

**TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HUNTINGDON, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016, 7:00 P.M.
11279 Center Highway, North Huntingdon, PA 15642
Presiding Officer – Tony Martino, President, Board of Commissioners**

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Martino called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Herold	Present	Also Present:
Commissioner Haigis	Present	John Shepherd
Commissioner Bertani	Present	Michael Turley
Commissioner Gray	Present	Solicitor Bruce Dice
Commissioner Faccenda	Present	Andrew Blenko
Commissioner Kucera	Present	
Commissioner Martino	Present	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CITIZENS' INPUT

William Loish ó 10781 Bellview Drive ó states he would like to know what is going on with the renovations of the Town House. He asks why four hundred fifty thousand dollars is being spent on fixing up the building.

Commissioner Martino states ideas for the building have been discussed, but nothing has been agreed to yet.

Mr. Loish asks if there is a senior citizen center or anything for seniors to do in the Township.

Commissioner Martino states there used to be a YMCA and a few years ago, a recreation center was put on the ballot but was voted down by the residents.

Mr. Loish also states there are no discounts to attend any of the sporting events.

Commissioner Martino states the Board does not have any authority to give senior discount at the school sporting events.

Manager Shepherd and Solicitor Dice explain the process of citizens input to Mr. Loish.

Mr. Loish asks if the taxes and millage will be raised in the near future.

Solicitor Dice states that will not be known until the budget process begins.

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RESPONSE TO CITIZENS' INPUT

Commissioner Haigis states a few years ago, an idea was brought to the Board regarding the recreation center. The residents voted approximately seventy percent not in favor of it. Commissioner Haigis states he is not in favor of raising taxes.

Commissioner Gray states during the budget process in 2000 for year 2001, the Board raised taxes one and a half mills. One mill went to the fire departments and the half mill went to the Capital Reserve Fund for big projects. Taxes have been reduced within the last recent years by a half mill each time. The Board has no control over the charges by the school district for gaming events. Some years ago, the senior center was voted down by almost seventy percent. The building repairs that were printed in the Norwin Star was a project scope of everything that could be done to the building, but have not be finalized.

Commissioner Bertani states in addition to the upkeep on the building, there will also be expenses to bring the building up to current ADA codes.

Commissioner Kucera states that some of the items that Commissioner Bertani is speaking of will be grant funded.

Work Sessions Discussion Topics

1) LERTA

Manager Shepherd states that Michael Pehur is present to give guidance and updates on how LERTA works.

Mr. Pehur gives an update on what has happened since the first meeting and states that he and Mr. Turley have met with the school administration to review the idea and discuss some preliminary schedules. The meeting went well. He states he provided two new models for the Board, one being a model that goes for six years with two years of one hundred percent exemption declining twenty percent until year seven or the second model was five full years of one hundred percent exemption.

Mr. Turley states they would like to get the Board's opinion of an exemption schedule and then go back to the school district Board.

Commissioner Haigis states he is comfortable with a five year model and the main player is the school board. The County is normally supportive but if the school district is more favorable to the six year plan, he would support but is more in favor of the five year plan, one hundred percent.

Commissioner Martino states he also is in favor of the five year plan.

Mr. Pehur states that provides feedback to take to the school board and get their opinion on the five year model, then introduce legislation at the Town House with a public hearing.

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Mr. Turley states the map has been scaled back to parcels that really need assistance and produced the right targeted parcels.

Mr. Pehur states a program like this needs to focus on vacant sites or buildings that will likely be torn down.

Commissioner Kucera asks if there is anything in the plan that require they stay for a period of time after they get the tax break.

Mr. Pehur states there is nothing in the plan requiring an amount of time. This program is mostly focused on bringing property that is blighted back up to a useful and productive tax use.

Manager Shepherd states tenants will likely leave a new, vacant commercial building that someone else can use.

Commissioner Kucera asks if there was a tax break for Walgreens.

Manager Shepherd states there was not a tax break.

Mr. Turley states moving forward, they will go back to the school district and discuss the schedule and then a public hearing will be held creating an Ordinance with whatever the final product is.

2) STRATEGIC PLAN

Manager Shepherd states John Trant is present to discuss the development of the strategic plan and where he is in the process and the next steps needed concerning the adoption of the plan if the Board is in agreement.

Mr. Trant provided the Board with a draft plan and progress into the 2017 budget process. Mr. Trant states he would like to walk through the report and the recommendations, then ideally consider taking some action to adopt as the Strategic Plan for 2017.

