

**Towamencin Township
Board of Supervisors
Monthly Meeting
March 27, 2024
7:00 PM**

Present:

H. Charles Wilson III, Chairman
Laura Smith, Vice Chair
Joyce F. Snyder, Secretary
Kristin Warner, Treasurer
Kofi Osei, Asst. Treasurer/Asst. Secretary

Staff:

David G. Kraynik, Township Manager
Robert J. Iannozzi, Jr., Esq., Township Solicitor
Mary Stover, Township Engineer
Niral Modi, IT Director
Timothy Troxel, Chief of Police

Present Remotely:

Colleen Ehrle, Director of Administration

Absent:

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Comments

- This Board meeting is provided live via Zoom for residents unable to attend in person but wish to view and hear the meeting remotely. Public comments submitted by 4:30 pm this afternoon will be read at the start of the meeting. For those present, public comment will be held at the beginning of the meeting.
- A reminder to residents to come up to a microphone. Zoom does not pick up voices from the audience.
- Come out for a night of competition and fun at our first puzzle event, Jigsaw Jamboree, on Friday, April 5th, at 7 pm. Register your team of 2-4 people. Prizes will be awarded to the team that assembles a 500-piece puzzle first. The cost to attend is \$30 per group. Please visit our website or Facebook page for details.
- The Township's Environmental Advisory Council will be holding an invasive plant awareness and removal event on Saturday, April 20th, at Fischer's Park. Participants will meet at 9 am, at the Meadow View Pavilion (the pavilion with the bathrooms). Check the Township's website and Facebook page for volunteer details.

- The Township will be closed this Friday, in observance of Good Friday.

Public Comments

Emailed Submissions:

Resident Lorena Fields reiterated that she wants the Board of Supervisors to stop spending tax dollars on this sewer sale. She condemned paying attorneys to produce a statement to the PUC that goes against what the majority of residents want. She begged the Board to stop this sewer sale once and for all.

Resident Craig Goldsmith asked that fencing be included in the Grist Mill Park plans. She has two children with autism that are both elopers and require fencing to keep them safe. Currently they go to parks outside the Township that are fenced in because our township currently doesn't have this. She provided Friendship Park in Montgomery Township and Kids Castle Park in Doylestown as examples. She asked the Board to consider the safety of all children if they truly wish to make this park inclusive.

Resident Jennifer Goldsmith commented on the Grist Mill Park plans. She and her husband are proud parents of twin autistic boys, who also have ADHD. She shared that a truly inclusive playground will be fully fenced for the safety of children prone to eloping. She shared autistic and ADHD children have a lack of safety awareness and often don't respond when their name is called. She asked the Board to represent their needs and those of many other special needs families in Towamencin Township with the newly renovated inclusive park.

Resident Katie Kelley advocated for the installation of fencing around the proposed inclusive playground at Grist Mill Park. She stated fencing enhances safety and security for all children and provides a crucial sense of reassurance for parents of neurodivergent children who may be prone to wandering or elopement. She feels for parents of children prone to wandering or elopement, finding safe places for their children to play and interact with others can be exceptionally challenging. She emphasized it is crucial that the Township work to create environments where everyone is seen, heard, welcomed, and included. She requested signage and community outreach to emphasize the importance of parental supervision.

In-Person Comments

Resident Vanessa Gaynor offered comments on Grist Mill Park fencing. She thanked Supervisor Smith for offering to investigate this and thanked OSPAC and Joe Meehan for looking to include an inclusive playground. She advocated for fencing to help address the needs of all children, including children prone to eloping. She wants to make sure any playground labeled as inclusive is truly inclusive for all children, which includes fencing, and thoughtful designs.

Resident Martin Cohen commented about the sewer sale, questioning the amount of money that will be received from the sewer sale. He took issue with Act 12, and offered comments about the act and asked the Board to reconsider the sale.

Resident Jenn Foster stated that at the last meeting Chairman Wilson made a comment that it is not that easy to walk away from the sale. She noted Willistown Township terminated their

agreement with AQUA because they listened to their constituents. She stated it is not a sign of weakness to admit you are wrong and asked the Board to reconsider their position.

Resident Bruce Bailey is aghast that three members of the Board are spending so much money on the sewer sale. He took issue with the agreement of sale, and he feels it exposes that the sale is bad for the Township. He encouraged the Board to vote to back out of the sale, feeling it is illegal to sell the system. He also asked for a fence to be installed at Grist Mill Park.

Resident Joe Silverman commented on electric vehicles, asserting the price of electric will increase because of demand. Costs will be great, with needed upgrades to power grids and poles.

Resident Chip Marger added to Mr. Silverman's EV comments, emphasizing the rare Earth minerals needed to manufacture batteries and that private enterprise funded gas stations. He referenced the 2024 sewer rate increase and shared his concerns of possible redistribution to support the sewer system via real estate taxes. He shared he paid \$40,000-50,000 toward his property's infrastructure. Supervisor Snyder clarified that water use is separate from the sewer bills. Supervisor Osei stated the current sewer sale will be funded by sewer rate payers.

