

**PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP
WORKSHOP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
MARCH 28, 2019**

The workshop monthly meeting of the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, March 28, 2019 at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building, 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064.

Chairman, Randy Heard, called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

ROLL CALL:

The following Supervisors answered roll call: Chairman, Randy Heard, Vice Chairman, Glenn Borger, Joyce Lambert, Jane Mellert, and Stephen Hurni.

Also present were Administrative Assistant, Paige Stefanelli and Township Manager, Thomas Petrucci.

I. TOWNSHIP MANAGER–THOMAS PETRUCCI:

1. Northern Tier Trail Connection Discussion with Bryan Cope, Northampton County Parks Superintendent:

Chairman, Randy Heard, stated that the purpose for tonight’s meeting is to review the various options for the connection of the Northern Tier Trail. Any current pending Land Development Plan reviews including Synagro will not be discussed due to the fact that the applicant is not present.

Mr. Bryan Cope was in attendance from Northampton County. Mr. Cope introduced the proposed Northern Tier Trail. He noted that a feasibility study was also conducted. There are six (6) major regional trail systems which will assist in a higher volume of tourism and a rise in economic development. Of those systems, one of them is the Appalachian Trail. Mr. Cope presented multiple maps to show the aerial view of the proposed trail. The Northern Tier trail runs across the upper portion of Plainfield Township. He added that the primary objective is to have a 35 mile trail extending from the Lehigh River to the Delaware River. This trail would promote economic development and outdoor recreation. This trail has the opportunity to bring a larger interest and flow from individuals on small business development.

Mr. Cope reviewed the 5 largest trends of outdoor activities in the area which included fishing, birdwatching, sightseeing, farmers markets, and hiking, etc. He added that the list hosts many new opportunities for our area. Outdoor activities are more popular now than before. Mr. Cope also looked into open space economics and there may be some great

incentives for the Lehigh Valley area. Mr. Cope stated that these trails have the ability to create over 60 million in extra funds each year.

Mr. Cope stated that there are seven (7) different destination segments. Segments four (4) and five (5) are the segments involving Plainfield Township. On 8th Street, there is a property with approximately 8 acres that Northampton County is intending to purchase.

The Northern Tier Trail plan was recently adopted by Northampton County Council. The County is looking to connect the trail to Weona Park, Wind Gap Community Park and through Plainfield Township. Possibilities between Waste Management and the County regarding an easement through Waste Management's land or a "land swap" have previously been discussed.

Mr. Cope noted that the teal colored strip on the map in the slideshow is the current easement line which is between Plainfield Township and Waste Management. Waste Management would then provide the Township with the darker green line area for the trail instead of the teal colored line. There is a possibility of a "trail swap" or "land swap" between the Township and Waste Management in order to accomplish a trail connection.

There were many issues brought up by residents in attendance of the various options of trail connections. Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, noted that this is an informational session only and no determinations/votes are being made by the Board at this point in time. To date, the Board of Supervisors has not seen the proposed trail connection opportunities. He added that during the initial Northern Tier Trail connection process, it was discussed by multiple communities of their need to have trail connections from Wind Gap Borough and Pen Argyl Borough through Plainfield Township. Considering the multiple options for connections, there is some flexibility on how to finalize the connection. Mr. Bryan Cope stated that the upcoming steps in the trail connection will not be driven by Northampton County. This project will be locally driven in order to have the connections finalized.

Residents of Plainfield Township in attendance expressed their comments and noted that the teal colored strip on the map which is the current easement between the Township and Waste Management is the most scenic route for the trail connection to be placed and is cosmetically appealing trail area. Resident, Millie Beahn, stated concerns with the easement and that it is not the final say as Waste Management does not own that section of land. She added that this easement was supposed to be a temporary ownership only.

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, proposed forming a committee to evaluate all possible options for the trail connection. A meeting could then be held with other committees from other municipalities in order to obtain a good starting point. At that point, each municipality will work out what they will be responsible for. Overall, the Board is in

agreement of connecting the trails, however, the way in which the trail is connection is a major deal and has yet to be finalized.

