

**HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORKSESSION MEETING
Monday, March 12, 2001
7:30PM**

The regularly scheduled worksession meeting of the Hilltown Township Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairperson Kenneth B. Bennington at 7:30PM and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also present were: John S. Bender, Vice-Chairperson
Betty P. Snyder, Supervisor
Gregory J. Lippincott, Township Manager
Kerry L. Trauger, Chief of Police
David W. Taylor, Code Enforcement Officer
Lorraine E. Leslie, Township Treasurer

Chairperson Bennington requested a moment of silence to note the recent passing of Mr. John Bolger. Chairperson Bennington noted the Board met in Executive Session prior to this meeting in order to discuss personnel matters.

A. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: None.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Action on the minutes of the February 26, 2001 Supervisor’s Meeting – Motion was made by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Bender, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2001 Board of Supervisors meeting, as written. There was no public comment.

C. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLING - Chairperson Bennington presented the Bills List dated March 13, 2001, with General Fund payments in the amount of \$29,108.73, State Highway Aid Fund payments in the amount of \$12,462.64, and Escrow Fund payments in the amount of \$7,375.03; for a grand total of all payments in the amount of \$48,946.40.

Motion was made by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Bender, and carried unanimously to approve the Bills List dated March 13, 2001. There was no public comment.

D. TREASURER’S REPORT – Chairperson Bennington presented the Treasurer’s Report, with the following balances as of February 28, 2001:

General Fund Checking	\$ 156,757.60
Payroll Fund Checking	\$ 892.25
General Reserve Fund	\$ 220,452.66
Fire Fund Checking	\$ 1,801.00
Debt Service Fund Checking	\$ 41,232.01

State Highway Aid Fund Checking	\$	3,112.85
Escrow Fund Checking	\$	320,532.28
Capital Projects Fund	\$	142,866.08

Motion was made by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Bender, and carried unanimously to approve the Treasurer's Report as of February 28, 2001, subject to audit. There was no public comment.

E. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT – Mr. Buzby was not present.

F. POLIC REPORT – Chief Kerry L. Trauger – Chief Trauger presented the Police Report for the month of February, 2001; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

Chief Trauger also presented the Hilltown Township Police Annual Report for the Board's perusal.

Chairperson Bennington requested a status report of the Township's opposition to the Pennridge School District not having a driver's education program in place. Chief Trauger explained that he has been working on this issue, which has been an uphill battle with the School Board. Approximately two years ago, the School Board issued a statement that driver's education programs were not practical and that the expense was too great, even though A & T Chevrolet agreed to donate two new vehicles. Chief Trauger and other police chiefs in the area support the reinstatement of a driver's education program. The Supervisors directed Chief Trauger to draft correspondence to Dr. Kish and Dr. Yarnell, with copies sent to Representative Watson and Senator Conti. Hopefully, this letter and possibly individual letters from other police departments and municipalities, will show support of the driver's education program in the Pennridge School District, which will bring the issue back into the forefront of the community. Discussion took place.

G. BUILDING REPORT – Mr. David W. Taylor, Code Enforcement Officer – Mr. Taylor presented the Building Report for the month of February, 2001; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

With regard to the violation at 209 Mill Road, where homeowners moved into their dwelling without obtaining a Use and Occupancy Permit, Mr. Taylor advised that the Township has not yet received the requested as-built plan. He has conducted a walk through inspection on the site, and is satisfied that the dwelling is substantially complete. The smoke detectors operate properly and the basic safety functions are present. The property owner still has not met all of the requirements for the issuance of a Certificate of

Occupancy. Mr. Taylor is proposing to allow the property owner until May 1, 2001 to obtain their Use and Occupancy Permit.

At the Board's direction, Mr. Taylor attended a site meeting on Tuesday, February 27, 2001, with Mr. Paul Stevens of Qualified Fire Protection, Mr. Chuck Stockert of the Hilltown Authority, as well as Mr. Paul Abdala and Mr. Vince Carmenlengo of Heritage Building Group concerning sprinkler systems in the Longleaf Subdivision. Representatives of Heritage Building Group assured Mr. Taylor that they will improve their customer response time, especially with regard to the sprinkler system. As far as the inspections of the sprinkler systems, Mr. Taylor noted that he will continue to conduct pressure tests at rough inspection and pressure tests at final inspection. He has ordered a book specifically relating to residential sprinkler systems to insure that he has the most current information.

