

Board of Supervisors Meeting

MINUTES

June 10, 2008

Jim Brownlow, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisors Present: Karen Bedics, Jim Brownlow, Barbara Lindtner and Rob Zisko

Also present: Sandy Everitt, Secretary/Treasurer; Scott MacNair, Co-Solicitor; and Rich Schilling, Township Manager.

Jim Brownlow noted that the Supervisors held an Executive Session on June 3 to discuss legal matters.

Presentation to Palisades Cyber Sonics Team

Karen Bedics presented certificates of achievement to the students and sponsors of the Cyber Sonics team in recognition of their exemplary performances in various competitions during the 2008 school term. The following students and sponsors were present:

Jeremy Reed (junior), Aaron Willey (sophomore), Megan Weaver (freshman) and Laura Trotta (sophomore)
Donna Trotta (parent mentor), Rob Reilly (team advisor) and Dave Beck (Head of Team)

Dave Beck commented that Rob Zisko was one of his first students! Dave explained that the Cyber Sonics team is a group of high school students who compete on a national and worldwide level for robotics. Students learn how to work together and interact as a team to achieve goals. Palisades is one of 16 teams to achieve Hall of Fame status out of approximately 3,000 teams, which Dave credits to the high caliber of students that are part of the team. He thanked the Township for inviting the team representatives to attend this meeting.

Karen expressed overwhelming pride in the achievements of the 27 young people who comprise this year's team. Sandy Berry, a resident, commended Mr. Beck and gave insights into how difficult it was for the team to achieve what they have without any links to the universities he was competing against, M.I.T. or NASA. Dave Becker invited residents to attend a Cyber Sonics competition, which will take place in March at Drexel University or in Trenton, NJ, at the Sovereign Bank Arena.

Approval of Minutes

Jim Brownlow **moved** to accept the April 29, 2008, minutes as corrected. Rob Zisko **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Rob Zisko **moved** to accept the May 13, 2008, minutes as presented. Jim Brownlow **seconded**. Voting **Yes**: Jim Brownlow, Barbara Lindtner, Rob Zisko. **Abstaining**: Karen Bedics. (The solicitor advised that even though Karen and Barbara were not present for this meeting, they could vote on the minutes if they had reviewed them.)

Bills for Approval

Barbara Lindtner **moved** to approve the bills listed on the May 14 – June 6, 2008, (\$43,041.89) and the June 7 - 10, 2008, (\$16,989.44) bills lists. After several questions and clarifications, Karen Bedics **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously. It was noted that the \$43,041.89 bills covered a one-month period rather than the usual two-week period.

Reports

Road Department (posted) – Accepted as presented.

Code Enforcement (posted) – Accepted as presented. There was discussion on a Zoning Hearing Board appeal submitted by a resident in response to a township enforcement action against him. Some details of the issue are contained in a June 8, 2008, memo from Dave Taylor, Zoning Officer, provided for the supervisors. The Board will review this memo and related information Dave Taylor will be asked to provide and vote at the June 17 Supervisors meeting whether the township solicitor should represent the township at this hearing. The action involves PPL and

the property owner and relates to trees that PPL cut down that exceed the number permitted by the township's Zoning Ordinance. A required permit was not obtained from the township. Scott MacNair indicated that unless there is a contract between PPL and the property owner, protecting the property owner from responsibility and providing that PPL is to obtain permits, the property owner is responsible. He added that frequently, enforcement action is taken against the property owner and the offending entity, in this case, PPL.

Police Report (on website) – Chief Laudenslager was on vacation. Rich Schilling reported that the police investigated 52 incidents in May. There was one accident involving 2 vehicles with no injuries. Property valued at \$2,600 was stolen with no recovery of the stolen items. Rich advised a testing date is scheduled at the end of July at the Allentown Police Academy. The advertisement for two full-time police officers will appear in The Morning Call on June 16.

Township Manager's Report – Rich Schilling met with Maria Weick, farm market manager, and the farm market Board on May 14 and 28. A township-wide mailing about the Farmers' Market was mailed on May 29. The Farmers' Market opened June 4 on the parking lot of the Springtown Fire Department. Rich estimated approximately 1,000 people attended, far more than were expected. Sixteen vendors signed up and 14 were present on June 4. Rich said police will be present for next Wednesday's event which should help with traffic problems. Rich submitted the final paperwork to the state for reimbursement of the \$2,000 grant for the Farmers Market.

