

Mr. Smock, President of the Board, convened the work session at 7:00 PM on the above date. Also, present were Commissioners Milazzo, Eckles, Pavone and Miller, as well as: Jason M. Bobst; John Walko, Esquire; Kathy Frederick; Michael Kelly; Stephen Morris; Donna Horn; Michael Valyo; Allan Booz; and Jon Dzedzy. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the meeting proceeded.

**Discussion/
Status Update**

A. *Regarding the 2023 Budgets, Mr. Bobst stated that the numbers are in and a presentation is being prepared and that a balanced budget is anticipated with no tax increase or increase in fees. As such, Mr. Bobst inquired of the Board if it would like to present next week at the regular meeting or wait until November for presentation with adoption in December. Mr. Miller suggested, and all agreed, to wait for all details to be finalized for presentation in November and adoption in December.*

B. *Ms. Pavone provided a history of the dog park project from its infancy, including, but not limited to, the formation of a subcommittee to gather ideas and research potential sites, the distribution and compilation of a survey of interest and the drafting of a plan, etc. According to Ms. Pavone, the current plan is located off of Eagle Drive on the Van Landeghem tract and includes a dog park, streambank stabilization, a ½ mile walking trail and removal of invasive species of trees, plants, etc. Mr. Smock added that the Township doesn't have a main street so our park system is what we have to offer and this can be a jewel. According to Mr. Smock, this park is designed to be a park with a dog park in it. Per Mr. Smock, the Van Landeghem site is an overgrown jungle and this project will improve the adjacent high school campus and perhaps include it as well, and there will be a straight line of site from Eagle Drive for added safety. Mr. Bobst showed the plan and elaborated on it by noting that there will be: two large dog areas of one acre each; a small dog area of 1/3 of an acre; two rain gardens; one meadow garden; 12 space parking lot; and riparian stream bank restoration. It was added by Mr. Bobst that the estimated price for the construction of the park will be \$750,000.00 inclusive with 100% grant money to be used. The first grant round is opening this month via DCNR and the second round in the next four weeks through DCED. Mr. Dzedzy added that there is a demand for a dog park, there are so many other positives with this project and that he is excited to move forward with it. In response to inquiries by the Commissioners, Mr. Bobst mentioned that most, but not all, invasive trees will be removed from the site; however, the Township has a planting resolution in place which requires 80% native plantings for any new project, and that utilization of the dog park portion of the park be on a membership basis with the details of which to be formalized at a later date. Mr. Miller*

concluded by acknowledging the “great work” by Commissioners and staff on this project.

- C. As a follow up to last month’s meeting about fireworks, Mr. Bobst distributed to the Board three model ordinances that came out from the PA Municipal League regarding the new state laws on fireworks prohibitions. Mr. Smock stated that he is in favor of Option 2 for general prohibition of fireworks as he believes that there is nowhere in the Township that consumer fireworks could be set off that would meet the current parameters already in place of 300’ minimum proximity to a structure. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Eckles, it was explained by Mr. Walko that professional display fireworks would not be prohibited. Ms. Milazzo stated that the danger is the most important issue. Based on the feedback received, we will draft an Ordinance per model ordinance 2 for the prohibition of consumer fireworks.*
- D. According to Police Chief Kelly, we are having a small return on applications for police officers so we will have to pivot a little bit and go to the consortium since we need a good pool of applicants. The consortium, per Chief Kelly, currently has 300 applicants with 16 member townships with one application process and no cost to the Township for the consortium’s services of conducting the written and agility tests, which will begin in January, 2023. Thereafter, we will handle the interview and all other processes. According to Chief Kelly, the Civil Service Commission will meet tomorrow to adopt the necessary resolution for participation in the consortium.*
- E. With regard to dedication of Markley Farms Phase II, per Mr. Bobst, the punch list of the engineers is completed so we can begin the process of taking formal dedication of the roads, utility lines, street lighting, stormwater improvements, etc.*
- F. As regards the sodium chloride (road salt) bid, our consortium price is \$68.00 per ton delivered, up from \$61.20 last year. According to Mr. Valyo, we have some salt in reserves from last year and with the addition of another dump truck and our salt brining tank we should be able to use less salt. An update on the paving project was given by Mr. Valyo who noted that the 2022 road paving project is complete with just a few adjustments to be made and stop bars to be installed. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Pavone, Mr. Valyo mentioned that DelVal came out to look at pooling on Penfield Avenue, which was paved last year.*
- G. The Frank C. Parker, Jr. & Son American Legion Post 901 will present its Police Officer and Firefighter of the Year awards at*

next week's meeting.

- H. *Mr. Walko updated the Board on the status of the requested PECO gas rate increase settlement. Per Mr. Walko, we joined a number of active parties, interest groups and organizations looking out for affordable utility services. These groups were leading this charge and an agreement was reached as to a settlement and have asked the Township not oppose the settlement as follows: an increase in flat monthly distribution charge of \$.62 vs. the requested \$4.87; an increase for usage fees of \$8.50 vs. the requested \$12.26; and for commercial customer there will be an 4.8% increase vs. the requested 7.1%. It was noted by Mr. Walko that part of the settlement is that these rates will remain in place until March 15, 2024 and, in addition thereto, PECO agrees not to cut back on funding and programs for low-income customers. Mr. Walko stated that no official action needs to be taken at this time and he expressed his confidence that this is the best that can be done at this time and that the consumer advocacy groups are happy with the outcome.*

