

UPPER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC MEETING WORK SESSION MINUTES

February 7, 2022

PLEASE NOTE: The Commissioners made decisions on the following items: #15 and #17. The decisions are included in these minutes.

1. Call to order

The February 7, 2022, Public Work Session of the Upper Gwynedd Township Board of Commissioners was called to order by President of the Board, Denise Hull at 7:03 PM. This meeting was recorded and visually taped.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Township Solicitor, Lauren Gallagher.

3. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Deanna Logan, Administrative Assistant to the Township Manager. The individuals in attendance were:

Denise M. Hull	President
Katherine D. Carter	Vice-President
Martha A. Simelaro	Commissioner
Liz K. McNaney	Commissioner
Ruth S. Damsker	Commissioner
Sandra Zadell	Township Manager
Megan Weaver	Assistant Township Manager
Lauren Gallagher	Township Solicitor
Nick Cross	Township Engineer
David Duffy	Chief of Police
David Brill	Finance Director via remote access
E. Van Rieker	Zoning Officer via remote access

4. Announcement of Executive Sessions

Ms. Gallagher said the Board met in Executive Session on February 1st to discuss potential litigation and prior to this meeting to discuss various matters of personnel

5. Recognition of Ben Townsend upon his retirement from the Police Department

6. Public comments and concerns (limit of five minutes per individual)

Mrs. Hull reviewed the public comment policy.

Judy Vose, 619 Whittaker Place would like to hear more about the trail development status. Mrs. Zadell said the Power Line Trail is actively in the feasibility study phase. We have been waiting over a year for a response from PECO about whether we can build a trail in the PECO right of way so until we get a response, the study is on hold.

Mrs. Zadell added that we are waiting for the first draft of the feasibility study for the Liberty Bell Trail. We may have further information by late spring, early summer. Staff follows up on the trail information every 2 – 3 months.

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Departmental Reports

7. [Manager's Report](#) (Sandra Zadell)

As reported by Sandra Zadell, Township Manager

2021 Major achievements

- Full selection of Park & Rec events was offered
- Increased financial reporting in public meetings
- Started a K-9 unit
- Completed the Comprehensive Plan
- Increased Street Sweeping frequency
- Completed Center Street Lighting Project
- Milled and paved numerous streets and got ahead of ADA ramp replacements
- Piloted summer hours to be more accessible to residents
- Continued work on the Liberty Bell Trail & PECO Powerline Trail Feasibility Studies
- New Unity for Kindness event
- New Arbor Day Event
- Received over \$1.5 million in grant funding for public safety, public works and stormwater projects
- Settled contract with police
- Refinanced township debt to create cost savings
- Completed WIP project and took flow to our plant
- Increased training of staff with free courses via DVIT
- Trained staff in Google translate and set up translation service to better serve our non-English speaking residents
- Awarded Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence with partners Wissahickon Trails, Merck & PECO

Social Media

- 156% increase in Facebook followers with over 1800 current followers
- 65% increase in Nextdoor
- Twitter increased by 77%
- New Township Instagram account is growing

Major 2022 projects

- West Prospect Bridge repairs
- Haines Run Project design
- Sumneytown Pike Bridge design
- Spray lining of pipes throughout the Township
- Installation of signs to improve pedestrian safety
- Dickerson Rd. and Meadowbrook neighborhood stormwater improvement project
- Roof Repairs to Township building
- Increase Police Department security
- Comprehensive Plan review and potential project prioritization
- Open Space maintenance prioritization
- Jacks Lane open space clean up
- Newbury Basin retrofit project
- Design and possible construction of secure office entrance
- New full-time Fire Marshal
- Veteran's Memorial and Castle refurbishment
- Upgrade of Administration phones to VOIP
- WIP follow up items for the WWTP with infrastructure and equipment improvements

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8. Planning and Zoning Report (E. Van Rieker)

As reported by Van Rieker, Zoning Officer

- **Subdivision/Land Development Plan for 17 Townhomes** (former Jeppy property renamed Wheatley Walk)

All outstanding issues have been resolved and recommended for approval by the Township engineer. Preliminary/Final Land development plans were approved by the Planning Commission on September 8, 2021. This will be an action item for the February 15, 2022 meeting of the BOC.

