

**TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HUNTINGDON, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021, 7:00 P.M.
11279 Center Highway, North Huntingdon, PA 15642
Presiding Officer – Zachary Haigis, President, Board of Commissioners**

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Haigis called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Stump	Present	Also Present:
Commissioner Atwood	Present	Jeffrey Silka
Commissioner Blasko	Present	Solicitor Alexander
Commissioner Zona	Present	Paul Christner
Commissioner Bevan	Present	Ryan Fonzi
Commissioner Gass	Present	Dan Miller
Commissioner Haigis	Present	Chief Rizzo
		Rich Albert

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPENING PRAYER

Moment of silence.

CITIZENS INPUT

Thomas Hempel – 1259 Julius Street – states he is here tonight to hopefully be appointed to the NHTMA Board for another five years. He thanks the Board as community servants to move the Township forward and he personally appreciates it as others do. Mr. Hempel states he started a non-profit organization called Toms Turkeys that provide gift cards for food for people in need. He asks the Board that if they know of any families in need to reach out to him so he can help. Mr. Hempel thanks the Board again and is proud of North Huntingdon Township.

RESPONSE TO CITIZENS INPUT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Commissioner Zona Motion to approve. (Special Meeting 12/10/20)
Second: Commissioner Stump

Commissioner Bevan makes a correction in that she was not present at the December 10, 2020 meeting. Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

January 20, 2020

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Gass

Motion to approve. (Regular Meeting 12/16/20)

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Motion: Commissioner Blasko
Second: Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

STAFF REPORTS:

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

There were no Board comments.

PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT

There were no Board comments.

POLICE REPORT

There were no Board comments.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Robert Dippolito states the department is moving forward and a lot of new people are coming in.

ENGINEERING REPORT

There were no Board comments.

FIRE OFFICIAL’S REPORT

There are no Board comments.

SUBDIVISION & LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

- 1) S-13-2020: Mountain Ridge Estates Revision 7, Wisperwood Court, PRD Zoning
**Action to approve a lot consolidation involving two lots in Mountain Ridge Estates.*

Motion: Commissioner Atwood
Second: commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7- 0 – 0

SOLICITOR’S REPORT – Solicitor Alexander

**There are no action items.*

January 20, 2021

TOWNSHIP MANAGER'S REPORT

- 1) Action to approve the December check register.

Motion: Commissioner Stump Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Atwood

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 2) Budget Report – December 2020 Report.

- 3) Action to approve a resolution adopting the 2020 Westmoreland County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Motion: Commissioner Zona Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Stump

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 4) Action to approve the request of NHTMA to waive building permit fees for the Highland Terrace Pump Station Project.

Motion: Commissioner Atwood Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Gass

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 5) Action to approve the request of Brandon and Traci Urban of 3331 Coulter Road and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to allow the existing home to remain in place while constructing a new home on the site and bonding the demolition of the current structure upon completion of the new construction.

Motion: Commissioner Gass Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Zona

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 6) Action to award the Forest Drive Stormwater project to CH&D Enterprises of New Stanton, PA for a base bid of \$103,451.50 and alternate bid of \$120,176.50.

Motion: Commissioner Stump Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Zona

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

Commissioner Haigis states this project was in the budget for one hundred twenty five thousand dollars.

January 20, 2021

- 7) Action to release the Maintenance Bond for Phase 1 of Willow Estates in the sum of \$73,863.68 upon the payment of \$400.00 for outstanding issues of final inspection upon recommendation of the Senior Project Engineer.

Motion: Commissioner Stump
Second: Commissioner Bevan

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 8) Action to purchase two (2) 2021 Ford Police Interceptor Pursuit AWD vehicles from Jim Shorkey Auto Group for the COSTAR price of \$33,185.00 each.

Motion: Commissioner Atwood
Second: Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Commissioner Gass states Shorkey dropped their price five hundred dollars per vehicle and is the lowest bid.

- 9) Action to appoint Tom Kerber to the Planning Commission for a four year term.

Commissioner Stump
Commissioner Bevan

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 10) Action to appoint Joseph Dykta, Sr. to the Planning Commission for a four year term.

Commissioner Stump
Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 11) Action to appoint Alan Vento to the Zoning Hearing Board for a five year term.

