



## WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

### BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes of the first November Meeting

November 8, 2023

#### **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Brian Dunn called to order the first November meeting at 6:39 p.m. The meeting was a hybrid with participants attending both in person and via Zoom.

Those in attendance in addition to Mr. Dunn were:

Rajesh Kumbhardare, Vice-Chairman  
Theresa Santalucia, Supervisor  
Pam Gural-Bear, Township Manager  
Jennifer Keller, Operations Manager  
Lee Benson, Police Chief  
Caroline Partridge, Finance Director  
John Weller, Director of Planning & Zoning  
Justin Smiley, Capital & Special Projects Manager  
Brannon Tupper, Engineering & Construction Projects Mgr.  
Ed Culp, Interim Public Works Director  
Ally Brandt, Park, Rec & Events Coordinator  
Katie Pusey, Public Information Officer  
Alex Baumler, Solicitor  
Pat Layman, Minutes

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

The Board of Supervisors met in executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of personnel and litigation.

The Township Building will be closed on Friday, November 10th in observation of Veterans' Day.

On Saturday, November 11th, the Exton Main Street Shuffle 5K will kick off Veteran's Day at 9AM at Main Street. Donations will go directly to the Chester County Veterans Affairs Fund.

Immediately following the Shuffle, the Friends of the Parks Craft Fair begins at 10 AM and ends at 2 PM at the Township Building.

The next meeting of the Board of Supervisors will be held on Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Township Building will be closed after 1 PM on Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> and all day of Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup> for the Thanksgiving holiday.

A groundbreaking event was held today, November 8<sup>th</sup>, for the new Public Works Facility.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Ms. Santalucia made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kumbhardare, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the following:

- Approval of October 25, 2023, Minutes
- Resolution 2023-42 Disposition of Media

Mr. Dunn called for public comment, and there were none. The motion was unanimously approved.

**BUSINESS:**

**1. Approval of Geotech Services Agreement for the Public Works Facility**

Mr. Kumbhardare made a motion, seconded by Ms. Santalucia, to table the approval of the Geotech Services Agreement for the Public Works Facility. Mr. Dunn called for public comment, and there were none. The motion was unanimously approved.

**2. Lochiel Farm Final Escrow Release**

Mr. Smiley reviewed his November 3, 2023, Memorandum and advised that the Lochiel Farm development has been constructed, and all conditions and waivers have been determined complete by Staff and Consultants. However, due to recent sinkhole repairs, the stop bars and pedestrian stripping have yet to be re-stripped. Mr. Smiley suggested the Board may wish to make this a condition of the proposed release. Board members agreed, and Mr. Kumbhardare directed that the HOA be notified that going forward any sinkhole repairs are the responsibility of the HOA. It was suggested that letters to that effect be sent to residents of the Lochiel Farm community.

Mr. Kumbhardare made a motion, seconded by Ms. Santalucia, to approve the final escrow release in the amount of \$2,070,092.00, and to authorize the Township Manager to execute the Certificate of Completion releasing the balance of the Lochiel Farm escrow account, pending the re-stripping of crosswalks and stop bars and that letters be sent to all home owners that future sinkhole repairs will be the responsibility of the Lochiel Farm HOA. Mr. Dunn called for public comment, and there were none. The motion was unanimously approved.

**3. Authorization for Local Share Account Grant Applications**

Ms. Gural-Bear explained that the Race Horse Development and Gaming Act provides for the distribution of gaming revenues to support projects in the public interest. Staff would like to submit applications for the following five shovel-ready projects:

- Pickleball, tennis and basketball courts at Exton Park;
- A ground mount solar array at the new Public Works Facility;
- A roof mount solar array at Boot Road House;

- Grubbs Mill Pump Station; and
- Clover Mill Pump Station force main air release valves.

Ms. Gural-Bear said the applications are due by the end of November, and neither the amount of the funding nor the competition is known at this time.