On May 20, Rich attended the Nockamixon BOS meeting to hear the discussion regarding the Cable Franchise Agreement. He was not aware that Service Electric was pulled from the agenda and will be placed on a June Agenda. He plans to attend that meeting.

Rich and Chief Laudenslager met with the Game Commission Warden regarding the coyote problem. The Warden explained that coyotes are afraid of humans and pose no threat unless they have rabies, as would be true of any other animal or pet.

Rich contacted PennDOT about lowering the speed limit in Springtown and they authorized lowering the speed limit from 35-miles per hour to 30-miles per hour. Rich Pursell ordered 14 new speed limit signs which the Road Department will install. There was a discussion about enforcement of speeding in the township and why the State Police are the only ones permitted to use radar for speed enforcement.

Barbara Lindtner **moved** to authorize Rich Schilling to scrap the inoperable police Crown Victoria. Rob Zisko **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Rich noted that \$2,100+ of the \$3,000 placed in the budget was used to send out the spring 2008 newsletter, leaving only approximately \$800 for the fall newsletter. The budgeted income for the year for the newsletter was \$250. Barbara Lindtner **moved** to authorize the Newsletter staff to utilize any income that comes in this year over the budgeted \$250 to cover expenses for the fall newsletter due to come out early in August. Rob Zisko **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Barbara Lindtner thanked Rich Schilling and the many township volunteers for their help in making the Farmers Market a success. Rich commended Maria Weick for the excellent job she has done in organizing and running the Farmers Market. There was discussion about whether the present location is large enough for the size of the market. Rich will monitor the traffic flow over the next five weeks.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Steve Doncevic suggested that the township advertise that businesses can place ads in the township newsletter. Rich Schilling indicated a balance needs to be maintained between advertisements and articles in the newsletter. He feels the newsletter editor balances the content well at this point.

Planning Matters

Joseph Subdivision – Scott MacNair presented details from the April 17 township engineer's review letter. On March 5, the Planning Commission recommended conditional preliminary/final approval be granted for this two-lot subdivision of a 46-acre tract with frontage on Old Bethlehem Road. They also recommended approval of the waivers listed in the township engineer's April 17 letter.

Ms. Meril Joseph, applicant, is attempting to put a conservation easement on lot 1 and has applied to both the Bucks County Agricultural Preservation Program and the Springfield Township Open Space Committee with the goal of selling a conservation easement to the Township and/or the County. However, the applicant has agreed to have a note placed on the plan that if lot 1 would be further subdivided, either all frontage improvements for the entire tract would be put in place or the cost (estimated at today's prices to be \$271,000) would be contributed to the Township to put the improvements in at a later date. This provides a for the applicant to pursue the conservation easement. Ms. Joseph will comply with all the requirements outlined in the April 17 township engineer's review letter.

Barbara Lindtner **moved** to grant preliminary/final approval for the Meril Joseph Subdivision and grant the waivers requested conditioned upon completion of the items outlined in the April 17, 2008, engineer's review letter and the May 12, 2008, township solicitor's letter. Rob Zisko **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Old Business

Parks & Recreation Steering Committee – Barbara Lindtner said 13 applications were received from residents expressing interest in working on this Steering Committee. Fees cannot be assessed on developers unless a Parks & Recreation Plan is in place. Because of the technicality involved in constructing such a plan, a consultant will be required. Fifty percent of the estimated \$15 - \$20,000 cost of preparing such a plan is reimbursable to the township from DCNR and/or a grant upon the plans completion. The township has a large property that can be used for recreational purposes and there is a possibility the township may receive another parcel back from a Homeowner's Association that could also be used for recreation. Barbara would like to work with Rich Schilling to do an RFP to hire a consultant to work on the Parks & Recreation Plan. She would also like authorization to form the Steering Committee, using the volunteers who have indicated interest, as well as members of the fire and police departments, and a member from both the Open Space Committee and the Planning Commission. This entire process will take approximately 18-months. Barbara would also like to be authorized to work with Rich to obtain whatever grants are available for funding acquisition of additional land, get trails, etc.