Commissioner Zona
Commissioner Atwood

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 12) Action to appoint Thomas Hemple to the North Huntingdon Township Municipal Authority for a five year term.

Commissioner Gass
Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

Commissioner Bevan thanks Mr. Hemple for his support of the Board.

January 20, 2021

- 13) Action to appoint Charles Gilbert to the Western Westmoreland Municipal Authority for a five year term.

Motion: Commissioner Atwood

Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Bevan

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 14) Action to appoint Emily Gindlesberger to the Civil Service Commission for a six year term.

Motion: Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Gass

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 15) Action to appoint Mitch Astalos to the Emergency Management Committee for a four year term.

Motion: Commissioner Stump

Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Zona

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 16) Action to appoint Rodney Mahinske to the Emergency Management Committee for a four year term.

Motion: Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Bevan

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 17) Action to appoint Harry Pawluk to the Emergency Management Committee for a four year term.

Motion: Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Stump

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 18) Action to appoint Jack Boyland to the Emergency Management Committee for a four year term.

Motion: Commissioner Atwood

Motion to approve.

Second: Commissioner Bevan

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

January 20, 2021

- 19) Action to appoint Bill Hensel to the Emergency Management Committee for a four year term.

Motion: Commissioner Gass
Second: Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 20) Action to appoint Jeff West to the Emergency Management Committee for a four year term.

Motion: Commissioner Gass
Second: Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 21) Action to appoint Dennis Collins to the Emergency Management Committee for a four year term.

Motion: Commissioner Stump
Second: Commissioner Gass

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 22) Action to appoint Eric Friez to the Emergency Management Committee for a four year term.

Motion: Commissioner Gass
Second: Commissioner Atwood

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

FURTHER BOARD COMMENTS

Commissioner Atwood states as the winter is upon us bringing snow and ice are faced with the treatment of the roads in order to make them safe for residents to drive. He states the Township employees do an excellent job in clearing the roads in a prompt and timely manner, however he has concern of the neglect of the State roads in the Township. He states in his ward alone, roads such as Barnes Lake, Clay Pike, Guffey and Robbins Station Roads are rarely treated before residents need to travel on them. Commissioner Atwood states as a matter of public safety, the Board needs to address this issue. He proposes to send a letter with the concerns to Senator Ward, Representative George Dunbar, and Assistant District Manager Dwayne Wright of PADot 12th District.

January 20, 2021

Commissioner Atwood states he would like to make a motion to add to the agenda to send a letter with the Board's concerns.

Motion: Commissioner Atwood Motion to add to agenda.
 Second: Commissioner Stump

Commissioner Gass states he would like to add Colonial Manor and Carpenter Lane. Manager Silka adds Brownstown Road also. Motion carried 7 -0 - 0

Motion: Commissioner Atwood Motion to send a letter to Senator Kim Ward, Representative George Dunbar and Assistant District Manager Dwayne Wright PADot 12th District concerning lack of treatment for the State Roads during snow removal.
 Second: Commissioner Zona Motion carried 7 - 0 - 0

Commissioner Stump states a public hearing is scheduled for February 11, 2021 for backyard chicken keeping. She would like the Board to reconsider that route because she feels nobody is going to pay five hundred ninety dollars for a couple of chickens. She also spoke with Manager Silka and found it will cost six to seven hundred dollars to advertise for the hearing and she feels that is wasted money. She would like to make a motion to drop the chicken keeping all together because money is being wasted on advertising and going through a hearing.

Commissioner Haigis clarifies that what Commissioner Stump is suggesting is to keep the current policy in place of ten acres.

Commissioner Stump states that is what she is saying because it would have been simpler to do the fifty dollar application fee and have a regular ordinance, but so many layers of bureaucracy have been added and is going to be expensive.

January 20, 2021

Motion: Commissioner Stump

Motion to add to the agenda to scrap the chicken keeping all together.

Second: Commissioner Gass

Commissioner Haigis clarifies the motion adding to the agenda from Commissioner Stump is to quit pursuing the zoning variance / conditional use.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Stump – YES

Commissioner Atwood – YES

Commissioner Blasko – YES

Commissioner Zona – NO

Commissioner Bevan – YES

Commissioner Gass – YES

Commissioner Haigis – NO

Motion carried 5 – 2 – 0

There was no public input.

