

**PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WORKSHOP MEETING  
January 25th, 2018**

The workshop monthly meeting of the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building, 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064.

Chairman, Randy Heard, called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

**ROLL CALL:**

The following Supervisors answered roll call: Chairman, Randy Heard, Vice Chairman, Glenn Borger, and Jane Mellert. Supervisors Joyce Lambert and Stephen Hurni were not in attendance.

Also present was Township Manager, Thomas Petrucci.

**I. TOWNSHIP MANAGER–THOMAS PETRUCCI:**

1. Official Map General Discussion:

Plainfield Township has been looking into adopting an Official Map of the Township for the past few years. Neighboring municipality Bushkill Township has already adopted an Official Map, which is used to ensure that all natural resources (including watercourses and woodlands) with high priority are identified and protected from future development. The Official Map would provide for both a map and an accompanying Land Use Ordinance for Plainfield Township.

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, recommended to the Board of Supervisors that the Township pursue a grant from the Lehigh Valley's Mini-Grant Program in order to hire a consultant to assist the Township on identifying the specific areas targeted for high priority in terms of conservation and protection. Mr. Petrucci also recommended that the Board utilize the services of the Township's current Environmental Consultant, Jason Smith, in order to assist with this process. A series of public meetings will take place in order to gain input from the residents and members of the community at large. If a subdivision or land development application is submitted at the Township and the proposal contains an area of land that is slated for protection under the purview of the Official Map, the new regulations would require the developer/owner to postpone any land development for one calendar year. During this time period, the Township has the following options 1). to negotiate with the landowner to place conservation easements on the land to be protected 2). to forego any type of protections at the discretion of the Township 3). purchase the land via the eminent domain process (which is typically seen

as a last resort, as per the case studies of other communities that have adopted Official Maps already).

In reference to protected areas, Township resident, Wanda Gruber, questioned whether the Township could deny Synagro from constructing a land development next to Grand Central Sanitary Landfill under the auspice of an Official Map. Mr. Petrucci noted that the Township would need to identify land or natural resources that are imperative to protect in that area. He postulated that it would be very difficult for the Township to identify high-priority conservation areas for that specific site considering there is already a landfill directly next to the proposed area.

Mr. Petrucci added that under new regulations by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with the Pollutant Reduction Plan, there is a cost associated with the actions that the Township is now required to take to mitigate sedimentation load. It is essential to protect the natural resources that the Township already has in place in order to help keep the cost of reducing the sedimentation load of the Township in the future at a minimum.

With the new Land Use Ordinance, the owner/developer would be required to postpone any subdivision or land development application submission for one year. Some of the Board members expressed concern of having a full year of reviewing the plans to ensure proper protection of specific areas within the Township. Supervisor, Jane Mellert, noted that there are already regulations put in place for Plainfield Township in order to protect certain areas. The Official Map can be a good tool for future use if accomplished in a reasonable manner. The Board members present at the meeting were generally supportive of a new Official Map for Plainfield Township, with the caveat that the Official Map should not be overly cumbersome across the Township.

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, also noted that the future land of Plainfield Township will not always be farmed. It is important to keep maintenance plans in place in order to keep up with vegetation and woodlands in the Township. There is an option to dedicate recreation land open to the public residents of the development which is required to be deemed appropriate by the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Petrucci is concerned to whether land owners preserve their land under Plainfield Township's Ordinance where it is an agricultural/conservation easement, but then the land is not being farmed because of the result of cutting off other farming areas because of subdivisions. Such land can be dedicated in the current Ordinance, however, detail on how to go through with this process is lacking. There are many scenarios that are possible to transpire in reference to the current Ordinance with property owners within the Township.

