

**HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULARLY SCHEDULED WORKSESSION MEETING
Monday, March 8, 1999
7:30PM**

The regularly scheduled worksession meeting of the Hilltown Township Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairman William H. Bennett, Jr. at 7:30PM and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also present were: Kenneth B. Bennington, Vice-Chairman
Charles D. Grasse, Supervisor
Bruce G. Horrocks, Township Manager
Gregory J. Lippincott, Assistant Manager/Zoning Officer
Thomas A. Buzby, Director of Public Works
George C. Egly, Jr., Chief of Police

Chairman Bennett announced the Board of Supervisors and the Township Manager met in Executive Session prior to this meeting in order to discuss legal matters.

A. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: None.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Action on the minutes of the February 22, 1999 Board of Supervisors meeting – Chairman Bennett noted the following correction to page 4, fifth paragraph, which should read “Motion was made by Supervisor Bennington, seconded by Supervisor **Grasse**, and carried unanimously that once the Township takes ownership of the property located at the corner of Rt. 152 and Fairhill Road, the Silverdale Volunteer Fire Company be authorized to use the property for fire and rescue training, as noted above. There was no public comment.”

Supervisor Bennington noted the following correction to page 12, fifth paragraph, sixth sentence, which should state “Unfortunately, even the Comprehensive Plan that is in place at present calls for additional expansion to the development district because we will be running out of it.”

Motion was made by Supervisor Grasse, seconded by Supervisor Bennington, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 22, 1999 Board of Supervisors meeting, as corrected. There was no public comment.

C. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLING – Chairman Bennett presented the Bills List dated March 9, 1999, with General Fund payments in the amount of \$53,342.03, State Highway Aid payments in the amount of \$20,573.37, and Escrow Fund payments in the amount of \$2,618.28; for a grant total of all payments in the amount of \$76,533.68.

Chairman Bennett commented the new financial statements generate a great deal of paper. Supervisor Bennington prefers the former style of financial statements because they are easier to read.

Motion was made by Supervisor Grasse, seconded by Supervisor Bennington, and carried unanimously to approve the Bills List dated March 9, 1999. There was no public comment.

D. TREASURER'S REPORT – Mr. Bruce G. Horrocks – Mr. Horrocks presented the Treasurer's Report with the following balances as of February 28, 1999:

General Fund Checking	\$136,179.65
Payroll Fund Checking	\$ 1,220.18
General Reserve Fund	\$341,154.56
Fire Fund Checking	\$ 2,280.88
Debt Service Fund Checking	\$156,505.42
State Highway Aid Fund Checking	\$ 21,134.47
Escrow Fund Checking	\$229,802.12
Capital Projects – Series 1989	\$ 26,342.87
Capital Projects – Series 1994	\$100,728.37

In the previous budgeted revenue and expense statements, Supervisor Bennington recalls there were percentages for the year listed, and he would prefer to have percentages shown. Supervisor Grasse agreed. Mr. Horrocks advised the new financial system is a work in progress, and eventually, the reports will be shown as the Supervisors request them to be.

Motion was made by Supervisor Grasse, seconded by Supervisor Bennington, and carried unanimously to approve the Treasurer's Report as of February 28, 1999, subject to audit. There was no public comment.

E. WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY REPORT – Mr. James C. Groff, Operations Manager – Mr. Groff read the Authority Report for the month of February 1999; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

F. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT – Mr. Thomas A. Buzby, Director of Public Works – Mr. Buzby read the Public Works Report for the period of January 31 through February 27, 1999; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

Supervisor Bennington mentioned an ongoing icing problem on Hilltown Pike. A woman he knows was involved in a serious accident on February 19, 1999 at this location. Supervisor Bennington is aware of the fact that Hilltown Pike is a State road

over which the Township has no control, however, he would like Mr. Buzby to contact PennDot regarding this matter. Chairman Bennett and Supervisor Grasse agreed. Mr. Buzby will contact PennDot in the morning. Discussion took place.