Mr. Taylor inspected two dwellings in Longleaf with the homeowners present and noted that the repair work had been completed on the sprinkler heads, and the systems were recharged.

When the initial sprinkler systems were installed, the Hilltown Authority determined that the only requirement they had was that the system be split off after the meter, and that a backflow prevention device be installed to protect the domestic water. Beyond that, the system simply had to comply with NFPA 13D, a nationally recognized standard, which was adopted by the Township. Mr. Taylor advised that when the initial sprinkler contractor, H.A.S. Sprinklers, came in to review installation plans, a valve configuration was submitted, reviewed and approved as meeting the requirements of NFPA 13D. When the second contractor, Qualified Fire Protection, submitted plans, the plans were likewise approved as meeting those requirements. Because NFPA 13D is a performance-based code as opposed to a prescriptive code, both configurations could be, and in fact, were, different, while still meeting the requirements of the standard.

At the February 27th meeting, those present reviewed both configurations, weighed the pros and cons, and agreed on a standard configuration. Further, Mr. Stevens of Qualified Fire Protection, agreed to supply a CAD drawing of the agreed upon standards. Mr. Taylor will sign the standard and all interested parties will be provided with signed copies. In the future, this will become the standard connection detail for residential sprinkler systems in Hilltown Township. Heritage Building Group has agreed to this detail, which will also be supplied to the Elliott Building Group when the Hilltown Chase is ready to begin construction, as well any other developers who meet the criteria for the installation of residential sprinklers.

Mr. Taylor noted that part of the confusion regarding the system of valves arose from Qualified Fire Protection's decision to install a pressure-reducing valve in the system.

The purpose of this valve was to keep the water pressure from exceeding what was required to insure protection. Mr. Stockert felt that this valve was unnecessary and because the valve settings are adjustable, introduced the possibility that a homeowner could adjust the pressure down, thus rendering the system ineffective. This particular valve was neither required nor disallowed by NFPA 13D. The Hilltown Authority has a triple redundant system at the pump house feeding the Longleaf Subdivision, which was represented as keeping the development's street pressures at 80 psi. Further, Mr. Groff informed Mr. Taylor that should the worse case scenario happen, outright failure of the system, the maximum pressure in the gravity system would not exceed 260 psi.

The sprinkler systems being installed in Longleaf Subdivision consist of piping rated for 275 psi and sprinkler heads rated for 300 psi. Because the rating of the system components exceed the maximum pressure for catastrophic failure, the agreed upon configuration eliminates the redundant pressure reducing valve (the system is still equipped with a pressure reducing backflow preventer). Further, the systems are to be equipped with special expansion tanks to relieve any internal system fluctuations due to climatic (summer heat) changes. The expansion tanks are designed to bleed off the system when the required pressure is exceeded due to fluid expansion, and then to allow the fluid back into the system when fluid volume contracts.

With regard to the need for antifreeze in the system as opposed to a system only requiring straight water, Mr. Taylor noted that this is dictated by the style of houses constructed. While it may be possible to design a system utilizing sidewall sprinkler heads for most of the rooms, and thus eliminating the need to run piping through the attic, this cannot be accomplished for the large volume of space created by the vaulted ceiling family rooms that are being constructed. A lengthy discussion took place concerning the use of antifreeze in the sprinkler systems.

Chairperson Bennington directed Mr. Taylor to notify Mr. Stevens of Qualified Fire Protection that he must contact Mr. Gillespie or Mr. Seifert of the Silverdale Fire Company within the next week, to discuss these residential sprinkler systems with the servicing fire company.

Supervisor Snyder asked if potential homeowners receive written notice concerning sprinkler systems from Heritage Building Group or the sprinkler system installer. Heritage claims that they do provide written notice to the homeowners, however one of the residents, Mr. Reppert, stated that he did not receive any written information regarding the sprinkler systems at settlement. Mr. Taylor has received several phone calls concerning the residential sprinkler systems from homeowners and prospective homeowners.

H. WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY REPORT – Mr. James G. Groff, Operations Manager – Mr. Groff presented the Authority Report for the month of February, 2001; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

Mr. Groff noted that the Authority offices will be moving to their new building on April 16, 2001.

Chairperson Bennington asked when the new sewage treatment plant may be on-line. Mr. Groff honestly does not know because he is still awaiting DEP approval, although he hopes that the treatment plant will be on-line by the fall of 2003.

I. HILLTOWN FIRE COMPANY REPORT – No one was present at this time. A copy of the Hilltown Fire Company Report for the month of February, 2001 is on file at the Township office.

J. SILVERDALE FIRE COMPANY REPORT – Mr. Keith Seifert, Chief – Mr. Seifert read the Silverdale Fire Company Report for the month of February, 2001; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

Mr. Seifert advised that the Silverdale Fire Company is expecting delivery of their new truck in mid-May.

With regard to the residential sprinkler systems in Longleaf, Mr. Seifert asked that the Silverdale Fire Company be provided with the appropriate phone numbers once Heritage Building Group establishes 24-hour per day service for their homeowners.

Mr. John Gillespie of the Silverdale Fire Company presented information concerning the update for the ISO (Insurance Service Office) rating that he intends to discuss at the next Fire Prevention Bureau meeting. Discussion took place.

K. PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT – Mr. John Kachline, Chairperson – Mr. Kachline will be presenting the Year 2000 Annual Report to the Supervisors once it has been typed tomorrow.

Chairperson Bennington advised that there is an Open Space Committee meeting scheduled for tomorrow evening, March 13th, and suggested that members of the Planning Commission and members of the Park and Recreation Board attend to discuss each Board's recommendation for open space on the proposed Berry Brow Subdivision. Discussion took place.

L. PARK AND RECREATION BOARD REPORT – Mr. Nick Lupinacci, Chairperson – Mr. Lupinacci read the Park and Recreation Board Report for the month of February, 2001.

At their last meeting, Ms. Maureen Theis, coach of the girls softball team at Sacred Heart Church, requested that the Park and Recreation Board provide a recommendation to waive the user fees for the Blooming Glen Playground softball field. It is Mr. Lupinacci's feeling that Ms. Theis is not opposed to user fees, rather she is opposed to the amount of fees based upon the condition of the softball field, versus the amount of fees for the baseball field at the Civic Park. The Park and Recreation Board promised Ms. Theis that they would address this issue with the Director of Public Works so that the Township could continue with the user fee structure that is in place for the Blooming Glen Playground softball field. Discussion took place.

Chief Trauger participated in the last Park and Recreation Board meeting to discuss proposed driveway access to the Forest Road Park property. There is frontage on both Forest Road and Hayhouse Road.

The Park and Recreation Board will be walking the Forest Road Park property on Thursday, March 15, 2001 at 2:00PM, with the recreational planner, Spotts, Stevens, and McCoy.

Mr. Lupinacci advised that a Pennridge High School senior, Ms. Sarah Uhl, has approached the Park and Recreation Board with a proposal to provide a bicycle safety course in May of 2001. Ms. Uhl is a recognized junior bicyclist who competes all over the world, and is currently training in California. Through a cooperative effort with the Police Department, the Hilltown Post Office, and potentially with Wal-Mart, the Park and Recreation Board is considering sponsoring such an event at some location in the Township. Hopefully plans will be in place by the April 12, 2001 Park and Recreation Board meeting.

The Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 7th at the Hilltown Civic Park, beginning at 11:00AM. There will be three different age groups.

M. OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE REPORT – Mr. Chuck Kulesza, Chairperson – Mr. Kulesza was not present.

