

**FORKS TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

2-4-2021

**Work Session Minutes
February 4, 2021 -**

A work session of the Forks Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at the Forks Township Municipal Building, Easton, PA, and was also held virtually through ZOOM. Chairman O'Neil opened the meeting at 7:06 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members:

John O'Neil, Chairman
Dan Martyak, Vice Chairman
Tim Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer
Kelly Keegan, Member
Ty Corallo, Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Donna M. Asure, Township Manager
Lisa Pereira, Twp. Solicitor
Sean Policelli, Engineer
Greg Dorney, Chief of Police
Steve Kramer, Public Works Director
Rachel Sulzbach, Parks & Recreation Director
Tim Weis, Building & Zoning Officer

Public Comment:

Residents of the Pheasant Ridge development spoke on behalf of the unfinished road and its winter maintenance in this section of the development. The following residents spoke –

Rose Peretti – 1460 Deerpath & Fox Run
Arthur Zaretsky – 1425 Fox Run Road
James Massy – 1455 Fox Run Road
Dario and Jennifer Ferrara – 1450 Fox Run Road
Jeff Stewart – 1405 Fox Run Road
Jeff Gross – 1425 Willow Drive
Michael Vitali – 1470 Fox Run Road
Matt Padray – 1420 Willow Drive
Michael Ecker – attorney

Issues discussed were surrounding why the road has yet to be taken over by the township, the maintenance of this road for the last fifteen years both winter and summer, the township responsibility of the road as they are not get signed over to the township, the shoveling of the bike path in front of the homes, the safety issues and how to move forward.

L. Pereira stated that the township is evaluating all options and the board will advise the residents as soon as there is a resolution.

J. O'Neil stated that the supervisors understand the frustration felt by the residents and apologized for the length of time this has taken to resolve. He stated the residents have the boards' word that they will find a solution.

D. Martyak stated that the residents' message has been heard by the board. As stated by Mr. O'Neil you have a commitment that something will be done. He stated that this will be reviewed as much as possible at the next board meeting.

Vince Veltri – 1612 Adams commented on the traffic concerns with the Triple Net Warehouse project. A concern is the turn that causes difficulty from Uhler to Kessler'sville. Mr. Veltri would like to see a

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sweeping right turn lane. D. Martyak explained that the hearing was held at the last meeting and traffic was discussed. The issue with the turn lane is the railroad tracks and eminent domain. Currently the intersection meets traffic standards. The board assured all that they are constantly looking at the traffic issues throughout the township.

Supervisors Comments:

- Supervisor John O'Neil thanked the public works, parks, police, and fire department for all they did during the storm. The roads were always passable, and he asked that residents be patient as the clean-up continues from such a large storm.

Announcements – none

Presentations

PFM – Public Financial Management –

Jamie Schlesinger of PFM presented a refinancing opportunity to the board. Currently the township has bonds, financed in 2010 and with interest rates being low the township may be able to net a savings of \$400,000.00. Mr. Schlesinger explained the process, the options, and the schedule to accomplish the refinancing. The debt would not be extended nor increased.

D. Martyak made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to authorize PFM to move forward with refinancing the Forks Township bonds. Roll Call Vote: T. Corolla, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Posh Property rezoning request –

Representatives of the Posh properties presented a request to the board that the property next to park plaza be rezoned to allow for apartments. The developer had requested a variance from the zoning hearing board for this use and was denied. They are requesting the supervisors entertain a zoning change for this property which is currently zoned TC and does not allow residential. The project they have for this property is a mixed-use project including apartments. D. Martyak asked if the re-zoning is approved would they be requesting variances for the apartments or would current regulations be

followed. The developer stated that they would meet the ordinance on certain things but would like to make the argument for a variance on parking. It was recommended that this discussion continue at the joint work session with the planning commission on February 23, 2021.

Action Items –

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to ratify vouchers payable received through January 28, 2021 in the amounts of General Fund \$ 22,092.28; and Utility Fund - \$ 3,518.63. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to ratify vouchers payable received through January 29, 2021 in the amounts of General Fund \$ 8,235.92. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to approve vouchers payable received through February 3, 2021 in the amounts of General Fund \$ 45,566.18; Real Estate Tax Fund – \$ 137,304.08; Utility Fund - \$ 70,330.32; State Liquid Fuel Fund - \$ 24,501.88. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

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T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to ratify the gross payroll for pay period ending January 31, 2021 in the amount of \$ 154,607.08. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Ecopax Letter of Credit -

Ecopax has submitted a request to reduce their current Letter of Credit for the building expansion project. A letter was received from Gilmore & Associates recommending the reduction. L. Pereira stated that there is evergreen language in the letter of credit.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to approve Release No. 1, a reduction in the letter of credit requested by Ecopax Inc for the Ecopax Building Expansion Land Development Project, for a total release of \$246,743.69 with a remaining value of \$268,600.81 as recommended by Gilmore & Associates. Roll Call Vote: T. Corolla, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Victaulic Guest House Parking Lot Expansion Maintenance Period –

A letter was received from Gilmore & Associates recommending this project enter the 18-month maintenance period.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to enter the 18-month maintenance period for the Victaulic Guest House parking Lot expansion project as recommended by Gilmore & Associates. Roll Call Vote: T. Corolla, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Fort James III

A letter was received from Gilmore & Associates recommending this project enter in to the 18-month maintenance period with a few open items to be addresses. A motion was made and seconded and later withdrawn as the discussion evolved. The township has concerns about the open item of the road settling. It is believed that this issue be resolved before a maintenance period begins. Direction was given to the engineer to contact the developer and state that the issue must be resolved when the weather permits, supervised by public works, before entering the 18-month maintenance period.

Personnel –

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to ratify the hiring of Morgan Keegan as a part-time community center monitor at \$13.00 per hour. Roll Call Vote: T. Corolla, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, abstain. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT HEADS ROUND TABLE

Township Manager- nothing additional

Police- The Chief commended Public Works on a job well done allowing those in his department to do their job safely.

Parks & Recreation- no report

Public Works- S. Kramer thanked everyone for the support during the storm. The department works hard to do a good job. They are working throughout the township to clear the roads. There is another event forecasted which may require the crew to be in over the weekend.

Zoning – Permits are being issued for the Sullivan Trail Apartments project.

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Solicitor- L. Pereira reported that the Noise Ordinance and Fireworks Ordinance will be on the next agenda for the hearing and decision.

Engineer – The discussion on grant opportunities has been put on the next agenda. There was a conference call with the LVPC concerning cross walks and the possibility of grant funding to complete.

Fire- N. Shurgot was presented and stated that the ladder truck is being repaired and reassembled. To date there is no report on the hydraulics or the cause of the damage.

Public Comment –

N. Shurgot thanked public works for the assistance in getting to fire calls.

D. Asure reported that there was an open item from a previous discussion which was the item, introduced by K. Keegan concerning an increase in the supervisor's compensation. The second-class township code allows compensation based on population for non-working supervisors. It appears Forks Township has entered a higher category. The salary could increase from \$3250 which is currently being paid based on a 2007 ordinance, to \$4125 based on the increased population. The board discussed this and decided that at this time the majority of the board was not in favor of pursuing this at this time. It was suggested that perhaps this be discussed in 2022 when there are no local elections that would be affected by this discussion and possible action.

Adjournment -

Upon a motion by K. Keegan, seconded by T. Corallo, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm. All in favor. Motion carried.