G. POLICE REPORT – Chief George C. Egly, Jr. – Chief Egly read the Police Report for the month of February 1999; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

H. ZONING REPORT – Mr. Gregory J. Lippincott, Zoning Officer – Mr. Lippincott read the Zoning Report for the month of February 1999; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

Mr. Lippincott announced the Complete Count Committee for the 2000 Census will meet on March 23, 1999 at 7:30PM at the Municipal Building. Ms. Marianne Crockett of the Census Bureau will speak about establishing a Complete Count Committee. The meeting will be open to the public.

I. HILLTOWN FIRE COMPANY REPORT – Mr. Jim Walters – Mr. Walters read the Hilltown Fire Company Report for the month of February 1999; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

Mr. Walters noted the fire department has purchased a trailer to be used in support of the rescue truck. The trailer will house equipment for building collapse, below grade rescue, confined space, and any other technical rescues. It will also be the Upper Bucks Response Unit, only the second in the County. The other unit is housed in Southampton. Assist policies and mutual aid agreements will be executed. Other fire companies that have agreed to help stock the trailer include Perkasio, Doylestown, and Warrington.

Further, Mr. Walters advised the Hilltown Fire Department has completed a HazMat Refresher Course, as required. The officers of the department also completed a Professional Development Course. A CPR/First Aid course will be sponsored by the Hilltown Fire Department this spring, which will be available to all Hilltown residents.

J. SILVERDALE FIRE COMPANY REPORT – Mr. Chuck Stockert, Chief – Mr. Stockert read the Silverdale Fire Company Report for the month of February, 1999; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

The department is awaiting bids from manufacturers for the new rescue pumper to be purchased in the near future. The estimated cost is approximately \$300,000.00. Two of the trucks, the 1965 Ford Rescue Truck and the 1980 Pierce Engine, will be replaced with this new vehicle.

Supervisor Bennington asked Mr. Stockert to remain following the meeting, because he would like to personally apologize to him with regard to a specific matter.

K. PARK AND RECREATION BOARD REPORT – Mr. Nick Lupinacci, Chairman
– Mr. Lupinacci read the Park and Recreation Report for the month of February 1999; a copy of which is on file at the Township office.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the Hilltown Civic Park on Saturday, March 27, 1999 (rain date of April 3, 1999) to begin at 11:00AM, with three different age groups scheduled. Ages 1 and 2 will begin at 11:00AM, ages 3-5 will begin at 11:20AM, and ages 6-9 will begin at 11:50AM.

L. CONFIRMED APPOINTMENTS: None.

M. MANAGER'S REPORT – Mr. Bruce G. Horrocks, Township Manager –

1. Mr. Horrocks presented four escrow releases for the Board's consideration:

County Line Plaza	Voucher #06	\$ 107.09
Estate at Tall Oaks	Voucher #16	\$ 307.37
Keystone Estates	Voucher #14	\$ 263.61
Longleaf Estates	Voucher #25	\$ 1,325.52

Motion was made by Supervisor Bennington, seconded by Supervisor Grasse, and carried unanimously to release the four escrows, as noted above. There was no public comment.

2. Two bids were received for the purchase of a replacement 1999 dump truck (Bid #99-1), which has been budgeted for in 1999. The bid results are as follows:

B.R. Scholl	\$72,956.18
Bergey's	\$72,485.00

Motion was made by Supervisor Bennington, seconded by Supervisor Grasse, and carried unanimously to award Bid #99-1 for the purchase of a replacement 1999 dump truck to Bergey's, in the amount of \$72,485.00. There was no public comment.

3. Fire Protection Agreements were disbursed for signature to all the fire companies who service Hilltown Township. Following this meeting, Mr. Horrocks would like the Supervisors to endorse the Fire Protection Agreement returned by the Dublin Fire Company.

