

Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Meeting Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA January 11, 2024

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 6:30 P.M. in the Township Municipal Building, 1200 Carsonia Avenue, Reading, PA.

I. ATTENDANCE

Board members in attendance included Todd Weikel, and Ann Sellers. Supervisor Theodossiou was excused from the meeting in order to attend the Central Berks Police Commission meeting. Other officials in attendance were Kelsey Frankowski (as Township Solicitor), Joe Rogosky (as Township Engineer), Homer Williams (representing the Township Planning Commission), Curt Hill (representing the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority), and Carl Weikel (as Township Road Foreman). Residents in attendance were Michael Roberts and Lorraine Storms (Antietam School District board members), Brian Reeves (water runoff at 27 Old Friedensburg Road), Judy Stettler and Chris Pelka (property issues at 1803 Friedensburg Road), and Holly Rigg, Nathan Storms, Susan Arnold, Marina McGough, and Amy Johnson (seeking information on Antietam School District).

II. PRESENTATIONS

No presentations were scheduled for this evening.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

- 1) Judy Stettler and Chris Pelka both mentioned the property at 1803 Friedensburg Road and asked about the status related to bug issues and sewage issues. Both stated that they have concerns and inquired as to the status of investigation and enforcement. The Township Manager read a prepared report from the Central Berks Police Codes Administrator and the Township Manager stated that both a Property Maintenance inspector and a third party who performs property inspections for the Township have been to the location. Both individuals have verbally reported to the Codes Administrator that no obvious signs of sewage or bugs were observed. The Codes Administrator and the Codes Inspector have been in contact with the property owner to discuss these matters. The Codes Administrator did say that if there are costs to neighboring property owners in remediating their properties, they should keep copies of the costs incurred and present these invoices to the district magistrate and seek reimbursement from the property owner, since this matter would be a civil issue. As far as the health and safety concerns resulting from any sewage concerns at this location, there appears to be no issue which rises to the level where the property would need to be evacuated or condemned at this time. The property will continue to be reviewed to verify there are no additional issues or reoccurrences related to these matters.

- 2) Brian Reeves addressed a concern with excessive water runoff originating from behind his property which then runs onto Old Friedensburg Road. Mr. Reeves property is located on the opposite side of Old Friedensburg Road. The water runs onto Old Friedensburg Road, which will freeze on the road during cold weather season. The Road Foreman stated that he is aware of this matter. He has been addressing this problem by frequently plowing and applying road salt and antiskid to this stretch of road. The Township Manager and Township Road Foreman will investigate the problem and determine what steps can be taken to alleviate the issues and see what the current construction looks like to see if storm catch basins exist to handle this runoff.
- 3) Homer Williams inquired as to certain information printed in the Township newsletter which may not align with the actual code. The Township Manager will research the issues and put out corrected information.
- 4) Curt Hill inquired as to the temporary roadway installed by PennDOT at the intersection of Carsonia Avenue and Logan Street. He wanted to see if PennDOT could patch the seam in the road to reduce the bump. The Township Manager stated that he will contact the PennDOT construction manager to see what can be done to change the concern.

No additional public comments were made.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the December 14, 2023, Lower Alsace Township Supervisors meeting will be approved at the next Township meeting, due to the absence of Supervisor Theodossiou. Supervisor Theodossiou and Supervisor Weikel were the only current Supervisors who were in attendance at the December meeting, and therefore they are the only Supervisors who can approve those meetings.

V. ROAD CREW FOREMAN REPORT

VI. SUPERVISOR LIASON REPORTS

- A. Central Berks Regional Police Commission – Supervisor Theodossiou was not present to give a liaison report.
- B. Lower Alsace Fire Company – Supervisor Weikel had nothing new to report.
- C. Lower Alsace Ambulance Association – Supervisor Weikel had nothing new to report.
- D. Antietam Valley Recreation Commission – Supervisor Sellers had nothing new to report.
- E. Antietam School District – Supervisor Sellers had nothing new to report.

VII. SOLICITOR

The Solicitor had nothing to report that is not already on the agenda.