Mr. Trant states North Huntingdon has a lot of good things going for them so this process is about helping the Township even further to the next level. Secondly, this is an evolving process and nothing is written in stone. The plan helps prioritize high priorities, medium priorities and low priorities that can be considered for the budget. As the Township grows and the demand for services increases, having a process in place gives a mechanism to evaluate opportunities and projects that might arise.

Mr. Trant starts with Administration ó one of the key topics is economic development. Community identity, continuing to invest in communicating the identity, clear information and a predictable process having a single point of contact starting with the Township Manager for initial inquiries, simplifying the development regulations and processes, communications and marketing, development incentives (LERTA).

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Administration – Communications – Mr. Trant states internal communication allows the Township to benefit from the Township Manager structure that frees the Board up to focus more on policy. He recommends the newly elected officials enroll in training, reinforce the use of the work order system, and to keep an active list of projects. External communications consist of customer service and community engagement, upgrading customer interfaces both professional and residential customer, social media, resident newsletter, online recreation rentals and program registration, service request online and online building permits. Customer service training is also very important and beneficial.

Strategic Planning & Budgeting ó this process is a recommendation during the budge process, adopt a policy for capital investment decision making, upgraded technology, improve systems and software. Mr. Trant states that all departments could benefit from enhanced ability to access system remotely. It's much more efficient especially for code enforcement.

PARKS AND RECREATION ó Mr. Trant states the key is planning. Park space is under-utilized for lack of planning and capital investment and recreation programming is maxed out because of available staffing, so the recommendations would be engaging stakeholders and to focus on priorities. North Huntingdon has great park land and could be benefit from master planning and grant opportunities. Mr. Trant recommends to apply for grant money for the construction. Recreation programming and using contractors to provide all the programming. Staffing, management, and organizational structure, updating the policy and procedures to allow more flexibility for staffing.

PLANNING AND ZONING ó Mr. Trant states there are three main priorities which are internal communications with a single point of contact between the permitting process and economic development. Secondly, is developing departmental goals and priorities and also planning and regulations and updating the ordinances. Lastly, is code enforcement and focusing more on being reactive then proactive

Manager Shepherd states the Township is in a proactive mode based on what Mr. Trant has presented.

Mr. Trant states there are benefits and challenges with being proactive.

POLICE ó Mr. Trant states community engagement. At the last meeting, he states Chief Lisiecki spoke of getting some programs back such as the Citizens Academy Program, Junior Academy Program. Continued use of the Nixle system and other social media to outreach.

PUBLIC WORKS ó rural road improvements is important to roll into the road program. There are a lot of road miles in the Township including rural, to maintain the roads at a certain level of service, have a consistent base and reinforce the work order system.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ó consider additional resources for additional support.

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Mr. Trant finalizes his presentation and asks if there are any questions from the Board. He provides the Board with a checklist going into the 2017 budget.

Manager Shepherd states the plan prepared will be helpful in deciding which projects to do in 2017 and a cost associated with them.

Mr. Turley asks if they should go over it for the next few weeks or months to prioritize a few of the projects and then adopt this policy.

Mr. Trant recommends that at the next meeting to adopt the plan, not the checklist.

Manager Shepherd states that from a budgetary standpoint would certainly pick items off the list.

Commissioner Faccenda states he would have like to have seen a survey with the Board as to what their priorities are.

Manager Shepherd states the priorities are in the plan it's just a matter of which one to tackle first.

Mr. Trant states the items listed are high priorities for topic areas but not all will make it in 2017.

Commissioner Bertani states for Manager Shepherd to begin the process and bring it back to the Board to make adjustments, if needed. He recommends looking at long range plan then narrow down to a short range plan that can be accomplished in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Commissioner Herold asks Mr. Trant in his opinion, does the Township need to look at having a full time Emergency Management Director.

Mr. Trant responds that position is mostly filled by volunteer and doesn't feel it would be a priority. Mr. Trant states he will issue the final report and forward to Mr. Turley.

Manager Shepherd states with the Board's agreement, will be put on the agenda for next meeting for adoption.

Mr. Haigis states this is a working document that can be changed and not sure if it should be formally adopted.

Manager Shepherd states it is the Township's strategic plan where priorities can change.

Commissioner Bertani states it should be adopted as a long range plan where it can be changed or adjusted.

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3) TOWN HOUSE RENOVATIONS

Manager Shepherd states he is looking for direction but would like to include some items for 2017 if the Board is comfortable in doing. The one item already agreed upon is not moving forward with the portico. The other project being considered is the ADA renovation component for grant funding. The piece will be the bathrooms on the main floor, in the Planning Department, the second floor bathroom, the lift and potentially renovations to the front door. A CDBG application will be included at next week's meeting and also the sanitary sewer lateral replacement program where the Board will have to prioritize them.

