

Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA

December 16, 2015

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 at 6:30 P.M. in the Township Municipal Building, 1200 Carsonia Avenue, Reading, PA.

I. ATTENDANCE

Board members present: James Oswald, John Theodossiou and Todd Weikel. In attendance were approximately 70 people who had attended to represent the Save our Mountain Organization.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by the Chairman James Oswald and then followed with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve the minutes of the November 11, 2015 Lower Alsace Township Supervisors' Meeting.

III. VISITORS:

Jay Worrall, Chairman of the Recreation Commission of the Antietam Valley discussed a recent committee meeting regarding the future maintenance of Carsonia Park which could involve the local municipal road crews and possible staff from the Water and Sewer Authorities. He then requested approval for the remaining playground budget for 2015 in the amount of \$1,139.69 be paid to the Antietam Valley Recreation Association for the future repairs and equipment needs at the playground. In addition, he requested that the 2016 Antietam Valley Playground Program Playground Leaders payroll and expenses be paid by the Recreation Association since some of the expense involved the pool's lifeguards. He said that both the Borough and the Township would then be provided with a detailed accounting each year of the campers and expenses related to the Playground leaders and equipment and supplies. A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel seconded and approved unanimously by the Supervisors regarding this request.

Before the residents from Save Our Mountain and the Spook Lane area were asked to comment, Supervisor Oswald made the following remarks regarding a report in the Reading Eagle regarding the Stokesay Over 55 development application. He read, "As far as the Reading Eagle saying I was unavailable for comment, I was out of the Country on vacation and was unaware of what was happening. In 2011 we spent the better part of a year updating our Zoning and other Land Use Ordinances. The Committee consisted of Twp. Planning Commission members, Supervisors, members of the Zoning Hearing Board and concerned citizens. We went line by line and made a fair amount of changes to better preserve the quality of life in Lower Alsace Twp. Keeping that in mind the Twp. is restricted by law from just outright banning things because residents don't like it. Pa Law requires us to make areas available for all kinds of Businesses from strip clubs to quarries and everything in between. We took a lot of time and did our best to find the areas where each use would put the least strain on the community.

I would appreciate if everyone would be civil and not bash Mr. Gulati, his family or the staff of Stokesay Castle. If you do not approve of the development, direct your comments there. Mr. Gulati, his family and the staff of Stokesay Castle have done a lot for the Community and surrounding area from help with National Night Out and Lower Alsace Ambulance and many others.”

Supervisor Oswald then asked that following Mr. Andy Shean's comments, any other resident who wishes to add new information or present fresh ideas that Mr. Shean didn't cover in his presentation will be given time to present that information and those ideas to the Board of Supervisors.

Andy Shean, a resident from Spook Lane, representing a concerned citizen group known as “Save our Mountain” presented comments to the Supervisors regarding their concern over the proposed over 55 development known as the Stokesay Castle Village project. Requested any additional information regard any TIF meetings or submitted plans on this project. He indicated that the group wanted to seek an amendment to the Spook Lane Overlay District and are considering the filing of a Curative Amendment to seek that change. He referenced the general concerns of this group and focused them on the impact that the development would have on the area roads potentially increasing the number of traffic accidents; the potential for flooding, the dislocation of wildlife and increased taxes. He then questioned whether there was a need for this use of over 55 housing in the area and expressed concern if they don't sell. Concern was also expressed over what was described as the lack of accountability for the tracking of existing TIF projects in the Commonwealth.

At this time Supervisor Oswald read the names from the list of residents who signed in at the meeting. The following residents spoke about their concerns regarding this project and emphasized what Mr. Shean discussed regarding the environment and the potential impact on the natural resources on the mountain. Those who commented include, Frederick Lubas, Lawrence Sweigart, Ralph Trout, Charles Loose, Courtney and Dean Moise, Tom Hopper, Catherine Watson, Francis Parzanese, Patrick Hartz, Lee Bilsky, Helen Martin, Daryl Berro, Meg Archebault, Matthew Beisswanger, Robert Moyer, Nancy Goodman, Ann Goodman, Barb Wittich, Ed Benado, and Fred Wittich.

Tom Watcke – discussed his involvement on the Planning Commission and suggested that the attendees continue to attend and increase their involvement in the township meeting process.

Tyler Watcke questioned the conditional use extension request currently on the agenda. It was explained that the developer is permitted to request extension of time to file the land development plan that was intended to follow the Conditional Use application for The Stokesay Hotel project.

