

**Board of Supervisors**

**MINUTES**

**JANUARY 14, 2025**

**IN-PERSON MEETING**

**BOS WORK SESSION**

**Supervisors Present:** Pete Kade, Lorna Yearwood, Dave Long and Bill Ryker.

**Also present:** Rich Pursell (Township Manager/Public Works Director), Tim Fulmer (Township Engineer) & Scott MacNair Esq. (Township Solicitor)

Mr. Kade called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. There will be an executive session to be held after the meeting to discuss personnel.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Eric Touchstone, 1810 Salem Road, read a letter he prepared regarding H&K Quarry access road on Mine Road. His concerns were about mud on the road. Mr. Touchstone submitted a letter and photos he took to the Board as correspondence.

Mr. Ryker advised Mr. Touchstone to notify Springfield Township of any future concerns. Solicitor MacNair stated the Township can then notify Bucks County Conservation District/DEP.

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**Walking Purchase Farms (Baker Tract) Subdivision** – Mr. Tim Fulmer, Township Engineer and Mr. Tyler Freed, Mease Engineering, applicant engineer was present. Mr. Fulmer reminded the Board of Supervisors that this topic was on the November agenda. This plan was previously approved approximately ten years ago but the protection period under MPC lapsed. The applicant can pursue the project but is subject to review under the new ordinance. Mr. Fulmer mentioned his review letter dated November 4, 2024. He said since the last BOS meeting, the waiver requests were received. Mr. Fulmer reviewed the waiver requests in his review letter dated December 23, 2024. Mr. Fulmer mentioned the concern was regarding tree replacement and he and Mr. Freed conducted a site visit along with Mr. Long. It would require 208 replacement trees with only three options for where to plant them. The owner is looking to plant 5 additional trees on each of the lots for a minimum of 75 more trees. The applicant is requesting a waiver for the remaining trees they cannot plant. Mr. Ryker said they are 133 trees short. Mr. Long asked if Mr. Ryker is requesting a fee in lieu of. Mr. Fulmer stated a capital contribution may be accepted in lieu of. Mr. Fulmer stated they can agree upon a value on a tree and then a capital contribution can be accepted. Mr. Freed stated they would consider that. Mr. Kade stated he would rather see the trees there. Mr. Long said they would be here or somewhere else if they accepted the fee in lieu of. Mr. Fulmer and Mr. Freed will work on calculations for the tree fees and then it will come back to the Board after calculations. The last waiver item was regarding recreational land which based off requirements would be 20,000 sqft area. Applicant requests to pay the fee in lieu of. Mr. Fulmer explained the Township would own the land, not HOA. The applicant has no obligation to develop the land and simply set aside a portion of the land. The option for this waiver would be a fee in lieu of also. Solicitor MacNair discussed the stipulations the money can be used for. He said according to our fee schedule \$12,650 would be the fee. Ms. Yearwood brought up the water resource study that was done back in the planning process. The water study was done in 2008-2009. Mr. Kade questioned water flow and drought conditions. Ms. Yearwood wanted to bring up a different possibility. She said a Representative from Springtown Water Authority is here and said it is possible to get Springtown Water to the new development. Mr. Rich Cernak discussed the water main being extended and the advantages of municipal water and fire hydrants. He said the only negative would be cost. Mr. Freed said that is a pretty substantial improvement cost and this plan was already previously

approved with on-lot wells. Mr. Freed said it would be hundreds of thousands of dollars. Mr. Cernak said the cost would be less than the 11 wells at \$6,500 each. Mr. Kade said the idea isn't to change the plan but it could be attractive to buyers. Mr. Freed said he would make the builder aware of the option. Motion by Bill Ryker, seconded by Mr. Kade to accept all waiver requests, except the fee in lieu of for the trees until they come back in front of the Board for cost. Motion was approved 4-0.

**Discussion on Solar** – Ms. Yearwood stated the Board of Supervisors previously discussed the idea of this project and authorized Mr. Fulmer to explore ground mounted solar panels on Township property and provide a plot plan. Mr. Fulmer stated his understanding is the electricity would not be for sale and would be for personal Township use. That is permitted by right, so no variance is needed. He proposed a plot plan that meets all setbacks and even 75 feet minimally from every property line. The ordinance does require a buffer of trees and shrubbery. Ms. Yearwood stated there was one estimate, but the next step would go out to RFP (Request for Proposal). The first estimate received was \$136,000 with a return in 7 years. She said it would then save \$15,000 per year. Ms. Yearwood said someone asked about inverters last time and the lifespan for them is 25 years and can buy extended warranties if needed. Ms. Yearwood was looking for a vote on the board moving forward. Mr. Ryker mentioned maintenance needed for the panels such as road crew take more time to weed-wacking and how often the panels need to be cleansed. Mr. Long said there didn't seem to be much more maintenance than that. Mr. Ryker stated when they discussed a cell tower on the Township property – something to make the residents feel safer and assist with emergency service communications - people were upset about the view from their preserved property. Mr. Ryker said that would have made us money and these solar panels will not. Mr. Long asked about the tax incentive. He said he couldn't determine how we get it. Mr. Long asked where the money would come from. Mr. Long said he doesn't think it is the right time. Mr. Long said this is not a need but a want. He said EMS closing one of the facilities is concerning and he would rather assist there if needed. Mr. Long asked if anyone drinks the water yet in this building. Mr. Long said a new well needs to be dug. Mr. Ryker, Mr. Kade and Mr. Long agreed to put a line item in the budget and start saving to install solar panels in the future. Mr. Fulmer said the plan would be on hold for the future.