Manager

Mr. Bobst stated that the following items would be considered for adoption and/or action thereon at the next Board meeting:

- A. *Approval of the AFSCME Agreement for a five-year contract with AFSCME union employees, i.e., public works, golf course, police office staff, sewer and administration staff. According to Mr. Bobst, this was a good working contract with an average of a 3.5% annual wage increase and some changes to DROP, but a neutral move with few budget impacts;*
- B. *Advertising of Ordinance No. 2022-756 re: stormwater update. It was mentioned by Mr. Bobst that this Ordinance streamlines the antiquated ordinance from 2004, was recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission and its focus is development and redevelopment in the Township;*
- C. *Advertising of Ordinance No. 2022-757 re: single-use plastic bags which was recommended by the Environmental Advisory Counsel.*
- D. *Renewal of the Montgomery County Planning Commission's Assistance Contract for a term of three years at a cost of approximately \$17,000 per year. Per Mr. Bobst, the Commission's #1 priority is the comprehensive plan, which is the planning document of the Township for the next ten years, so we need to wipe the slate clean and start fresh.*

**Liaison
Committee
Reports**

Mr. Smock reiterated that the Planning Commission reviewed the updated Stormwater Ordinance as prepared and presented by Beth

Uhler of Cedarville Engineering.

Ms. Milazzo mentioned that the Recreation Committee met to discuss plans for upcoming events and that the Silver Circle had a wonderful first session with the help of Ms. Eckles. It was added by Ms. Eckles that the Silver Circle will meet again this month for flower arranging by Plaza Flowers

Per Ms. Eckles, the Civil Service Commission will meet tomorrow.

Ms. Pavone noted that the HRC is planning to have a table set up at the Fall Festival, is also looking at presenting a series of movies for the community on different educational topics and is pursuing a ban on conversion therapy for gay youth in conjunction with The Trevor Project.

It was added by Mr. Miller that the EAC met to finalize details of the single-use plastic bag ban Ordinance and that the pollinator garden has been installed with native plants out front of the Township building for migrating and pollinating insects.

**Public
Comment**

Leroy James Watters, III., 1 E. Indian Lane, commented that “we slayed a couple more bad crossarms”, the dog park plan looks “beautiful” and the repair of roadway at not-yet dead man’s curve on Schuylkill Avenue looks “great”. Mr. Watters handed out a pamphlet for more understanding as to what can be done with the stream, specifically for the HO Association at Stonybrook. Also, per Mr. Watters, he recently visited the Flight 93 Memorial and is looking to organize a trip there for veterans. Additionally, Mr. Watters mentioned his concerns, including utility poles, visibility of stop signs, stopping flooding, saving bridges and water infrastructure funding.

Mary Ellen Moran of 714 Port Indian Road inquired why the Van Landeghem tract was chosen as the location for the dog park and what is the plan for the land purchased at Centennial Park. While Ms. Moran stated that she is in favor of the conservation of the streambank on the Van Landeghem tract, she questions the amount of work being created for management of the dog park and the close proximity of the Norristown Farm Park. Ms. Moran also questioned the percent of responses to the survey for the dog park. It was stated by Ms. Moran that we have other problems in the Township, i.e., safety of the bike trail, mercantile tax and shoplifting, and that believes that we need to address other issues and that our priorities are not in the right place. Mr. Smock stated that he would not like to conduct a dialog tonight, but he is making note of her concerns and will get back to her after his investigation.

Kim Haymans-Geisler voiced her dissatisfaction with the dog park which she stated that she has been fighting since 2014 when Jason first proposed it. According to Ms. Haymans-Geisler she sees problems with the dog park, including, but not limited to, location, lack of park for medium sized dogs, police monitoring of a private road (Eagle Drive), speeding and careless driving, maintenance of the dog park, inclusion of the high school students. At the request of Mr. Smock, Ms. Haymans-Geisler concluded by requesting a restrictive covenant be included in the agreement to protect the land in the event the park goes downhill.

James Reihman of 217 Colonial Avenue, read a statement that he prepared in opposition to the proposed single-use plastic bag ban Ordinance. According to Mr. Reihman, the consumer's interest is not being taken into consideration and he quoted statistics from a recent National Geographic article which indicated the production of reusable bags uses 4x more energy than production of plastic bags. Mr. Reihman also inquired about the frequency of plastic bags clogging our storm drains and cleanup costs of plastic bags as he has heard nothing in those regards. Mr. Reihman reiterated that the proposed Ordinances gives little to no consideration to the consumer and the citizens of West Norriton and he objects to the penalties proposed therein. In conclusion, Mr. Reihman stated that he would rather see the Board spend its time on more beneficial projects such as the excellent dog park idea, the improvements at Jeffersonville Golf Club and the great West Norriton Day.

Upon motion of Mr. Miller, seconded by Ms. Milazzo and unanimously agreed, the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

**Upcoming
Meeting Dates**

According to Mr. Bobst, the following meetings are scheduled: Environmental Advisory Council on October 5th @ 7:00 PM; West Norriton Academy on October 19th @ 6:30 PM @ Jefferson Fire Company No. 1; Recreation Committee on October 5th @ 6:00 PM @ Centennial Park; Planning Commission on October 17th @ 7:00 PM; Zoning Hearing Board - None; and Human Relations Commission on October 27th @ 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

There being no further items on the agenda, upon motion of Mr. Miller, seconded by Ms. Milazzo and unanimously approved, the work session was adjourned at 8:18 PM.

*Kathy K. Frederick
Assistant Secretary*