

Schuylkill Township  
Board of Supervisors Public Work Session  
Thursday January 16, 2020 6:30 p.m.

The Schuylkill Township Board of Supervisors held their public work session on Thursday, January 16, 2020. This is an informal meeting to discuss township related business with the public without making any motions or voting on any discussed items. The work session was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Board Chair Martha Majewski.

The work session agenda is discussions on the Township's Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan update, Valley Park Municipal Park maintenance, winter road maintenance & salting, a proposed tree ordinance, a Traffic Impact Fee Advisory Committee update, and 2020 Phoenixville Country Club events. In attendance were Supervisors Mark Donovan, Susan Guerette, Martha Majewski, and Fred Parry. Also attending were Township Manager, E.J. Mentry and Township Secretary, Madeline Harbison. Supervisor Bob Cooney was absent.

Proposed Tree Ordinance – Supervisor Guerette updated the Board on her progress with the ordinance and informed them that she has encountered some complications on how to position it properly for residential enforcement in Schuylkill Township, i.e., should it be written to protect trees by numbers, size, species or location, and asked the Board in what direction it wished to go. Mr. Steve Kunz of the Township's Environmental Advisory Council ("EAC") has been assisting Supervisor Guerette with the tree ordinance project and he mentioned that one of the issues faced by the EAC with the tree ordinance proposed several years ago was establishing a baseline on what is protected, i.e., what are you protecting, and how would you inventory it. The EAC decided that one of its main goals in a protective ordinance was to prevent clear-cutting and to save specimen trees but there would have to be clear species designations so the ordinance language is not vague. Mr. Kunz added that perhaps the number of trees is not as important as the location. Mr. Jerry O'Dell, a resident, advised the Board that if you simply protect a specimen tree and clear everything else, it becomes a hazard. It is important to keep clusters of trees. Supervisor Parry questioned whether a tree ordinance is necessary or is it simply nice to have. Supervisor Guerette said that they are very common and environmental groups are promoting tree protection. She went on to say that currently the Township has restrictions on developers but not individual property owners and that she feels it necessary to establish reasonable restrictions on tree clearing. Further discussion ensued regarding woodlands and hedgerows. Supervisor Guerette advised the Board that she and Mr. Kunz would start fresh; possibly incorporating some of the language from the original EAC tree ordinance and clarifying definitions such as woodlands and hedgerows; an update will be given at a future work session. Mr. Michael Bauer of the Township's Planning Commission offered to assist with drafting the ordinance and Mr. Norman Vutz advised that the Township Solicitor be kept in the loop.

Valley Park Municipal Park (the "Park") Maintenance - Mr. Nicholas Cinciripino, Roadmaster, informed the Board that he was waiting for their decision regarding regulations signage, a gate, etc. for the Park. Discussion ensued regarding park regulations and gating. Mr. Mentry said he would reach out to other township managers for sample rules and regulations and recommended that any regulations be enacted through an ordinance. The Board concurred that a gate was not necessary at this time for the Park. Regarding maintenance of the Park, Mr. Mentry advised the Board that the mowing along the trails, the meadow and cemetery will be handled in-house but a comprehensive park maintenance plan is needed not only for the Park but for all the Township's recreation and open space. Mr. Mentry said that Natural Lands developed a draft stewardship manual during the Park's development phase and said perhaps an internship could be created for the development of an overall park maintenance plan. Mr. O'Dell recommended a restriction on park entry during high winds in excess of 15 MPH, similar to a sign at the Medal of Honor Grove at the Freedoms Foundation. Mr. Vutz commented that to date, the Township's Roads Department has absorbed "park & recreational" work but perhaps the Board should consider a reorganization of responsibilities. Mr. Mentry asked if consideration should be given to creating a Public Works Department.

Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan (the "Plan") Update - Mr. Mentry told the Board that the current Plan was created in 1992 and should be updated. During previous discussions with Natural Lands on this subject, options were discussed for a complete vs. mini update but a decision was not reached. Mr. Mentry requested that the Board consider obtaining a proposal/scope of work from Natural Lands and noted that grants for plan updates

are available through Chester County's Vision Partnership Program. Supervisor Guerette questioned why an update was needed; couldn't the current plan simply be enforced. Mr. Mentry advised that the Plan should be strengthened so the Township's SALDO is effective in achieving the Board's objectives within the Township, i.e., usable "recreation" space vs. simple "open" space. It was the consensus of the Board that a proposal should be requested from Natural Lands for a Plan update.

Winter Maintenance – Supervisor Guerette asked that this item be on the agenda to discuss the recent *PA Township News* articles on winter maintenance and road salting and to work through the Township's process. She asked Mr. Cinciripino, Township Roadmaster, about the possible overuse of salt used on Township roads and whether an alternative such as brining has been investigated. Mr. Cinciripino said that the Township does pre-wetting but does not have brine because in his opinion it is not an effective method of keeping roads safe. He added that the Township does not over-salt, but it may appear so if there are many snow/ice events within a short period of time. Mr. Cinciripino advised the Board that he lays down salt when the Township Police Department determines it is necessary for the safety of travelers on our roads and added that the Road Department's ultimate goal in snow/ice events is to ensure that school buses and emergency vehicles can pass and that roads are safe for residents. Mr. Jerry O'Dell, a resident, explained to the Board that he has done commercial snow/ice removal and said it is common practice & policy to err on the side of safety when trying to keep roads clear. Supervisor Guerette asked if further investigation could be done on ways to cut down the use of salt. Mr. Mentry said the Township is currently looking into brining but that would likely entail new equipment and trucks. Supervisor Majewski's opinion was that it sounded like an expensive undertaking to set up a process that we are not sure works. Mr. Cinciripino said if the Board wishes, the calibration on the salt spreaders could be cut down, however, they are currently set to PennDOT standards. He also offered a ride-along during the next snow/ice event to any Supervisor who might be interested.

Traffic Impact Fee Advisory Committee ("TIFAC") (Act 209 Study) – Mr. Mentry advised the Board that there are 6 confirmed committee members and he is actively canvassing for the 7<sup>th</sup> and final member.

Phoenixville Country Club Events – Mr. Mentry asked that the Board keep these events in mind and reminded them of the dates:

- Thursday March 12..... 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Thursday May 14..... 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Thursday September 10 ..... 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Saturday November 7..... 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Additional Business –

- Dangerous Dog Case – The case will be heard in the Chester County Court of Common Pleas on Wednesday, February 5, 2020. No time has been posted yet.

Public Participation

Mr. Norman Vutz, 630 Country Club Road, asked the Board to not seek litigation as a solution to issues in the Township as the risks are high.

An executive session was called at 8:15 p.m. for discussion on certain litigation matters. The public meeting was reconvened at 9:55 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

The next work session is scheduled for Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Madeline Harbison  
Township Secretary