Mark Dudash asked for comments from Mr. Gulati as the developer of this project. At this time Mr. Jack Gulati thanked all of the neighbors of Stokesay Castle for attending the meeting and apologized to them for not communicating in a better manner regarding this project. He discussed this and many other community projects that he was involved with over the last few years. He indicated that this Over 55 community project has been withdrawn due to the current objections of his neighbors.

Robert. Doskos –attended the meeting seeking a solution to a local resident who built a gun range on his property on Haag Road.

IV. ENGINEER

Township Engineer Joe Rogosky reported that the Township will now be submitting the Skyline Grant application to the PennDot Multi Modal Transportation Grant program in addition to the DCED Multi Modal Grant program. A motion was then made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel and all voted yes approving Resolution 201512164 authorizing a grant application and signatory authority to the Chairman James Oswald and Manager Terry Styer; all voted yes to approve.

V. SOLICITOR

A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel and all voted yes to approve Ordinance 239 summarized as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOWER ALSACE, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION BY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF MT. PENN AND THE TOWNSHIP OF LOWER ALSACE, ALL OF BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, TO PROVIDE FOR THE AMENDMENT AND RESTATEMENT OF THE ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT OF THE CENTRAL BERKS REGIONAL POLICE COMMISSION FOR THE PUPOSE OF PROVIDING POLICE SERVICE TO THE AFOREMENTIONED MUNICIPALITIES.

VI. SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS WERE PRESENTED:

- A. Road Department
- B. Central Berks Regional Police Commission. A motion was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel and all voted yes to approve the 2016 Central Berks Regional Police commission Budget totally to \$1.99 million.
- C. Lower Alsace Fire Company and Ambulance Association and Parks Study Committee

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT / LIST OF BILLS

- A. Supervisor Oswald made a motion that was seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou and all voted yes to approve for payment the list of bills in the amount of \$3,288.83 from the Fire Tax Fund and \$151,116.08 which includes the Playground Program 2015 budget balance of \$1,139.69 from the General Fund.

B. After reviewing the proposed 2016 Township budget which proposes to increase the Real Estate Taxes by ½ mill, a discussion was held with Township Resident Homer William suggesting that with the declining fund balance shown in the projected 5 year plan, he suggested that the board consider a 1 mill increase. Following a discussion, the Board said they would revisit the increase as part of the 2016 budget process but preferred to stay with this ½ mill increase in the proposed budget on tonight’s agenda. Also discussed and based upon the request of the Lower Alsace Ambulance Association a new EMS tax of .27 mills would be enacted as per the below Resolution. Following the discussion on the proposed budget, the Supervisors voted to approve the following Resolutions with motions made by Supervisor Seconded by Supervisors Weikel and all voted yes to approve.

201512161	A.	Resolution approving the 2016 Budget of Lower Alsace Township.
201512162	B.	Resolution approving the 2016 Tax Millage for Lower Alsace Township.
201512163	C.	Resolution enacting the 2016 an EMS Tax for Lower Alsace Township.

RESOLUTION NO. 201512161

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED AND ENACTED by the Board of Supervisors of Lower Alsace Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania adopted the Budget as proposed for 2016, summarized below and more fully detailed on the attached pages.

<u>Total Proposed budget for 2015</u>	\$2,855,519
General Fund	\$2,623,695
Highway Aid	\$147,000
Fire Tax	\$40,000
EMS Tax	\$44,824

RESOLUTION NO. 201512162

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED ANE ENACTED by the Board of Supervisors of Lower Alsace Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania that a tax be and the same is hereby levied on all real property within the Township of Lower Alsace subject to taxation for the fiscal year 2016 as follows:

Tax rate for General Purposes, the sum of 6.75 mills on each dollar of assessed valuation, or the sum of .6750 cents on each hundred dollars of assessed valuation plus;

- Local Services Tax - \$52.00
- Per Capita - \$10.00
- Fire Tax - .25 mills
- EMS Tax - .27 mills
- Antietam Lake Tax - .68 mills
- Real Estate Transfer Taxes – ½ of 1%
- Earned Income Tax – ½ of 1%

VIII. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

A. **Township Manager**

1. A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel and all voted yes to approve the 2016 meeting dates and to authorize the Sunshine Act advertisement noting the change for those dates. It was noted that the days for Township Supervisors meetings in 2016 will change from the second and fourth Wednesday's to the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.
2. A request for extension of time until March 31 of 2016 for the Conditional Use Approval for Stokesay Castle Hotel project was reviewed and approved by a motion made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel and all voted yes.

A. **Central Berks Police Department**

November operational and financial reports were submitted

B. **Sewage Enforcement officer**

November report was submitted

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM. The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 6:30 PM in the Township Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Styer
Manager, Secretary / Treasurer