Resident Joe Silverman once again commented on electric vehicles, stating it may sound like the electric vehicles are not polluting the environment, but the energy must come from somewhere.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Warner, the Board approved the March 20th meeting minutes.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce F. Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development

Mainland Golf Course: Pillar Agreement for Sign Location

The agreement includes waiver of damage for the property owner for the following:

1) any claim for future damages against the Township for removal of the sign located within the right-of-way and if the Township deems such removal necessary; 2) any claims for consequential damages associated with such necessity for the removal of the sign; and (3) any claims for damage to the property that may occur because of the choice of location of the sign within the right-of-way. This includes but is not limited to any damage caused by snowplowing operations or motor vehicles.

The agreement requires the property owner to indemnify and hold harmless the Township for any damages, costs, or expenses incurred as a result of any claim alleged to have resulted because of the sign's location.

On a motion by Supervisor Warner, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved the Mainland Golf Course pillar agreement.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce F. Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Supervisor Osei asked with if the sign is within the right-of-way, is it a non-conforming sign, or should it be in our Code. Chairman Wilson clarified it is a long-standing sign and it does not need to be altered.

Old Business - None

New Business

Grist Mill Park Improvements Phase 1 Final Design Presentation & Bid Authorization

The Township continues to advance plans for Grist Mill Park improvements Phase 1, which include: a pavilion, an inclusive playground, 2 basketball courts, handicapped parking, and a perimeter trail. To date, the Township has been awarded a \$250,000 grant by PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, with a pending \$250,000 grant application to Department of Community and Economic Development. Simone Collins Landscape Architecture has updated the plans based on feedback from the Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee and will finalize construction and bidding documents based on the Board's feedback. CKS Engineers has provided survey services, and has assisted with grading and stormwater management plans, and erosion and sediment control plans. The park improvements have evolved over the last few years. Robert Gladfelter of Simone Collins reviewed the current plan options to the Board.

Chairman Wilson asked for clarification on the price for the large park, which was \$586. The Township Manager asked if fencing was included in the figure provided, Mr. Gladfelter confirmed it was not, and it could add approximately \$12-15,000 to the final figure.

Supervisor Snyder questioned the difference between inclusive designs and equipment. Mr. Gladfelter offered examples and explained the difference.

Supervisor Warner asked for clarification on the fencing placement challenges. Mr. Gladfelter shared his concerns about potential triggers and the space required for eloping children, acknowledging it is an important concern to discuss. He offered suggestions and other park examples that currently have this design.

Supervisor Osei asked for information on the fencing around the basketball court and the associated boundaries. Mr. Gladfelter clarified the boundaries.

Chairman Wilson asked if the smaller proposal were approved, could additions be made later. Mr. Gladfelter reiterated the available spacing, and the possibility of adding on later.

Chairman Wilson asked how confident Simone Collins was with the proposal figures. Mr. Gladfelter noted they were very confident, and that savings may be found through COSTARS.

Supervisor Smith asked if the full budget could not be attained, rather than subtract from the playground, she would be comfortable adding in the extras later (cornhole, ping-pong, etc.). She appreciated all the residents' feedback and would like to hear more from the families, who wrote in as their comfort is valued. Supervisor Warner agreed.

Supervisor Warner noted this park location is removed from other Township parks areas and would benefit these neighboring residents. She appreciates including the basketball courts.

Resident Vanessa Gaynor thanked Supervisor Smith for reaching out to families with needs. She agrees nothing is going to be a one size fits all, but there are parents that need a smaller perimeter park, and it is important to meet the needs of children who struggle to find a place to belong. She stressed for eloping, distance and time is of the essence.

Resident Gisela Koch commented it seems many things are being crammed in one area. She asked if things could be more spread out. She took issue with there being only two swings on the plan, and asked if another could be added. Mr. Gladfelter offered that there is a gas easement conflict that affects some of the usable area. She thanked Supervisor Smith for her suggestion on completing the playground first, then going back and adding on later.

Resident Jenn Foster appreciates the concept, thanking the Board for the thoughtfulness with this park. She questioned the smaller and larger budgets and asked would reducing the pavilion size help increase the playground area. Mr. Gladfelter confirmed reducing the size would not offer much cost savings.

Resident Joe Meehan shared additional information on the pavilion size in both plans and the option for playground surface materials that could offer cost savings. Mr. Gladfelter confirmed, yes, however, that would require additional future maintenance. He also mentioned another grant has been applied for, however a decision has not been returned on the grant. He added the Committee's opinion was to stick with the larger plan.

Chairman Wilson suggested the park plans be reviewed further with the OSPAC and Finance Committee and the Board would review their findings at the April 24 Board meeting.

