

THE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
FEBRUARY 7, 2024

A Regular Business Meeting of the Smithfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on February 7, 2024 at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

Present are Supervisors Jacob Pride, Robert Lovenheim, and Michael Albert, Solicitor Ronold Karasek, Engineer Jon Tresslar, Conservation & Recreation Director Alex Jackson, Administrative Coordinator Dyana Salvi, and Township Manager Julia Heilakka.

Also present are Katherine Uhler, Janine Tancredi, Susan Downing, Janice Medwick, Donna Kelmeris, Dennis Dumas, Kristine Karol, Brett Cartwright, Jean Turn, and Joann Norris.

1. Chair Jacob Pride calls the meeting to order at 6:01PM. A quorum is present.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.
3. Announcements
 - a. The Environmental Advisory Committee is now accepting letters of interest. Contact Alex Jackson by email at alex@smithfieldtownship.com for more information.
 - b. An Executive Session was held from 5:32PM- 5:54PM regarding personal and litigation.
4. Minutes
 - a. Robert Lovenheim motions to table the minutes from the January 24, 2024, regular meeting, Michael Albert seconds. Vote: all in favor; minutes tabled.
5. Bills & Obligations
 - a. Consider: Ratification of Bills Paid 2/07/2024 – General Fund: \$60,690.69
 - b. Consider: Current Bills. General Fund \$96,482.09, Liquid Fuels Fund: \$0, Escrow Fund: \$0, Capital Improvement/Grant Fund: \$251,885.56.

Robert Lovenheim motions to approve the bills, Michael Albert seconds. Michael Albert clarifies capital purchase is the loader and skid steer. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.
6. Reports
 - a. Solicitor's Report: Ronald Karasek states the Mountain Manor motorcross case is set to continue during the Zoning Hearing Board meeting on February 22, 2024 at 7:00PM.

- b. Engineer's Report: John Tresslar states that he provided plans to acquire right-of-ways for Green Mountain Drive. The bridge is partially outside of the existing right-of-way and the property needs to be appraised. The Board will consider this at the next meeting.

7. Old Business

- a. Continuation: Comment Period for Renaming of S*mbo Creek. Alex Jackson states that S*mbo Creek begins in Middle Smithfield Township but the land is owned by East Stroudsburg Borough. Although there have been theories, the current name does not have any concrete historical associations with local tribes. The municipalities agree to change the name of the creek, and discussions are ensuing.

Brett Cartwright asked if the creek would have more than one name. Alex Jackson clarifies that there is a main stem and tributary, commonly known as Little S*mbo. There have been two different name petitions. The name for the main stem is pending, and the working name for the tributary is "Swan Creek". Michael Albert clarifies that the municipalities need to agree over the name change.

Vicky Ozgun asked why they are changing the name if it has historical origin. Jacob Pride replies that the name is a racial slur and has no concrete historical origin as a name.

- b. Discuss: Post Office Bridge Road Barriers/Closure. Julia Heilakka will meet with PennDOT Engineers on February 14, 2024 to discuss this further and will have an update for the next meeting.

8. New Business

- a. Consider: Approve Consent Agenda.
 - i. Consider: Approve Public Officials Policy Renewal.

Robert Lovenheim motions to approve the consent agenda, Michael Albert seconds. Kristine Karol confirms that it is an insurance policy. Vote all in favor; motion carries.

- b. Presentation: Pocono Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center. Katherine Uhler, Janine Tancredi, and Susan Downing introduce the wildlife center and demonstrate how the organization assists the community. They request financial assistance of \$1,500/yr to help continue operations. Jean Turn thanks the center for recently releasing possums.

