

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 3, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Public Services Commission regular monthly meeting was called to order at 6:34 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
Kevin Moore
Janice Gottesfeld
John Ceschan, Jr.
Virginia Kerslake
Liz Alakszay

TOWNSHIP STAFF

Pam Gural-Bear, Township Manager
Ed Culp, Interim Public Works Director
Wyatt Williams, Sustainability Coordinator
Todd Greenawalt, Codes Administrative & Enforcement Mgr.
Brian Dunn, Member, Board of Supervisors

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Craft Fair will be held on May 6 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Township building.

Ms. Gottesfeld thanked Brian Dakin for his sponsorship of Friends of the Parks.

Trash and Recycling pickup will move from Tuesday to Wednesday for the Memorial Day holiday.

Reminder to vote in the upcoming primary election on May 16.

Mr. Culp announced that street sweeping is scheduled for June 5- 9th.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

BUSINESS:

1. Review of Minutes

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Ms. Gottesfeld, to approve the April 5, 2023, minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

OPEN DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Codes/Permits – Health and Safety for Rentals

Ms. Gural-Bear introduced Todd Greenawalt, the Township's new Codes Administrative and Enforcement Manager. He previously worked as an on-site inspector with SSM Group.

Mr. Greenawalt explained that the purpose of the rental inspection program is to ensure that rental properties are safe for tenants. When there is a change in tenant occupancy, the

rental unit is inspected for various life and safety issues, and a certificate is issued upon passing. Should a unit fail the inspection, a re-inspection is scheduled to ensure the necessary work has been completed before the unit can be occupied.

The Township's inspection program lapsed for a few years with the rapid increase in development but is now being reinstated. Mr. Greenawalt said about 150 inspections have been completed to date, and only a few failed. These were mostly older buildings that did not meet newer code compliance regulations. The program has been successful thus far, and management teams have been receptive. Inspections are conducted by both Township staff and Arro Consulting. The rental inspection fee (\$75 per apartment unit and \$100 for townhome/single family detached) is analyzed to accurately reflect the actual cost of performing the inspection.

Members asked if all property owners know that they must apply for a rental inspection with every change of tenant. Mr. Greenawalt said the Township is currently reaching out to all of the apartment complex management teams and Home Owners' Associations. Individual properties without some type of HOA/management team are harder to identify, but anyone can reach out to the Township if they have concerns about a particular property. The Township will be advertising the rental inspection program in upcoming newsletters and postings on the website. Should a rental unit fail the inspection, a certificate of occupancy will be withheld until the necessary repairs are made and a re-inspection is completed. Ms. Gural-Bear explained that presently the Township is encouraging property owners ("educational approach") to report if they are renting. There currently is no requirement to do so, but requirements and fines will come at a later time.

Mr. Dakin asked if the rental inspection program could provide relief to a tenant experiencing issues with a landlord not making necessary repairs. Mr. Greenawalt said it would, as well as the Township's recently adopted Property Maintenance Code.

2. Sustainability Goals Discussion

Wyatt Williams reviewed a Power Point presentation of potential sustainability goals for West Whiteland and sought feedback from Commission members on the various goals to ensure that they are realistic and good for everyone.

West Whiteland has already committed to the Energy goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2035 and 100% renewable energy by 2050.

Waste – a potential goal is zero waste commitment. Mr. Williams explained that this means that all waste generated is either recycled, upcycled or used in some other way. A zero waste commitment is merely the first step, (laying the groundwork and adopting methods) not the end result. Ms. Kerslake asked if these goals are for the Township or individual residents. Mr. Williams said the goals are for everyone with the Township leading the way. He emphasized that the goals are not "set in stone" at this time, and that feasibility is still being explored.

Mr. Dakin asked how the Township can tell if it is making progress toward its goals (has the needle moved?) Mr. Williams said the needle has started to move and as funding opportunities come up, the rate of movement will speed up. However, there are no metrics on movement at this time. Ms. Alaszay pointed out that the suppliers play a big role (PECO), and the Township cannot control this aspect.

Ms. Kerslake asked if the Township is going to stick to its commitment of 100% renewable energy by 2050, noting that other options are being considered by the Board of Supervisors for the new Public Works facility. Mr. Dunn said the Board is considering all options at this point to get the facility up and running and could do a conversion in the future if necessary.

Returning to the topic of Waste, Mr. Williams asked whether members preferred an overall total percentage reduction or a targeted reduction per capita. Ms. Kerslake suggested the metric be as tangible as possible. It was noted that consumer behavior contributes to much waste, and that perhaps more education is needed. Mr. Dakin cautioned about the method of measurement used – to be sure that it accounts for growth in the Township’s population, noting that it could be possible that as less waste is generated per person, an increase in total waste is shown due to an increase in population.

Water – the Township is currently working on PRP goals for sediment reduction, but water reduction for individuals is also a goal with educational efforts regarding car washing and waste water running into storm drains, etc. Ms. Gottesfeld suggested the use of rain barrels may have an impact. Mr. Williams will see if there are any funding opportunities to purchase rain barrels at a reduced cost. Ms. Kerslake suggested posting a regular feature in the Township’s newsletter educating residents on water usage – what individuals can do to reduce usage and posting average amounts used for general tasks/purposes, etc. Ms. Gottesfeld suggested a comprehensive sustainability resource page on the website.

Transportation – potential goals include EV charging stations at all municipal properties by 2030; electrification of light fleet by 2028 and specialized vehicles by 2035. In addition, support for alternative transportation in the Township with implementation of the Township Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is a goal.

Land Use – In addition to the Complete Streets Plan, a goal of 30% open space (up from the current 24%) by 2030 was discussed. With the Township already built out, Mr. Dakin asked if the additional 6% was attainable. Mr. Williams said in speaking with Mr. Smiley, he believed the additional open space can come from redevelopment of properties such as the Exton Square Mall. A 15% reduction in impermeable surfaces by 2035 and Meadow implementation on Township properties by 2035 were discussed. In addition to Exton Park, Ms. Kerslake suggested a few properties in Meadowbrook Manor that may be good candidates for Meadow implementation. Ms. Alakszay suggested requiring developers to use permeable pavement.

Mr. Williams reported that feedback received from local businesses leaned against a plastic bag ordinance. He advised that a possible alternative could be recycling carts that would allow recycling of plastic bags in single stream recycling.

Ms. Kerslake asked if light pollution was a part of sustainability. Mr. Williams said it was not, but the Township could look at this going forward.

Topics for Future Meetings:

Mr. Dakin asked members to forward any topics for future meeting agendas to him and Staff. Ms. Gural-Bear suggested field trip options to visit parks/facilities. Ms. Alakszay suggested a visit to a nearby solar installation. Mr. Williams suggested visiting the Church Farm School solar array.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Gottesfeld made a motion, seconded by Ms. Alakszay, to adjourn the meeting; the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Moore
Recording Secretary