

**Towamencin Township
Board of Supervisors
Work Session
May 12, 2021
7:30 PM**

Present:

H. Charles Wilson III, Chairman
Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Vice Chairman
Daniel Bell, Treasurer
Richard Marino, Secretary
Laura Smith, Asst. Treasurer/Asst. Secretary

Staff:

Robert A. Ford, Township Manager
Brooke Neve, Finance Director/Assistant Township Manager
Jack Dooley, Esq., Township Solicitor
Tom Zarko, Township Engineer
Niral Modi, IT Staff
Timothy Troxel, Chief of Police

Present Remotely:

Colleen Ehrle, Assistant to Township Manager

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Comments

Chairman Wilson made the following announcements:

- Due to the COVID-19 Emergency, the meeting is being held via Zoom video communications. The public was invited to participate remotely and e-mail questions to info@towamencin.org by 4:30 pm, prior to the meeting.
- The Board met in executive session prior to this evening's meeting to discuss a matter of litigation.
- Both the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue recently announced the income tax filing due date for individuals for the 2020 tax year will be automatically extended from April 15, 2021, to May 17, 2021. For local earned income taxes, the Montgomery County Tax Collection Committee has adopted a policy establishing a limited time amnesty program waiving penalty and interest charges should any individual taxpayer file a final 2020 tax return after April 15, 2021 but on or before May 17, 2021.

Public Comments

Neil Landes, resident of 898 Carriage Way, submitted the following comment:

Please do not sell and privatize our sewer system. There have been a number of articles in The Inquirer on this topic (below is today's); although it does provide the community with an influx of cash, you are essentially guaranteeing a rate increase for everyone. If you need additional funds to support the system, I would much prefer that you just raise the rates a bit, rather than selling to a for-profit monopoly that has no accountability.

Chairman Wilson responded that the Township is working through the process and has not made any decisions to date. Information from bidders will be needed in order to analyze any potential financial impacts to the Township.

Chris Hicks, resident of 100 Finch Run, submitted the following comment:

I am reaching out on behalf of the neighborhood located on Finch Run to submit a comment about the non-mow "meadow area" located at the entrance of the neighborhood. Over the last few years, there have been numerous issues with the overgrown meadow area that has attracted trash, raccoons, snakes, an abundance of mosquitoes, and most recently a tick infestation.

I have experienced all of these issues first hand when the township decided to make this area a non-mow "meadow area" to obtain credits towards the MS4 program. Originally when the area transitioned into a meadow area I was told it would be maintained every quarter to now maintained once a year. My property is directly next to the "meadow area" and I have found countless ticks in my driveway despite having my yard treated for ticks and other insects during the spring time. I am the father of a 3 and 6 year old that have come inside after playing in the backyard on numerous occasions with ticks on their clothing and/or hair. Both of my children have expressed their fears in going out to play because of the ticks in the area. I was also told that the meadow condition per the committee, "would not promote an abundance of ticks" when we all know that ticks along with other wildlife/insects thrive in unkempt natural areas.

Due to COVID-19, we all have fallen on uncertain times with the health and safety of everyone and adding these issues onto the residents of Finch Run is unsettling. Our homes have become our only true safe place and now that is becoming tarnished because of the issues we are all experiencing due to the overgrown area. Many of the neighbors that come around the "meadow area" whether it's walking their pets or going on a walk with their kids have also had issues with finding ticks on themselves or children.

I am not against having "meadow areas" around the township, but it is negligent to have them inside of a residential neighborhood with so many young children. The township is currently only mowing one strip of land near the sidewalk. We are asking for the committee to help with maintaining (mowing and trash upkeep) this area on a weekly basis for the safety and well-being of the neighborhood. I thank you for your time and consideration.

Chairman Wilson asked Township Manager Robert Ford what was the maintenance schedule of the meadow areas. Mr. Ford responded that he understood it to be twice a year, in the spring and fall. Chairman Wilson asked if it would help the situation if mowing setbacks were

adjusted/increased at this location. Mr. Ford said he would check with the Public Works Director and Township Engineer to see if there was an area in the Township to offset the area accounted for if this meadow setback was increased in square yards with possible future maintenance.

