

**TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HUNTINGDON, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING, THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2022, 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
Commissioner Atwood Present
Commissioner Gray Present
Commissioner Zona Present
Commissioner Wengrzyn Present
Commissioner Gass Present
Commissioner Haigis Present

Also Present:
Harry Faulk
Mike Turley
Solicitor Dice
Ryan Fonzi

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CITIZENS INPUT

David Plecko – 9931 Deerfield Drive – reads a quote from TribLive from July 15, 2021 states the Westmoreland County Housing Director defends senior project for Irwin and quotes “Irwin will benefit financially from a proposed fourteen million dollar fifty unit apartment building for low income senior citizens”, ending with “he hopes with his presentation could quash some of the negativity in social media and suggested to see recent housing projects in Hempfield, South Greengate Commons, Oden View to see the quality of the housing and doesn’t appreciate that some residents are mis-informed.” Mr. Plecko states he does not feel mis-informed as there are legitimate concerns. He asks can anyone articulate what the benefits will be as surrounding residents do not see any benefit at all. He also asks how the Housing Authority assesses those benefits. In another article from the Trib, it states the bridge at the bottom of Fairwood Drive is scheduled to be replaced in 2023 and has anyone thought of the ramifications of that project occurring at the same time as the senior complex cutting off or impeding the two main entrances into County Hills. Thirdly, there are two other possible locations for easements on the Irwin side and has the Housing Authority looked at that plus have they contacted the owners of Conley Storage, the carwash or Norwin Library for other locations for the easement. Lastly, he states the Commissioners who voted not to table last month and quotes the Trib stating if North Huntingdon doesn’t approve this project, the Housing Authority most certainly would appeal to Common Pleas Court costing the Township legal fees and asks if the exact situation was taking place in one of their wards, would they still vote the same way an if so, why.

Mary Anne O’Neill – states she wants to bring attention to the closing of the tax office window. She has been there three times and every time is closed. She contacted her Commissioner and he stated this has been an issue. Ms. O’Neill states she sent Shelley Buchanan an email but never

May 12, 2022

heard back from her. She reads the letter to the Board and provides a copy. She urges Shelley to open the window and hire staff to do the job as she is the elected official, elected to serve all the people in North Huntingdon Township.

Rebecca Rudy – 10018 Deerfield Drive – states she has spoken before regarding the Grand View Senior highrise and the opposition from the Deerfield residents along with residents from Laurel and Caruthers. She states the development is being approved by Irwin Borough with the burden being on North Huntingdon. She feels there were a lot of emotions at the last meeting and feels those emotions need to be removed and deal with the facts. Another developer tried to develop this land years ago and felt it wasn't feasible. She states everyone in North Huntingdon wants a senior highrise supporting Veterans and all agree on that, but everyone is also concerned about the roads. The increased traffic will burden County Hills the most and the property owners have concerns and there is no guarantee of a landslide in the future. Ms. Rudy states so much of the hillside is going to be removed making it unstable and also there are no funds to fix the roads. She feels the plan is unsafe for the seniors and also rescue vehicles. She states in past meetings was asked if other sites were looked at but never heard an answer, so she contacted the communication directors at Excelsa and he is welcoming input from the Township and Commissioners to look at additional sites. Excelsa stated they are not in the business for housing however no one has approached them about land that they own that could be for sale or consider selling. Ms. Rudy states the residents of Laurel and Caruthers continue to be concerned about their properties and the neighborhood and she urges the Board deny this project.

Bob Morgan – 871 Northeast Drive – states he is here to consider the recreation facility and in doing some research, back in 2017 there was a study of recommendations needed in the Township, however nothing has been done. There was also a bike trail proposal and was wondering if the old trolley line along Route 993 could be used. He also states the Penguins would help fund deck hockey.

Dan Korhnak – 681 Northeast Drive – states he is forming a group of volunteers to explore options for building a bike trail. He understands it is a lot of work, could be a lot of money along with maintenance costs, but it needs to start at some point to make the Township a more attractive place to live.

Zach Waszyn – 3051 Kingston Court – states he grew up in the Township and feels more activities need to be provided in the Township. There are ways to get grants for funding.

Megan Javor – 2141 Lancelot Drive – states she is still interested in working with the Board to keep their backyard chickens.

RESPONSE TO CITIZENS INPUT

Commissioner Haigis states the Grand View Senior Residencies is on the agenda if the Board would discuss at that time. Board agrees. He also states the Tax Office issue is on the agenda and can be discussed at that time.

May 12, 2022

Commissioner Haigis states the recreation center has been discussed and Commissioner Atwood was interesting in doing some research. He states he is in favor of exploring different options, but states a lot of times the grants that are offered are matching grants and not free money so at best could be a fifty percent grant and the Township would still have to pay money for these projects. He suggests also working with Dan Miller to explore options. Commissioner Atwood states he is very much in favor of exploring options. Commissioner Stump state they are always looking for volunteers on the Recreation Board and there are some flat areas in some of the parks that could be used for a hockey deck.

