioner DeMarco and seconded by Commissioner Betkowski.

Roll call:

- Commissioner Poweska – Yes
- Commissioner Laslavic – No
- Commissioner McKellar – Yes
- Commissioner Piring - No
- Commissioner Shaffer – No
- Commissioner Betkowski – Yes
- Commissioner DeMarco – Yes
- Commissioner Korbelt – Yes

Motion carries – 5 to 3

CU-19-1 – Lockamp Group, LLC, is requesting Conditional Use approval for a commercial cheerleading school in an existing building at Lot & Block 429-P-366, 355 Rochester Road, in a C-2 Zoning District of the 4th Ward.

Mr. Scott Kurtz, architect, was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Michael Locke, owner of the property, was also present. Mr. Kurtz described the request in detail. There will be approximately 20 students on the entire site and 2 teachers. A traffic study has been done. The impact is negligible. Landscaping and parking were discussed. Regarding lighting, Mr. Kurtz stated they will actually go on the site with a light meter and adjust the lighting with an electrician. The existing lights will be converted to LEDs. Signage was discussed. There is no pole sign.

Motion to grant Conditional Use approval of CU-19-1 to Lockamp Group, LLC, for a commercial cheerleading school at Lot & Block 429-P-366, 355 Rochester Road, in a C-2 Zoning District of the 4th Ward, pending the landscaping and photometric plan, made by Commissioner DeMarco and seconded by Commissioner Piring.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

New Business - None

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Chairs: William McKellar; Members – Jack Betkowski and Dan DeMarco

Police Chief Report:

Chief Ley mentioned there are strict guidelines to traffic calming and speed humps. He stated a raised crosswalk is much more aesthetically pleasing. He discussed the difficulties with speed humps.

As tax season approaches, Chief Ley stated they will be publishing a list of tax scams that some of the residents have called about in the past. He stated the IRS is never going to call you to tell you that you owe money.

Chief Ley stated PennDOT officials have begun their reinforcement of monitoring speeding in active work zones. He also stated he was comfortable with the new contract for the police.

Police Contract – The Police Association and the Township have reached a tentative agreement on the terms of a new four (4) year contract retroactive to January 1, 2020.

Motion to ratify the Tentative Agreement by and between the Township of Ross and the Ross Township Police Association for changes to the Collective Bargaining Agreement effective January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2023, made by

Commissioner McKellar and seconded by Commissioner Betkowski.

Motion to table made by Commissioner Piring and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

New Business - None

PARKS AND RECREATION:

Chair: Jason Piring; Members – Joe Laslavic and Pat Mullin

Parks and Recreation Director Report:

Ms. Peet commented that Ross Township, along with the Pennsylvania Resource Council, put on rain barrel workshops for the public three times a year. Ross Township does not charge a fee. The Pennsylvania Resource Council has a small fee.

Ms. Peet stated the Evergreen Park Spillway Repair Project is on track to finish before the busy park rental season. She also indicated she is in the initial contract process with DCNR for Denny Park – Phase II. A grant was received from the DCNR for \$114,000 for the 9-hole disc golf course. There will also be a modular restroom, as well as a walking track around the new perimeter of the park. The funding for the walking track is courtesy of the Ridge at Highlands.

The new playground has been installed at Sangree Park. She thanked Avanti Consulting and Allegheny County Community Development for \$75,000 for the project.

The Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, March 28th, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Only the first 200 registrants will be taken.

The planning process has begun for the 4th of July Parade, which will be held on July 5th. Ms. Peet stated she will be meeting

with The Block probably sometime in the next couple of weeks as a follow-up for the September 19th and 20th dates for Community Day. There will be a car cruise on September 20th.

Ms. Peet has also been working on getting bylaws together for the Athletic Advisory Board . Commissioner Piring stated the committee will be meeting on the 28th to discuss moving forward. The Athletic Advisory Board will consist of two members from North Hills Baseball, Ross/West View, North Hills Soccer and two at-large members with no affiliation with the three organizations. Commissioner Korbel commented that the solicitor will need to create an ordinance to create the Board.

Ms. Peet stated she will be sending the link to Swank Movies for the new commissioners to pick their movies for Movies in the Park. Commissioner Laslavic has already picked the first movie for Friday, July 3rd. In response to Commissioner DeMarco, Ms. Peet stated they are going to get a new backup generator this year.

Administrative Training Request – Eloise Peet and Laurie Berie are requesting approval to attend the 2020 Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society/PA Association of Environmental Educators Conference from March 17-20, 2020, in Seven Springs, PA, at a cost not to exceed \$2,500.00.

Motion to authorize Eloise Peet and Laurie Berie to attend the 2020 Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society/PA Association of Environmental Educators Conference from March 17-20, 2020, in Seven Springs, PA, at a cost not to exceed \$2,500.00 made by Commissioner Piring and seconded by Commissioner Laslavic.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

CITF Grant – Sangree Park Master Plan – Phase I (Play Area)

Motion to authorize Eloise Peet to execute the Grant Contract 2019-CITF-118 between Ross Township and Allegheny County Economic Development, Community Infrastructure & Tourism Fund, for the grant amount of \$75,000.00 made by

Commissioner Piring and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

Awarding of the Evergreen Spillway & Seating Bid

Motion to award the Evergreen Spillway and Seating bid to S.E.T., Inc., in the amount of \$144,805.00 made by Commissioner Piring and seconded by Commissioner Shaffer.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

New Business - None

OTHER BOARDS/ENTITIES (COG, CONNECT, Intergovernmental):

Commissioner Betkowski stated there was a CONNECT meeting last week, and the census was discussed. There will not be a mailing. A code will be received in the mail, and the census will be done online.

Commissioner Korbel stated the school board will be convening a meeting with the township and West View Borough and the school district with respect to turnKey Taxes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Darlene Didonato addressed the Board regarding Short Line Hollow Trail, the Environmental Advisory Council and the property where Public Works is located.

MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:31 P.M.

Manager/Secretary

**President,
Stephen Korbel
Ross Township Board of
Commissioners**

**Minutes transcribed by Noreen A. Re, Certified Realtime
Reporter**