

Ross Township Commissioners Meeting
Ross Township Public Works Building
225A Cemetery Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
October 17, 2016
7:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Jeremy Shaffer, Daniel L. DeMarco, David J. Mikec, Lana Mazur, Stephen Korbel, Richard Avon and Jack Betkowski

ABSENT: Patrick Mullin and Grace Stanko

SOLICITOR: Bonnie Brimmeier, Esq.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER: Douglas Sample

RECORDING SECRETARY: Noreen A. Re

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

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS - None

PETITIONS AND COMPLAINTS - None

RESOLUTIONS TO BE ADOPTED:

Resolution No. 2222 – 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 Real Estate Tax Refunds – Various - \$51,426.37

Motion to adopt made by Commissioner Mikec and seconded by Commissioner Mazur.

Commissioner Betkowski suggested that for the larger refunds that perhaps the township should have representation at the appeal hearing. He did comment that the representative from the school district is relied on heavily in these matters. Commissioner Shaffer

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was in agreement. He stated he spoke with Mr. Hall from the school district, who expressed frustration with the way some of the commercial real estate refunds are being handled, especially ones related to the mall. Ms. Brimmeier commented as follows:

MS. BRIMMEIER: "Well, historically we have not done that, because it's always been my feeling that there is no point -- believe me, I'll take the work. But it's not really lending anything more, because the school district has the same interest and the county as we do. If you want me to go, I'll go. I don't know that it's going to change anything. Just so you understand that that's why. It was a fee saving issue."

Commissioner Shaffer stated he would contact Mr. Hall to inquire if there were any substantial appeals coming up in which the township could be of assistance. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Betkowski if the hearings are open to the public, Ms. Brimmeier responded as follows:

MS. BRIMMEIER: "It starts with a conciliation with the Board of Viewers that is closed. But if you don't come to agreement and you go to a hearing, then that's always open."

Motion passes – 7 to 0

ORDINANCES TO BE INTRODUCED:

Ordinance No. 2379 – Repealing and amending a portion of Chapter 27-906.6.D: Residential Accessory Structure of the Ross Township Code of Ordinances.

Mr. Rickert stated this closes the loophole where people can put multiple accessory buildings in their backyard. It caps the size to 600 square feet for a 2-car garage and 120 square feet for a standard shed. Mr. Frank Kodrich, 109 1st Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, requested if the Board had any issues with zoning to get them to Mr. Rickert so he could begin the paperwork.

PUBLIC HEARING TO BE HELD

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ORDINANCES TO BE ENACTED - None

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of Minutes – September 6, 2016

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Mikec and seconded by Commissioner Mazur.

Motion passes – 7 to 0

PAYMENT OF BILLS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Mazur and seconded by Commissioner Mikec.

Motion passes – 6 to 0 with 1 abstention

LIBRARY BOARD:

Commissioner DeMarco stated there was a recent fundraiser that raised \$2,000. The budget was received, and the director will be available at the next meeting to address the Board. The budget will be approved at the next meeting or it will just be deemed approved. There was a slight increase from last year. Commissioner Avon commented that as the building ages, the budget will need increased to cover the cost of maintaining the building.

PLANNING COMMISSION - None

PLANNING/ZONING REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

Board motion to reject all bids for the Evergreen Park Phase II Project and that the project be re-bid in January 2017.

Motion made by Commissioner Korbelt and seconded by Commissioner Mazur.

Commissioner Avon inquired if anything was added to the bid package that would improve the prices. Mr. Sample stated Gateway

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put the bid package together. Mr. Sample also indicated that the contractors who picked up a bid package were contacted and that the bid package was tweaked. He was hopeful that with a winter bid more contractors would be looking for work. The township has a \$31,000 Community Development Block Grant, which would require the township to use prevailing wage.

Motion passes – 7 to 0

Motion to accept the resignation of Ms. Debbie Griffin from the Township Planning Commission effective October 31, 2016, made by Commissioner Korbelt and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Motion passes – 7 to 0

Commissioner Korbelt stated The Container Store and Saks Off Fifth are both open for business. The developer stated the Chick-Fil-A is on schedule for an end of first quarter/beginning of second quarter opening, depending on the weather. Commissioner Korbelt also indicated he is working with Mr. Rickert on the mixed use overlay district on the zoning side.