9. Public Comment

- a. Janice Medwick is a resident of Lake Valhalla, an officer of Lake Valhalla, and president of the Lake Association. She states that Michael Ellis, the owner of Redline Junk Removal, began his business in Lake Valhalla three years ago. The Zoning Officer issued violations for an illegal business on the property and went to court, but Mr. Ellis has not

compiled with the court's ruling and continues to run his business. Mr. Ellis has also completed upgrades without permits. He has also damaged the road and is costing the Association between \$10,000 and \$20,000 in repairs. Lake Valhalla has begun litigation. The Monroe Conservation Office has been notified and will be investigating the property. She is also concerned that Mr. Ellis's business advertises hazardous waste removal.

Jacob Pride explains that he has spoken to Judge Levy, and the case will need to be brought to court a second time. Ellis has now defied court orders and will possibly have two cases against him. Janice Medwick asks for an expedited process, because of recent delays and the length of the process. Robert Lovenheim hopes to expedite the process. Ronold Karasek states that the police will not get involved within the current state of the case; he advises that the Zoning Officer needs to investigate the property and issue additional violations.

Janice Medwick states that the Association's attorney will address Valhalla Road Maintenance concerns, which include icing, flooding, and damage to the roads. All other concerns will need to be addressed through the Township's Zoning Officer. Ellis is storing trash on his property and burying shelves in his yard. Ronold Karasek advises the Zoning Officer to investigate the property and send enforcement notices. Donna Kelmeris questions why the process has been stagnant, and why a bigger fine has not been issued. Julia Heilakka clarifies fines are the court's decision.

Dennis Dumas is Michael Ellis's neighbor. He describes that he has been speaking to Ken Wolfe for two years regarding this matter and wants enforcement of the zoning laws. Michael Albert describes that they are collecting the information to move forward with Judge Levy in the court. The Board agrees that action should be taken.


Kristine Karol questions oversight of the Zoning Officer's activities. Michael Albert states that enforcement is an ongoing discussion in all of Pennsylvania. Dennis Dumas states Ken is not taking action on the case. Michael Albert reiterates that Ken will need to send out another violation to take this matter to court again. Jacob Pride describes that the Board will have more information on this case during the next meeting. Janice Medwick reiterates that the area is a safety concern and has given the owner multiple opportunities to cease operations.

- b. Brett Cartwright asks what structure is in place to track zoning complaints. Michael Albert states he met with Ken Wolfe and Julia Heilakka, and the Township will start a complaint form to track cases moving forward. Julia Heilakka states that the previous online system crashed, and the Township is working on a new system.
- c. Brett Cartwright asks if there is a clearly defined escalation process, and what is the follow through after issuing an enforcement notice. Jacob Pride explains the person is assumed guilty if they do not comply with the enforcement notice. Julia Heilakka clarifies that Ken Wolf is responsible for the follow through of an enforcement notice.

- d. The Board and public briefly discuss pay for supervisor and employees. Jacob Pride discusses that different townships appoint different positions according to their needs.
 - e. Kristine Karol asks if the Zoning Officer takes an oath to uphold zoning laws. Jacob Pride explains that he is certified by the Pennsylvania Association of Zoning Officers. Kristine Karol then asks how Ken Wolf prioritizes and manages his caseload. Michael Albert discusses the timeframes and deadlines for issuing permits.
 - f. Kristine Karol asks if there have been previous instances where home modifications without permits have been forcibly taken down. Jacob Pride replies that there have been a few instances in the past, but there is an opportunity for the owner to correct the problem before the Township enforces removal.
 - g. Kristine Karol asked what online program crashed. Jacob Pride explains that Ninja forms no longer works with the website, and the Township is researching Laserfiche.
 - h. Joann Norris asks about the status of the Shawnee Valley PRD. Ronold Karasek replies that the project is currently proceeding. Joann Norris asks about entrance points. Robert Lovenheim replies one will be Shawnee Valley Road and another will be Hollow Road. This project was approved in 2005, and there is a procedure to follow approved plans.
10. Michael Albert motions to adjourn, Robert Lovenheim seconds; meeting adjourned at 7:36PM.

Minutes recorded by Dyana Salvi and Julia Heilakka

Respectfully submitted:



Julia Heilakka, Township Secretary