

LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES – March 6, 2023 @ 7:00 P.M.
In-Person

CALL TO ORDER: The March 6, 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 (zoom), S. Burns, J. Zator(zoom), J. Coyle (zoom) J. Smethers and M. Mastrogiovanni. There were 14 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 6, 2023. MOTION by J. Mauser, second by S. Burns to approve the minutes as revised and submitted.

Vote: 5-0.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. **C. Buehler** – Catherine received notice from LV Game Commission and PA Game Commission they are putting leg bands and GPS movement to track dynamics of the turkeys that are by her house. She has spotted 18 in the field across from her house and 3 dozen good mixture of males and female. Since the traffic has slowed down, she has also spotted over 50 deer.
2. **M. Posner** – M. Posner mentioned the Rec. Board met last week. They discussed the Easter Egg Hunt and Pancake Breakfast. The Rec. Board will be cooking and serving the breakfast and the Board of Supervisors volunteering is mandatory. M. DeBerardinis will work with the Fire Department organizing the Easter Egg Hunt. The township is buying all the pre-filled eggs and chocolate bunnies. J. Leggett is working on the wooden Easter Bunny cut out display. The Rec. Board will be starting their seedlings soon for the plant sale and Community Day is June. 10th.
3. **R. Marinelli** – The quarry group had a zoom meeting with New Enterprise; 2 reps. were present from New Enterprise (they were also at the 1st meeting). They have made progress in different areas and are considering getting other quarries and trucking companies involved and would like to ask them to come to the next quarterly meeting which will be in person.

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Good Shepherd Lutheran/Trinity EV Lutheran Church** – J. Smethers, S. Disidore, S. Newman, S. Burns and J. Pilyar toured the church for 2 hours. Jen noted the building has amazing history but needs a lot of work. The bathrooms downstairs are not ADA accessible, there is no restroom on the main level, it needs a new roof, new septic and there might be asbestos shingles in the ceiling and needs new decking accessible for a wheel chair. The biggest problem is the parking will only accommodate about 10 cars (the lot across the street was bought by a private owner). S. Disidore agreed, parking is a huge issue. J. Pilyar mentioned this is a historical building and could look into fundraising, grants and possibly there is money from the church available.

R. Marinelli noted there are challenges that come along with historical building and preserving them. It is across from the scenic byway and has a lot of meaning for many generations. The parking issues could be overcome, maybe consider shuttling from Centerfield to the church. There was discussion about potential grants and raising money. We still haven't established if legally the 501 (c)3 would transfer over to the Township.

S. Burns mentioned if we were doing grants, she would like to see the Centerfield building, tennis courts and playground rehabbed. S. Burns suggested maybe J. Pilyar can set up a 501 (c)3. S. Newman suggested we contact our consultants and get their input of the feasibility of doing this. She could also contact Jackie Koons- Felion, she is in charge at the state level and has a lot of knowledge and expertise about Scenic Byways.. R. Marinelli mentioned the possibility of people in the community coming forward in helping and volunteering to see this church preserved. S. Burns commented there are so many unknowns, no numbers of the costs and no inspections have been done. S. Disidore mentioned the high costs of just upgrading the office and maybe other organizations would be interested, or maybe other 501 (c)3 organizations. An environmental study, inspection, analysis, and title search would need to be done. J. Zator indicated that can be done during due diligence. There was discussion about looking into other Historic Committees such as Easton, Bethlehem, and Northampton County.

