

**Towamencin Township
Board of Supervisors
Monthly Meeting
February 14, 2024
7:00 PM**

Present:

H. Charles Wilson III, Chairman
Laura Smith, Vice Chair
Joyce F. Snyder, Secretary
Kristin Warner, Treasurer
Kofi Osei, Asst. Treasurer/Asst. Secretary

Staff:

David G. Kraynik, Township Manager
Robert J. Iannozzi, Jr., Esq., Township Solicitor
Mary Stover, Township Engineer
Niral Modi, IT Director
Timothy Troxel, Chief of Police

Present Remotely:

Colleen Ehrle, Director of Administration

Absent:

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Comments

- This Board meeting is provided live via Zoom for residents, who are unable to attend in person but wish to view and hear the meeting remotely. Public comments submitted by 4:30 pm on the day of the meeting will be read at the start of the meeting. For those physically present, public comment will be held at the beginning of the meeting.
- StandGuard Aquatics is running a sale with 15% discounts on Towamencin 2024 pool memberships through Sunday, February 18th. Prices will increase on Monday, February 19th. To review pricing and to purchase memberships, check the Township's Facebook page and our website's pool page.
- Staff from the Montgomery County-Norristown Public Library will return on Wednesday, February 28, at 11:30 am, to provide their next story time for preschoolers in the Meeting Hall. Stay tuned for monthly programming by visiting our website and Facebook page.

- A reminder to residents to come up to a microphone, when prompted for questions, as Zoom does not pick up voices from the audience.

Public Comments – Emailed/mailed submissions:

Resident Tina Gallagher thanked the Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee, especially Joe Meehan, for not advancing a concept plan to add parking and pickleball at Fischer’s Park. She noted the park is in a fragile flood plain. Both residents and non-residents enjoy the park for its natural habitat and beauty, and she feels any development considerations should be carefully and thoroughly explored with all stakeholders.

In-Person Comments

Resident Joe Silverman stated we are here for another BOS meeting, and asked what has changed in reference to the Home Rule Charter that took effect July 1, 2023, and recited a quote by Douglas MacArthur, “you will be remembered by the laws you break.”

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Supervisor Warner, seconded by Supervisor Osei, the Board approved the January 24th meeting minutes.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development

Consider Escrow Release #1 - Wambold Realty - Phase 2

In accordance with the provisions of the Land Development and Construction Escrow Agreement, the Township Engineer reviewed the developer’s request for a reduction in financial security posted for the project’s public/site improvements and confirmed that items noted within the reduction request have been satisfactorily completed by the developer. The development is located on the easterly side of Wambold Road, between Fretz and Schoolhouse Roads; and includes seven (7) new self-storage buildings and associated public/site improvements. The Township Engineer prepared a Certificate of Completion #1 in the amount of \$699,885.29 for the associated escrow status report update and recommends approving the escrow release to the developer.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Snyder, the Board approved Certificate of Completion #1 and the escrow release of \$699,885.29.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A

Absent: N/A

Consider Escrow Release #4 - Kessler Dental

In accordance with the provisions of the Land Development and Construction Escrow Agreement, the Township Engineer reviewed the developer's request for a reduction in the amount of financial security posted for the associated project's public/site improvements and confirmed that items noted within the reduction request have been satisfactorily completed by the developer. The Township Engineer prepared a Certificate of Completion #4 in the amount of \$28,732.00 for the associated Escrow Status Report Update and recommends approving the escrow release.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Warner, the Board approved Certificate of Completion #4 and the escrow release of \$28,732.00.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Consider Release of Maintenance Bonds - Towamencin Town Square Stage II-A, Phase 1 & Phase 2

In 2018, the Township Engineer verified all items listed in associated maintenance bond inspection punch list reports relating to public improvements constructed in conjunction with the following land developments were completed and found the developer had satisfied all obligations under the 18-month maintenance bonds. The developments include:

- Stage II-A, Phase 1 (Marriott Hotel)
- Stage II-A, Phase 2 (Culinary School) land development

The amounts to be released are \$27,037.42 and \$5,674.65, respectively. While the status reports of the maintenance bonds were reviewed with the Board, the releases were not formally approved.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Snyder, the Board approved the corresponding maintenance bonds release for both phases.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Old Business

None

New Business

Gateway Landscape/Signage Improvements at I-476 Interchange Presentation

Over the last few years, the Public Works Committee has discussed adding beautification elements to the gateway of Towamencin via the property located at the intersection of Sumneystown Pike and the I-476 Interchange. The improvements would include landscaping and signage that would announce “you are in Towamencin Township,” be memorable, be durable, be visible day or night and still be reasonable to maintain. Peter Simone, from Simone Collins, presented the design concept.