Jim Brownlow **moved** to authorize Barbara Lindtner and Rich Schilling to form a Steering Committee to begin exploration of a Parks & Recreation Board to include constructing an RFP for obtaining a consultant to help with developing a Parks & Recreation Plan. Rob Zisko **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Community Service Update – Karen Bedics provided information to the Board members from The Progress Program (Youth Services Agency of Bucks County in collaboration with the Bucks County Juvenile Probation Department) as well as from the Bucks County Adult Probation and Parole Department. Karen is not interested at this time with working with the Adult Probation program, but provided their information for possible later use. She also presented a proposal for a Community Service Program in Springfield Township. Karen would mentor the program initially, working in conjunction with Cooks Creek Watershed members and the Bucks County Juvenile Probation office and caseworkers. Projects planned at this time include roadside clean up, recycling projects, and maintenance projects at the township building and throughout the township. Examples of the type of work to be done include landscaping/groundwork at the township building, invasive plant removal in designated watersheds or on township properties, assisting with Community Day activities, etc. Most activities would take place from April 1 through October 30, or year-round, if recycling is expanded within the township. The program would give low-level juvenile offenders an opportunity to serve and give back to the community after their offense. Other goals would be to educate juveniles as to cause and effects of their actions, to build awareness about their community responsibilities, and to instill caring for watershed(s) and other community resources.

The Adult and Juvenile County programs are both anxious to work with the township and offer their support. The Progress Program of the juvenile justice system involves a 3-phase program. The first phase is Restorative Justice, which involves bringing the offender, the victim, their families and anyone else affected by their actions together to discuss what was done, who was affected and how things can be repaired. After the offender goes through the Restorative Justice program, they enter Phase 2 (Life Skills) which involves having them participate in whatever classes will help them (Basic Money Management, Anger Management, Diversity Awareness, etc.). Phase 3 (Active Citizenship) is when they perform community service. A caseworker would accompany the young people and supervise their work. The focus of the program is educating rather than punishing youthful offenders. Karen thinks this would be an excellent opportunity for various township committees and groups (Cooks Creek Watershed, EAC, Historic Commission, etc.) to educate the youth, help them learn about local government and in

the process take the burden off the committees for getting various tasks completed. The township's responsibility would be to provide the jobs for the youth. An adult from the township should be present to ensure that the work is understood and being done correctly. The county now has approximately 300 youths who need to perform 30 hours of community service each, so she feels that we can get as many volunteers as we need for projects.

Although the Youth Services Agency provided a waiver and release of liability, Scott MacNair did not have an opportunity to review it. He would feel more comfortable producing a township waiver, specifically listing Springfield Township as a protected entity. Scott will prepare a township waiver for further discussion and a vote at the June 17 Board meeting. (Rich: Township Staff need to know these volunteers will be available so they can plan.)

Request for Quote for Utilization of Township Property for Growing of Hay – Barbara Lindtner said that three residents are interested in growing forage for cattle and/or horses on the 45-acre, township-owned property. At a prior meeting, the Board authorized Barbara and Rich Schilling to come up with an RFQ to send to farmers interested in farming the township property. Rich Schilling provided a copy of the proposed RFQ. They need input from the Board on several issues to complete the RFQ: 1) Forage only? 2) Soil improvement allowed? 3) Till or no till? 4) The use of Herbicides or Pesticides?

Nevada Mease, one of the interested farmers, was present and presented very helpful information on the farming issues involved in effectively utilizing the township tract. He took a soil sample from the tract to Penn State, had a soil analysis done, and he provided a copy of that analysis to each supervisor. The analysis indicated "Below Optimum" results in four soil nutrient levels that are key to growing crops. He indicated that the cost of materials required to supplement the soil have increased 57% since March, due in large part to increased fuel costs. Nevada said a number of invasive weeds can be found on the property. These are very difficult to get rid of without using Round Up. He indicated that only a quart of Round Up would be used per acre, but that more than one application could be necessary to get rid of entrenched invasive plants. Karen Bedics asked if there was any way to farm the tract without tilling it and without using Round Up. Nevada said for an average farmer, organic farming was feasible on a small scale, but he was not aware of it being financially feasible, or successful, on very large tracts such as the township owns.