Mr. Nilsen, Pleasant View Road, he questioned if there is no battery backup whether there would still be power available from the solar panels. Ms. Yearwood said there is new technology out there that allows power from the solar panels to still be used if there is a grid outage. Mr. Cernak said they looked into solar with the Springtown Water Authority.

**Closeout of Relief Fund** – Mr. Pursell said he needs their authorization to close out the account from QNB. He said all the funds were expended as required by the end of December 2024. Motion made by Mr. Ryker, seconded by Mr. Kade, unanimously approved 4-0 authorize the closing of the Relief Fund from QNB Bank with any remaining money in the account to be placed in the General Fund.

**Discussion on Diamond Communication** – Ms. Yearwood said she was put in touch with Diamond Communications. She said within the Comprehensive Plan, it was identified there is a problem with cell service. Ms. Yearwood stated Diamond Communications will do a deficiency study to identify areas where cell service was lacking and then identify the most strategic locations for cell towers to improve service for residents. There is no cost or contractual obligation. Ms. Yearwood shared the information Diamond Communications gave her related to a similar project in Southampton, NY. Mr. Kade said we want coverage and the income from the cell tower. Mr. Long said it's a good way to start. Mr. Ryker asked where this company was found. Ms. Yearwood said they are working with MetEd and Mr. Bill Burland, a resident who was interested in putting a cell tower on his property. Mr. Ryker said he was curious where this derived from. Mr. Kade said the Township Building area is a dead spot for Verizon. Mr. Long asked if there is an RFP needed. Mr. MacNair said with no cost, no RFP is needed, just a motion to enter into a contract. Mr. Long said he thinks it's a good idea. Mr. Ryker said it would be helpful to know the magnitude of the problem.

Ms. Yearwood said Diamond Communications can do a presentation for the Board. It was discussed this presentation would happen during Township business hours. Solicitor MacNair said authorization of the study will need to be done at a regularly scheduled meeting after the presentation.

**Comprehensive Plan Priorities/Next Steps** Mr. Pursell said this agenda item is for the Board to set a date to discuss the comp plan and next steps. Ms. Yearwood would want to be there after she returns from vacation. Mr. Ryker and Mr. Long suggested during Township hours. Mr. Long suggested Thursday 2/27/25 at 3 p.m.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Nilsen, Treasurer for UBREMS, requests a sit-down with the Board to speak where UBREMS stands regarding their long- and short-term goals. There was an ask to understand the call box mapping and requesting the Board to share their regional call boxes. Mr. Ryker wants to see proportionate funding for all coverage areas. Mr. Ryker said Springfield Township does pay their bills. Mr. Nilsen said they are \$500,000 in donations, \$300,000 is a source outside of municipal government. The BOS/Mr. Pursell will reach out with a date/time to meet.

Ms. Meredith Elinich (non-resident), 41 Duncan Road, Quakertown stated there is a place for 133 trees on the Baker property. She said she worries about the cast iron pipeline that transports gas through the area and that drilling wells will disrupt the pipeline. Mr. Kade said there is an emergency management plan in place, and it is being re-done, pipelines are referenced in there.

Mr. Bruce Whitesell, 2011 Rt 212, he is happy to see the board is addressing the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Whitesell handed out books "Who Moved My Cheese" to the Board of Supervisors. He said it's about change. Mr. Whitesell suggested ad hoc committee to see how the Boards and ABCs can implement the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Travis Pantaleo, 2529 Rt 212, asked how many outstanding plans like Baker exist. Mr. Long said that was the only one. He said it should be a cautionary tale. He said he is glad there are no others out there.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Rich Pursell said speed boards are approved through DCED grant.

Mr. Kade said MAP grant is approved as well. Mr. Kade said he didn't want to spend more money to get more knowledge, but he said this is part of getting other municipalities to help us. Mr. Nilsen asked what the study was about. Mr. Kade said it is to develop our commercial district to have commercial properties along with the village centers.

Mr. Yearwood said what other townships require regarding ordinance for pump tests. She hopes maybe the planning commission can work on that. She questioned wells and septic on small lot sizes and the need to increase fees in lieu of recreation areas.

Mr. Ryker said the comprehensive plan took two years to create. It's 115 pages on the website. He urged residents to read it. Mr. Ryker thanked our Roadcrew their hard work in the nuisance snowstorms. Mr. Ryker urged people to check on your neighbors. He also mentioned the chili contest at Silver Creek on January 26, 2025.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kade announced there will be an executive session to be held after to discuss personnel.

Motion by Ms. Yearwood, seconded Mr. Long, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Gerhart

Secretary