

Ligonier Township Supervisors
Regular Meeting
October 8, 2019

The Ligonier Township Supervisors met in regular session at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance opening the meeting. Roll call was taken by Secretary / Treasurer Verna. Present were Chair, Wade Thomas; Vice Chair, John Beaufort; Secretary / Treasurer, Stephanie Verna; Supervisor Paul Knupp and Supervisor, D. Scott Matson.

Executive Session

The Supervisors went into executive session at 7:00 p.m. and were back in regular session at 7:14 p.m. Solicitor Kornis certified compliance with the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act stating discussions were related to potential litigation and real estate.

Public Comment

Mr. Larry Springer (Looking Glass Lane) said that his family has lived in Ligonier for 3 generations. His neighbor showed him a recent newspaper article regarding the Property Maintenance Code. He said that some codes such as building codes protect consumers and property owners, but he does not think we need more regulations. He thinks that one should not be fined or prosecuted just because property is not maintained to someone else's standards. He feels the article is threatening residents with the Court of Common Pleas and that the Township's goal is to collect fines faster. He stated he plans on getting a demo permit and will take his property off the tax rolls.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Paul Knupp to approve the September 24, 2019 regular meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Supervisor Comment

Supervisor Knupp commented that the Rec Board received a national award for the Ligonier Community Gardens and commended them for the work they've been doing. He also addressed Mr. Springer and explained that the Property Maintenance code is a way for the Township to address complaints from other residents.

Supervisor Matson agreed with Supervisor Knupp and added that zoning is a tool not a weapon.

Staff Reports

Manager's Report

See attachment.

Public Works Report

Manager Carcella reported that Berkley Road is now open; we received \$50k for project costs from the County Conservation Dirt & Gravel grant, the Township spent \$30k (this includes our labor), for a total of \$80k spent on the road. Russell Standard has completed work (sealing roads) for a total of \$203k. Next up is Hillside Drive – putting a rolled curb in place, Swank

Road – grading and shaping and winter prep. We will also submit 3 grant applications for Hidden Valley Road, Claycomb Road and Old Linn Run Road for the 2020 season.

Mr. Ashley discussed the Energy Efficient Project – Trane Commercial Systems in Pittsburg has put together a proposal to reduce the complex energy costs.

Engineer's Report

Deferred to Old Business.

Police Report

See attachment.

Assistant Chief Matronics asked the community to follow the signs/detours and watch out for pedestrians during the upcoming Fort Days festival. He also stated officers served an arrest warrant after following up on some neighborhood complaints and encountered stolen guns and methamphetamines, charges are being filed.

Solicitor Report

Solicitor Korn reported that he went to the Summit Avenue stormwater meeting and will keep the Supervisors apprised of further developments.

Zoning Report

See attachment.

Code Officer Report

The County Land Bank annual \$25k Demo Grant application period is open until the end of October. Mr. Ashley is researching requirements.

Correspondence

- 1) Hami's letter clarified they are interested in working with the Township on smaller jobs, but not going to apply for the Township Engineer opening.
- 2) Ligonier Valley Library letter requesting \$1,500 donation
- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Paul Knupp to approve a \$1500 donation for the Ligonier Valley Library. Motion carried.
- 3) Community Gardens notice of a national award

Treasurer's Report

Supervisor Verna reported the account balances as of October 8:

General Fund account is \$380,868

Act 13 Account is \$52,991

Beach Property Account is \$3,618

Developers Account is \$12,544

Liquid Fuels Account is \$42,215
Equipment Fund is \$12,272
Capital Reserve CDs are at \$541,544
Sweep Account at this point is \$112,788

For a total account balance of \$1,158,850

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Scott Matson to approve the bill pay list as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business

Ms. Boring reported that the County's stormwater model ordinance is still being reviewed by the DEP; she recommends that the Township's ordinance (2019-3) be tabled for advertising until the County version passes.

Logo Contest

Mr. Nieuwsma reported that although staff was unable to conduct a poll, there was some community consensus; the Supervisors chose Mary Laughlin's submittal as the contest winner.