Work Sessions Discussion Topics

1) Logan Road Intergovernmental Agreement with North Versailles – discussion.

Manager Faulk states North Versailles submitted an agreement that was approved and share a common boarder on Logan Road. They are requesting North Huntingdon pave the road and will be reimbursed three thousand eight hundred twenty one dollars eighty one cents. Commissioner Atwood asks how we arrived at that amount. Manager Faulk states North Versailles arrived at that number. Commissioner Atwood feels the Board should have that information before making a decision. Mike Turley states Bob Robinson looked at this and has done this with other agreements. Commissioner Zona states the agreement states exactly what will be put down and totals that amount.

2) Natalie Lane Easement Vacation – discussion.

Manager Faulk states Bob Robinson does not feel there is any benefit or use for this easement as there are already houses that have inground pools and the recommendation is to vacate the easement. Commissioner Stump asks why people are building on top of the easement and shouldn't be allowed. Director Fonzi states there is at least one pool but is outside of the easement. Mr. Gobel, with the lot in question, applied for a building permit for a swimming pool and discovered the easement is crossing right where he wants the pool. He states the easement was originally put in because the developer wasn't sure of the final grade and how the roof drains would tie in but there is no need for the easement in the back for stormwater control so basically is an empty easement.

3) Grand View Senior Residencies – discussion.

Commissioner Atwood states his first concern is over the cut slopes and has the condition for erosion control been reviewed. Don Housley and Bud McCutcheon, Geotechnical Engineer, are present to answers questions. Don Housley states the conditions are compliant however they are going through a process with the Westmoreland County Conservation District to have permits issued, however he has not seen the final permit issued yet. Bud McCutcheon states he was provided the preliminary stability calculations and gets the sense the configuration may not be the final configuration, but the data and availability of fill going to the site will make it stabile. Commissioner Atwood asks the two to one slope is two feet of run for one foot of rise, so based off that measurement, are there any industry standard precautions when constructing a slope like this. Mr. McCutcheon states the two to one slope as being the normal industry standard, but never

May 12, 2022

a guarantee of a landslide. Commissioner Atwood states he is concerned about the weight limits on the roads, how many, how often, and how long the construction phase will be. Director Fonzi states in Bob Robinson's analysis of the roads is that what he saw on Caruthers he felt there really wasn't a base failure issue but more surface related, but any type of construction or weighted vehicle will need a heavy hauling permit and there is a charge for that. Don Housley adds the road will be video logged prior to construction activity and then videoed logged post construction to determine if there are any damages. Commissioner Atwood asks if there is an ordinance regarding the amount of dirt can be taken from a site. Director Fonzi states he does not think there is a maximum amount of dirt restriction.

Commissioner Stump states she feels more comfortable with some of the piping planned for the hillside and asks if that would stabilize and prevent erosion. Don Housley states that is definitely the point of the swells at the top of the slope to collect water as well at the bottom of the slope. Vegetative cover will also be planted. Commissioner Stump states that Irwin Borough is eligible for CDBG grant money but North Huntingdon is not because of the income level and possibly why the developer is looking to Irwin to get the development of roads and bridges.

Commissioner Gass states he advocates safety not only for the residents that live there but for the new residents also. He asks if there are any mines underneath. Mr. McCutcheon believes it does not go over a mine even though there are lots of mines in the area. Commissioner Gass asks to lessen concerns of the residents to take the high ground dirt on the right of Laurel and move it to the left side of Laurel to raise the ground and without effecting the wetlands. Mr. McCutcheon clarifies what side of Laurel Commissioner Gass is referring to. Commissioner Gass states he mistakenly thought the Housing Authority owned the other side of Laurel on the left side.

Commissioner Haigis asks if a traffic study was done and asks what the site distance requirements would be if it was forty miles per hour instead of the posted twenty five miles per hour. Don Housley states he does not have the report in front of him but was turned over to a consultant the Township uses often and he felt the report was ok. Commissioner Haigis states the site distance works for the posted speed limit but not for speeding vehicles. Also, a concern of over six hundred cars entering and exiting the residence and will put a burden on the residents in the community. Commissioner Haigis states he does not understand why the Housing Authority did not explore other options for entrance and exit of the facility. He states if you look at Caruthers Lane you would see the soil is giving away. He also wants to clarify on the approved plan that this is not to be a dedicated roadway to North Huntingdon Township and will stay a private road. Lastly, he states the Board should have a say in how the grading is completed and requests more vegetation for more stabilization. Commissioner Haigis has concerns with the Housing Authority's other properties that are not maintained. Commissioner Atwood is concerned that the residents for the property may not even live in this area. Director Fonzi adds that there was an issue about the sewage pump station at the site so he contacted Mike Branthoover from NHTMA who said there was a small pump station and was decommissioned in the late 70's and was properly demolished.

