

# **Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Meeting Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA October 10, 2024**

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Thursday, October 10, 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, Todd Weikel, and Ann Sellers. Other officials in attendance were Central Berks Regional Police Department Chief Ray Serafin, Kelsey Frankowski (as Township Solicitor), Joe Rogosky (as Township Engineer), Lower Alsace Fire Company Chief Robert Mountz, Homer Williams (representing the Township Planning Commission), and Carl Weikel (as Township Road Foreman). Residents in attendance were Jane Glenn (new assistant to the Lower Alsace Fire Company), and Sheila Shuman (transportation vehicles parked on Cornell Street). There were no nonresidents in attendance.

## ***II. PRESENTATIONS***

No additional presentations were scheduled for this evening.

## ***III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS***

- A. Lower Alsace Fire Company Chief Robert Mountz introduced Jane Glenn, who will be working with the Fire Company to help with recordkeeping and other matters. The Fire Chief also reported that the ramp work at the fire station has been completed and he was very pleased with the project. He also thanked the Supervisors for the contribution of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to fund this project.
- B. Sheila Shuman spoke about her concerns with her previous complaint regarding transportation vehicles parked on Cornell Street. The Solicitor and the Township Manager both spoke on the actions which have been taken since the complaint was first brought to the attention of the Township. The Solicitor and the Township Zoning Official had issued a Notice of Violation letter to both the tenants living at this location, as well as to the landlord, to inform them that they were in violation of the Home Occupation guidance in the Township's zoning ordinance. This informs residents that a zoning variance is needed to use a residential property for business purposes. The Township Manager commented that since the letter was issued, there has been only one vehicle documented by the Township Manager in this area. Mrs. Shuman stated that she has seen multiple vehicles in the area and would produce photographs and videos to show this activity. Based upon Mrs. Shuman's comments, a motion to direct the Solicitor to pursue legal action to enforce the zoning ordinance was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.

No additional public comments were made.

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2024, 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 reported that work on the 2024 Road Paving project has been completed. He also reported that leaf collection has begun, and tree limb collection will end before the end of October.

**VI. SUPERVISOR LIASON REPORTS**

- A. Central Berks Regional Police Commission – Supervisor Theodossiou had nothing to report in addition to the Chief of Police report.
- B. Lower Alsace Fire Company – Supervisor Weikel had nothing to report in addition to the Fire Chief report.
- C. Lower Alsace Ambulance Association – Supervisor Weikel had nothing to 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 provided an update on the process of having both Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough work jointly on reviewing the joint zoning ordinance, which was initially enacted in 2011. The Solicitor reported that she has reached out to the Solicitor for Mount Penn Borough but has not received a return call. She asked if the Township Manager could provide her with emails for both the President of Mount Penn Borough Council and the Borough Manager. The Township Manager stated that he can do so.

The Solicitor had nothing else to report in addition to items already on the agenda.

**VIII. ENGINEER**

- A. The Engineer presented a status report on the 2024 Road Paving Project. The work has been completed except for line painting. The Engineer has reviewed the work and is satisfied. The Engineer presented Payment Request # 1 payable to Construction Masters Services, LLC for this project in the amount of \$86,622.75 which is being funded by state Liquid Fuels revenue received by the Township. A motion to approve this invoice and payment was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.
- B. The Engineer discussed the damage to a stone wall along Lewis Road. The damage may have been the result of 1) vehicles driving too far off the roadway and running over the stone, 2) age and 3) 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 and Township Manager have met with the property owner who lives next to the road and discussed a plan to repair the wall in order to make the roadway safe.
- C. The Engineer discussed the repair work which was done at the Lower Alsace Township Fire Station. As previously discussed, the project appears to have gone well and was done timely.
- D. The Engineer gave an update on the Carsonia Avenue sidewalk, storm sewer, and streetscape project. The Engineer mentioned that the engineering work has begun. He stated that the window to apply for a PennDOT Multimodal Grant is open and applications need to be submitted by November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve a Resolution to authorize the submission of the grant was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, 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 September 30, 2024 Treasurer's reports was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, 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 Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Sellers, the motion carried.

**XI. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL**

- A. **Central Berks Police Department** – the September 2024 report was presented. Chief Serafin asked if the Supervisors had any questions. There were no further questions from the Supervisors.
- B. **Central Berks Codes Department** – the September 2024 report was presented. Central Berks Police Codes Administrator spoke on the progress made regarding ongoing complaints at a property located in the 1800 block of Friedensburg Road, He has been coordinating exterminations at two properties and the issue is progressing. The case should be closed in the near future.
- C. **Sewage Enforcement Officer** – the September 2024 report was presented.
- D. **Zoning and Building Code Officer** – the September 2024 report was presented.
- E. **Lower Alsace Township Fire Company** – the September 2024 report was presented.
- F. **Lower Alsace Ambulance Association** – the September 2024 report was presented.