4. It was previously discussed that the Township Manager, Chairman of the Supervisors, and two office personnel will be attending the State Convention in Hershey, Penna., and therefore, will not be able to attend the April 12, 1999 Supervisor's worksession meeting. Mr. Horrocks asked the Board to consider canceling the April 12, 1999 Worksession meeting, with reports for the month of March to be presented at the May 10, 1999 Worksession meeting.

Motion was made by Supervisor Bennington and seconded by Supervisor Grasse to cancel the April 12, 1999 Supervisor's worksession meeting, due to the State Convention in Hershey, Penna. Chairman Bennett abstained. There was no public comment.

5. Mr. Horrocks spoke with Mr. Paci, chairman of the Planning Commission, who advised the Planning Commission is requesting a joint meeting between the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, the Township Engineer, the Township Solicitor, and Ms. Ann Hutchinson, to review all aspects of the Cluster section of the Zoning Ordinance. Supervisor Bennington suggested this meeting be held on Monday, March 22, 1999, during the regularly scheduled meeting. Chairman Bennett and Supervisor Grasse agreed.

6. A request has been received from the Lighthouse Baptist Church of Buckingham to use the pavilion at the Hilltown Civic Park on Saturday, August 14, 1999, from 10:00AM to 8:00PM. A security deposit has been provided.

Motion was made by Supervisor Grasse, seconded by Supervisor Bennington, and carried unanimously to authorize the use of the pavilion at the Hilltown Civic Park by the Lighthouse Baptist Church on Saturday, August 14, 1999, as specified above. There was no public comment.

7. Motion was made by Supervisor Bennington, seconded by Supervisor Grasse, and carried unanimously to return the \$200.00 donation to the Bucks County Seeing Eye Puppy Club, since they are a non-profit organization. There was no public comment.

8. Mr. Horrocks just returned from a week in Washington, D.C. with the Pennsylvania Rural Leadership Program. This is a two-year program sponsored by Penn State and funded by the State legislature. There are two more meetings scheduled – one in April and one in May, with graduation to follow. Mr. Horrocks intends to provide the Board with a detailed report after graduation, and thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend because it has been an incredible experience. Supervisor Bennington reminded Mr. Horrocks that one of his 1999 objectives is to put together a program so that Hilltown employees will benefit by his participation in this program.

- N. CORRESPONDENCE – None.
- O. MYLARS FOR SIGNATURE: None.
- P. PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Ms. Diane Parks of 1022 Keystone Drive made the following statement:
“About 7 years ago, I bought a home in Hilltown. Like many other people have done, I chose to live here. I chose to make my investment because I wanted permanence and a sense of community, surrounded mostly by agricultural and rural neighbors. Permanence and history is certainly the essence of Hilltown Township. My neighbors tell me of their families who have been here for generations, and some of them have even lived in my home before I did. The Township has also welcomed a lot more recent homeowners too, and it has welcomed us on terms that were established to protect our environment and to protect our investments. Our homes are usually the single largest investment that any of us make in our entire lifetime. Before I made my decision to buy here, I had briefly reviewed the zoning regulations so that I could feel certain that the rural atmosphere that surrounded my new home would be protected and preserved. Even though I knew there had to be development, I thought that minimum lot sizes and the natural limitations on water and sewer would give us that protection. At first, I concentrated on settling in. I was a bit surprised my first summer when my well ran dry. The new one ran almost 600 feet, so not only did I get sticker shock, I got a heightened awareness of the impact of the water table. There really weren't very many visible immediate threats to our environment back then, and I thought the Township was in good hands. So I paid my taxes, voted in the big elections, and maybe even missed a few of the small ones, because my business demanded frequent and extensive travel. In the last 1 ½ years though, I've had a serious wake-up call. I've seen an unpleasant acceleration in development, especially denser development than I expected. Certainly more than I wanted. I began reading the local newspapers a lot more closely, and even thought about just how to change that direction. What I didn't realize then, though, was just how many people in Hilltown feel the same way I do. The real catalyst that drove me to action last fall was almost in my own back yard, it was the massive proposed development at the top of the hill on my street. Rather than the broad, open hayfield with church spires and farmhouses in my field of vision that greets me every morning, now at 6:15AM as I made my way to work, there was a strong possibility that the view of hundreds of homes might accompany my morning drive time news. Instead of dodging woodchucks, I could have been sharing a two-lane street with several hundred additional cars. That potential development and the publicity that came with it really got my attention. I got concerned and I got involved. It was pretty easy. All I had to do was pick up the phone and call the person that spoke at the October meeting and say “Want some help?” Since last fall, I have become part of the nucleus of a growing population of Hilltown people who choose to live here because of the rural nature of the Township. We like the character of the