Steve Doncevic encouraged the supervisors not to permit non-organic farming on township property. Nevada said it would cost approximately \$255/acre to bring the 45-acre township-owned tract into good condition for growing crops (\$11,475). Nevada uses the extension office of Penn State for information. He stated Penn State's recommended use of a Round Up product is in accordance with USDA standards. Nevada added that window-washing fluid is actually more toxic than Round Up. He explained that Round Up is a post-emergent herbicide that works by interrupting the photosynthesis process of the weeds and cutting off the supply to the roots, thus killing the plants.

Karen Bedics **moved** to authorize the township manager to issue an RFQ for the use of the Kurtesan property without any stipulations about how it is to be used. Jim said he felt that the supervisors should not add any stipulations, but permit the farmers to offer their suggestions, since they know more about the process. He added that the supervisors have the right to reject all bids after they are reviewed. Barbara asked if Nevada would permit residents to walk or ride around the perimeter of the property. He said he would and that they could also walk on the strips between the areas being farmed. Bidders may submit alternate bids as to how they will use the property.

Tina Shaffer – Suggested that the township should adopt a policy for what can be done on all township property. Jim Brownlow said that this bid award would realistically determine what the township's policy would be. Jim reiterated that the supervisors are not qualified to make such a policy at this time, and to do so could require up to a year of research before such a policy could be set.

Rose Strong asked whether the township had to follow township ordinances just as all other residents must. She feels that to create a separate policy would go beyond ordinances that already exist to protect streams, etc.

Bruce Whitesell noted that the 45-acres belong to the residents, not the supervisors. He suggested that the Parks & Recreation Steering Committee decide whether to enter into a long-term agreement with a farmer for use of the land. In the meantime, he suggested that we continue just having the property cut at no cost to the township. He

questions tying up the township property for the three – five years it would take for the field to be financially profitable for the farmer developing it.

Karen Bedics thanked Nevada Mease for his very informative presentation and said she learned a great deal from what he presented.

Jim Brownlow called for the question. Barbara Lindtner **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

New Business

1. Charles Halderman’s Resignation Letter – Jim read the following email letter from Chuck Halderman: “June 2, 2008 - I hereby submit my resignation as Vice-Chairman of the Springfield Township Board of Supervisors, this being my “formal” notice, having been effective May 23, 2008. I am no longer residing in Springfield Township, therefore I will no longer be able to fill the position of Springfield Township Supervisor/Vice Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

Thank you for allowing me to serve the residents of Springfield Township. I have always considered it an honor and a privilege. I extend my warmest regards to the citizens of Springfield Township and best wishes for the continued growth, success and preservation of their community.

Thank you.
Respectfully submitted,
Chuck Halderman”

Rob Zisko **moved** that Barbara Lindtner be appointed vice-chairperson to replace Chuck Halderman. Karen Bedics **seconded**. Voting **Yes**: Karen Bedics, Jim Brownlow, Rob Zisko. **Abstaining**: Barbara Lindtner. The motion **passed**.

2. Springtown Study – At the April 8 supervisors meeting, there was discussion regarding sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, etc., in Springtown. The Supervisors decided that the existing Springtown Study should be reviewed. Further, they asked the Historic Commission to comment whether new sidewalks would be permitted in a historic district, as Springtown was recently listed on the Historic Register.

Rich Schilling provided copies of the Springtown Study for the Board and for the Historic Commission to review. This topic was discussed at the Historic Commission’s April 15 meeting, and they submitted a two-page memo about the issue. Karen Bedics attended that meeting. She said the Historic Commission felt that Springtown residents were not in favor of having sidewalks installed, as they would be afraid to walk on them because of cars speeding on Route 212. They requested additional police enforcement of the speed limit through Springtown.