Awards & Recognition

Volunteer Recognition: Vaccine Clinic Volunteers - Skippack Pharmacy

The Township acknowledged the incredible work of Skippack Pharmacy’s Fight COVID Task Force Volunteer Community, who have special ties to Towamencin Township with two Township employee serving as core volunteers – Cortney Marengo, our Special Events Facilitator and Bill Gagliano, of our Public Works Department. In addition, Dr. Mayank Amin, owner of Skippack Pharmacy, is a resident of Towamencin.

Skippack Pharmacy “Fight COVID Task Force” has been instrumental in coordinating and facilitating over 35,000 vaccine doses to County residents, with numerous clinics taking place within Towamencin. The Board recognized their dedication and thanked them for their tireless efforts in making the Towamencin Community a safer place to live and work.

Members of Skippack Pharmacy’s COVID Task Force were in the audience and the Board presented commendation to the following: Mayank Amin, Dipun Amin, Bill Gagliano, Stephanie Glover, Christine Jacobson, Isabelle Lawler, Erica Mabry, Cortney Marengo, Keyur Patel, Charlene Prutzer, Mitchel Rotholz, Jennifer Speer-Mondillo and Lindsey Walkoe.

Chairman Wilson also thanked the North Penn School District, who have accommodated some of the largest clinics hosted at North Penn High School, and acknowledged representatives Bob Lanetti, Coordinator of Maintenance and Facilities, and Ed Wosiak, former Towamencin police officer, representing security at North Penn High School.

Dr. Mayank Amin thanked the Board for the recognition and described his fondness of the Towamencin community, as it has been his home for the past 35 years. He referenced the reciprocal assistance between his pharmacy and the Township Police Department when the pandemic first broke out and stressed the significance of such community partnerships. He was especially thankful to his team of volunteers for their dedication and personal sacrifice over the last three months in saving lives and making the community safer.

Approval of Minutes: April 28, 2021

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved the April 28, 2021 minutes.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell, Laura Smith

Voting No: N/A

Abstaining: N/A

Absent: N/A

Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development

Public Hearing: Planet Fitness – Amended Conditional Use (Signage Application)

PSDC/Planet Fitness have made an application to amend their Conditional Use approval to waive or modify requirements regarding signage of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant is proposing to install wall mounted signs that exceed the zoning code allowance of 35 square feet. The applicant is proposing a 65.46 square foot sign on the front facade and a 54.33 square foot sign on the side facade of the building facing Allentown Road.

Chairman Wilson introduced Township Solicitor Jack Dooley, who presented the associated hearing exhibits. Mr. Dooley introduced Carl Weiner, Esq., representing the applicant, who made a presentation to the Board, along with John B. Anderson, P.E. of Cornerstone Consulting. A court reporter was present remotely to make a complete and formal record of the hearing. Solicitor Dooley closed the hearing, noting the Board of Supervisors would render a decision at one of their future meetings.

Supervisor Marino commented that it would be helpful if phasing plans could be submitted along with associated timelines. He asked when the Planet Fitness was opening. Mr. Anderson noted June 14, 2021. Mr. Marino stressed the community interest in adding landscaping to the shopping center and recommended that the majority of planting take place this fall. Mr. Anderson noted he was working out the timing in conjunction with phasing, posting escrows and permits.

Chairman Wilson asked when the developer was expected to return with the Mattress Warehouse and Chipolte plans. Mr. Anderson responded he was waiting on the final signage package for these two sites to provide a more cohesive conditional use submission.

Chairman Wilson noted parking calculations may be a challenge when moving the development along piece-meal and that the whole development should be accounted for when doing so. Mr. Anderson acknowledged this point, noting as each application comes in, they have to prove there is adequate parking with the breakdown of the various uses for the entire site.

Supervisor Marino commented he was at the last Planning Commission meeting and the double building pad presented was not appealing and may present an uphill fight for the developer. Mr. Anderson was appreciative of the Board's comments, as they will help with future submissions.

Old Business

309 Connector - Section HT2- Cowpath Road Detour Plan Update

This issue was initially discussed at the Board's March 24th meeting, which prompted directing the traffic engineer to obtain additional information from PennDOT. Southbound Cowpath Road in Hatfield Township will be closed for approximately three months for construction related to a new intersection that will be created with the 309 Connector road. PennDOT plans to have separate designated detour routes for trucks and passenger vehicles during the closure. The proposed detour route for the passenger vehicles would utilize Allentown and Derstine Road. PennDOT needs the Township's approval to post a detour route on Derstine Road since it is a Township road.