community. That character, though, is really in danger. You've told us there is protection in the Comprehensive Plan, and I've taken a look through that plan, and I think you're right. But we feel that our community is also under attack by the Cluster Development Ordinance, which up front appeared sound in theory. In practice though, this Ordinance appears to favor both outside and vested and personal interest, over those of the larger community of taxpayers who elected you to represent all of us. The terms of the Ordinance are accelerating the development plan. Ordinances like these, if allowed to continue, have the potential to open up the entire rural zoned portion of the Township to that type of development. Although we know that we can't stop change, Ordinances like this could easily speed our growth well ahead of the plan by ten to twenty years. Then we will have to react as a community, with an explosive impact on sewers, water, traffic, crime, schools, and our taxes. That one Ordinance is not the only issue. We can review and amend that, you've already talked about that tonight. Could one person make a difference? Could one person resist? I believe one person can make a difference, and I'd like to thank the three of you gentlemen for your suggestion at the last Supervisors meeting that community members get more involved. That's a great suggestion. Last week, my candidacy papers for Supervisor were filed. This is an exciting potential commitment for me and for the community. When you get right down to it, contributing to Hilltown through pursuing elected office is a logical extension of any successful corporate career. I'd like to put that to work. Thank you again for your suggestion."

2. Mrs. Janice Stemler of 19 Beverly Road attended the March 4th Planning Commission worksession meeting, and stated the majority of Planning Commission members are concerned with changes created with Ordinance #98-13, the Cluster Ordinance. Mrs. Stemler studied the Ordinance herself and has listened to discussion by various groups, finding the following list of problems with the Ordinance to be of concern to many people:

- It encourages dense housing on 7,500 sq. ft. lots on any property over five acres anywhere in the Township, rather than confining it to the development district as set out in the Comprehensive Plan.
- It allows for the same size lots on Rural Residential land as it does for CR-1 and CR-2, except the CR-1 or 2 option where the lot size may be 6,000 sq. feet.
- It facilitates the development of land that would only be marginally profitable or impossible to develop under the old Ordinance due to perk characteristics or the need for a private water supply.
- It allows for more houses per development on Rural Residential than the old Ordinance.

- It encourages the building of package sewer plants anywhere in the Township. Since the Ordinance denies sewer access on Rural Residential properties and allows package plants with Clustering, any future attempts by the Township to try to limit the number of undesirable package plants in Rural Residential may invite the possibility of curative amendments being brought against us.

- It encourages developers to request zoning changes for the extension of sewer lines beyond the development district into contiguous Rural Residential areas.

- It expands the uses of open space to include wholesale nurseries and associated buildings, commercial equestrian facilities, stormwater management systems, water supply and sewage disposal systems.

- It mandates more expansion of public water and the drilling of more community water system wells by virtue of allowing for more houses than the old Ordinance which may lead to inadequate groundwater recharge.

- It will cause the acceleration of the development of the Township by enticing builders to take advantage of the high density allowances in our Ordinance, while our neighbors continue to fight to keep densities down.