The township was awarded an \$865,000 grant by PennDOT through their Multimodal Transportation Fund to improve the McKnight/Siebert intersection. That grant will add a turning lane and will also result in a sidewalk being constructed from McKnight Road to Babcock Boulevard on Siebert Road. Commissioner Korbelt thanked everyone for their efforts in this regard and especially Representative Dom Costa. The total project cost, according to the grant award, was \$1.126 million. The township would be responsible for the balance. Commissioner Korbelt stated the Transportation Impact Fee, which was recently imposed, would go towards this cost. This would only be the beginning of improving the intersection. There are other phases of the Siebert intersection across the street that need addressed.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT - None



RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Mazur reminded everyone this Saturday is the Halloween Bash for children at the Municipal Center from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Halloween in the township will be celebrated on the 31st. She thanked the Police Department, the Fire Police and all the fire departments who will be on the roads on the 31st to make sure the children are safe. She also thanked everyone involved in the ribbon-cutting ceremony, especially Mr. Mike Funk and Ms. Karen Condle for their work in organizing the event.

ADMINISTRATION/LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT - None

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Mikec echoed Commissioner Mazur’s thank-yous regarding the ribbon-cutting ceremony. He also thanked Commissioner Mazur for helping to pull everything together for the event. Road paving is actively going on.

PUBLIC SAFETY/POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Avon stated the Ross Township Police will hold a crime prevention meeting on Thursday, October 20th, at 7:15 p.m. at the Ross Township Municipal Building. Topics of discussion will include Halloween safety tips, tips to keep your kids safe, tips to keep your property safe and tips on hosting responsible parties.

He also indicated the police will be holding a Distracted Driving seminar on Thursday, November 3rd, at 7:15 p.m. at the Ross Township Municipal Building. This program will focus on keeping teen drivers safe while driving or riding as a passenger in a vehicle. This program is appropriate for all persons ages 12 and over. Adults can also benefit from the program.

Commissioner Shaffer inquired if the chief was aware of solar-powered speed limit signs. There is a strobe light that will flash when someone is exceeding the speed limit. Commissioner Mikec stated they are only helpful for a while. If there is no enforcement, they are not as effective. Chief Ley commented that the majority of the

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studies are showing one to three percent of all vehicles are speeding on residential streets. Some streets, such as Babcock Boulevard, are higher. Mr. Sample commented that the stealth camera that no one knows is there is more accurate. Commissioner Mikec stated Bellevue Road is 25 miles an hour, and it is a double-line divided connector roadway.

PUBLIC SAFETY/FIRE/FIRE POLICE/EMS COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner DeMarco stated there will be a fire chiefs' meeting this Wednesday. He already talked to two department heads about some concerns that were raised. The projected budgets for all the fire departments for 2017 have been provided. He thanked the fire departments for their dedication and commitment in risking their lives on a regular basis.

Commissioner Betkowski questioned some of the numbers on the budget page. Commissioner DeMarco stated a lot of it is demographic in terms of the fund drive numbers. Each department received the same amount of money from the township. Discussion ensued regarding the fire departments.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

Mr. Sample was reminiscing about the last time there was a meeting at the Public Works Building about two years ago when there were many issues. Now, a little over two years later, the township has a beautiful state-of-the art building that many municipalities are envious of. He thanked everyone that made it possible. Commissioner Shaffer thanked Mr. Sample and Mr. Funk for their efforts in getting the new building accomplished.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Commissioner DeMarco commented on the ingress and egress to the McKnight-Siebert Shopping Center on Siebert Road. He wanted to make sure that would be discussed with the improvements. Commissioner Shaffer stated moving forward a committee might need to be formed. Commissioner DeMarco stated he had a meeting with Father John Rushovsky of St. Sebastian Church and

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Representative Dom Costa about five or six years ago to discuss the issue. He indicated now is the perfect time.

Commissioner Mikec inquired where the township was in the process of accepting the roads in the Highland Country Club development. Mr. Rickert indicated Phases 1 and 2 are pretty much complete. The township will accept dedication of Phases 1 and 2 once they've met all of Gateway's inspections. Commissioner Mikec suggested doing corings of the roads before they are accepted. Mr. Rickert stated he believed Gateway was on top of that and he would check with them. Commissioner Mikec stated he would like to see the reports.