PennDOT representatives recently responded that they would not honor the Township's request to add a permanent left turn signal modification on Derstine Road, when making the left on to Allentown Road.

On a motion by Supervisor Marino, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board declined to allow a posted detour along Derstine Road as proposed by PennDOT.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell, Laura Smith
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Supervisor Bell thanked the community advocates in the Derstine Road area for keeping the Board's attention on the truck issue.

Chairman Wilson noted there is an expectation of increased truck traffic when an alternate detour is implemented and asked Chief Troxel to provide an update on enforcement plans. Chief Troxel explained his traffic force will need to observe the conditions in real time and can not forecast the best enforcement for that scenario. However, he suspects there likely will be more impacts to neighborhood cut through roads if the actual detour is much longer to maneuver than the neighborhood roads.

Chief Troxel noted his department reviews the enforcement continually. Between January and May 12th, there were 82 enforcement efforts, resulting in 29 warnings, 21 citations and 18 MCSAP inspections (Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program). He contined these inspections add significant delays to the truck drivers, as they can range from 30 to 45 minutes a stop. Business owners can be fined, versus the driver, for infractions documented during these inspections. Chief Troxel indicated they are working to make it miserable for the truck drivers in the area. He added this past fall, previous correspondence was sent to local trucking companies outlining the truck ban.

Supervisor Marino referenced a possible suggestion to add a pad to the northwest corner of the intersection as a safer observation point for patrols to take place. Chief Troxel acknowledged the area does present a challenge with limited room to safely stop vehicles, and would forward this suggestion to his department.

Chief described that the truck conditions tend to be hit or miss and are not exclusively a rush hour problem, and that he is limited by a finite number of resources. He suggested possibly utilizing an electronic signage board to help get the message across, but noted finding a safe position in the area is tough. Supervisor Marino noted continuing enforcement is key. Chief Troxel and his patrol team will continue to enforce the area.

Jackie Swanson, of 118 Kimberly Way, commented that more trucks are coming from the Fretz Road direction. She noted there no warning signs along Wambold Road, approaching the Wambold and Fretz Roads intersection, alerting motorists that left turns are not permitted onto Fretz Road.

She also suggested patrol vehicles be tucked away on side roads as motorists are reporting sightings of police vehicle to the Waze app, which may be providing a head-ups to potential truck drivers. Chief Troxel responded he perceived this as a good thing and joked residents in the area should report the patrol vehicles more often to curtail the truck traffic.

Chairman Wilson emphasized since the Township is not allowing the local detour, there will not be a left turn signal onto Allentown Road from Derstine Road, nor a temporary left turn signal onto Derstine Road. He asked traffic engineer Chad Dixon how best to move forward on these proposed improvements.

Mr. Dixon explained PennDOT declined these improvements to add the permanent left turn phases as the traffic warrants were not met for the requested left turn phasing. The warrants are based on traffic volume criteria for two hours a day. He added the overall approaches did not meet these volume thresholds either. Mr. Dixon noted they can continue to monitor the volume at the intersection to assess if it is approaching warrant levels. He added the northbound left phase threshold has been met and could be pursued. Mr. Dixon described another option may be low cost geometric improvements to the intersection, noting the intersection's skewed configuration is problematic. The traffic engineer could prepare traffic concept plan alternatives to the Township.

Supervisor Marino acknowledged that signalization improvements would go a long way versus road widening, noting the Board does not want to increase the size of the road much, as it would invite more traffic. Mr. Marino suggested Mr. Dixon check the signage issue raised by Ms. Swanson along Wambold Road, heading to Fretz Road. Mr. Dixon will review the issue.

New Business

Resolution 21-16: Endorsement of Proposed Enforcement Procedures for Act 101 Violations

Last September, the Northern Montgomery County Recycling Commission distributed proposed regulations regarding violations of the Commonwealth's Act 101 by waste haulers, businesses, and residents of member municipalities. While most municipalities, including Towamencin Township, endorsed the regulations, some members subsequently requested edits to the endorsement resolution. The Commission has distributed an updated version of the regulations and has asked all members to consider approval.