New Business

Mr. Carcella briefly discussed the 2020 Draft Budget, stating there are increased expenses to cover additional services (tree trimming, stormwater planning, and trail extension), equipment rental/purchase, and rising health care costs. The increase is partially offset by a full time position reduction in hours and some funds that will not be spent in 2019. He recommended a 1 mil tax increase to keep the budget (as is) balanced and asked the Supervisors to review the draft and provide feedback. He will meet with the finance committee for their recommendations before submitting to the Board for public discussion / approval in November.

10-Ton Roller

The broken 10-ton roller was put on Municibid as scrap material. Received an \$825 offer.

- A motion was made by Scott Matson and seconded by John Beaufort to sell the 10-ton roller for \$825. Motion carried.

Memorial Park Fishing Dock

The Recreation Board is seeking a grant for funds to build a fishing platform at Memorial Park. The estimated cost of the project exceeds the Second Class Township code limit, requiring that it be put out to bid. Supervisor Beaufort asked if anyone was opposed to this project, specifically Trout Unlimited? Trout Unlimited sent a letter of support.

- A motion was made by Paul Knupp and seconded by Stephanie Verna to advertise for bids to build the fishing platform at Memorial Park. Motion carried.

Halloween

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Paul Knupp to approve trick or treat on October 31 from 6-8 p.m. Motion carried.

Resolution 2019-35

This Resolution contains five items and is intended to help clarify the Board's priorities and help determine what direction to give to the Planning Commission:

- A. Solar Energy Amendment to Zoning Ordinance - amend so that minor issues can be approved by the Zoning Officer instead of going through the Zoning Hearing Board Process.
- B. Zoning Map Amendments – for Nicely Road potential development (R1 or R2) this could bring tax revenue growth
- C. Oil & Gas Amendments from the Joint Comprehensive Steering Committee – this is quite extensive and involves legal analysis
- D. Property Maintenance Ordinance Amendment UCC
- E. Timber Ordinance – recommendation from PA Hardwoods

Solicitor Korns added the Supervisors need to consider if they want to “reopen” the zoning ordinances. The process is lengthy, costly, and requires coordination. Supervisor Verna said we should have accumulated a list of map changes that could be processed at the same time. There was a discussion about how to proceed; what level of review would be required and when/if it would happen. Supervisor Verna commented that it is challenging to evaluate these issues from the limited information being provided. People have spent a lot of time to research and put together a thoughtful proposal. At a minimum, she would like to see the list and formally respond to it. Supervisor Beaufort was not sure what level of analysis would be required. Supervisor Thomas did not want to review. The resolution was tabled. The Supervisors asked Mr. Carcella to coordinate with the Planning Commission, to attend their next workshop for discussion on October 22 @ 4:30 p.m.

Public Comment “B”

Vickie Oles – attended the last Planning Commission meeting and asked Mr. Korns if municipalities have more leeway in regulating gas & oil issues since 2015. Solicitor Korns answered that yes, things have changed in some areas, such as sound, air monitoring, performance standards. Mrs. Oles then stated, in 2015 they were assured there was an urgency to pass the ordinance and that it would be revisited. They were encouraged to participate. They collected and reviewed data from others, what has stood up in court, best practices and standards, reports of health data, and emergency management. They have participated in the Environmental Subcommittee of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. They have filled out the forms, followed the requirements, focused on what they want rather than what they don't want.

They came prepared to make reasonable recommendations and for cooperative dialogue. She hopes they invite a member of the environmental committee to participate in the workshop meeting and thanked them for consideration so far.

Patty Ostrosky – Said in reference to an earlier comment that it is hard to get community involvement that she has signed up for workshops but no one has contacted her. She has a lot of research she is willing to share. There are probably others that haven't been contacted and the Supervisors should be aware of this. If you want community involvement – you need to ask. She was appalled at the comments made about not participating in the zoning ordinance processes and asked why.

Supervisor Comments

Supervisor Matson commented, it's not that he doesn't care, he thinks the Township has done a good job with zoning, especially considering we are surrounded by Townships that don't have zoning ordinances.

- A motion was made by Scott Matson and seconded by Paul Knupp to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Bethany Caldwell
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer