

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BUSINESS MEETING
November 3, 2022**

Call to Order: Chairman Neights called the hybrid live/virtual meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Protocol for Hybrid Meetings: Chairman Neights provided an overview of the protocols for public participation for members of the public attending the meeting virtually over Zoom.

Roll Call:

- a. The following Board members were in attendance: Chairman Neights, Vice Chair Coless, Supervisor Darby, and Supervisor MacFarland (via Zoom). Supervisor Sorgini was absent.
- b. Also in attendance were: E.J. Mentry, Township Manager; Lauren Gallagher, Township Solicitor; Tim Woodrow, Township Engineer, Mike Mrozinski, Community Development Director; Police Chief Michael Jackson, Rich Lafiata, Finance Director, and Student Representative Ashish Jeyapratap.

Chairman's Comments

Chairman Neights announced that an executive session was held prior to the meeting on November 3, 2022, to discuss legal and personnel matters.

1) Presentations

A) Student representative report – Ashish Jeyapratap

B) 2023 proposed budget

- i) Mr. Mentry stated that many hours had been devoted to the budget process, starting in July and including 10 hours of public workshops. The vote to authorize advertisement of the proposed budget is the first official action in the process. Once advertised for the required 20 days, adoption of the final budget and approval of tax rates is anticipated for the December 1st Board of Supervisors meeting. He provided a summary of Township funds, noting a shortfall in the General Fund, the primary operating fund, of approximately \$960,000. He explained that earned income tax provides 55% of the revenue for the General Fund. The majority of the fund is spent on staffing, wages and benefits, as is typical.
- ii) Mr. Mentry noted the Township's strong reserves and said the Board and staff have begun planning on how to allocate these funds for long-term capital, infrastructure, and stormwater initiatives while maintaining "rainy day" funds.
- iii) Major themes and highlights of the proposed 2023 budget are: The start of a multi-year approach to address staffing shortages; funding for fire protection, EMS and library; stormwater management/MS4 requirements; capital equipment and projects; grant writing consultant; technology upgrades; Parks & Recreation facility and program improvements; increased road project funding; and increased pension and benefits costs.
- iv) It was noted that of the four taxes that make up a homeowner's real estate taxes – Methacton School District, Montgomery County, Montgomery County Community College and Lower Providence, only 6.7% goes to the Township.
- v) Mr. Mentry said various tax increase options had been discussed at length at the public workshops. Recommended is "Option C" which covers a little more than half of the deficit

and pays for the increased staffing costs, inclusive of wages and benefits, which will be perpetual and increasing expenses each year. It would mean an increase of about \$62.80, or \$5 per month, for the average taxpayer.

- vi) There was discussion about addressing the Township's continuing structural deficit and the limited revenue streams.
- vii) **MOTION:** Chairman Neights made a motion to advertise the proposed 2023 budget as presented. Supervisor Darby seconded the motion.
- viii) There was no public comment.
- ix) The motion *passed* 4-0.

2) Consent Agenda

- A) **MOTION:** Vice Chair Coless made a motion to approve the consent agenda, moving the minutes of the Board of Supervisors budget workshop of October 13, 2022 and business meeting of October 20, 2022 into the record. Chairman Neights seconded the motion.
 - i) Vice Chair Coless requested that the October 13, 2022 workshop minutes be modified to include the total deficit amount in the proposed budget at that time.
 - ii) There was no public comment.
 - iii) The motion *passed* 4-0.

3) Old Business

- A) Consideration of authorization to advertise a Human Relations Commission ordinance
 - i) Solicitor Gallagher explained that the ordinance establishes a commission to facilitate communication and education in order to work through existing discrimination processes and mechanisms.
 - ii) Supervisor MacFarland stated that the current draft of the ordinance was not substantially different from the version discussed at the August 18 meeting when he and Supervisor Sorgini had expressed concerns, noting that enforcement mechanisms are already in place on the state and federal levels and that a commission is not the proper tool.
 - iii) **MOTION:** Chairman Neights made a motion to advertise an ordinance establishing a Human Relations Commission, Vice Chair Coless seconded the motion.
 - iv) There was no public comment.
 - v) The motion *passed* 4-0.
- B) Consideration of application for Conditional Use- HTC Associates, 3150 Ridge Pike
 - i) Solicitor Gallagher explained that the Board would be voting to approve or deny the conditional use. If approved, the use would be subject to the conditions that were discussed and accepted at the conditional use hearing held October 20, 2022. The vote will be ratified by a written decision issued by the Board at a subsequent meeting.
 - ii) **MOTION:** Chairman Neights made a motion to approve the conditional use application of HTC Associates for 3150 Ridge Pike subject to the written decision and conditions. Vice Chair Coless seconded the motion.
 - iii) There was no public comment.
 - iv) There motion *passed* 4-0.
- C) Consideration of Resolution 2022-30 granting request for waiver of land development from the Lincoln Center, 1100 Adams Avenue
 - i) Chairman Neights noted that the Center had agreed to put in sidewalks where identified.
 - ii) **MOTION:** Supervisor Coless made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-30 granting the request of the Lincoln Center for waiver of land development, seconded by Supervisor Darby.

