

Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Meeting Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA March 14, 2024

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 6:30 P.M. in the Township Municipal Building, 1200 Carsonia Avenue, Reading, PA.

I. ATTENDANCE

Board members in attendance included John Theodossiou and Todd Weikel. Ann Sellers was excused from the meeting. Other officials in attendance were Central Berks Regional Police Department Chief Ray Serafin, Kelsey Frankowski (as Township Solicitor), Joe Rogosky (as Township Engineer), Homer Williams (representing the Township Planning Commission), Lower Alsace Fire Company Chief Robert Mountz, Antietam School District Board President Michael Roberts, Antietam School District Superintendent Heidi Rochlin, and Carl Weikel (as Township Road Foreman). Residents in attendance were Matt Piatt (road concerns - road closure and motorcycles & speeding on Friedensburg Road), and Kelli Rosenberger (seeking information on Antietam School District).

II. PRESENTATIONS

No presentations were scheduled for this evening.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

- 1) Chief Robert Mountz inquired as to the process and timing of having the paving work done at the fire company's lot. Supervisor Theodossiou and Supervisor Weikel spoke on the process, which would be to have the fire company advertise the bid using Pennbid. The fire company will also work with the Township's Engineer Joe Rogosky to develop the project specifications for the project. The Township Manager will work with both Chief Mountz and Joe Rogosky to coordinate this in order to get the bids out and awarded in a timely manner.
- 2) Michael Roberts and Heidi Rochlin both requested to speak to the Board of Supervisors in an executive session to discuss an update on the status of the school district's plans for housing elementary school students for the 2024-2025 school year.
- 3) Matt Piatt inquired as to the details of the road closure at Antietam Road. An update on the PennDOT project which is designed to repair and / or replace the retaining walls in this area is the main reason for the ongoing work. Matt Piatt also expressed concerns for the number of motorcycles speeding on Friedensburg Road. The Police Chief spoke on the matter and will have officers try and monitor the roadway.

No additional public comments were made.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2023, Lower Alsace Township Supervisors meeting was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.

V. ROAD CREW FOREMAN REPORT

The Road Foreman provided an update on snow plowing work. The Road Foreman also expressed a desire to consider the need for hiring a third person on the road crew.

VI. SUPERVISOR LIASON REPORTS

- A. Central Berks Regional Police Commission – Supervisor Theodossiou had nothing new to report. The Police Chief mentioned that there has been a noticeable increase in car thefts involving Kia automobiles.
- B. Lower Alsace Fire Company – Supervisor Weikel had nothing new to report. Supervisor Theodossiou mentioned that the Township will be approving a Resolution to adopt the update the International Fire Code at the next Supervisors' meeting.
- C. Lower Alsace Ambulance Association – Supervisor Weikel had nothing new to report.
- D. Antietam Valley Recreation Commission – there was nothing new to report.
- E. Antietam School District – there was nothing new to report at this time.

VII. SOLICITOR

- A) The Solicitor stated that she replied to the audit request of Herbein & Company and sent a copy of her response to the Township Manager.
- B) The Solicitor spoke on the proposed Fire Code Ordinance. She stated there is nothing unusual to report.

The Solicitor had nothing additional to report.

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.

- B. The Engineer stated that the list of proposed 2024 Street and Road Paving projects will be presented at the April meeting to approve advertising the bids.
- C. The Engineer discussed a request from the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority to waive fees for an upcoming project. issue.

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 February 29, 2024, Treasurer's reports was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, the motion carried.
- B. A motion to approve the payment of the list of bills as presented was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, the motion carried.

XI. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

- A. Central Berks Police Department – the February 2024 report was presented.
- B. Central Berks Codes Department – the February 2024 report was presented.
- C. Sewage Enforcement Officer – the February 2024 report was presented.
- D. Zoning and Building Code Officer – the February 2024 report was presented.
- E. Lower Alsace Township Fire Company – the February 2024 report was presented.
- 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. All necessary permits have been applied for and approved.
- B. A discussion on the American Rescue Plan Local Funds will need to be scheduled to review projects and outside funding sources which will impact the use of funds.
- 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 Township Manager presented a letter which had been sent to the property owners. An update on this matter will be presented at the April Supervisors' meeting.
- D. The Township Manager, Police Chief, and Solicitor reported that there have been no additional issues related to the commercial property in the 700 block of Brighton Avenue related to the previous concerns of the residents living at this location. The Supervisors had no additional concerns.
- E. The Supervisors had no other comments or concerns at this time regarding a property in the 1800 block of Friedensburg Road. The issue is being monitored.
- F. 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 is necessary in order to make a final decision on the road crew. There will be a meeting with the Mount Penn Borough Council to discuss the financing and advertising of the job. The Supervisors agreed to have the Township Manager advertise the position dependent upon the consensus of the meeting with the Borough.
- G. The Supervisors had no further comments or concerns at this time regarding the issue of excessive water runoff onto Old Friedensburg Road. The issue will continue to be monitored.
- H. The Supervisors, Police Chief, and Solicitor discussed the issue of vehicles currently parked in the 900 block of Carsonia Avenue with "For Sale" signs on them. The Solicitor will look into possible legal avenues that could be taken to correct this situation. The issue of the vehicles being in the right of way may be a way to have the vehicles moved.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Township Manager mentioned that the external auditors from Herbein & Company are nearing completion of their audit for the year 2023.
- B. The Township Manager presented a proposed Ordinance to approve the adoption of the 2018 International Fire Code and repealing all Ordinances and parts of Ordinances in conflict therewith. Hearing no comments on the proposed Ordinance,

a motion to advertise the Ordinance was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.

- C. The Township Manager presented a proposed agreement with Hera Registry to provide property registration services for the Township's foreclosure property registration Ordinance. Hearing no comments on the proposed agreement, a motion to approve the agreement was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.
- D. The Township Manager presented a proposed three year agreement with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation for the mowing and weed maintenance along Carsonia Avenue, Friedensburg Road, and Antietam Road. Hearing no comments on the proposed agreement, a motion to approve the agreement was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve. The Supervisors did question what the pros and cons would be of assuming responsibility for snow plowing along these roads. The Township Manager stated that he would reach out to PennDOT to discuss.
- E. The Township Manager presented four applications for special event permits for Antietam Cart Racing, the Gravity Racing League, the Mount Penn Preserve Partnership, and the First Baptist Church for events in the area. The applications was reviewed by Central Berks Police, Lower Alsace Fire, and Lower Alsace Ambulance, and all gave their consent. Hearing no additional comments on the applications, a motion to approve the permits was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.
- F. The Township Manager mentioned that the external auditors from Herbein & Company are conducting their audit for the year 2023 in preparation of the 2023 financial reports, and all is progressing well.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No additional comments were made.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

An executive session was held starting at 7:20 P.M. for the Board of Supervisors to be brought up to date on the status of the school district's plan for housing elementary school students for the 2024-2025 school year. The school board will present the plan to the school board for discussion and possible approval at their school board meeting on Monday, March 18th. The executive session ended at 7:45 P.M. No actions were taken.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM on April 11th, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pottiger, Manager, Secretary / Treasurer