Supervisor Snyder referenced the funding would come from an art fund, and questioned if the proposed concept would be considered art. Supervisor Smith clarified the art interpretation, adding it was simply meant for signage in front of the Village District. Mr. Simone offered the Board would have discretion on what art to approve.

Supervisor Warner asked if the Township was resigned to the mounds remaining permanently, asking if anything can be done to modify them, such as create a berm. Supervisor Smith responded that every effort was made with various government entities, adding the Turnpike Commission controls the property and the Township can’t do anything other than try to dress them up.

Supervisor Osei commented he is not against this idea but did not want to advertise an entrance to Towamencin until the Village development is complete.

Supervisor Warner asked in addition to the sign, could landscaping be added to the area. She would like it to incorporate the natural attributes that contribute to the Township’s attractiveness. Supervisor Wilson asked if the Township would need permission from the Turnpike Commission to add trees. Mr. Simone and Mr. Dixson noted once a decision has been made on how to proceed, a design concept would be presented to the Commission for approval, which is a lengthy process.

Chairman Wilson asked the Township Manager’s opinion on what group or person would be the appropriate party to move this forward. Mr. Kraynik noted design feedback from the Planning Commission would be appropriate. Mr. Simone suggested, due to the length of time that has passed, obtaining updated pricing from sign companies should be considered. He also suggested the Township consider presenting the concern that the Township’s aesthetics were significantly damaged and/or affected by the Commission’s decision to create and leave the large mounds at the Township entrance. The Board agreed this was an excellent suggestion.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Snyder, the Board approved authorizing staff and Township consultants to obtain pricing and concept plans to determine feasibility prior to proceeding with the project.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Resident Joe Silverman asked who would be responsible to power the sign and offered using solar power or other means, rather than PECO.

Resident Matt Chartrand acknowledged he sits on both the Planning Commission and Economic Development Committee, but his comments were offered as a resident. He agrees the large mounds are ugly but felt slapping a sign on them may not be the answer. He encouraged conversations to continue, rather than just deciding to move forward because nothing has happened. He does not feel a sign of this proportion will represent the Township well.

Resident Joe Meehan commented that the mounds are a punch in the face to the Township by the Turnpike Commission, adding the Township should not give up requesting their removal. He asked if the sign concept represents what we want to tell people, proposing Welcome to Towamencin. He suggested old plans be reviewed to determine if trees existed in the area prior to the mounds.

Traffic Engineer Report

Towamencin’s Traffic Engineer Chad Dixson provided updates on various transportation projects within the Township. He highlighted the Welsh/Orvilla Roads improvement project; Old Forty Foot Road/Old Dutch Way to Camelot Way PennDOT additional low-cost safety improvements; and inquiries regarding safe pedestrian crossing on Bustard and Rittenhouse Roads.

Supervisor Smith asked if a 2026 completion timeline could be expected for the Welsh/Orvilla project. Mr. Dixson agreed.

Chairman Wilson asked if the stop bar on Rittenhouse Road would be moved as part of PennDOT’s low-cost improvement. Mr. Dixson said no, but that would be for the Township to review. Supervisor Warner asked if there were any statistics on low-cost traffic signage additions and their impact on improving traffic conditions. Mr. Dixson noted PennDOT has not made crash data available, and it could take time.

Supervisor Snyder asked if it was known how long people are waiting to approach the slip ramp. Mr. Dixson has not personally timed it, but knows it is considerable delay, lasting several signal cycles. She asked about concerns of drivers cutting over, and what could correct the issue. Mr. Dixson reviewed the options being considered. Supervisor Warner commented that she feels Mainland Road is used to avoid the traffic. Chairman Wilson recommended Mr. Dixson press PennDOT on adding the additional eastbound lane. Supervisor Smith asked about coordinating a meeting be scheduled between the Township and local State Representatives to review the traffic issue and work together to assist resolving the traffic issue. Chairman Wilson asked if data has been made available for 309 Connector traffic changes, Mr. Dixson stated he would need to further review the data.

Resident Joe Silverman commented that another lane should be added to Sumneytown Pike eastbound, cutting into the Mainland hillside, to account for needed width for the additional lane.

