

Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Meeting Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA August 29, 2024

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Thursday, August 29, 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), Arthur Kelly (as Central Berks Regional Codes Department Administrator), Carl Weikel (as Township Road Foreman), and Lorraine Storms (Antietam School District School Board member). Residents in attendance were Sheila Shuman (transport vehicles parked on Cornell Street) and Matt Piatt (speeding and reckless driving on Friedensburg Road and Park Lane). Nonresidents in attendance were Alice Moyer (permit for handicap ramp for Taft Avenue property).

II. PRESENTATIONS

No additional presentations were scheduled for this evening.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Alice Moyer, a representative from the group Little Acts of Love, spoke about the project they are working on to construct a handicap ramp at a property in the 200 block of Taft Avenue for the residents who have mobility issues as well as financial issues. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve a waiver of the permit fee of \$75 was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.
- B. Matt Piatt spoke about speeding issues as well as reckless driving concerns in his neighborhood. Chief Serafin spoke about the difficulties in positioning cars along Friedensburg Road for Central Berks officers to ticket speeding drivers. He also spoke that the police department does not have the ability to use speed guns. He further discussed that recently a traffic study was requested of PennDOT to see if the speed limit could be lowered. The study showed that the current limit is appropriate and is not approved for a change. Other methods of “traffic calming” are not permissible on a state road. Chief Serafin also stated that an officer cannot be posted in this area for any length of time to monitor speeding and reckless driving.

No additional public comments were made.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2024, Lower Alsace Township Supervisors meeting was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.

V. ROAD CREW FOREMAN REPORT

The Road Foreman had nothing to report.

VI. SUPERVISOR LIASON REPORTS

- A. Central Berks Regional Police Commission – Supervisor Theodossiou had nothing to report.
- B. Lower Alsace Fire Company – no report.
- C. Lower Alsace Ambulance Association – no report.
- D. Antietam Valley Recreation Commission – Supervisor Sellers had nothing to report.
- E. Antietam School District – Supervisor Sellers had nothing to report.

VII. SOLICITOR

- A) The Solicitor reported the cars parked along the 800 and 900 blocks of Carsonia Avenue with “FOR SALE” signs on the vehicles appear to have been relocated. The Solicitor and Township Manager have worked on various ways to communicate to the vehicle owners to have the owner move the vehicles. Apparently, the message was received.
- B) The Solicitor reported that further investigation into the transport vehicle issue will be conducted and at that time a letter will be prepared.
- C) The Solicitor reported that consideration had been expressed to review the joint zoning code. The Supervisors agreed to have the Solicitor reach out to the Solicitor for Mount Penn Borough to gauge his thoughts on the matter.

The Solicitor had nothing else to report.

VIII. ENGINEER

- A. The Engineer presented a status report on the 2024 Road Paving Project. The oil and chip work on Hill Road and Old Spies Church Road will begin the week of September 9th through September 13th.
- B. The Engineer discussed damage done to guiderails near Antietam Lake. The Road Foreman reviewed the situation and has been in contact with Berks County Parks personnel to get costs for the Township's portion of the repairs, as well as getting quotes for the repairs to be paid for by the County.
- C. The Engineer discussed the damage to a stone wall along Lewis Road. The damage may have been the result of age and the additional traffic from the detour during the PennDOT bridge project. The wall has crumbled which now leaves a sharp edge at the road paving which could cause vehicles to lose control. The Engineer will meet with a property owner to discuss potential repair options.
- D. The Engineer discussed the status of the repair work to be done at the Lower Alsace Township Fire Station. A quote was received by the contractor performing the road work for the Township. The quote was lower than other quotes received by the Lower Alsace Fire Company. These savings were most likely a result of not having to deploy equipment and manpower to the site since they are in the area, as well as the timing of the work, which will occur after most road work has been concluded.
- E. A brief discussion on the Carsonia Avenue sidewalk, storm sewer, and streetscape project commenced. The Engineer presented preliminary costs and the Township Manager stated that funds for this project will be coming from a state Multimodal grant of \$850,000 and from funds resulting from ARPA proceeds of approximately \$350,000. Further discussion on how far the \$1.2 million will extend the project will occur at the September meeting. A motion to approve incurring the engineering costs necessary for this project identified in the grant and payment of those costs was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.

