

Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Meeting Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA September 12, 2024

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Thursday, September 12, 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), Homer Williams (representing the Township Planning Commission), and Carl Weikel (as Township Road Foreman). Residents in attendance were Louis Dalaveris (traffic concerns in the vicinity of the Antietam Valley Recreation & Community Center and landscaping at the Community Center building), James Oswald (no specific concerns), and Sue Moyer and Sara Moyer (questions about 703 Friedensburg Road and possible sinkhole on the property). Nonresidents in attendance were Robert Miller (permit for special event – Antietam Valley Community Partnership 9th Annual Carsonia Craft Beer and Wine Amusement event), and Michael Spuhler (Reading Liederkrantz sign).

II. PRESENTATIONS

No additional presentations were scheduled for this evening.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Louis Dalaveris commented about the traffic on Byram Street. He made a few suggestions for slowing traffic in this area, where the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour. The Police Chief, Road Foreman, and Township Manager all spoke on the various suggestions. There are “Children at Play signs posted which appear to have no effect on drivers. Speed bumps are not permitted. The one item which could be used is to paint a warning on the street. The Road Foreman was instructed to look into this. Mr. Dalaveris asked about having landscaping work done to the recreation center building. The Supervisors informed him that the building is not Lower Alsace Township property. He was informed to discuss the issue with the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority or the Antietam Valley Recreation and Community Center who could provide information.
- B. Sue and Sara Moyer commented on the property at 703 Friedensburg which is now posted for sale. They live nearby and were concerned about the reported sinkhole under the parking lot. The Supervisors and Township Manager all stated that the property is privately owned and that any prospective buyer would be informed of the inspection reports which were completed as part of the Antietam School District’s review of the property when they were considering a purchase.

- C. Robert Miller spoke on the special event permit application for the Carsonia Craft Beer and Wine Amusement event and asked if the Supervisors had any questions. The Supervisors did not have any questions.
- D. Michael Spuhler commented on the new sign along Spook Lane for the Reading Liederkrantz. He commented that it may not be in compliance with the Township Zoning Ordinance. The Township Manager stated that he spoke to the Township's contracted Zoning Official who is scheduled to meet with officials from the Reading Liederkrantz to review the sign's placement.

No additional public comments were made.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 29, 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 would be starting soon, and that leaf collection will begin at month's end.

VI. SUPERVISOR LIASON REPORTS

- A. Central Berks Regional Police Commission – Supervisor Theodossiou reported that an agreement with the Oley School District was entered into for the Central Berks Police Department to provide a School Resource Officer to the District.
- B. Lower Alsace Fire Company – Supervisor Weikel reported that the paving work at the fire station has been agreed to and work should commence shortly.
- 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 reported that she will be reaching out to the Solicitor for Mount Penn Borough to 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 the Borough's interest.

The Solicitor had nothing else to report in addition to items already on the agenda. She will address those items as they come up for discussion.

VIII. ENGINEER

- A. The Engineer presented a status report on the 2024 Road Paving Project. The work is scheduled and he will review the work in conjunction with the Road Foreman and Township Manager.
- B. 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 has a meeting scheduled to discuss the issue with a property owner and identify potential repair options.
- C. The Engineer presented a status report on the repair work to be done at the Lower Alsace Township Fire Station. The work has been scheduled and he should have an update for the October Supervisors' meeting.
- D. The Engineer gave an update on the Carsonia Avenue sidewalk, storm sewer, and streetscape project commenced. The Engineer mentioned that the first step in this process would be to begin engineering work. He estimated that \$25,000 may be needed to pay for these costs. After a brief discussion, a motion to authorize engineering work to be performed for this project not to exceed \$25,000 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 August 31, 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.
- C. Supervisor Weikel inquired as to whether the final loan payment on the remaining Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank loan has been made. The Township Manager stated that it was. The debt service of approximately \$60,000 is now available in the Township budget for other projects. Supervisor Weikel stated that some of these funds should be set aside for underground pipe and bridge work, such as replacement of stormwater system infrastructure.

XI. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

- A. **Central Berks Police Department** – the August 2024 report was presented. Chief Serafin asked if the Supervisors had any questions. There was nothing further on the report.
- B. **Central Berks Codes Department** – the July 2024 report was presented.
- 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. 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 was a minor issue, but no issues of significance. The Solicitor stated she will be arranging 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.
- 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 has scheduled a meeting on October 8th 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 October meeting.

- 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.
- E. 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 August 1, 2024.
- F. 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 reported that documentation which will allow the Township to inform the residents that the vehicles need to be removed. A letter from the Solicitor and Township Zoning Official has been sent. Results will be presented at the October 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 and is in the process to be reviewed.
- H. The Township Manager provided a status report on the LSA grant applications previously submitted. No new updates were received.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Township Manager presented the preliminary 2025 Non-Uniformed Minimum Municipal Obligation calculations for the Township's Defined Benefit Pension Plan in the amount of \$89,766. A motion to approve the calculation to be included in the 2025 Township budget was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Sellerrs, and all voted yes to approve.
- B. A discussion was held on the issue with a fence at a property in the 600 block of Penndale which appears to be not in compliance with the Township Zoning Code. The Township Manager and the Solicitor, along with the Township Zoning Official are aware of the issue and are researching the details and figuring out next steps.
- C. The Township Manager presented the draft 2025 Animal Control contract proposed by Safety Net Sanctuary. He reviewed the wording of the document and asked if the Supervisors had any questions. Hearing none, the Township Manager stated that this agreement will be voted on in November prior to finalizing the 2025 budget.
- D. The Supervisors and Township Manager discussed the proposal for landscaping work for the island along Carsonia Avenue. The consensus was that the proposal was more than what the Supervisors believed necessary and it was agreed to that

Supervisor Sellers could determine a more suitable proposal. Supervisor Sellers will present her thoughts at the October meeting.

- E. The Township Manager presented two special event permits to the Supervisors. One was for the 9th Annual Carsonia Craft Beer and Wine Amusement and the second was for the Reading Liederkrantz Oktoberfest event. On a motion to approve the Special Event Permits was made by Supervisor Weikel, seconded by Supervisor Sellers, and all voted yes to approve.

Supervisor Theodossiou was then excused from the meeting.

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 8:10 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM on October 10th, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pottiger, Manager, Secretary / Treasurer