Jim McMullen – 1163 Canterbury Dr. asked if the plans will be available prior to next week's meeting. Ms. Weaver replied if you click on the blue link, all the documents associated with the item are available.

- **ZHB 22-01, 309 Sumneytown Pike** - Parking variance.
This is a request to provide fewer parking spaces than required by Zoning. This was approved with conditions on January 25, 2022 and a use & occupancy permit is pending.
- **Proposed Zoning Map Amendment, 375 Morris Road**
This is a map amendment. The property is presently zoned: LI – Limited Industrial and the proposed zoning is IN Institutional. (Former ACTS Corp. Offices). This property is approximately 5.25 acres. Scheduled for the UGT Planning Commission on February 9, 2022
- **ZHB 22-02 – 621 W. Prospect Avenue** – Variances and appeal interpretation by Zoning Officer to build a 5000 sf 2-story garage with other uses as accessory use in R-1 District. Mr. Rieker rejected the building permit application. This will be heard by the ZHB on February 22, 2022. Mr. Rieker recommends sending the Township Solicitor to represent the township in this matter.

9. Engineering Report (Nick Cross)

As reported by Nick Cross, Township Engineer

- **MS4 Program Outfall Inspections**
This time of year typically is best to conduct our annual inspections for pipe outfalls to our waterways and creeks. As part of our MS4 Program, we inspect and report their condition and identify any outfalls that may need further attention (contamination, structural damage, etc.). Our field inspector is making their way through this year's list of outfalls.

Mrs. Carter asked Mr. Cross to explain outfall. Mr. Cross said they are large pipes that outfall or drain to streams and other waterways. Mrs. Carter also asked about the number of outfalls we have in the Township. Mr. Cross was unable to answer her question but will get her the answer.

- **Stormwater Project Design Phase**
We have numerous stormwater infrastructure projects in the budget this year and they are currently making their way through the design phase (Dickerson Rd. and Moyer Blvd.). There is not too much visible in the field during this phase, but the phase that will follow will include a review with Township staff and residents as it moves closer to public bidding and then construction.

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Denise M. Hull, PRESIDENT
Finance/Personnel/Administration

10. Staff Department Reports

This will be placed on the consent agenda

11. Public Meeting Minutes of January 3, 2022 (Reorganization)

This will be placed on the consent agenda

12. Public Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2022

This will be placed on the consent agenda

13. Special Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2022

This will be placed on the consent agenda

14. Approval of Resolution 02-2022; Disposition of specific Township records

This will be placed on the consent agenda

15. **DECISION:** Motion to approve Thomas Koebert as the Deputy Tax Collector for Upper Gwynedd Township

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Damsker, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved.

16. Approval of Nathan Crittendon at the Finance Director/Treasurer for Upper Gwynedd Township

Mrs. Zadell announced that Mr. Brill is retiring at the end of this month. Mr. Crittendon has been involved in municipal finance since 2014. He was offered the position of Finance Director and will be in attendance at the next meeting.

17. **DECISION:** Ratification of authorization of the Township Manager to execute all necessary documents to allow the Township to opt-in to the Opioid Settlement

This is an opportunity to opt in to the settlements regarding the many lawsuits about opioids.

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Damsker, the motion was unanimously approved.

18. Discussion of the Proposal from Gailey Murray Communications

Mrs. Zadell said we have been considering the use of a professional communications company for some public relation strategies and communication options for the Township. We've discussed starting a weekly newsletter as well as work on some special projects. Mrs. Zadell is looking for direction on the scope of the project based on the proposal from Gailey-Murray. This firm has a wealth of expertise with communications and many municipalities in the area use their services for newsletter development, surveys, special projects to name a few.

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Mrs. McNaney asked if we can continue to do our own social media posts and newsletters as she feels we do a good job. Mrs. Zadell said we will continue with the newsletter and social media posts, but we don't have the staff for a weekly e-newsletter. She added we can use them for whatever we need based on a time and materials basis. Mrs. McNaney said this may be a good way to increase resident communication and engagement.