Timber Harvesting was also discussed at the meeting. Plainfield Township currently has a Timber Harvesting Ordinance in place, however there are some gray areas within the Ordinance that should be addressed and reevaluated for a more clear understanding. Jane Mellert announced that a meeting was held on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with Brooks Mountcastle from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Ann Hutchinson from Natural Lands, Terry Kleintop from the Environmental Advisory Council, and herself, Tom

Petrucci and Jane Mellert representing the Township/Board of Supervisors. Many potential changes and tips were provided to Township officials. The separation of Woodland Preservation and Timber Harvesting should be present within the Township's Ordinance, however both matters are currently incorporated together which should be changed. Many regulations within the Ordinance are replicated in multiple sections which makes the overall understanding of the matter very unclear. Simplicity and clarity is needed in order to ensure proper regulation and protection of trees, vegetation and woodlands within the Township. Many of the changes that were proposed are more user friendly, in the opinion of Supervisor Mellert.

Mud Run Road was also discussed in terms of a traffic study. Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, stated that he did a study for two hours during rush hour just before Thanksgiving of 2017. The findings of Mr. Petrucci's analysis did not indicate a heavy flow of traffic. There were not a high volume of vehicles that were observed, and it is his recommendation that the Township should endeavor to undergo stop-gap maintenance measures with respect to the road surface. It would be difficult to reconcile spending a large sum of money on the road due to the low number of vehicles that utilize the road on a daily basis.

2. Low Volume Roads Program- Grant Application- Grand Central Road Bridge Replacement- Due 2.2.2018:

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, followed up with the Commonwealth Financing Authority and DCED. The Low Volume Roads Grant Program and the DCED Multi-Modal Transportation Fund Grant Programs are not compatible in terms of local matching funds, because they are grant fund sources derived from Act 89 funds. Plainfield Township has received a grant in the amount of \$203,143.00 through the DCED Multi-Modal Transportation Fund. The Township will be working with the Conservation District for additional grant funding through the Low Volume Roads Grant Program if it makes sense within the overall scope of the grant awards. Approximately \$60,000.00 to \$100,000.00 will be taken from local funds in order to complete the scope of work for the Grand Central Road Bridge Replacement Project. The Township currently has a \$50,000.00 grant from Northampton County along with the grant from the Multimodal DCED Program in the amount of \$203,000.00 totaling \$253,000.00. Additionally, the Township is waiting for approval of its General Permit-11 from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

**CITIZEN'S AGENDA/NON-AGENDA:**

1. **Wanda Gruber-** Mrs. Gruber stated that a local farm had recently taken down woodlands where an older farm many years ago was located. She noted that this was cleared out to create more land to farm but the damage to the land seems to be significant. The woodlands are no longer preserved. Structures were also taken down. Township Manager

Petrucci asked whether this farm was in Plainfield Township, and Mrs. Gruber responded that the farm was not in Plainfield Township.

Chairman, Randy Heard, expressed concern with this type of action taking place within Plainfield Township as well. Mr. Heard noted that areas for wildlife are diminishing.

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REPORTS:**

1. ***Glenn Borger, Vice Chairman-*** No Report
2. ***Joyce Lambert-*** Did not attend
3. ***Jane Mellert-*** Ms. Mellert asked Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, to address the meeting that happened in Bangor Borough on January 24, 2018. Mr. Petrucci spoke to the Bangor Borough Manager. The Bangor Borough Authority and the COG entered into a Lease Agreement to house animals on property that belongs to the Bangor Authority. The occupants have yet to retain the necessary permits from Labor and Industry and have not gone through the complete process with Washington Township in order to occupy the building. The building also lacks electricity which can be easily rectified. There is no heat in the building currently but it was noted at that meeting that there will be some type of donation in the future to use towards a new HVAC system. The things that need to be done will take the course of a few months; although, these items were apparently supposed to be addressed and completed before occupancy of the building, as per the terms of the Lease Agreement. Bangor Borough is stating that there is a violation of the Lease Agreement based on these findings. A relocation of the animals currently occupying the structure will need to be done as soon as possible. Plainfield Township is unable to assist the Borough with the relocation of the animals because the Township no longer holds a valid kennel license to store the animals.
4. ***Stephen Hurni-*** Did not attend
5. ***Randy Heard, Chairman-*** No Report

**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 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 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 Gerstenberg, under the direction of the Township Manager/Secretary.*