Consider Green Light-Go Grant Submission & Funding Commitment

Last November, the Township Traffic Engineer received Board authorization to prepare preliminary cost estimates for the Green Light-Go Grant and future grant applications. The grant application is due at the end of February. The Township plans to submit an application to upgrade the traffic signal equipment at ten (10) intersections and upgrade the existing traffic signal system for the Sumneytown Pike, Forty Foot Road and Bustard Road corridors. The total project cost is \$388,150. The funding request for this grant application is \$310,520, with a required match in the amount of \$77,630.

On a motion by Supervisor Warner, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board authorized the Green Light-Go grant submission by Township staff, and approve funding commitment letter noting the estimated cost and local match.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Authorization to Advertise: 2024 Road Paving Program

Bid documents are being prepared for a contract associated with the Township's annual repaving program. This year there are 8 streets scheduled for milling and paving. Bids are expected to be released in the spring with paving scheduled during the summer months to reduce conflicts with traffic and school buses. The curb ramps for these roads were upgraded in 2023. The amount budgeted for 2024 paving and ADA ramps is \$875,000 in Liquid Fuel Funds and General Capital Funds. Roads scheduled for 2024 paving include: Valley View Way, Creek way, Squire Way, Spring Valley Road, Spring Meadow Lane, Knollbrook Drive, Sunny Ayre Way, and Morris Road.

Supervisor Osei asked how much of the total amount is Liquid Fuels. Mr. Kraynik offered approximately \$575,000.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Warner, the Board authorized the bid release.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Grant Preparation Services Proposal - Grist Mill Detention Basin Conversions

At the January 10th meeting, the Board approved a proposal for engineering services for the Township Engineer to prepare design plans, construction specifications, regulatory agency permits applications, bidding documents and bid administration services for a future MS4 project to convert two stormwater basins in the Grist Mill Neighborhood to "dry extended detention basins." The project's estimated cost is \$200,000. The proposal cost to prepare the two grant applications

is \$ 5,750. At the recent meeting of the Skippack Creek Watershed Alliance, two grant opportunities were identified and discussed to help fund this project - the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund (SRRF), and the Watershed Restoration and Protection Program (WRPP). The Schuylkill River Restoration Fund has an application deadline of March 14th, with a maximum grant award of \$100,000, with a 25% match. The Watershed Restoration and Protection Program grant application is due by May 31st, with a maximum grant award of \$300,000 and a 15% match.

On a motion by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board authorized approving grant preparation services proposal.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Pool Snack Stand Roof Replacement Proposal

In January, while conducting other maintenance, Township staff discovered significant roof damage to the snack stand building located within the Township's pool facility. A proposal to replace the asphalt shingled roof and damaged plywood was received by Borowski Home Improvements, Inc. for \$9,580.

Supervisor Snyder asked if more than one bid was obtained. Chairman Wilson replied this was beneath the bid requirement threshold. Mr. Kraynik added the contractor had previously been used at the pool site.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Osei, the Board approved the pool snack stand roof replacement proposal.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Request Field Rental Use/Flat Fee (Bustard Park field) Senior Softball League

A senior softball league has been renting a field (B3) at Bustard Park the last several years on Monday and Wednesday mornings weekly from spring through fall. The group is requesting to rent the field for two mornings a week. In addition, they are requesting to rent the field one Friday morning each month. The use would occur between April 1st through November 30, 2024. They are requesting to keep the same fee paid in 2023, which is a flat rental rate of \$400. TYA officials have confirmed there are no major programming conflicts with this request.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Warner, the Board approved the field rental request.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Volunteer Committee Appointments

Residents have submitted applications expressing their interest in serving on the Township's various volunteer committees. The Board considers these volunteer committee appointment requests:

- Veterans Advisory Committee, term expiring 12/31/26 - Rich Marino

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Warner, the Board approved the Volunteer Committee Appointment.

Supervisor Osei referenced an informal policy of not appointing Supervisors to committees, adding there is not an insignificant number of residents, including at least one Supervisor, that feel Rich will be a supervisor in a few months. While acknowledging Rich would be a great addition to the Committee, and is looking forward to the completion of Veterans Park, due to the informal policy, he would be voting no.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce Snyder, Kristin Warner
Voting No: Kofi Osei
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Additional Business

Supervisor Osei motioned to authorize staff to prepare an ordinance to terminate the sewer sale and to place it on the next agenda. The motion did not carry with a 2:3 vote.

Voting Yes: Joyce Snyder, Kofi Osei
Voting No: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Kristin Warner
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Supervisor Smith wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day. Supervisor Snyder praised the Public Works and the Police Department for their efforts during the surprise snowstorm.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Ehrle
Director of Administration