Mrs. Stemler commented Cluster Ordinances do not have to permit increased number of houses in order to promote open space. She referred to an article from the March 3, 1999 Souderton Independent, titled "Lower Salford may adopt Cluster Housing Ordinance." In that article, one of Lower Salford's planners, Brian O'Leary, states "There are several benefits of cluster housing in which developers can build on smaller lots of land in exchange for open space for the Township. They are still building the same number of houses, but there will be between 50% and 55% open space. In the R-1A District, homes are zoned for 80,000 sq. ft. lots. You don't get any extra homes, but on the open space, you can preserve environmentally sensitive land, woodlands, and views." Even though Lower Salford's Ordinance allows for bigger lots and has the same number of houses per development as their old Ordinance, Mrs. Stemler noted there are still a number of Commissioners who are leery about passing this Ordinance. Commissioner Charles Lannon said "This will change the entire structure of development. Is that what we want?" Planner Richard Prescott said "A disadvantage of the overlay is that it may encourage some growth, since some sites that wouldn't get developed before, may get developed. Portions of land that are incapable of on-site sewer systems can potentially get sewers when Clustered." Mrs. Stemler advised these are some of the same concerns she has heard Hilltown Planners say about our Ordinance. Mrs. Stemler stated open space is not protected forever. The meaning of open space created by this Ordinance can be changed again in a future Ordinance, which could allow for eventual development of the open space.

Mrs. Stemler would like the Supervisors to respond to these concerns. Chairman Bennett noted the Supervisors will respond at the March 22, 1999 Supervisors meeting.

3. Mr. Stefan Heilakka of Church advised the name of the concerned citizens group is "Friends of Hilltown." The group will be meeting on Thursday, March 11, 1999 at 7:30PM at St. Peters Evangelical Lutheran Church on Hilltown Pike to discuss the Cluster Ordinance issue. Mr. Heilakka invited all interested Hilltown residents to attend.

4. Mrs. Joan Grasmeder of 20 Beverly Road stated there are many decisions to be made with regard to the Cluster Ordinance, and the consequences of the decisions that the Supervisors make will affect the future of Hilltown Township. This is not to be taken lightly. She hopes that at the March 22, 1999 meeting, the residents will not be brushed off. The development of Hilltown Township is severe, it is a concern, and it will change and affect every resident of our community. Mrs. Grasmeder reminded the Board that they are elected officials, and she is hoping that they will make the right decisions.

5. Mr. Garrett Bencker of Audrey Lane noted Supervisor Bennington earlier touched upon the safety of Rt. 152, which is a major concern. Mr. Bencker noted a number of incidents that he has seen with regard to the safety of Rt. 152 since he moved here in 1986:

- The Hilltown Authority connected to the Seidel wells, and in the process, some speed limit signs were inadvertently removed. After three calls to PennDot, Mr. Bencker finally was able to have a 40 m.p.h. speed limit sign erected, as you enter Silverdale. This is the only speed limit sign from the Hilltown Inn to Rt. 113.
- A jogger from Mr. Bencker's neighborhood landed on the hood of a pick-up truck.
- In 1988, the driver of a construction vehicle lost his brakes, and had to lean on his horn to alert a school bus that was stopped to pick up children near the Sterling Knoll development.
- In 1992, Silverdale repaved Barringer Avenue, which has served to increase the speed that vehicles travel when entering and leaving Silverdale Borough and Hilltown Township.
- In 1995, a pedestrian was struck and killed along Rt. 152.
- In 1995, a vehicle was pulled from Reverend Dean Bickel's back yard

after it had jumped a curb and taking out a tree, just 100 ft. from the same school bus stop Mr. Bencker mentioned earlier.

- In 1998, a motorcyclist, traveling at a very high rate of speed, was killed at the intersection of Rt. 152 and Fairhill Road.

Mr. Bencker stated Rt. 152 has no shoulders and no speed limit signs, even though it is a State road and is considered a major artery. Mr. Bencker invited any and all of the Supervisors to join him during any rush hour, morning or evening, to observe what goes on. Mr. Bencker does not intend to sprinkle salt in the expansion dreams and schemes of any and all public and private concerns, however he does wish to raise everyone's awareness to what he considers is a very dangerous situation.