N. CONFIRMED APPOINTMENTS:

1. Mrs. Dorothy Marchini – Concerns with Broad Street/Callowhill Road Intersection – Mrs. Marchini was not present.

2. Mrs. Jackie Walker – Bed and Breakfast Regulations – Mrs. Walker, owner of the Stoneridge Farm Bed and Breakfast located on Bypass Road, which has been in operation for the past 1 ½ years, was in attendance to request that the Board of Supervisors amend the present zoning laws for Bed and Breakfast establishments. Mrs. Walker is proposing that the amendment increase the number of bedrooms permitted in a Bed and Breakfast from six to ten. Mrs. Walker had previously made her plea to the Planning Commission, however she is aware that the issue “is on the back burner.” Mrs. Walker is under a five-year completion time limit with Labor and Industry, which began in 1998 when she obtained her permit. She presented documentation from the Pennsylvania Travel Council that specifies that a Bed and Breakfast establishment contains 10 or fewer guest rooms; and an Inn contains 10 or more guest rooms. Mrs. Walker explained that she is presently unable to utilize her whole building, though the downstairs area had to be finished per Labor and Industry, regardless of whether or not she could actually use that space. Mrs. Walker stated that she is losing business because she does not have the capacity of ten guest rooms. She recently lost the opportunity to rent ten rooms to Aetna U.S. Healthcare, who booked fifty guest rooms at the Joseph Ambler Inn and required ten more. Further, she recently lost the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justices, who also required ten guest rooms, which she was not able to provide. Chairperson Bennington explained that the Planning Commission is presently working on the Agricultural Zoning, the Comprehensive Plan, and updating various sections of the Zoning Ordinance; and in order to speed up the process, suggested that Mrs. Walker apply to the Zoning Hearing Board for a variance. Mrs. Walker commented that she would have to prove a hardship to obtain a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board. Discussion took place.

Mrs. Walker advised that her property will be reviewed by the Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission tomorrow, and she anticipates that it will be the second property in Hilltown Township, including the Pearl S. Buck Foundation, that will be listed on the Pennsylvania Historical Register.

O. MANAGER'S REPORT – Mr. Gregory J. Lippincott, Township Manager –

1. Mr. Guttenplan's work status report for the Comprehensive Plan Task Force was presented for the Board's review.

2. The Zoning Report for the month of February, 2001 is on file at the Township office.

3. Mr. Lippincott was to attend the Open Space Committee meeting and the Dublin Ambulance Service meeting, both of which are scheduled for Tuesday, March 13, 2001 at 7:30PM. Mr. Lippincott asked if one of the Supervisors would be available to

attend the Open Space Committee meeting. Chairperson Bennington agreed to attend the Open Space Committee meeting.

4. Mr. Lippincott and Mrs. Seimes will be attending Senator Conti's Grant Seminar on March 23, 2001. The seminar's goal is to make local officials aware of State Grant opportunities. Mr. Lippincott asked if the Supervisors wanted to investigate any particular type of grant opportunities. Chairperson Bennington suggested that investigation of any park and recreation grants for the improvement of open space for recreational facilities would be welcome. Supervisor Snyder suggested that any grants pertaining to watershed enhancement, protection, and/or restoration would be useful.

5. Ten "Welcome to Hilltown Township" signs have been ordered and will be installed this spring and summer along with Snow Emergency Route signs.

6. There are 4 escrow releases for the Board's consideration this evening:
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|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Longleaf Estates Phase I | Voucher #54 | \$ 1,300.12 |
| Longleaf Estates Phase II | Voucher #12 | \$ 844.20 |
| Lynrose Estates | Voucher #12 | \$ 392.82 |
| Tall Oaks Subdivision | Voucher #4A | \$ 46.08 |

Motion was made by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Bender, and carried unanimously to approve the release of the four escrows as noted above. There was no public comment.

7. On Saturday, March 10th, the 2000 Census totals were released and published in local newspapers. Mr. Lippincott noted that Hilltown's population figures came in at 12,102, which is approximately 700 less than what was anticipated. This figure is a 14% increase (or 1,496 individuals) from the 1990 Census figure results.

P. CORRESPONDENCE – Mr. Gregory J. Lippincott, Township Manager –

1. Chief Trauger has drafted a letter to Senator Conti and Representative Kathy Watson in protest of PennDot's new Police Crash Reporting Forms scheduled to be implemented by the end of April for police departments in Bucks County. This letter will be available for the Board's signatures following this meeting.