Motion: Commissioner Stump

Motion to scrap plans to advertise on February 11, 2021 for the proposed chicken ordinance because nobody is going to pay five hundred ninety dollars for four chickens and also keep the current zoning ordinance in place.

Second: Commissioner Bevan

Commissioner Blasko states the whole reason for this predicament is because the Board could not compromise on property size and his vote will be no because he is concerned this will reappear and will be back to square one and not addressing other priority issues. He states that he agrees with Commissioner Stump in that it is very expensive.

Commissioner Zona states he agrees with Commissioner Blasko in that this basically was shoved down their throats and went months and months discussing it. Several Board members tried to

January 20, 2021

compromise and others did not. He states that once this is in the newspaper that the conditional use is not being pursued, will the residents who want chickens come back with their complaints. He feels to move forward with the public hearing and his vote will be no.

Commissioner Haigis agrees with Commissioners Blasko and Zona. He states he was against chickens in residential properties, but was open to compromise. He states some Board members wanted to allow chickens in small backyards which he was totally against, so now if back to the current ordinance of ten acres, the policy that the Board was going down the path would eliminate the ten acres and allow residents to apply for the permit, but would still have to publish in the paper, so either way would be spending money. He states putting ads in the paper is the cost of doing business in local municipalities and there is money budgeted every year to do so.

Commissioner Stump adds that going this route is discriminatory and doesn't want to see the Township throw money away.

Commissioner Haigis states this could have been done months ago if the Board would have stood their ground on the current ordinance.

Commissioner Zona adds that if they would have compromised, would not be at this point.

Commissioner Stump states why throw money away when the end result is the same.

Commissioner Zona states he does not feel the end result is the same as the citizens wanted the Board to take action and they are changing what was had and making it more flexible.

Commissioner Gass states the current ordinance states ten acres and he does not know of anyone that owns ten acres.

January 20, 2021

Commissioner Zona states some of the Board members were willing to compromise and come down from ten acres while other Board members were not willing to come up from the small areas.

Commissioner Haigis states the conditional use was the next best option, but now is getting rid of that option which he is ok with because he never wanted chickens to begin with.

Commissioner Bevan states she finds it interesting to have received a letter from the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development that basically agreed with what Commissioner Stump has been saying all along that you need to define backyard chicken keeping use, establish specific standards and criteria and the cost was too high.

Commissioner Zona asks if the County knows the regular conditional use fee is seven hundred plus dollars. If five hundred is too much then isn't seven hundred too much.

Commissioner Stump asks Commissioner Bevan to read the letter to the public.

Commissioner Zona states when there was a sample ordinance discussion he felt it was too generic and needed more language, but was told to leave it generic and not spell it out, and now being told to spell it out and be more specific.

Commissioner Bevan states these are only suggestions and the County is not telling us what to do. She states this was Commissioner Stump's point and to just go back to the original ordinance.

Commissioner Zona states all this time wasted and to just say let's go back and forget it. He states they were told to change the regulations to bring everyone who violated the ordinance into compliance.

Commissioner Stump states she wants to see people have freedom and liberty to use their property.

January 20, 2021

Commissioner Haigis clarifies that the motion is to not pursue the conditional use permitting and to keep the current zoning ordinance in place of ten acres for backyard chickens.

Solicitor Alexander states to basically scrap the proposed ordinance.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Stump – YES

Commissioner Atwood – NO

Commissioner Blasko – NO

Commissioner Zona – NO

Commissioner Bevan – YES

Commissioner Gass – YES

Commissioner Haigis – NO

Motion fails – 3 – 4 – 0

Commissioner Zona thanks Tom Hempel for his support of the Board and also thanks him for what he does for the Township and new program Toms Turkeys.

Commissioner Gass also thanks him.

Commissioner Bevan states there have been some issues with County Hauling and states they are not responsive to citizens concerns. She states they have to be more friendly and respond in a timely manner.

Manager Silka states they are scheduled to meet with County Hauling.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Atwood

Motion to adjourn. (7:40 P.M.)

Motion carried 6 – 0 – 0

- Regular Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2021 were approved by the Board of Commissioners on February 17, 2021.

Jeffrey Silka, Township Manager
/jjm

Zachary Haigis, President