Violations include commingling recyclable materials with waste, putting leaves in the trash, burning of leaves, and making collections between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am. The regulations provide progressive enforcement actions starting with a warning. This resolution endorses the proposed regulations and authorizes Towamencin's representative on the Commission to vote on the adoption of the regulations at a future Commission meeting.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Resolution 21-16, Endorsement of Proposed Enforcement Procedures for Act 101 Violations.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell, Laura Smith

Voting No: N/A

Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Consider Proposal for Planning Services – Veterans Memorial Park

The Township submitted grant applications in 2019 to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) seeking a combined total of \$50,000 for the preparation of a master plan for the Veterans Memorial Park. The Township was awarded a \$25,000 grant from DCNR, but did not receive a DCED grant. The Township reapplied in the next round of DCED grants and was recently informed that it has been awarded.

The Township’s planning consultant, Simone-Collins, had provided a proposal in 2019 to prepare the plan at a cost of \$50,000. Now that the Township has received both grants, the Board is asked to accept the proposal from Simone Collins.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board accepted the Simone Collins’ proposal to prepare a master plan for the Veterans Memorial Park.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell, Laura Smith
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Proposal to Prepare Grant Application (Welsh Road and Orvilla Road)

This proposal is for McMahon Associates to assist Towamencin and Hatfield Townships in completing the 2021 DCED Commonwealth Finance Authority (CFA) Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant application for preliminary and final design services for the roadway and traffic signal improvements at the shared intersection of Welsh Road and Orvilla Road. The grant request will be for \$500,000 to \$600,000 in funding for preliminary engineering and final design for the intersection improvements in order to obtain the necessary permits. The proposed improvements include:

- Widening Orvilla Road to provide left turn lanes on both approaches,
- Widening Welsh Road to provide left turn lanes on both approaches,
- Traffic Signal Modernization.

The cost to prepare the application by McMahon Associates is \$5,000 that will be shared equally between the two townships. The deadline to submit the grant application is July 31, 2021.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board accepted the McMahon Associates proposal to prepare the grant application.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell, Laura Smith

Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Proposal to Prepare Resubmission of Grant Application – KRI II Trail

In 2020, the Township submitted a grant application through the DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation program seeking \$250,000 as an additional funding source that could be combined with the in-hand \$190,000 grant from Montgomery County Montco 2040 Program. The project would provide approximately 4,000 feet of trail that would run from the existing trail access on Kriebel Road adjacent to the PECO right-of-way to the old Arneith House within Fischer’s Park. The Township was recently notified that it was not awarded the DCED grant. The Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee recommends that the Township reapply in the next round of grants that has an application deadline of May 31st. The County grant expires on June 30, 2022. Gilmore Associates has submitted a proposal to prepare an updated grant application at a not to exceed cost \$1,500.

Supervisor Smith noted a concern with the Township potentially competing with themselves with multiple grant submissions. The Board was in favor of moving forward with the grant application.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board accepted the Gilmore Associates proposal to prepare an updated grant application with a not to exceed cost of \$1,500.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell, Laura Smith
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Request Authorization to Advertise - Keeler Road Bridge Structural Reinforcement

At their March 24th meeting, the Board authorized the Township Engineer to proceed with the preparation of engineering plans for the recommended temporary repairs associated with the structural reinforcement of the Keeler Road Bridge. The Township Engineer is requesting Board authorization to release authorize the advertising of the bid specifications for this work.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board authorized the bid advertising of the Keeler Road Bridge Structural Reinforcement Project.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell, Laura Smith
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Additional Business

Supervisor Littley noted May was bike safety month and reminded residents about bike and pedestrian safety now that the weather has been nicer and had the following recommendations. Wear bright colored/reflective clothing while out after dusk and that those 12 or under must wear a bike helmet. Bike riders must obey traffic signals and signs per PennDOT regulations. Do not ride bikes on sidewalks as pedestrians have the right of way.

Pedestrians should wear reflective clothing or devices after dusk or carry a flashlight. Walk on the left side of the road if there is no shoulder or sidewalk. Pedestrians should be using available sidewalks. Reflective wear/leashes for dogs is also recommended after dusk and/or if your dog is dark in color.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colleen Ehrle', written in a cursive style.

Colleen Ehrle

Assistant to Township Manager