Karen talked with Bob Hill at Village Center Automotive, and if the township installed one cross walk at the post office, Bob agreed to assume responsibility for removing the sign at the end of each day and replacing it again in the morning Monday through Saturday. On behalf of the Historic Commission, Karen asked the Board to authorize more police presence in Springtown and to request the township to contact PennDOT about installing a crosswalk in front of the post office. Karen Bedics **moved** to authorize the township manager to contact PennDOT about installing a pedestrian crosswalk in front of the post office in Springtown. Barbara Lindtner **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

The Historic Commission also would like to see three school bus stop warning signs in Springtown. Karen Bedics **moved** to authorize the township manager to request permission from PennDOT to install school bus stop warning signs in Springtown at three points: near the post office, near the bend close to Drifting Drive, and at the center of town near the Almanac store. Barbara Lindtner **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

3. Resolution for Police Hiring – Rob Zisko **moved** to adopt Resolution 2008-06 establishing guidelines and procedures for the hiring of police officers for the Springfield Township Police Department, to supersede Resolution 2005-02. Barbara Lindtner asked if the Board would be able to interview the police applicants before they are hired. Rich said he and Mark will conduct initial interviews and narrow the group down to the top candidates, who will then be interviewed by the Board. Barbara Lindtner **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Correspondence – Listed on the agenda

Public Comment

Steve Doncevic asked what the Almanac was and was advised it was a gift shop that used to be a country store.

Willard Weierbach asked if there were any areas along Cooks Creek where residents could walk and/or picnic. Rich said there are some easements where fishing is permitted, but he would have to do some research about whether picnics could be held in those areas. Rich said the new Zoning Ordinance prohibits any activity within 125' of the center of a stream. He thinks this would prohibit having a walking trail by the stream. Steve Doncevic suggested that information be placed in the newsletter if there are areas open to the public.

Steve Doncevic asked if it would be good for the Farmers' Market to work with Silver Creek Athletic Association and "jockey around" those Wednesdays that they already have committed. Rich Schilling said the township donated \$750 to the Springtown Fire Department out of the grant money. All agreed that a move to Silver Creek in the future would permit more growth, provide more parking, and provide shelter for vendors and residents during inclement weather. Rich encouraged Steve to join the Board of the Farmers' Market.

Supervisors Comments

Karen Bedics said the Board received notification from PSATS that the State Senate passed a bill proposing countywide earned income tax collection by 2012. If enacted, this would move the process of collecting EIT from Palisades School District to the County.

Karen also announced that Bob Hill purchased most of the properties next to Village Automotive and he is in the process of cleaning up those properties. Karen hopes that he puts a convenience store in that area.

A resident of Blue Church Road contacted Karen. He contacted the supervisors of Upper Saucon Township about 2 months ago about doing a traffic study on Blue Church Road for restricting the weight of vehicles traveling on that road. He said they told him they would have their engineer review his request and then get back to him. To date, he has not heard back from them. Karen would like the Board to authorize Rich Schilling to contact Upper Saucon Township, perhaps requesting a copy of their engineer's traffic study, and see what they plan to do about placing a weight restriction on Blue Church Road. This resident talked with our township about this, but Bob Wynn said this would have to be a joint effort between Springfield and Upper Saucon Townships, as both townships owned a portion of Blue Church Road. Rich Schilling will contact the resident to learn when he attended Upper Saucon's meeting. He will review the minutes from that meeting so that he can see exactly what was said, and will then call the manager of Upper Saucon. Jim Brownlow asked Rich in the call to Upper Saucon to ask whether they would be receptive to a request from us about working together to put a weight restriction on Blue Church Road.

Rich Schilling finalized details today for the public meeting about the PPL's submission to the PUC with the administrative assistant of the PUC Administrative Law Judge. Two meetings for the residents of Springfield Township will be held on July 14 at the Springtown Fire Department Social Hall at 1:00 p.m. and again at 7:00 p.m. Rich Schilling will contact the reporter from The Intelligencer and a press release will be issued about this important meeting.

Adjournment

At 10:00 p.m., Rob Zisko **moved** to adjourn the meeting. Jim Brownlow **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra L. Everitt
Secretary/Treasurer

Next meeting: June 17, 2008 (Advertised and moved from the normal date of June 24, 2008)

Approved: June 17, 2008