Mr. Kumbhardare made a motion, seconded by Ms. Santalucia, to approve Resolution 2023-43 authorizing the Township Manager to execute the Department of Community and Economic Development LSA Grant Applications for:

- Pickleball, tennis and basketball courts at Exton Park (Resolution 2023-44);
- A ground mount solar array at the new Public Works Facility (Resolution 2023-45);
- A roof mount solar array at Boot Road House (Resolution 2023-46);
- Grubbs Mill Pump Station (Resolution 2023-47);
- Clover Mill Pump Station force main air release valves (Resolution 2023-48).

Mr. Dunn called for public comment, and there were none. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **4. 2024 Budget Discussion:**

Ms. Partridge provided a recap of the proposed tax increase. The 2 mill tax rate will result in the average real estate tax bill increasing from \$127 to \$354 per year. The Township has not had a tax increase since the Open Space Referendum in the late 1980's. The increase for fire hydrants six years ago was not a tax increase as it affected property owners differently with some experiencing a decrease as a smoothing method was used. Residents will be notified of the proposed increase via the various social media outlets as well as the upcoming Township Newsletter.

##### **a. Friends of the Park Budget – Recreation and Events**

In attendance from the Friends of the Park (FOP) were President Lori McDermott, Treasurer Marguerite Dube, and Vice-Chair Janice Gottesfeld.

Ms. McDermott reviewed the various events that FOP sponsored this year. Highlights include the Summer Concert Series, Egg Hunt, Holiday Lights Contest, Holiday Tree Lighting, and two Crafts Fairs. FOP also partnered with Chester County and the Township to bring another successful Community Day to Exton Park. A \$15,000 donation was made toward the Disc Golf Course and additional money was raised by the addition of six new corporate sponsorships (Gold Sponsors, \$1,000 each). An additional \$3,000 was received from the Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and various vendor fees.

The two biggest expenses are the Concert Series and Community Day. It is expected that revenue will exceed expenses this year by \$10,000. FOP anticipates committing \$15,000 from its fund balance to the Parks this year and asked for ideas on how best to use this donation. Mr. Kumbhardare suggested benches along the trails in Exton Park. Purchase of a memorial bench or Adirondack chair is planned in memory of Alice Choper.

Ally Brandt then reviewed proposed Parks programs for the upcoming year. Proposed programs include:

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- Learning sessions for disc golf and pickleball
- Phillies baseball Camp the week of June 17, 2024;
- Nature based programs include a turtle walk and an Introduction to Birding session;
- Kids programs include Story Walks and participation in Longwood Gardens Community Read; and
- A wreath making session to be held at Boot Road Park House.

Sustainability programs include a composting workshop, no sew reusable bag, clothing swap, PECO home energy workshop, native plant sale, educational workshops on stormwater, and a Sustainable Ranger Camp for kids.

Mr. Kumbhardare noted that the proposed programs are a good starting point, and that perhaps summer camps can be added in the future.

### **b. Administration**

Ms. Keller presented the Administration budget noting a 6.4% decrease over last year due to a reduction in projected overtime and office supplies. Administration is responsible for IT (information technology), Human Resources, Public Information, Capital & Special Projects, Solid Waste, and Technology. This year the Administration Department successfully hired 12 new employees, maximized usage of existing software systems, broke ground on the new Public Works facility, and the soon-to-be opened Ship Road Couplet. In addition, the Work Safety Committee received certification status from the Department of Labor & Industry and also received a Certificate of Recognition from the Delaware Valley Worker's Trust for being in the top 10% of municipalities with the lowest number of incidents/accidents in the workplace. The goal for 2024 is to continue to build community relationships fulfilling the slogan "Good Government for a Great Community".

Ms. Pusey gave an overview of Public Information, the goal of which is proactive public outreach to better inform and engage the community. This year social media subscribers increased 41.7% for Constant Contact, 10% for Next Door, and 14.4% for Facebook. The typical standard open rate for e-news communications is 15-20%, but the Township's e-news open rate is 55%, up 10% over the past few years. The Township's mediums allow for communication both ways – disseminate and receive. A Sustainability Survey will be launched this year to gather feedback from residents and businesses regarding a possible ordinance for single-use plastic bags. The Township will continue to work with the American Red Cross to host Blood Drives, will work with elected officials for shredding events and the Senior Fair, and will partner with the Exton Chamber of Commerce to host Business Forums. The Township's website will undergo a redesign next year, and work will continue on creating an historic time line of the Township for display in the Township building.

