

MINUTES
SOUTH MIDDLETON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
520 PARK DRIVE
BOILING SPRINGS, PA. 17007

AUGUST 2, 2005

PRESENT: TOM FALEY, JIM BAKER, PHYLLIS GIVLER, BRYAN GEMBUSIA, RON REEDER – (absent) – SUPERVISORS; Richard Mislitsky – Solicitor; Barbara Wilson – Manager; Sandy Quickel – Recording Secretary; Jarrett Sweeney – Assistant Manager; John Weidner; Mike Merrick; Jim Adams; Mark Ritter; Gary Folcik; Elizabeth Smith; Howard Rose; Jesse Moose; Tom & Ann Benjey; Bill & Eleanor Hartman; Gene Heyman; Richard Cummins; Mike & Marion Rayeur; Clare Hamm; Jean Harrison; Chad Clancy; George Stapleton; Tony Gonzalez; Ray Porter; Lucille Hillman; Bill Brown; Scott Bucher; Gretchen Naugle; Gary Turnbaugh; Martha Green; Kenneth Staver; Eric Harkreader – “The Sentinel”; Andrea Ciccocioppo - “The Patriot News”.

Chairman Tom Faley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Tom Faley led the audience in the pledge of allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

A moment of silence was observed for Supervisor Gembusia’s father who was in a car accident today.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Board & staff members introduced themselves.

MINUTES: 07/14/05 (Regular Meeting)

Phyllis made a motion to approve the minutes, as written. Bryan seconded, & the vote in favor was 4 to 0.

ORDINANCE #05-06 Referendum on Funding Open Space Preservation – Public Hearing:

Mr. Mislitsky opened the hearing & stated the procedure. The Chairman noted the Planning Commission & Open Space Committee members that were present. Tom stated that the Board will be voting on placing a question on the November election ballot, not on raising taxes. He added that the Board was elected to determine & act on what the public prefers. He introduced Duff Manweiler, Chairman of the Open Space Committee, who stated that the committee was formed a year ago & has studied the major growth concern in the Township. A 1999 survey sent to residents indicated that the majority of the residents want to preserve open space. Duff noted that if the majority of the voters answer yes to the ballot question, the Earned Income Tax will be raised to .25%. This will not raise the Real Estate Tax. Tom read the question that will be placed on the ballot. It was also noted that the Open Space Committee will meet with several groups of citizens to discuss the proposal. There have also been newsletter articles sent out and more mailings planned. Tom stated that Derry Township had a similar question on the ballot, but it was voted down. Duff noted that several townships have been successful by taking this approach. Board comments were taken.

Jim feels this is a great step toward preservation & wished something like this was done 15-20 years ago to save more open space & farmland. Bryan stated that the Board wants the public to make the decisions so the Board can act accordingly. Tom stated that the survey indicated that 82% of the responses favored conservation of green space. The Township has taken steps to preserve space by purchasing the land for Spring Meadows Park & the Leaman farm. He also added that this potential tax increase will not hurt the senior citizens; it will only affect the wage earners. He stated that the farmland is disappearing due to explosive growth in the township as well as other areas. Phyllis wished the Board had the foresight back in 1999 to start the planning process. She stated that if nothing is done now, there will not be any open space left. She feels the question should be placed on the ballot. Public input was taken.

Mike Rayeur asked how much revenue will be generated. He was told it would be about \$650,000 annually.

Mark Ritter, 637 W. First Street, feels the intent is good, but not the execution of the plan. Duff stated that he is getting favorable responses from the public.

George Stapleton, Lindsey Road, asked how much the Township has set aside for preservation. He was told \$296,000, with \$165,000 committed for this year. He also asked how much the millage increase would be if this was paid for by a real estate tax. He was told it would be approximately one-half to three-fourths of a mill.

Dick Cummins, Greenfields, asked about the 3 mailings. Duff said that 2 mailings are planned, with a third mailing being written. Mr. Cummins noted that the taxes in the rural part of the County are less than in the developed areas.

(Bryan left the meeting at this time)

Cumberland County Commissioner & SMT resident, Rick Rovegno, quoted statistics on 2005 assessments based on the 2005 mill rates. Cumberland County has the lowest rate.

Jesse Moose, 11 Woodview Drive & Planning Commission member, asked if other avenues to do this have been explored. He asked if any changes in zoning were considered. Duff said that several avenues are also being looked at for solutions. Zoning changes are part of the presentation effort.

Gary Turnbaugh, 1142 Petersburg Road & Township employee, feels that a majority of the votes will be hard to determine since there has been low turn-outs at the polls. He also feels there is concern with trying to inform the public about this issue. Barb stated that there are personal contacts also; not just mailings being sent out.

Lucy Hillman, Derbyshire Drive, feels this is a huge issue, & she is concerned about marketing the plan to the public.

Scott Bucher, W. First Street, is in support of the ballot question. He commended the committees on their initiative on this issue. He added that each new home costs more for services than they pay in taxes.

Ray Porter, N. Pin Oak Drive, feels this is the biggest issue of concern in the Township. He questioned whether the .25% increase is enough. He feels it should be higher.

Elizabeth Smith, James Road, stated that she is retired, but would be happy to pay more in taxes to save open space. Duff stated that donations may be taken since retired people would not be taxed.

Chad Clancy, Sheeley Lane, is in favor of the idea. He asked if the Township would buy land outright or buy development rights. Duff stated that the Township does not want to own a lot more property now, but would pursue development rights.

Marti Green, Derbyshire Drive, has heard positive comments on this topic. She asked how the land will be chosen & who will choose it. Duff stated that the Open Space Committee looked at & rated the parcels on which ones to choose.

Eric Vorodi, Sheeley Lane, is a member of the Open Space Committee. He stated that several factors determined which parcels of land were looked at & the condition of the land.

Tom Benjey, Springville Road, also a member of the Open Space Committee, commented that the County & the Growing Greener II initiative have committed funds for land preservation. With our program in place, we could piggyback in some county & state funds.

Bob Dougherty does not want to see the Township turn into Camp Hill where you have to tear something down in order to build.

Rick Reighard, Whitley Court & Planning Commission member, asked if the development rights would be in perpetuity. Mr. Mislitsky replied yes.

Clare Hamm, Wiltshire East, stated that she is in favor of saving open space.

Phyllis made a motion to approve Ordinance #05-06, as submitted. Jim seconded, & the vote in favor was 3 to 0. Tom stated that both Supervisors Ron Reeder & Bryan Gembusia are both in favor & wanted their feelings noted for the record. The hearing was closed.

(BREAK)

PUBLIC INPUT:

Mike Merrick, 30 Pine Street, asked when the Sable Chase plan will be discussed & for the location of the plan. He was told it is behind Rillos Restaurant & will be on the August 16th Planning Commission agenda.

SUPERVISORS' DISCUSSION:

There was no discussion.

BILLS FOR PAYMENT:

Phyllis made a motion to pay the bills, as submitted. Jim seconded, & the vote in favor was 3 to 0.

ADJOURNMENT:

Jim made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m. Phyllis seconded, & the vote in favor was 3 to 0.

WITNESS:

**SOUTH MIDDLETON TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Thomas E. Faley, Chairman

Bryan A. Gembusia, Vice Chairman

Phyllis W. Givler

James N. Baker

Ronald L. Reeder