Q. MYLARS FOR SIGNATURE: Platt Subdivision

R. PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Mr. Jack McIlhinny of Broad Street has had the opportunity to review the proposed Agricultural Preservation Zoning amendment, and feels that it is an outright

assault on the rights of the citizens of Hilltown Township. Under the ruse of protecting agricultural, Mr. McIlhinny believes the Township is attempting to acquire or strip property rights without due process of law or just compensation. Further, he feels that the Township is attempting to acquire open space land by controlling it with such onerous, dimensional, and category restrictions, that there is no use that is acceptable except farming. Mr. McIlhinny believes that the Township is attempting to claim farming as a zoning district, when in reality, it is actually a use. This proposed district encompasses hundreds of properties in only the northern half of the Township, with an area of approximately 4,800 acres, which is 66% of the land in that area. Mr. McIlhinny urged the Board of Supervisors to reject this proposed Ordinance outright, for surely the lawsuits to follow will be a heavy burden on the taxpayers of Hilltown Township and the viability of the government of this municipality. For the farmers who currently use the land of others, Mr. McIlhinny noted that this proposed Ordinance will strain or break their relationships.

2. Mrs. Alice Kachline of 529 Mill Road wished Mrs. Walker luck with the proposal to expand her bed and breakfast establishment.

On a different matter, Mrs. Kachline participated in the walk-through of the Berry Brow property. She went there at the time thinking as the Tax Collector, of all the money that the Township would get in real estate taxes alone, and thought that she would support a golf course on that open space area. It is Mrs. Kachline's understanding that when a new property is developed the assessment is based on what it cost to develop, which in this case would be phenomenal tax dollars, not just for the Township but also for the Pennridge School District. After Mrs. Kachline viewed the property and the applicant's plan, she is not certain which of the alternatives she would support – either a golf course or recreational open space. Even though Mrs. Kachline personally might like to see the property remain as open space, she also believes the Supervisors should keep in mind the tax dollars that could be realized from a golf course.

3. Mrs. Jackie Walker of Bypass Road stated that on January 17th, her husband suffered a stroke, which caused him to fall and strike his head on a beam in the barn. She was very grateful to the Dublin Ambulance Service for responding to the call within five minutes. Mrs. Walker strongly supports the continuation of the Dublin Ambulance Service and hopes that the Board of Supervisors will as well. She suggested that all volunteer ambulance services or fire companies follow up their donation request mailings with a phone call, which she believes is more effective than simply a mailing.

Chairperson Bennington commented that the Dublin Ambulance Service was asked to prepare a plan for Hilltown Township and other neighboring municipalities to review for possible financial assistance, however that has not yet been accomplished.

S. SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:


1. Supervisor Snyder wished to respond to Mr. McIlhinny's comments and concerns regarding the Agricultural Zoning District being proposed by the Township. She believes that at first glance, this proposal may appear threatening to residents of that area, however she wanted to make it clear that it is only prime agricultural soils and only soils of statewide importance that the Planning Commission is attempting to protect. Supervisor Snyder stated that the locations of those particular soils are where the severest limitations are. She referred to the newest U.S.D.A. Soils Map, and noted that the Township would really not be protecting a great deal in a very onerous fashion. There is still a lot of land and a lot of soil in that proposed Agricultural Preservation District that can be developed in the same way that Rural Residential soils all over Hilltown Township can be developed. Supervisor Snyder knows that the statistics shown early in the proposed Ordinance can be frightening, and the Planning Commission did worry about whether or not they would be depriving residents of the use of their land. This is the main reason the Planning Commission went in the direction of protecting the prime soils and the soils of statewide importance. She feels that it is imperative for property owners located in this proposed Zoning District to review the soils map to determine what will happen to their particular parcels of property. This is the best advice Supervisor Snyder can give to residents in preparing their questions, comments, and concerns for the Public Hearing that will be held for the Board's consideration of this Ordinance.

2. Supervisor Bender commented that Mrs. Walker's Bed and Breakfast is a fine addition to the Township, and he would like to see other similar establishments in Hilltown.

T. PRESS CONFERENCE: A conference was held to answer questions from those reporters present.

U. ADJOURNMENT: Motion was made by Supervisor Snyder, seconded by Supervisor Bender, and carried unanimously to adjourn the March 12, 2001 Hilltown Township Board of Supervisors Worksession meeting at 9:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Lynda Seimes

Township Secretary

(*These minutes were transcribed from notes and tape recordings taken by Mrs. Lorraine Leslie, Township Treasurer).