

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
AUGUST 23, 2005**

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairman Rod Wieder with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Members present were Vice Chairman Pete Lamana, Chuck Halderman, Rob Zisko and Jim Brownlow. Ted Evans, Open Space Consultant was present.

Rod Wieder announced an Executive Session was held on August 16, 2005 regarding personnel.

Minutes of August 9, 2005

Pete Lamana moved to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Jim Brownlow. Vote was 4-Yes, Rod Wieder abstained.

**PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEMS
NONE**

**PUBLIC HEARING TO INCLUDE ELEVEN TAX PARCEL NUMBERS IN THE
AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREA.**

Rob Zisko stated the Township received applications from 8 property owners representing 11 tax parcels with a total of 392.1697 acres to be included in the Agricultural Security Area. The Bucks County Planning Commission, Springfield Township Planning Commission and Springfield Township Agricultural Security Committee all recommended that these properties be included.

Rob Zisko moved to include tax parcels 42-9-64, 42-9-94, 42-9-94-2, 42-94-1, 42-9-92, 42-9-102, 42-9-88, 42-9-100, 42-9-105-1, 42-9-105 and 42-9-122 in Springfield Township Agricultural Security District. Second by Pete Lamana. Vote was unanimous.

OPEN SPACE REPORT

Rod Wieder introduced Ted Evans, Bucks County Open Space Partnership. Ted is working with Barbara Smith as a consultant for our Open Space Program.

Ted gave a brief overview of the Agricultural Security Program. This program is typically updated every six years and an effort is made to encourage property owners to apply to be included in the District. Ted referenced a map of the township showing properties in Ag Security in yellow and protected properties with hash marks in black. Currently Springfield has a little over 2,600 acres in the Agricultural Security District.

7:45 p.m. County Commissioner Jim Cawley arrived at this time.

The Township has partnered with County and State programs to get the best value for our open space dollar. The open space program is a mix of agricultural and natural areas properties. There are also two municipal properties, Kurtesan and Komar. These properties were protected with a combination of Bucks County and Township funds. We anticipate by the end of 2005 to have protected a total of 906 acres at a cost to the Township of \$656 per acre. There is an additional 324 acres that have been protected in prior years to include Bucks County Parks and Recreation properties on Buckwampum Mountain.

We are currently working on seven properties that lie along Cooks Creek.

Rod Wieder introduced County Commissioner Jim Cawley. Commissioner Cawley stated he made a pledge to visit all of the municipalities in Bucks County and he is here tonight to say hello and answer any questions the Board or residents may have.

Ted Evans thanked Commissioner Jim Cawley for the County program. Ted noted Springfield has made good use of our money.

Commissioner Cawley emphasized the relationship between Bucks County and Springfield Township is strong. He congratulated Springfield on their open space program. He stated there is a sincere interest at the county level to continue open space preservation. There is currently discussion about phase two. There is not a lot of money available so it is unclear what the commitment will be at this time.

Commissioner Cawley opened the floor for questions.

Pete Lamana asked about the metal bridge that connects Route 212 to Bridge Street. This bridge was damaged by Hurricane Hugo last year. The bridge on Old Bethlehem Road is also closed and people are using this one. The concern expressed by several residents is that large trucks are using this bridge. There was a metal bar across the top which prevented large vehicles from using the bridge; however, the bar has been removed. There is a posted weight limit on the bridge but this is not stopping overweight traffic from using it.

Commissioner Cawley stated he was contacted by Robert Huntzinger about the situation. He and Joe Bush from the County Bridge Department, met Mr. Huntzinger at the site last week. After a brief inspection of the bridge it was confirmed that the bridge is stable. It is true that overweight vehicles could further damage the bridge. There is a weight limit on the bridge; however, this is apparently being ignored. Mr. Cawley understands the Township Police Department cannot station a man at the site full time. Commissioner Cawley asked if the Township would like the bridge closed. If so, the County will close it. The reason the metal bar across the top was removed is that the posts were hit so many times it was weak and ready to fall.

Chuck Halderman thanked the Bucks County Parks and Recreation Department for their land preservation in Springfield.

There was discussion about the bridge on Old Bethlehem Road that is closed. Rob Zisko asked if there is anything the Commissioner can do to encourage PennDot to fix this bridge. Mr. Cawley stated he contacted PennDot District Office and is working on this. Paul Clymer is also working with PennDot to see what can be done to reopen this bridge.