Warrant List

The March Warrant list in the amount of \$2,158,604.34 was presented for approval. On a motion by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved the warrant list in the amount of \$2,158,604.34.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce F. Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Public Works Report

The Public Works Committee meets monthly to scope projects and identify efficiencies related to Township infrastructure, properties, and equipment. The Committee met March 21st. Supervisor Smith provided the Committee's report summarizing the following topics:

- Weikel Road Project
- Central Drive Storm Sewer Repairs
- Bocce Courts at Fischer's Park
- 2024 Road Paving & ADA Ramp Project
- Landscape Signage at the Turnpike Interchange
- Repairs to Pedestrian Bridge over Forty Foot Road
- Green Lane Park Soccer Fields
- Welsh/Orvilla Road Intersection Improvement Project
- Forty Foot Road/Newbury Way/PSDC Traffic Signal
- Pedestrian Crossing at Fischer's Park
- Grant Opportunities
- Comprehensive Plan
- MS4 Permit Requirements
- Long Term Storm Sewer Maintenance Plan
- Old Forty Foot Road/Rittenhouse Road PennDOT Safety Improvements
- Township Pool – 2024 Season
- Request for Streetlights at Detweiler Road, Quarry Road and Forty Foot Road
- Possible Grant Opportunities – Traffic Signal Equipment Upgrade
- Retaining Wall – Stonebridge Circle
- Butch Clemens Park Pickleball Courts Concept Plan Proposal
- Stop Sign Request: Green Lane Road and Liberty Bell Circle
- Streetlight at Susan Drive and Keeler Road
- Morgan Log House Roof Replacement
- 2023 Storm Sewer Project – resident issue 1540 Kriebel Road

Finance Committee Report

The Township Finance Committee meets monthly to monitor economic indicators and the pulse of the Township's revenues and expenditures. They also address various requests and concerns that may arise. The Committee met on March 20. Supervisor Warner provided the Committee's report summarizing the following topics:

- Meeting with Morgan Log House
- February 2024 Financials
- Township 2023 Audit
- Long-Range Financial Forecasting
- Capital Budget Update

Consider Proposal to Prepare Concept Plan for Pickleball Courts at Butch Clemens Park

At the request of staff, per the recommendation of the Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee, the Township Engineer submitted a proposal to provide engineering services to prepare a concept plan for future pickleball courts at Butch Clemens Park. The proposal is a lump sum fee of \$5,000 that will cover all costs required to prepare the plan.

On a motion by Supervisor Warner, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved the proposal to prepare concept plans.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce F. Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Authorization to Advertise - 2024 ADA Ramp/Curb Project

This bid is for a contract associated with the Township’s annual curb ramps upgrades and concrete curb replacement. The bid specifications are through a standard PennDOT form and per PennDOT and Federal regulations, whenever projects such as resurfacing are undertaken, the municipality must upgrade existing pedestrian curb ramps to the latest ADA standards. The curb ramps scheduled for this year will be for roads scheduled for paving in 2025. There are 41 ramp locations included as part of this project along Mark Drive, Oxford Road, Steven Lane, Michael Way and Gehman Road. The additional roads where curb replacement is proposed are Susan Drive, Tennis Way, Detwiler Road, Tyler Way, Lisa Lane and Donna Place.

In addition, there is an add/alternate item for a sidewalk extension and two ramps at the intersection of Rittenhouse Road and Old Forty Foot Road.

On a motion by Supervisor Osei, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved authorization to advertise.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce F. Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Consider Proposal - Roof/Soffit/Fascia Replacements to Bustard Road Park Snack Stand

Two proposals were sought by the Public Works Director for labor and materials associated with roof, soffit, and fascia removal and replacements to the Bustard Road Park snack stand building. This expense was accounted for within the 2024 budget. The proposals received include:

- Volpe Enterprises, Inc.:
 - \$23,119 roofing component, \$3,618 Soffit/Fascia work; Total \$26,737
- Borowski Home Improvements, Inc.:
 - \$10,850 roofing component, \$6,500 Soffit/Fascia work; Total \$17,350

Staff has recommended the approval of Borowski Home Improvements, Inc.’s proposal.

On a motion by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved the proposal for roof/soffit/fascia replacements.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce F. Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Acceptance of Donation – Towamencin Volunteer Fire Company

Residents Chang and Yong Park sent a \$75 donation with their alarm permit fee, and directed their donation go to the Fire Company.

On a motion by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved the donation for the fire company.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Joyce F. Snyder, Kristin Warner, Kofi Osei
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Additional Business

Supervisor Osei motioned for staff to prepare a sewer sale termination ordinance and include it on the next agenda. Supervisor Osei commented it has been a year since the APA transfer from NextEra Water to PA American Water. He summarized how they got to this point. He emphasized that four Board members approved a sale to NextEra despite the public being against it. He commented, we are not in a legal issue due to magic, rather this was a policy decision, and there's been no effort by the three Supervisors currently on the Board to try to get out of the agreement. He referenced \$600,000 is sitting in escrow - from the transfer – and it would be nice to use some of those funds to fully build-out Grist Mill Park.

On a motion by Supervisor Osei, seconded by Supervisor Snyder, the motion failed by a 3:2 vote.

Voting Yes: Joyce F. Snyder, Kofi Osei
Voting No: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Kristin Warner,
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Chairman Wilson thanked everyone for their comments this evening. There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Ehrle
Director of Administration