Mrs. Hull commented that she felt the price was too high. Mrs. Zadell said we can scale down the proposal. We need help with a weekly e-newsletter for citizen engagement as this is a good way to get information to our residents. Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Simelaro also commented on the high cost of the proposal and felt a pick and choose option would be appropriate.

Mrs. Zadell will ask for a new proposal from the Gailey Murray taking the BOC comments into consideration.

Katherine D. Carter, Vice President **Public Safety**

19. Approval of the Fire Safety Service Renewal Agreement with Keystone Fire Protection

This will be placed on the consent agenda

20. Approval of the purchase of a 2022 Ford Expedition as a replacement police vehicle in accordance with the police department's capital purchase vehicle replacement plan.

This year we will be replacing one police vehicle. Mrs. Carter asked if we would have difficulty getting this vehicle. Chief Duffy said this vehicle is currently in stock with our Costar vendor.

21. Approval of the release of the Fire Escrow for 408 Carmichael Drive in the amount of \$121,651.82

Mrs. Zadell said the Fire Marshal recommended the release of much of the money held in escrow and is holding a portion in reserve for site improvements until building plans are finalized.

22. Approval of the Fire Departments Volunteer Tax Credits

NPFD volunteers are eligible this year.

23. Approval of the Police Chief to meet with the Civil Service Commission regarding the hiring process to fill a vacant police officer position and a promotion process to fill a vacant sergeant position.

Sgt. Townsend is retiring from the police department and an open officer position will need to be filled.

Ruth S. Damsker **Zoning/Planning/Code Enforcement**

24. Merck & Co. waiver request from Chapter 113-1 & 124-5 for afterhours and Sunday work to install a new natural gas service into the Merck site from the gas main on Sumneytown Pike. February 16 – April 3, 2022.

This will be placed on the consent agenda

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25. Merck & Co. waiver request from Chapter 113-1 & 124-5 for Sunday work to perform structural steel erection with crane lifts on WP50. February 16 – April 3, 2022. Sundays in March and April 2022 as needed

This will be placed on the consent agenda

26. Approval of the SBMP O&M agreement for 732 Towamencin Avenue.

This will be placed on the consent agenda

27. Approval of the Township Solicitor appearing on behalf of the Township regarding the ZHB appeal of 621 W. Prospect Avenue

28. Approval of Resolution 03-2022, Preliminary/Final Land Development Plans for WB Home's Wheatley Walk subject to the conditions set forth in the Resolution

All land development plans are available in the packet by clicking the blue link.

Liz K. McNaney

Public Works/Parks/Recreation

29. Approval of the Wissahickon Trails Walk on Sunday, September 18, 2022

This will be placed on the consent agenda

30. Approval of the Wissahickon Trails Green Ribbon Race on Saturday, November 5, 2022

This will be placed on the consent agenda

31. Approval to advertise for the 2022 Roads Program

If you click on the link, the list of roads to be paved this year are provided in the packet.

Mrs. Carter asked how the roads are selected. Mrs. Zadell said we have a list of roads and when they were paved. We typically pave roads approximately every fifteen years. We evaluate the condition of the roads and decide what will go on the list for mill and overlay.

Martha A. Simelaro

Wastewater Treatment

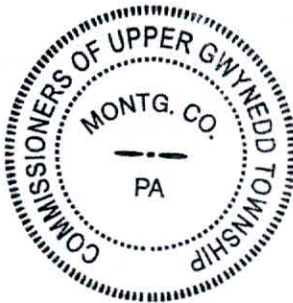
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Other Business

32. Approval of February 2022 Open Invoices (via roll call vote)
33. Approval of February 2022 Paid Invoices (via roll call vote)
34. Call for Adjournment

Mrs. Zadell announced the Township did not raise taxes for 2022, but resident tax bills went up because the county raised real estate taxes by 8%

Mrs. Hull adjourned the meeting at 7:48 pm.



Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Weaver

Megan Weaver
Assistant Secretary

Approved March 22, 2022

/djl