

LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES – April 3, 2023 @ 7:00 P.M.
In-Person

CALL TO ORDER CALL TO ORDER: The April 3, 2023, regular meeting of the Lower Mount Bethel Township Board of Supervisors was held in person at 6984 S. Delaware Drive, Martins Creek, Pennsylvania, 18063 (formerly known as Centerfield School), Martins Creek, PA, 18063. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson DeBerardinis at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were M. DeBerardinis, S. Disidore, S. Newman, J. Mauser, S. Burns, J. Zator, J. Smethers and M. Mastrogiovanni. There were 16 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 6, 2023. S. Disidore made one edit to the minutes as follows in bold: **Frontier is going to install fiber optic internet**, instead of Frontier is buying fiber optic internet. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Newman to approve the minutes as revised by S. Newman previously and S. Disidore as stated above. Vote: 5-0. M. DeBerardinis announced there was an Executive Session held on 3/11/23, no action was taken.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Approval of the Road Paving Project** – J. Smethers has reached out to our PennDOT rep multiple times to meet and put together our RFP for paving. We are planning on doing Little Creek Road this summer. Jen also spoke to Landon Parker from the County regarding replacement of the asphalt on the bridge. We can use extra asphalt as an alternate bid for the bridge, to be paid by the county. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to have J. Smethers move forward with advertising the RFP contingent upon our PennDOT rep approving the project and completing the RFP paperwork. Vote: 5-0. Public Comment by M. Szoka – she asked if anyone knows when County Bridge 41 is going to be completed and when PPL is going to put the poles back. Public Comment by B. Hart – he recommended the 611 bridge plan by the scenic byways include walking sidewalks. S. Burns mentioned they are going to repair the bridge in 2024-2025, but no replacement for 10 years.
- 2. Approve purchase / order of backhoe** – The state contract price from Groff Tractor & Equipment came in at \$136,900.00. J. Smethers indicated she got an estimate from Embassy Bank for financing (they did the financing for the white truck). With \$35,000 down, the loan amount would be \$81,900 for 5 years and an interest rate of 6.35% with a monthly payment of \$1,600.00. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Burns to authorize J. Smethers to move forward with ordering the backhoe and use Embassy Bank for financing. Vote: 5-0.
- 3. Welcome Center open Memorial Day – Labor Day.** J. Smethers indicated this was discussed briefly last year, if the Township wants to open the Welcome Center from Memorial Day – Labor Day. A staff member would need to be there, we can work that out. Visitors did enjoy stopping in and getting information and looking around. Jen & Melissa can rotate 1 day each week with A. Disante being there also, that way someone is always in the office. J. Mauser thought this is a great idea to have environmental information available to the residents. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Newman to proceed with the plan. Jen and Melissa will work out the schedule with Anthony the days he has office hours. Vote: 5-0.

4. **Approval of the 2022 Audit –MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to approve the 2022 Municipal Annual Audit and Financial Report and advertise accordingly. Vote: 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **MacDougall ASA Public Hearing – Resolution No. 2023-06.** J. Zator opened up the Public Meeting at 7:20 p.m. The public notice was advertised in the Express Times on 3/16/23 and the required posting of the public hearing was completed on 3/24/23 for a Public Hearing to be held on 4/3/23. No public comment has been received by the Township and everything is in order. **MOTION** by S. Newman, second by S. Disidore to approve the addition of approximately 70.1 acres owned by Ann Marie MacDougall and Catherine Watts – 3137 Klausz Rd. Bangor, PA 18013 to the Agricultural Security Area and adopt Resolution No. 2023-06. Vote: 5-0.
2. **Ordinance No. 2023-01- Howell Road 10-ton Motor Vehicle Weight Restriction Public Hearing – Ordinance No. 2023-01.** J. Zator opened up the Public Hearing and reviewed the ordinance with the Board of Supervisors. Signs will be posted that there will be penalties for violations. Public Comment by M. Posner – she asked how this will be monitored. There was discussion about how this will be enforced. J. Smethers indicated the signs that will be posted shall state no trucks permitted. Once they are posted, if any truck travels on Howell Rd. their license plate number can be recorded and the trucking company contacted.. B. Hart suggested we reach out to New Enterprise and Delaware Quarry to let them know about the posting of the road that no trucks are permitted. S. Newman suggested we notify residents, put on the website and notify the state police. S. Burns suggested we send the ordinance to all the quarries. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Disidore to adopt Ordinance No. 2023-01 establishing a ten-ton weight restriction on motor vehicles traveling on Howell Road based on the condition of the road and to provide signage indicating such restrictions. Vote: 4-0-1, M. DeBerardinis abstained.
3. **Hunting permits – 2023/2024** – J. Mauser indicated 150 hunting permits were issued for 2022/2023. 16 deer were harvested and the rules were 1st harvest a doe, then a buck. They were to report to the Township secretary; only ½ have reported. Most people that harvested were not Township residents. We need to address the harvest decline as it is having a major environmental impact.. J. Mauser will ask the PA Game Commission to come to the May Meeting. M. DeBerardinis would like to have Talen sit down with us also. J. Mauser and M. DeBerardinis will reach out to the Game Commission and meet with Talen to see if they would be willing to re-open those areas they took away.
4. **Centerfield Playground** – J. Smethers indicated she received the updated numbers and the layout from Lyons Recreation. The cost for Centerfield is \$47,714.19 and Riverton is \$18,161.61. Based on these figures, the township would need to contribute \$10,875.80 with the road crew prepping the site. Jen also submitted two more grants for the tennis/pickleball courts to try and get additional funding for the courts. Jen mentioned the Road Crew trying to move the little bus without destroying it and move some of the park benches to make everything fit. M. DeBerardinis asked that we put this on an actual site plan to see how it will fit with the existing equipment. Mike suggested a fence around the propane tank and the slide going by the Basketball court. Jen suggested keeping the all-inclusive equipment together for children with disabilities. There was a discussion about the sliding board location. Jen indicated we could eliminate the sliding board completely, or move it to a different location which would be a savings of \$4,732.00. There was also discussion about updating our Basketball court to the regulation size.