2. **MacDougall ASA** – J. Zator indicated everything is in order and can move forward with process. **MOTION** by S. Disidore, second by S. Newman to authorize Zator Law to advertise for a public hearing April 3, 2023 and post the property. Vote: 5-0.
3. **2023 Howell Road 10-ton Motor Vehicle Weight Restriction Ordinance** – The Board reviewed the draft Ordinance and indicated the draft is acceptable as submitted. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Newman to authorize Zator Law to advertise the proposed ordinance for possible enactment at the April 3rd BOS meeting. Vote: 4-0-1, M. DeBerardinis abstained.
4. **Authorize Township Manager to Attend PSATS as Voting Delegate** – J. Smethers indicated Jane Mellert, Plainfield Township Supervisor has a Resolution regarding biosolids on the PSAT'S agenda for approval. She would like Lower Mount Bethel Townships support. S. Newman mentioned Nazareth Municipal Authority bought a preserved farm and will be dumping bio-solids on the property. We have a lot of preserved properties and this is a resolution we would want to support. **MOTION** by S. Disidore, second by M. DeBerardinis to authorize J. Smethers, Township Manager to attend the PSAT'S Convention as a voting delegate to support Plainfield's Resolution regarding bio-solids. Vote: 4-0-1, S. Newman abstained.
5. **Rental Fees Criteria for Centerfield Building and Gym** – J. Smethers discussed the fees for the Centerfield Lower Level and suggested they not be waived unless its township related and everyone should be charged to make it fair. We have an intermunicipal agreement with UMBT because LMBT children participate in the program. There was discussion about the gym rental by the wrestling club. S. Disidore suggested since nobody else can use the gym, they should pay the days the mats are down and enter into a contract. The Board discussed checking with other municipalities to see what facility use policies they have in place, if they have any criteria for waiving fees and maybe we consider a discount for long term use fee's. J. Smethers indicated the wrestling club is bringing in about \$7,000 revenue per year. The subcommittee consisting of J. Smethers, S. Disidore and S. Newman will be reviewing and working on a policy for rental criteria. J. Smethers will set up a zoom with the sub-committee to start working on this policy.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Playground Improvements Proposal** – J. Smethers submitted to the BOS the Co-Stars contract with Lyons Recreation and playground equipment pictures. We have to take out the bus, which the Road Dept. can take out and will be replaced with the fire truck. Total cost is \$28,358.61 plus \$3,000 - \$4,000 for installation & freight costs.
- 2. MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Burns to move forward with Lyons Recreation pending confirmation of final numbers. J. Pilyar indicated he and Elvira are on the Centerfield Park Committee and were not included. J. Smethers indicated there are only certain places things would fit. Vote: 5-0.
- 3. Slater Baseball Association Request for Waiver of Fees** – The program is requesting to use Keifer Field from March 15 to June 15 for practice and games. They are further requesting the fees be waived since 18 children who reside in LMBT are in the program. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Newman to approve the request by Slater Baseball Association Request for use of the Keifer field and waive the fees. Vote: 5-0.
- 4. Resolution 2023-05 Livable Landscapes Grant Program Application** - J. Smethers asked the Board if she could apply for funding for the tennis and pickleball courts. Jen indicated we have not heard back from the Statewide LSA grant yet and are seeking other sources of funding. **MOTION** by S. Newman, second by S. Disidore to adopt Resolution 2023-05 – authorizing J. Smethers to apply for the Livable Landscapes Grant Program application. Vote: 5-0.
- 5. Authorization to Apply for the Lehigh Valley Greenways Mini-Grant** – J. Smethers indicated she can apply for up to two grants. One is for stormwater improvements to go along with the Livable Landscapes grant for the tennis courts, and second a grant to plant trees along the bridges on Little Creek Road where the trees had been cut down due to the large equipment. Jen also asked for authorization to work with Justin on stormwater engineering. **MOTION** by S. Disidore, second by J. Mauser to authorize J. Smethers to apply for the Lehigh Valley Greenways Mini-Grant and the Lehigh Valley Greenways Mini-Grant; 2 grant applications. Vote: 5-0. **MOTION** by S. Disidore, second by S. Newman to authorize J. Smethers to work with Justin on stormwater engineering. Vote: 5-0.
- 6. Authorization to Apply for the Northampton County Community Development Block Grant and the Grow NorCo Grant** – J. Smethers asked the Board if she could apply for the CDBG and Grow NorCo grants for funds to replace the cinder shed at the garage. These applications are not due until May and June but would like to start working with Justin on the engineering and plans. **MOTION** by S. Disidore, second by S. Newman to authorize J. Smethers to apply for the CDBG & Grow NorCo grants and work with J. Coyle; Washington Township did their grant application and used contractors in quote for inclusion in the grant. **MOTION** amended by S. Disidore, second amended by S. Newman to authorize J. Smethers to work with J. Coyle and contractor on contract and design to be included in the grant applications. Vote: 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS - MOTION by S. Newman, second by S. Disidore to pay the bills in the amount of \$208,323.20. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

Township Solicitor Report – J. Zator submitted his written report. In addition, there is no update on the Terpstra Farmland Preservation. Joe asked for an Executive Session after the meeting.

Township Engineer Report – J. Coyle reported we received the last pay out for the Gravel Hill Road Culvert Project which came back \$1,500 under contract, he will put the close out documentation together.