IX. BOARD AND COMMISSIONS REPORTS

- A. Planning Hearing Board – the most recent meeting of the Planning Commission was held on May 1, 2024. 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 20, 2024. 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 July 31, 2024 Treasurer's reports was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, 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 July 2024 report was presented. Chief Serafin reported that a road cut which was made by UGI appears to have sunk. The Engineer stated he will reach out to UGI representatives to make any necessary repairs. Chief Serafin also reported that the Antietam School District may have some concerns with school buses navigating the right turn from the parking lot driveway at Vesper Avenue. Vehicles which are parking in that area may be an issue, as well as the width of the driveway located there. The Township Manager stated he and the Road Foreman will check into the matter and see what can be done.
- B. **Central Berks Codes Department** – the July 2024 report was presented. The Codes Administrator mentioned a property in the zero hundred block of Midland Avenue. Some issues will need to be forwarded on to Central Berks Police to investigate. Other issues which were included in the resident's complaint were issues with grass and trash cans. The Codes Administrator also addressed his review indicated that the property is a rental and appears to be out of compliance with the rental license and inspection program. Subsequent to the meeting, it was determined that the property is in compliance and not up for renewal until 2025. The Codes Administrator also updated the Supervisors on the status of complaints at a property in the 1800 block of Friedensburg Road related to bug infestation issues. The Codes Administrator stated he has been in contact with both the owners of each property as well as the tenant in the rental property to resolve the issue. He will continue to monitor and report back at future Township Supervisors' meetings.
- C. **Sewage Enforcement Officer** – the July 2024 report was presented.
- D. **Zoning and Building Code Officer** – the July 2024 report was presented.
- E. **Lower Alsace Township Fire Company** – the July 2024 report was presented.
- F. **Lower Alsace Ambulance Association** – the July 2024 report was presented.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Based upon the quote and the information received by Fire Chief Mountz, the Township Supervisors recommend that the quote received from CMS be accepted by the Lower Alsace Fire Company.

- B. The Police Chief and Solicitor provided an update on any 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 Police Chief has reported that there have been no new issues occurring. The Solicitor and Township Manager will continue to review the status of progress and evaluate if a second group meeting will be needed to review any issues with the operations of this group.
- C. 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.
- D. 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 has scheduled a meeting on September 10th with the property owner and business operator, along with the Township's zoning official to review the progress made. The results of this meeting will be presented at the September meeting.
- E. The Township Manager provided an update on the status of the property in the 100 block of Midland Avenue. The Township has been in contact with the company overseeing the property to make any needed improvements and find potential buyers.
- F. The Township Manager provided an update on the status of the property in the 800 block of Penndale Avenue. The Township has been in contact with the owners in order to work through any permits, repairs, and inspections necessary. The property was just sold on July 31, 2024.
- G. 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 Township Manager reported that, after much correspondence, it appears that the vehicles have moved.
- H. The Supervisors, Police Chief, Township Manager, and Solicitor discussed the issue of vehicles currently parked in the zero hundred block of Cornell Street. The Township Manager and Solicitor will explore some new information which may prove helpful in removing these vehicles from the street.
- I. The Township Manager and Solicitor provided an update on an Air BnB operating on Eagle Lane. The owner of the property has pulled his application to seek a variance to allow him to operate an Air BnB and is now seeking to register to rent the property.
- J. The Township Manager provided a status report on the LSA grant applications previously submitted.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Township Manager and Solicitor presented Ordinance 2024-4 – Ordinance of the Township of Lower Alsace Township Authorizing Enacting Section 209 of the Lower Alsace Township Traffic Ordinance # 246 Entitled “Regulations, Enforcement and Appeals Related to Motorized Devices and All Terrain Vehicles” for review. A motion to approve the advertisement of the Ordinance was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No additional comments were made.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A brief executive session was held at 7:30 P.M. to discuss applications received for the full time road crew position. No decisions were made. The executive session ended at 7:45 P.M.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM on September 12th, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pottiger, Manager, Secretary / Treasurer