iii) There was no public comment.

iv) The motion *passed* 4-0.

D) Consideration of Resolution 2022-31 granting request for waiver of land development from Streamlight, 30 Eagleville Road

i) Solicitor Gallagher explained that the application involved the addition of a garage to the main building, but there is little to be reviewed in the land development process. She said the waiver is recommended by staff and the applicant appeared at the October 20, 2022 meeting.

ii) **MOTION:** Supervisor Darby made a motion to grant the request of Streamlight for waiver of land development, seconded by Supervisor MacFarland.

iii) There was no public comment.

iv) The motion *passed* 4-0.

4) New Business

A) Discussion of waiver of land development request – Arrowhead Elementary School, 232 Level Road

i) Mr. Mrozinski explained that during construction of the new school, the need arose for a detached shed.

ii) In response to a question from Chairman Neights, Mr. Woodrow said the project underwent land development about two years ago and is still under a state NPDES stormwater permit.

B) Authorization to order Public Works dump truck

i) Mr. Mentry explained that the Public Works vehicle to be ordered is included in the proposed 2023 budget. As it is unlikely to be removed from the final budget, staff is seeking pre-authorization to place the order with no expenditure of funds. He cited the continuing backlog and long lead-times as the reason for the request.

ii) **MOTION:** Chairman Neights made a motion to order the 2024 International HB507 Municipal dump truck. Supervisor Darby seconded the motion.

iii) There was no public comment.

iv) The motion *passed* 4-0.

C) Discussion of SALDO waiver application procedure

i) Mr. Mentry said staff had prepared a procedural guide to provide to applicants seeking waiver of land development in order to standardize submission requirements. The procedure will be formalized in an ordinance to be considered at a future meeting.

5) Announcements/Meetings

A) The Board of Supervisors are looking for qualified residents interested in serving on the Township's various boards and commissions. Details and instructions on submitting a letter of interest and resume can be found on the township website, lowerprovidence.org

B) Nominations are being accepted for the annual Community Awards, recognizing a Citizen, Volunteer and Business of the Year. Details are posted on the township website.

C) Election Day – November 8

D) Sewer Authority – Nov. 14 at 4:30 p.m.

E) Parks & Recreation Board – Nov. 15 at 7:00 p.m.

F) Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee – Nov. 16 at 7:00 p.m.

G) Environmental Advisory Council – Nov. 21 at 7:00 p.m.

H) Library Board – Nov. 22 at 7:00 p.m.

I) Planning Commission – Nov. 22 at 7:00 p.m.

J) Zoning Hearing Board – Nov. 23 at 7:00 p.m. cancelled

6) Comments and other Business

- A) In response to Supervisor Coless, Mr. Mentry said the SALDO waiver guidelines will help the Board in the review and decision process. The ordinance to be drafted will have built-in thresholds for automatic exceptions and will memorialize the waiver process.
- B) Supervisor MacFarland asked if the Montgomery County coroner's and/or archives buildings are occupied and if there were any conditions regarding the trail project and building occupancy. He expressed disappointment with the Methacton School Board's pending decision vote to demolish Audubon Elementary School.

7) Courtesy of the Floor

- A) Sandy Harrison, Woodwinds Drive – Ms. Harrison expressed her concern with the PennDOT's Ridge Pike and Germantown Pike intersection re-alignment project. As part of the project, the current entrance to her development will be closed and a new one will be opened that is close to her home that will be the main access to Germantown Pike.

8) Adjournment

- A) **MOTION:** Supervisor Darby made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Coless seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Next Business Meeting: November 17, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.
December 1, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.