Commissioner Mikec also inquired as to the maintenance of structures at the parks that were given to certain organizations. He inquired as to what the effort would be to research the legal ownership of those buildings. Ms. Brimmeier responded as follows:

MS. BRIMMEIER: "The only way we would know is if somebody had records or if there was a maintenance agreement, if it was recorded with the Register of Deeds. I would think most likely it did not happen. There's always a chance that somebody was on top of things and did that, but --

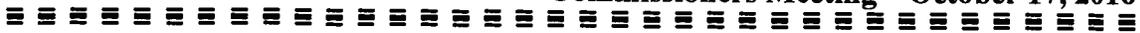
COMMISSIONER MIKEC: "Would that be much of an effort?"

MS. BRIMMEIER: "We would have to do title searches."

Commissioner Mikec mentioned the building at Denny Park is in need of repair. Scharmyn Park had buildings built through grant money as well as grant money was used for the lampposts in Perrysville. Ms. Brimmeier commented as follows:

MS. BRIMMEIER: "Let's say you got a CDBG grant for improvement to a park. You're wondering does that obligate someone else to maintain it? No, it does not."

Commissioner Mikec also inquired if PennDOT owns curb to curb and the township receives a grant to do sidewalks in front of businesses and lampposts, if they would be the township's responsibility. Ms. Brimmeier responded as follows:



MS. BRIMMEIER: "No. They would become the property owner's responsibility."

Ms. Brimmeier suggested Commissioner Mikec make a list of the ones he is questioning.

Regarding speed bumps, Commissioner Mikec stated he was involved through his job in a project to remove speed bumps because kids would put their cars up against the speed bumps and squeal their tires at 2:00 in the morning. He stated there are lots of reasons not to have speed bumps. Ms. Lorna Corso complained in her neighborhood in Laurel Gardens that people do not stop at the stop signs. Commissioner Mikec stated that was an enforcement issue.

Commissioner Mazur wished everyone a safe and happy Halloween.

Commissioner Korbek thanked everyone involved in getting the Public Works Building ready for tonight. He was in agreement that something needs done with the McKnight-Seibert area. He also wished everyone a happy Halloween.

Commissioner Avon stated he recently had some streets paved in his ward. He thanked Mr. Funk for handling concerns residents had with their driveways.

Commissioner Betkowski reminded everyone that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and early detection is key.

Commissioner Shaffer also thanked everyone for their efforts in getting the Public Works Building ready for tonight, and he also thanked the Public Works Department for their ongoing efforts. He also commented that Ross Township now has the largest salt dome in Allegheny County. Commissioner Shaffer also inquired as to the chicken ordinance. Commissioner Korbek indicated at this point there were no real desires to change the current ordinance and that there are provisions under the existing ordinance for animal control and nuisance issues. Commissioner Shaffer also commended the township staff in their efforts in acquiring grants such as the McKnight-Siebert grant as well as grants for park improvements. He

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also mentioned the proposed Cemetery Lane Park and the need for volunteers to help with trail construction. Access points for the park were discussed.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Mr. Joe Zawoysky, 123 5th Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, had some Right-to-Know requests for Mr. Sample. He inquired as to the construction ongoing behind The Barn. Mr. Rickert indicated they are building extra storage pads for their materials. No public will be allowed up there. He also inquired as to the La Quinta. Mr. Rickert stated they are in the middle of their process for changing the property to an assisting living facility. He also inquired as to 6th Avenue. Mr. Funk stated Gateway has been working on the design for the area. Mr. Zawoysky also commented that he was unaware he had to renew his library card every two years. He also questioned if he could cut down a lamppost put on his property if he didn't want to maintain it. He inquired if there would be sidewalks installed on Siebert Road and if they would take property. Commissioner Shaffer stated the sidewalks would be in the right-of-way. He also commented on "sidewalks to nowhere."

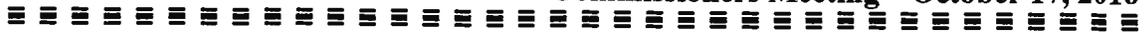
Mr. Frank Kodrich stated after serving the township in various capacities for 35 years he will be stepping down from the Zoning Hearing Board. He stated he is very proud to be a member of the township. He requested Ms. Brimmeier read an article aloud entitled "Two Ross Officials Lauded," which was from a resident thanking then Commissioners Kodrich and Huber for their efforts in some road repairs. Commissioner Shaffer thanked Mr. Kodrich for his service to the township.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner DeMarco and seconded by Commissioner Korbel.

Motion passes – 7 to 0

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:35 P.M.

Commissioners Meeting – October 17, 2016





Douglas Sample
Manager/Secretary

By: 

Jeremy Shaffer, President
Ross Township Board of
Commissioners

Minutes transcribed by *Noreen A. Re*, Court Reporter