Commissioner Haigis recommends the exterior renovations be completed and possibly do phase improvements.

Manager Shepherd also states the parking lot needs repaired. Bob Robinson will give an estimated cost.

Commissioner Haigis proposes to pull out the parking lot piece and move forward with the exterior renovations as Phase 1 and look at the interior plans and parking lot as Phase II.

Manager Shepherd states by next year, will know if grant money will be available.

Commissioner Martino states he agrees to do everything on the exterior, pull out the parking lot portion for 2018.

Commissioner Gray asks what is the repair cap retaining wall.

Manager Shepherd responds it is the wall that runs along the police station.

Commissioner Gray states there are sixteen items and he recommends to go with Items one through nine then thirteen through sixteen.

Manager Shepherd states another cosmetic item would be the keystones above the windows that is sixty four hundred dollars.

Commissioner Gray states if the brick is cleaned and shutters replaced, then he would be ok including that item. He has received many complaints about the appearance of the building.

Manager Shepherd states he will include this in the budget for 2017 and will give Ron Gigler the go ahead to start designing.

Commissioner Faccenda states his concern on the interior would be getting the lift in and get it done in January.

Manager Shepherd states they will not know about the funding piece.

The Board agrees on the exterior renovations.

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4) CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION RULES AND REGULATIONS

Manager Shepherd states he has given the Board an update to the Civil Service Rules and Regulations and there is only one change from what was proposed from the Civil Service Commission relating to the Physical Agility Exam. The meeting a few months ago, the direction was to have the Civil Service Commission look at giving specific tests rather than leaving it open on a test by test basis. The Civil Service Commission altered the rules and included the physical agility test component. It is slightly different from the existing rules. If the Board is in agreement with the rules, then it will be advertised as an Ordinance and consider a formal adoption in October.

Commissioner Haigis states he is ok with passing the updated rules.

Commissioner Martino asks on the second page states öin the event that any of the agility requirements are unavailable and are not operational, then the Chief of Police shall make the recommendation on alternative substitute test that is similar to the components of the agility test that is unavailableö, what under this agility test could be unavailable.

Manager Shepherd states he feels it would be unlikely, but in theory could a window climb not be working, possibly, but the Commission wanted to have some flexibility in the event that one of the tests wasn't available, they wouldn't be able to test.

Commissioner Kucera states what they mean by unavailable is if it is being challenged.

Commissioner Martino states it should read challenged, not unavailable.

Manager Shepherd states he agrees but feels the Commission wants some flexibility in the event something would not be available. If the Board wants the Commission to look at it again, then they'll schedule an additional meeting to reconsider the concern and the process will start again. He states the concerns are valid and the Board agrees to move forward to advertise.

F. Planning/Engineering Topics:

1) S-11-2016: Brook Haven Plan Phase III & IV, Morris Avenue / Durst Rd / Timothy Road, R-3 & 4 Zoning

**Subdivision plan to create 27 single-family lots on Durst Road and Timothy Road.*

Mr. Blenko states Phases I and II are already underway in Penn Township. It is a simple plan in terms of infrastructure because all the lots are on existing roads with the exception of the six lots on the cul de sac to be named Reilly. Water and sewer need to be extended, the stormwater will run into one large detention pond. The developer is requesting waivers on submission of a formal environmental constraint study, installation of sidewalks because ninety percent of the lots exceed one hundred foot frontage and exceed half an acre, submission of a traffic impact study and a waiver that asphalt wedge curbs would be constructed out of base material. The Planning Commission recommended approval of this plan with four conditions being that PADot would

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approve the proposed driveways and intersection with Reilly Way, however PADot will not permit more than one driveway from a piece of property, resolution of a handful of remaining engineering comments, a developer's agreement and fee in lieu funds will be dedicated to Oak Hollow Park.

2) S-12-2016: Adam & Carley Painter Plan, Southampton Drive, R-3 Zoning

**Minor subdivision located on 3.219 acre parcel at 2261 Mickanin Road.*

Mr. Blenko states this is a one parcel into two lot subdivision located on Southampton Drive. Mr. & Mrs. Painter would like to split the land to create a second lot so a second home could be built. The only condition is DEP would have to approve one EDU sewage plan. The Planning Commission recommends approval with DEP approval.

G. FURTHER BOARD COMMENTS

There are not further Board comments.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Herold

Motion to adjourn.

Second: Commissioner Bertani

Motion carried 7 6 0 6 0 (8:47 P.M.)

- Special Meeting minutes of September 15, 2016 were approved by the Board of Commissioners on _____.

Tony Martino, President

John M. Shepherd, Township Secretary
/jjm

****Executive Session after meeting.**

1. Police Negotiations - update.