Pete Lamana asked how does the Township determine if the bridge should be closed. Commissioner Cawley stated there is no indication the bridge is near collapse. He stated he will have the bridge re-evaluated at County expenses. If structural damage is discovered, the County will close the bridge.

Karen Bedics suggested Commissioner Cawley mention to PennDot that Old Bethlehem Road is used to access Tohee Park and Nockamixon State Park. Also by Haycock Fire Company.

Pete Lamana referenced the approximately one mile of Route 412 from Springfield to the County line that has been referred to as the forgotten mile. Also, there is a one lane bridge on that stretch of road that was supposed to be addressed. Pete feels there is a lot happening at the lower end of the county and the upper end is ignored. We don't have the political clout the lower end has. It was mentioned that the Pa. Historic Commission has been in the area recently. Commissioner Cawley noted this is a good sign.

Paul Clymer contacted the Township Office on Friday to let us know he was told by PennDot that work will start on the 412 situation this week.

Hans Reimann referenced the intersection of Routes 412/212 and Hickory Lane as a particularly bad intersection. There was a subdivision plan recently before the Township where the attempt was made by the planning commission to get sufficient land to line the intersections up. There was discussion by several residents about how dangerous the intersection is. Also, the increased amount of large trucks going through this area have destroyed the shoulder and turned it into a muddy mess at the stop sign on 412. In order to make the swing, the trucks go off the road into the shoulder, creating a huge rut. Recently a school bus was stuck and had to be pulled out.

Chuck Halderman expressed concern about the many dangerous intersections and the general condition of the roads. Chuck feels we should have some plan as to how to manage development based upon the existing roads. Commissioner Cawley said he would talk to Lynn Bush at the Bucks County Planning Commission to see if they can be of help.

Pete Lamana discussed Act 319. Springfield has approximately 73 property owners under the act. Pete feels the way the act is being abused is not fair. Commissioner Cawley explained Act 319 was intended to be a tax benefit for active farmers. Farming is the largest income pursuit in Pennsylvania. Under the old 319 provisions for forestry easements and agriculture were included. Under the new Act 319 these provisions are no

longer mandated to be included. The County has to take action to address these under the new Act 319. There is debate going forward but no decision has been made. This is a political hot potato.

Chuck Halderman feels 319 is helping preserve open space and farming. If the commissioners fail to act agriculture and forestry will cease to get benefit.

Hans Reimann feels elderly people hang on to their land.

Chuck and Commissioner Cawley discussed rolling assessments.

Cindy McCurdy discussed a number of trees along State Road with dead limbs. She referred to the recent tragic accident in New Jersey where an 8 year old Bucks County girl was killed by a falling limb. Cindy would like to be sure that doesn't happen. Commissioner Cawley will contact PennDot.

Rob Zisko thanked Bucks County for their Agricultural and Natural Areas programs which help us to preserve open space.

Commissioner Cawley stated there will be a Phase II.

Jim Brownlow stated as properties come before the Planning Commission the members are diligent in seeking deed restrictions or conservation easements. Jim notes these properties are not accounted for on the map prepared by Ted.

The question was asked if a deed restriction restricts further development. Ted Evans replied it has been his experience that if you have a good story, you can have a deed restriction removed. Ted will attempt to add these properties to the map.

Rod Wieder thanked Commissioner Cawley, Rob Zisko, Ted Evans and Barbara Smith for their efforts to protect open space in Springfield Township.

FREEH PROPERTY

Rob Zisko moved to authorize payment of \$1,000.00 per acre for the preservation of 98 acres of the Freeh Property through the Agricultural Protection Program. Seconded by Pete Lamana. Vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dennis Steskal discussed the tri-axle truck traffic coming onto Drifting Drive from Banko Lane. Lower Saucon has not responded to our request to consider posting a weight restriction on the Lower Saucon end and Springfield portion to keep the trucks from using the road. Secretary will follow up.

Hans Reimann discussed Springtown Knoll(Manor) and the fact that the Township Open Space Plan shows an easement for the bottom part of the property for a trail. Hans

believes it would be appropriate to ask for a 12 foot easement to begin to put the pieces together.

Cindy McCurdy asked about the balance of the open space account.

SUPERVISORS' COMMENTS

Chuck Halderman referred to a project with Lower Saucon Township and Heritage Conservancy to preserve a large piece of land near the springs.

ADJOURN

Rob Zisko moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Second by Jim Brownlow. Vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted

Barbara A. Smith
Secretary