Chairman Bennett commented there are 75 miles of Township roads, and 75 miles of State roads through Hilltown Township. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to get much accomplished on State roads, since they are under the jurisdiction of PennDot. The Board of Supervisors are well aware of Mr. Bencker's concerns and they intend to address it the best they can. Discussion took place.

6. Ms. Sandra Seifert of Beverly Road believes Mr. Bencker's point is that the roads in this area can not take the development that is proposed, let alone what may come in the future. Rt. 152 is a main artery and it can not handle the traffic it experiences at present and Mrs. Seifert wondered how it would handle the traffic of the future.

7. Mr. Stefan Heilakka, who also lives along a State road, wondered why the Township can not confront PennDot and force them to address these problems. It appears that the Township is powerless against PennDot.

Mr. Horrocks explained Title 67 controls signage on roads, and speed development control on roads, and is a State regulated program. When the Hilltown Police conduct a speed survey, it must be run to State standards. If it does not meet those standards, no speed limit can be reduced. Mr. Horrocks would be glad to share his copy of Title 75, which is a very large document, with Mr. Heilakka.

Further, Supervisor Bennington noted that if there is a dangerous intersection of two State roads, and someone is injured or killed at that intersection, the Township, even though they have no responsibility or control over a State road intersection, will be sued right along with PennDot. Supervisor Bennington commented the Township should not be party to that lawsuit, but unfortunately it happens all the time. Discussion took place.

Q. SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:

1. Mr. Horrocks requested that the Supervisors meet in Executive Session following this meeting in order to discuss personnel matters.

2. Several months ago, Supervisor Bennington mentioned a matter he noticed at the car wash near Blockbuster Video on Rt. 113. The Supervisors were told that the developer was going to install stanchions to prevent motorists from cutting straight in to the site. Supervisor Bennington advised that has not been accomplished and he wants it done immediately. Mr. Horrocks will mention it to the Township Engineer at tomorrow morning's staff meeting.

3. Supervisor Grasse carefully reviewed "Growing Greener" and asked himself what exactly it means. He believes it is an approach to demonstrate the principles of conservation zoning and conservation subdivision. This is a State and National planning initiative, a collaborative effort at the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Lands Trust level, and supported by government agencies, both County and State. It has been a plan since 1961, and is a plan for the 21st century. For an example of the magnitude of success that can be achieved by the Growing Greener Plan, Supervisor Grasse explained Lower Makefield Township, Bucks County, has conserved more than 500 acres through this technique alone. This equals to \$3.5 million dollars worth of land conservation, at no cost to the Township, no dependence on public bond funds, and no sacrifice to local land owners. Supervisor Grasse asked what makes our community a special place to live – the CR-1 and CR-2 District on the north side of Rt. 113? Growing Greener, in Supervisor Grasse's opinion, creates better designs for an open space subdivision, so that conservation objectives may be achieved. Supervisor Grasse encouraged everyone to keep their eye on the future because Hilltown is facing growth pressure and to leave it go back to 1950 style zoning would be a great loss. Too much of Bucks County has become what is today, the embodiment of suburban sprawl, because little if anything was done to encourage sensible planning. Supervisor Grasse has attended a number of seminars concerning Growing Greener, and he believes it is a great plan that should be given every consideration for the future.

R. PRESS CONFERENCE: A conference was held to answer questions of those reporters present.

S. ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion by Supervisor Bennington, seconded by Supervisor Grasse, and carried unanimously, the March 8, 1999 worksession meeting of the Hilltown Township Board of Supervisors was adjourned at 8:39PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Lynda Seimes
Township Secretary

(*These minutes were transcribed from notes and tape recordings taken by Mr. Bruce G. Horrocks, Township Manager).