Mr. Bryan Cope finalized the presentation. He showed various pictures of what the trail connection has the possibility of looking like and the activity taking place in the area of the crosswalks/trail. The next steps for Mr. Cope would be to hold a presentation with Wind Gap Borough. Mr. Cope met with Pen Argyl Borough prior to meeting with Plainfield Township. A Multi-Municipal Agreement would be needed as well in order to finalize the proposed route, complete the design engineering and permit processes, obtain grants and funding, and begin to construct the connecting portions of the trail.

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, noted that the committee would be exploratory only. Resident, Millie Beahn, questioned if the Township would be able to have something in writing so that way the intention of the trail connection and any other details regarding such is clearly written. Mr. Cope indicated to Mr. Petrucci that he can provide examples of a Multi-Municipal Agreement. Mr. Cope is only looking to implement the plan. He added that there will be items to discuss that the feasibility study did not address. The main purpose of having a committee to iron out these issues that have yet to be addressed.

2. Zoning Ordinance and Appeal Discussion:

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, stated there was a recent Zoning Hearing that took place which the applicant was denied for a warehouse at a height of 50 feet. That decision by the Zoning Hearing Board was appealed by the applicant. Since then, there was another submission which the applicant proposed a 49.5 foot warehouse along with a modified plan. The final vote on this matter was an approval for a 46.5 foot building with modified staircases. The final vote was 3-2 after 4 hours of deliberation.

Chairman, Randy Heard, noted that the issue is that the Zoning Ordinance does not allow developers to build a structure over 35 feet. After Mr. Petrucci spoke with Mr. Joe Correia for the most recent warehouse submission located at 550 Male Road, warehouses could not be built with a maximum of 35 feet since this type of building would not be marketable. Additionally, there are ladders up the side walls of the structure externally which are for the fire companies to fight fires. Ladder trucks cost over a million dollars and cannot be financially attainable at this time by the fire department. These ladders assist the fire department in the event of the fire without the need of a ladder truck.

Mr. Petrucci questioned the Board on whether they feel as though the Zoning Ordinance is obsolete.

Supervisor, Jane Mellert, questioned about possible fire sprinkler requirements in large commercial buildings such as warehouses. Mr. Petrucci stated that sprinkler systems are in fact required by the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) for commercial buildings.

Supervisor, Joyce Lambert, stated that she feels the Zoning Ordinance is obsolete at this point as there are many issues within the existing ordinance. She noted that the Township should evaluate what neighboring municipalities have in terms of regulations for warehouses and other zoning issues and rewrite Plainfield Township's Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Mellert noted to be cautious on assigning the same height maximum for warehouses within all Zoning Districts within Plainfield Township as warehouses will not be ideal for all Township areas.

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, questioned the Board on whether they would like to move forward on appealing the decision of the Zoning Hearing Board. The Board would like to consult with Solicitor Backenstoe prior to any further action. Mr. Petrucci will discuss the matter with Solicitor Backenstoe and will report back to the Board. Additionally, he will research contemporary warehouse standards in adjoining/alike municipalities.

CITIZEN'S AGENDA/NON-AGENDA:

There were no residents to be heard at this time, as the concerns of residents were voiced throughout the meeting.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REPORTS:

1. *Glenn Borger, Vice Chairman*- No Report
2. *Joyce Lambert*- No Report
3. *Jane Mellert*- No Report
4. *Stephen Hurni*- No Report
5. *Randy Heard, Chairman*- No Report

SOLICITOR'S REPORT- DAVID BACKENSTOE, ESQUIRE:

The Solicitor's items were addressed earlier in the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, motion was made by Glenn Borger and seconded by Chairman, Randy Heard, to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved. Vote 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Petrucci, Township Manager/Secretary
Plainfield Township
Board of Supervisors

These minutes were prepared with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant of the Township, Paige Stefanelli, under the direction of the Township Manager/Secretary.