May 12, 2022

4) NHT Tax Office – discussion.

Commissioner Zona states he is glad to hear residents speaking out about the tax office being closed. He feels they are doing a dis-service and needs to open the office. He states he received an email from Shelley Buchanan and was told the office is not closed because of COVID, but because mean people come to the window and treat them bad. Commissioner Zona states from what he read from the tax collector code is that they are only required to be open three days per week during the last two weeks of the discounted timeframe and he wants to know if they are compliant with opening the office. Commissioner Haigis states he would like to see even just one day per week that they be open. Commissioner Stump adds that the Township gives them a favorable rent rate for her to be here and if she is not going to service the public then the Board should reevaluate the leasing arrangements. Commissioner Atwood states he disagrees.

5) Action to hire the following Summer Employees in the Parks Department.

- **Jadon Hooke**
- **Gaige Gazalie**
- **Dylan Werder**

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Stump

Motion to hire the summer employees.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

PLANNING / ENGINEERING TOPICS:

1) S-08-2022: Penrod-Walley Plan, Veronica Lane, R-3 & R-4 Zoning

**Proposed boundary line revision involving tow lots at the terminus of Veronica Lane.*

Director Fonzi states Steven Penrod lives in a home at 13229 Veronica Lane is was looking to sell his house and saw a property line was going through the garage and the title company of the potential buyer stated they would purchase while the property line existed on the garage. A surveyor stated the garage was legal as far as the property line and Mr. Penrod bumped it out another seven or eight feet to make it comply. The Planning Commission recommended approval.

2) Javor Backyard Chicken Keeping Application – discussion.

**Proposed boundary line revision in Sheridan Terrace.*

Director Fonzi states this was tabled from last month and believes Solicitor Alexander was looking into the emotional support end of the chicken keeping. Commissioner Atwood states he would like the requirements that were presented previously to become the standard requirements. Commissioner Stump agrees. Commissioner Atwood states the only thing he did not see was the limit on the number of chickens permitted and would be ok with seven. Commissioner Gass states he agrees also. Commissioner Zona states he disagrees with making this an ordinance. He believes the dimensions were ten thousand square feet minimum and feels is too small to have chickens in a residential neighbor. He states he would support making it a one acre minimum. Commissioner

May 12, 2022

Stump states the ordinance that was passed did not have conditions and this would address conditions and protect the neighbors. Commissioner Zona states he disagrees and this will not protect the neighbors. Commissioner Atwood states he would prefer to have something rather than nothing because if a conditional use is granted now there is nothing holding anybody accountable and will be done on a case by case basis. Commissioner Gray asks Director Fonzi that a conditional use stays with the property and has no sunset provision. Director Fonzi states that is correct. Commissioner Gray states he is against that. Commissioner Atwood suggests to add it to the ordinance. Commissioner Haigis states previously he was in favor of exploring the idea of having backyard chickens and settled at an acre requirement to hopefully get an ordinance passed, but unfortunately that wasn't able to be done so that's when conditional use was explored to take a case by case basis in which he does not like picking winners and losers. Commissioner Stump states she would be in favor of adding as soon as someone sells their house, the conditional use is terminated. Commissioner Gass states chickens also help with tick control.

FURTHER BOARD COMMENTS

Commissioner Atwood states in reference to the recent email policy discussion and the current policy is dated 2005, 17 years old, and he would like the policy reviewed and updated. Also, based on recent court cases about cell phone policies and hopefully the solicitor can help keep the Board compliant. Solicitor Dice states a lot of communities are purchasing a phone for Commissioners, Directors, etc. in addition to personal phones and you use that phone only for Township business. Personal phones will not be used for any municipal work. Commissioner Stump states she would not want to charge two devices and the updated email policy resolves that issue. Commissioner Zona feels the easy way around it is to use the issued email address instead of a new cell phone. Commissioner Atwood states even if you use your issued email on a personal device, it still does not protect you. Solicitor Dice states that is correct. Commissioner Haigis states he agrees to update and revise the email policy.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Atwood

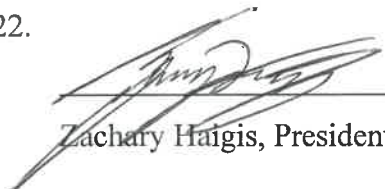
Motion to adjourn.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0 (8:26 P.M.)

- Special Meeting minutes of May 12, 2022 were approved by the Board of Commissioners on June 15, 2022.



Harry R. Faulk, Township Secretary



Zachary Haigis, President