

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
March 2, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Public Services Commission regular monthly meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was open to the public, and a link to join the meeting via Zoom was listed on the agenda posted on the Township's website.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Brian Dakin  
Joe Roscioli  
Janice Gottesfeld  
Kevin Moore  
Rob Hall  
James Duffy  
Lee Ann Embrey

**TOWNSHIP STAFF**

Pam Gural-Bear, Assistant Township Manager  
Ed Culp, Assistant Director of Public Works  
  
Brian Dunn, Board of Supervisors Liaison

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Mr. Moore, seconded by Mr. Hall, to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2022, meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Friends of the Parks will be hosting the annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 9 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at Boot Road Park. There will be two age groups covering ages 2-10.

The Spring Craft Fair and fundraiser will be held on Saturday, April 30 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Township Building. The fundraiser helps to defer the costs of events such as fireworks and summer concerts.

Recordings of the Board of Supervisors' meetings will now be available on the Township's website for viewing by the public. The recordings will be available for one year from the time of posting. Mr. Culp asked the PSC members if they wanted their monthly meeting recordings posted also. After brief discussion, members decided in favor of posting the recordings, noting that it may inspire others to participate in the meetings. It was suggested that those participating via Zoom may wish to block their phone numbers from showing on the recording.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION:**

### **1. Township Communications**

Representatives from the Homeowners' Associations within the Township were invited to the meeting to provide feedback and share information on how best to communicate with residents and provide them with pertinent information. Those in attendance were:

- Tim Sheean and Tim Jennings from Reserve at Glen Loch
- Jon Martin, Historical Commission member involved with the Crossroads project
- Ryan O'Malley from Swedesford Chase
- Alex Plotkin, Exton Station (Sub-association of Railway Square)
- Mary Ann Landmesser, Reserve at Whiteland Hills

A power point presentation was given describing the Public Services Commission – who it is and what it does. The PSC is one of seven Boards and Commissions that support the Board of Supervisors and Township Staff. It consists of 10 residents who volunteer their time and expertise and serve 4-year terms. PSC meets once a month on the first Wednesday of every month beginning at 6:30 p.m. The Commission was established in 2017 as a merging of the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Municipal Services Commission. Topics covered by the PSC include parks, stormwater management, pedestrian networks, communication, traffic, sanitary sewer, trash/recycling, and renewable energy and sustainability.

The Township currently shares information with the public in both passive and active methods utilizing the Township's website, Newsletter, Next Door, Facebook, and Constant Contact. The Township values communication and employs a Public Information Officer to ensure the information is updated as quickly as possible.

The various means of communication were discussed in more detail. The website provides a one-stop shop for residents and businesses for all things Township related. On the website people can enroll to receive Code Red Alerts. Currently all landlines are enrolled, but people can sign up to have alerts sent to their cell phones. A "Code Green" alert was suggested for those items that are not considered an emergency, but still good information.

Two Newsletters are produced per year with a special edition added last year on the "Crossroads". The Newsletter reaches 8,500 households and 1,000 businesses. The Township also posts 6 -10 times per month on Facebook. The Next Door social media platform sees the most activity. There was then discussion of the presence of the "rumor mill" on these sites that allow anyone to post opinions and mis-information.

The Township also hosted several Open Houses on Exton Park, general development within the Township, and the Crossroads project to receive feedback and suggestions from the general public and business owners. Surveys were also conducted to receive feedback.

The big question is "What works?" Which forms of communication work best? The following comments were received:

- Ms. Gottesfeld - some of the information on the website is buried too deeply but is generally good information.

- Suggestion made to put hot links on the home page of the website to the top 5 topics accessed most frequently.
- The Recycle Coach app is available for download for recycling information and pickup dates – some expressed they already have too many apps and would not use it.
- Tim Jennings suggested doing a Google search for specific Township topics rather than searching through the website for specific topics.
- Ms. Landmesser found the room reservation process online difficult to determine dates and times available – not easy to navigate. Ms. Gural-Bear said instructions could be streamlined. It was suggested that if instructions are needed, perhaps the system is not user-friendly enough.
- Mr. Martin expressed difficulty finding historic information on the website.
- A suggestion was made to offer training in social media and demographics for the Public Information Officer to learn better ways to target the many different age groups.

Ms. Gottesfeld asked the HOA representatives how they communicate with their residents. Responses received include:

- Set up Google docs/drive to post documents.
- Use email distribution lists to send out email blasts.
- Some management services use Town Square app, but it is a struggle to get residents to use it.
- There is also little trust with the Town Square app that concerns are being answered and addressed at the other end.

Ms. Gural-Bear advised that the “open rate” for the Township’s e-news is 40%, which is considered good in the industry.

It was suggested that if people could pick only the topics they are interested in when they sign up for e-communications, it would be more successful, noting that people are currently inundated with so much information from so many sources that much of it is never opened.

Ms. Gural-Bear said the Township maintains a list of all HOA’s that it can forward information to for the HOA’s to then distribute to their residents, but it can be difficult keeping an accurate list updated, noting some HOA’s are more responsive than others.

Ms. Gural-Bear explained that the Township’s over-arching goal is to educate residents and businesses as to the services the Township provides, with more specific goals from various departments. It was suggested to “look wider” to surrounding communities and advertise more regionally for non-services such as park concerts and events where greater attendance is desired. Ms. Gural-Bear advised that the Township also partners with the Chester County Library and the Exton Chamber of Commerce in utilizing data bases to disseminate information.

Mr. Hall suggested that in addition to publishing a list of businesses that sell the Township trash bags, a list also be generated of those businesses that do not sell the bags.

Tim Jennings offered to provide the PSC with a presentation on changing technology. Mr. Dakin will follow up.

Mr. Dakin thanked everyone for their comments and suggestions.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Ms. Gottesfeld made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roscioli, to adjourn the meeting; the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin Moore,  
Recording Secretary