VIII. ENGINEER

- A. The Engineer presented a status report on the PennDOT bridge replacement project. He is working on open issues with the project, which include the retaining wall along Old Angora Road and the creek wall / flooding / PA Department of Environmental Resources permit / creek remediation. A virtual meeting to discuss the issues with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources is scheduled for January 24.
- B. The Engineer discussed the review of 2024 Street and Road Paving projects with the Township Manager and Road Crew Foreman. This information was also discussed with the engineer for the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority in order to coordinate work between both entities, No changes to the list of projects due to scheduling conflicts noted. The Township Manager mentioned that the water main break on Lenox Avenue may require a change in the repaving priority list depending on what the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority needs to do to repair the main. The Engineer stated that he will reach out to the Authority's engineer to discuss.
- C. The Engineer discussed the issue related to the gas line at the high school property where it crosses the creek. A meeting to discuss the issue is scheduled for January 16.

IX. BOARD AND COMMISSIONS REPORTS

- A. Planning Hearing Board – the most recent meeting of the Planning Commission was held on November 2, 2022. No new meetings of the Planning Commission have been scheduled at this time.
- B. Zoning Hearing Board – the most recent meeting of the Zoning Hearing Board was held on May 17, 2023. No new meetings of the Zoning Hearing Board have been scheduled at this time.
- C. Antietam Valley Recreation Commission – no report.

X. MANAGER - TREASURER'S REPORT / LIST OF BILLS

- A. A motion to approve the December 31, 2023, Treasurer's reports was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Sellers, the motion carried.

- B. A motion to approve the payment of the list of bills as presented was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Sellers, the motion carried.

XI. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

- A. **Central Berks Police Department** – the December 2023 report was presented.
- B. **Central Berks Codes Department** – the December 2023 report was presented.
- C. **Sewage Enforcement Officer** – the December 2023 report was presented.
- D. **Zoning and Building Code Officer** – the December 2023 report was presented.
- E. **Lower Alsace Township Fire Company** – nothing new to report.
- F. **Lower Alsace Ambulance Association** – nothing new to report.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. An update on the status of the use and occupancy permit application for a property in the 1300 block of Friedensburg Road was presented. The owner is in compliance with all required permitting and construction is proceeding.
- B. A discussion on the American Rescue Plan Local Funds will be scheduled for a future meeting.
- C. The Supervisors discussed issues noted at a commercial property in the 1500 block of Friedensburg Road concerning the number of vehicles at the location. The Supervisors directed the Township Manager to review the status of ongoing issues related to zoning laws or property maintenance issues to see if any violations are occurring.
- D. The Supervisors discussed parking concerns noted at a commercial property in the 700 block of Friedensburg Road. The Supervisors directed the Township Manager and Road Foreman to work with the BCIU to identify what changes can be made at this location to reduce the length of the No Parking zone so additional residential parking can be restored.
- E. The Solicitor discussed the commercial property in the 700 block of Brighton Avenue related to the previous concerns of the residents living at this location. At this time, there have been no recent problems reported to Central Berks Police or to the Township office. A problem resident had been relocated to another facility.
- F. The Township Manager read a statement prepared by the Central Berks Codes Administrator on the concerns of residents regarding a property in the 1800 block of Friedensburg Road. The statement details the process by which property maintenance issues and rental property issues are investigated and the options by which they can be resolved. The statement also mentions that details of the status of

these cases cannot be made public due to the fact that these issues may be used in potential legal proceedings. The Central Berks Police Codes Administrator wants to assure the Board of Supervisors and the public that this situation remains an open case and it is being investigated.

- G. The Township Manager presented information on staffing questions related to both the road crew and the codes department which have been raised by both the Supervisors and the road foreman. The supervisors agreed that more discussion must happen in order to make a final decision, which will include a discussion at a future meeting of the Central Berks Police Commission.
- H. The Supervisors discussed the zoning requirements necessary to allow the Antietam School District to use the building at 705 Friedensburg Road as a school for students attending kindergarten through third grade. An inspection of the property by the appropriate specialists took place on January 5th. The Township Manager is awaiting the reports from the specialists and will present those findings to the Board of Supervisors and to the Antietam School Board for their review and consideration.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Township Manager presented an application for a special event permit for Pretzel City Sports to conduct 4 trail runs on January 28, February 25, March 24, and September 1, 2024. The application was reviewed by Central Berks Police, Lower Alsace Fire, and Lower Alsace Ambulance, and all gave their consent. A motion to approve the permit was made by Supervisor Sellers, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

At this time, several of those in attendance who previously stated they were present to learn more about the situation with the school district thanked the Supervisors for their statements regarding the importance of working cooperatively with the school district, the borough, and the residents to find solutions in order to educate the students of the district.

No additional comments were made.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was held.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM on February 8th, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pottiger, Manager, Secretary / Treasurer