Gravel Hill Enterprise - Justin met with J. Smethers, and A. Disante. The inspection went well. The site has been graded out and are doing staging, berms have been installed around lower perimeter. Their NPDES permit has been approved and E & S control plan is in place. The lower end discharge has been stabilized. They have hydro-seeding left to do and the access road should be completed at the end of this month, they should be operational by the end of the month. Justin recommended ATR (auto measuring device) cameras be installed to track the number of axles going in. There was discussion about where the ATR cameras might be placed. We are waiting for approval from DEP and were copied on the NCCD recommendations. The monitoring wells are in, but we haven't received the report yet. S. Newman mentioned we need to monitor the traffic and the truckers need to follow the route. Justin indicated we can do spot inspections and possibly place the trail cam in our right of way; the SD card in the trail cam will pull all the information that we will have on video.

Chairman's Report – M. DeBerardinis will report under the Road Department.

Board Members Reports

S. Disidore – Susan reported on Little Creek Road the curbing comes out, it angles out against the way the road turns, and the wheels of your car go up on the curb when coming around the bend. M. DeBerardinis indicated he will look into it and the Road Crew will fix it. S. Disidore indicated Frontier is going to install fiber optic internet.

S. Newman – Sandra reported at the Slate Belt COG meeting they set the date for sewer jetty training and Mark Hess will be attending. The Slate Belt COG is also looking into other grants. Our Road Department is in favor of a cherry picker. Sandra commended the Board for working on our Waste Management contract and mentioned UMBT's WM contract and the extreme size of the toters they acquired. There is a survey on the County website about broadband.

S. Burns – Samantha asked R. Grucela about the BASIDA being originally the BASDEDC. R. Grucela noted the only original members are Jack Bellis and Jeff Manzi. Rich mentioned the 3 million dollars to do infrastructure in the park; Ultra Poly owned most of that land. When the authority gave the ability to raise more money, each municipality signed off. S. Burns noted this is different from what LMBT originally was involved in; they are involved now in this UMBT project. Samantha talked about not getting information from the IDA through our Rep. and LMBT does not agree with the things they are approving in UMBT. R. Grucela explained the objective of BASDIDA is to bring in businesses to reduce the burden of property taxes to the residents; the overall effect is the BASDIDA is a marketing authority. Air Liquide gave BASD tax revenue. S. Newman mentioned there was a special meeting held last Thursday in which Lou Pektor gave a presentation on sewage treatment plants / drip irrigation. The contract reads it's a power plant environmental cleanup and BASDIDA is a party to the agreement once 50% of the building is occupied, Lou Pektor will turn over and is asking for BASIDA support.

Sandra noted her concern with liability issues by signing the agreement. R. Grucela indicated he will ask questions at the March 16th meeting. S. Newman mentioned the BOS concerns with traffic and the UMBT project will impact all surrounding municipalities. S. Disidore noted there is a huge issue with the trend of warehouses going in now. LMBT has no say about warehousing being put in and Tatamy and LMBT are going to get the hit from the West and the North.

Samantha asked that a motion light be put up outside the Rec. room door. She would like to change the wording in the newsletter the Garden Club's article to say "take a book, leave a book" no more books are being accepted for donation.

Samantha asked if we could have doggy bags outside the township building. M. DeBerardinis said it's not a good idea, because people will be leaving those bags outside the township building, or in the township garbage cans.

J. Mauser – No report

Township Manager Report – Written report submitted. Jen suggested we change the locks for the Centerfield building, we don't know how many keys are out there, maybe dead bolts as an additional lock and then when we rent out, we can unlock the dead bolt and Rodney can lock the dead bolts after the rental is complete.

Road Department Report – M. DeBerardinis reported there was garbage dumped on Old Franklin Hill Rd., he met with the Brewers and the State Police were called. The Road Dept. pre-treated roads for the storm and cleaned up dead fallen trees. Mike mentioned we need to contact PPL for a replacement of the street lights. The 1999 John Deere Backhoe needs to be replaced, a 2024 will be in the range of \$180,000 and it might take time to order the equipment. J. Smethers will look into grants and the replacement schedule. They are stocking the stream at The Meadows, he will make sure the gate isn't blocked. Mike mentioned to John that the Girl Scouts would like to do a project at The Meadows, they will work with John.

PUBLIC COMMENT – R. Grucela noted Section 1901 of the Second-Class Township Code mentions if 25 people petition the Board of Supervisors regarding a Police Department, the Board of Supervisors can move forward organizing a Police Department. He has contacted PSATS regarding tracking and independent cost analysis and contracting with contiguous municipalities.

ADJOURNMENT - The Public meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

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