### **c. Finance**

Ms. Partridge advised that the Finance Department consists of four full time and one part time employee. The Department continues to work with all other Township departments to present fiscal reporting and budget. Finance continually monitors the income and expense

budgets as well as the investment portfolio and will continue work on a procedures manual to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements.

#### **d. Technology**

A 5-year plan for technology by department was reviewed. No new expenditures are planned for 2024, but the transition from Cassel to Munis and TRACR to ESRI GIS took longer than expected so will extend 3 months into the new year. Multi-factor authorizations are being implemented. CPU units are on a 5-year rotation schedule. Ms. Gural-Bear noted there will be an annual maintenance fee for the 9 new cameras used for license plate readers.

Ms. Keller showed an example of the Work Order Ticketing System created on SharePoint for the Public Works Department. Staff will be able to add mapping to the system next year when ESRI links to SharePoint.

Mr. Culp advised that the use of SCADA has reduced the Public Works overtime budget as employees are no longer needed to work weekends to monitor the pump stations.

#### **e. Debt Service**

Ms. Partridge advised that there are two pieces of debt: 2020 Bond which terminates in 2034, the proceeds of which will go toward the Public Works Facility; and a 2021 Bank Note that terminates in 2029. The interest rate on the debt is very low at about 1%. Overall Debt Service remains flat for 2024.

### **5. Approval of Township Payment Report for November 8, 2023**

Staff provided answers to Board members' questions.

Mr. Kumbhardare made a motion, seconded by Ms. Santalucia, to approve the Township Payment Report for November 8, 2023. Mr. Dunn called for public comment, and there were none. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **6. Township Commission Updates from Board Liaisons**

Ms. Santalucia announced the 5K Shuffle at Main Street at Exton this Saturday with the Craft Fair immediately following at 10:00 a.m. Other upcoming FOP events include the Holiday Lights Contest and the Holiday Tree Lighting on December 6. Santa is scheduled to arrive in a fire truck with his elves following in antique cars.

Mr. Kumbhardare reported that the Planning Commission issued a motion for Mary C. Howse Elementary School to remove a modular classroom and construct two additions. Responding to stormwater concerns from neighbors, the Applicant investigated options but could not construct a retention basin over the 60-year old on lot septic system that the School uses. The Applicant was encouraged to investigate the possibility of connecting to public sewer. The Planning Commission also reviewed a 4-lot subdivision plan at 1430 Grove Avenue with one lot

to accommodate an existing home, two building lots, and one smaller lot to be conveyed to the adjoining property owner.

Mr. Dunn advised that Ally Brandt and Wyatt Williams gave presentations to the Public Services Commission on proposed parks and sustainability projects for 2024. Also an update on the Ship Road Couplet and the Clover Mill Pump Station project was given.

## **7. Staff Updates**

Ms. Gural-Bear said the Township has partnered with the Exton Chamber of Commerce to schedule a Business Forum on December 7 at 8:30 a.m. with a presentation to be provided by Chester County Solid Waste.

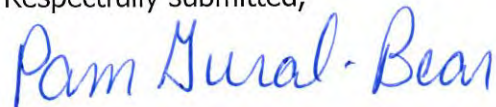
Mr. Culp reported that the parts are in for the LED sign at the Township building, and November 17 has been set as the projected operation date.

Mr. Smiley provided an update on the opening of the Ship Road Couplet. Due to issues with the traffic signals, the Couplet was not able to open to the public on Tuesday as planned, but it is hoped that the work can be completed in time to open this Friday. Ms. Gural-Bear expressed concern with a Friday opening when Staff will not be available to answer residents' questions over the weekend. The Board will discuss the matter further before finalizing an opening date.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pam Gural-Bear  
Recording Secretary