MOTION by J. Mauser, second by S. Burns to move the sliding board to the Riverton Park and maintain the playground equipment at Centerfield as stated by J. Smethers. Vote: 5-0.

Jen mentioned the current tennis courts might be on the adjacent property and asked the Board if she could work with Justin (estimate is \$2,500 - \$3,000) on getting a survey done. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Newman to approve J. Smethers working with J. Coyle on the survey to be done at the Centerfield property for installation of the tennis courts and pickle-ball court. Vote: 5-0. J. Smethers mentioned we received a \$100,000 grant for the tennis and pickle-ball courts and also submitted two other grants to the County and LV Greenways.

5. **Good Shepherd Lutheran/Trinity EV Lutheran Church.** R. Marinelli, Open Space Chair. made a presentation to the Board of Supervisors and discussed the option of using Open Space funds to preserve Historic Buildings. Regina mentioned she would like to get started on our Corridor Management plan so we can legally use Open Space Money. S. Disidore mentioned the Northampton County Historical Asset Plan has fundings sources and has a chart how different entities can partner together. Regina indicated the Open Space Committee made a recommendation to get a legal opinion for use of 25% Open Space Funds per year. The Open Space Fund brings in approximately \$200,000 annually and there is 1.48 million in the account.

Public Comment by M. Szoka – If we can't use Open Space funds, then maybe we can form a 501(c)-3 and sell it in the future.

J. Mauser suggested exploration to see if we can find a current 501 (c)- 3 partner. The Martins Jacoby Watershed Association is a 501 (c) -3. If LMBT takes it on, we could acquire it for \$1, but we would be responsible for all maintenance. Being a 501 (c)-3 helps with funding. We should also look into what part of the community is interested in this. There was discussion about getting a building inspection, title search survey & environmental inspection before moving forward and what the costs will be before moving forward and if it's a viable and worthwhile project.

Public Comment by R. DeFebo – Ray mentioned this isn't the first building given to the township for \$1.

Public Comment by J. Koshinski – John disagreed with the money coming from the Open Space fund and commented on the liability to the Township by acquiring this building; that Farmland Preservation is not a continued liability to the Township.

Regina will make the same presentation at the Martin Jacoby Watershed meeting tomorrow night. Regina & Sandra will continue proceeding with 501 (c)-3 inquiries. S. Newman mentioned the Friends of 3 Church Hill have unofficial committed funds. Sandra also mentioned we have more parks & recreation than we'll need for the next 10 years. J. Smethers noted acquiring ownership doesn't mean you have to restore; it could just sit there and keep it closed until future renovations. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Newman to have J. Smethers contact L. Possinger to inquire if the Township can use Open Space Funds for maintenance of the Good Shepherd Lutheran/Trinity EV Lutheran Church and also contact J. Coyle for a cost estimate to do a building inspection, title search survey & environmental inspection. If the cost estimate comes back \$4,000 or less and contingent on a positive answer from L. Possinger, then J. Smethers can move forward with building inspection, title search survey & environmental inspection paid out of Capital Reserve fund. Vote: 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS - MOTION by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Burns to pay the bills in the amount of \$151,849.49. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

Township Solicitor Report – J. Zator submitted his written report and noted he signed off on the Auditors letter today.

Chairman's Report – No report

Board Members Reports

J. Mauser – John indicated he met with E. Woodruff & J. Pilyar from Centerfield Park Committee, the CF Park Committee does not have a budget and are asking the Township for \$300.00 from Township funds for plants at Centerfield School to be put in urns on the playground, bench planters and arbor. They have put in a lot of effort and it's a modest amount of money. Public Comment by M. Posner – they have done a beautiful job there. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Newman to grant the CF Park Committee's request of \$300.00 for plantings at the Centerfield School Building. Vote: 5-0.

S. Newman – No report.

S. Burns – Samantha reported as Rec. Board Liaison – All seedlings are completed for the plant sale; the Rec. Board earns about \$1,000 from the sale for Community Day activities. She and S. Newman attended the Northampton County Council meeting re: LERTA for River Pointe Logistics. Our Representative from BACAIDA was present. Samantha indicated LMBT does not agree or endorse LERTA for River Pointe Logistics. Public Comment by R. Grucella – Rich noted he appeared at that meeting, not as a member of BACAIDA, but spoke as R. Grucella, private citizen.

Township Manager Report – J. Smethers submitted her written report.

Zoning Officer Report – A. Disante submitted his written report.

Road Department Report – F. Heitzman reported they have been doing maintenance on the trails at Riverton and the Meadows, patching, trucks inspections and maintenance on vehicles and mowers and helped with set up and clean-up of the Easter Egg Hunt.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Floyd Brewer – He asked if we could look into the telephone pole that needs to be moved on Old Franklin Hill Rd. **Bob Hart** - asked if the entire Board of Supervisors contacted the commanding officer at the Belfast State Police Baracks regarding traffic and police presence in the township. S. Burns responded things are under way, the State Police can't ticket until the signs are moved. She will ask the State Police for police presence after the signs are placed. Samantha also mentioned she has been working on this for 7 years and other members of the Board have met with the State Police also. She also went to Harrisburg and has been in constant contact with Penn DOT and she is getting responses now.

ADJOURNMENT - The Public meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted – Melissa Mastrogiovanni, Township Secretary / Planning Administrator
Lower Mount Bethel Township