**XII. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. 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 were no new issues. The Solicitor stated she is coordinating another group meeting to review all improvements to reduce incidents at this location.
- B. 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. Work is progressing.
- 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 the Township Zoning Official met with the property owner on October 8<sup>th</sup> to review the progress made and all remaining issues. The Township Manager and Township Zoning Official informed the property owner needs to move the vehicles along Friedensburg Road, which are the most visible and unsightly. The vehicles should be relocated behind the fence on the property. A final meeting has been scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup> to verify the property is compliant or legal proceedings will be initiated.
- D. 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. An update on the status will be provided at the next Township Supervisors' meeting.

- E. The Township Manager provided an update on the status of the property in the 800 block of Penndale Avenue. The property was sold on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and substantial repairs have been made to the property. At this time, this matter will be closed, and all follow-up activities with permit inspections and other issues which may arise will be monitored as they arise.
- F. The Supervisors, Police Chief, Township Manager, and Solicitor previously discussed the issue of vehicles currently parked in the zero hundred block of Cornell Street. The Supervisors will await a follow-up report from the Solicitor at the next Township Supervisors' meeting.
- G. The Township Manager and Solicitor provided an update on a property on Eagle Lane. The owner of the property has submitted an application to operate a single family rental at this location which was approved on September 23, 2024.
- H. The Township Manager provided a status report on the LSA grant applications previously submitted. No new updates have been received. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve two Resolutions to authorize the submission of two grant applications for both the Township road crew and for the Lower Alsace Ambulance Association, which were both previously submitted but not awarded, was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.
- I. The Township Manager provided an update on a property in the 600 block of Penndale Avenue regarding a zoning problem with a fence. The Township Manager is working in conjunction with the Township Zoning Official to determine the best way to resolve the issue.
- J. The Supervisors reviewed a proposal for landscaping for the island along Carsonia Avenue which is in front of the Township Municipal building. A discussion about the cost estimate resulted in a decision that the proposed price was higher than the Supervisors wanted to pay. The Supervisors agreed to an alternate plan. The proposed plan would involve Supervisor Sellers offering to design the layout of trees and plants at no cost to the Township, with the Township agreeing to pay up to \$2,000 for trees, shrubs, flowers, and mulch. The Township road crew would then be enlisted to plant and mulch the area. A motion to approve the landscaping plan as presented was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and Supervisors Theodossiou and Weikel voted yes to approve. Supervisor Sellers abstained from the vote.
- K. The Township Manager updated the Supervisors on the steps being taken to search for a suitable full time road crew person. A staffing company has been contacted to see how they can assist in the search.
- L. The Township Manager spoke on the process of finding a new health insurance provider. Several potential brokers have been contacted and the Township Manager

has supplied each with the employee roster as well as current insurance information. New rates are being published now, so there should be comparable information shortly.

M. The Township Manager discussed the status of the 2025 Township Budget.

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. The Township Manager presented a special event permit to the Supervisors for the Antietam A-Fest fund raising event conducted by the Antietam Music Boosters to be held on October 20, 2024. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve the Special Event Permit was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.
- B. The Township Manager presented Ordinance 2024-4 - Ordinance of the Township of Lower Alsace Enacting Section 209 Entitled "Regulations, Enforcement And Appeals Related To Motorized Devices And All-Terrain Vehicles". The Ordinance has been properly advertised. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve the Ordinance was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.
- C. The Township Manager addressed a complaint regarding a commercial vehicle parking in the 900 block of Brighton Avenue. The complaint states that the vehicle is a refrigerated truck and the refrigeration unit has been noted running during overnight hours and may be in violation of the noise ordinance. The Police Chief, Township Manager, and Solicitor will look into the matter and determine what next steps could be taken to address the situation.
- D. The Township Manager discussed the timeline for the review and approval of the 2025 Budget for Lower Alsace Township. The Township Manager stated that two items to be finalized are the approval of the Central Berks Police 2025 budget and the proposals for the Township's 2025 health insurance plan. The Township Manager stated that a workshop meeting should be scheduled in order to review the draft budget proposal before it is voted on to approve. The Township Manager will schedule dates.

**XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No additional comments were made.

**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No executive session was called.

*XVI. ADJOURNMENT*

Hearing no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM on November 14th, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pottiger, Manager, Secretary / Treasurer