

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS INFORMATIONAL
AND GENERAL AFFAIRS MEETING MINUTES**

September 26, 2022

The Informational and General Affairs Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Upper St. Clair, duly advertised and posted in accordance with law, was called to order at approximately 7:30 PM, Monday, September 26, 2022, in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room, Township Municipal Building, 1820 McLaughlin Run Road, Upper St. Clair, PA 15241.

PRESENT: Commissioner Paoly President
 Commissioner Plutko Vice President
 Commissioner Burlingame
 Commissioner Enck
 Commissioner Pardini
 Commissioner Thomas

 Matthew R. Serakowski Township Manager
 Mark M. Mansfield Assistant Township Manager
 Mark P. Romito Director of Finance
 Adam A. Benigni Director of Planning and Community Development
 Irving S. Firman Township Attorney
 Jennifer Slagle, P.E. Township Engineer
 Laura Long Recording Secretary

EXCUSED: Commissioner Orchowski

PUBLIC: Three members of the public were in attendance.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Presentation Re. Morton Fields Complex.

Jennifer Slagle introduced Alberto Jarquin, civil engineer with Gateway Engineers, Inc., to the Board of Commissioners and stated that they would present the existing conditions of the Morton Fields Complex along with four proposed concepts this evening.

Ms. Slagle provided a brief update of where this project stands stating that when the Board accepted the Morton Fields Complex Study conducted by Pashek MTR this past April, the Township

directed Gateway Engineers to conduct a survey of the complex to prepare to move forward with the provided recommendations.

Mr. Jarquin stated that Gateway Engineers reviewed the existing conditions of the complex and has prepared four concepts to present. The elevation levels of the existing three fields and parking lot within the complex currently vary which has created ADA accessibility concerns and parking challenges.

Mr. Jarquin presented the first concept which would keep Field #1 intact and turfed with additional field surface added to the left. A portion of Field #2 would relocate to create a centralized parking lot area that would be ADA accessible and lead to concession stands. Field #3 would be used for the accessible parking so a new field would be created. There are still terrain level challenges with this concept.

The second concept also keeps Field #1 intact and turfed. The parking would be moved to the opposite side for ADA accessibility. A more centralized playground would be in between the fields; however, the elevation grades between the fields still vary which causes ADA concerns due to the number of steps in between the fields.

The third concept would be to level off the entire area to construct a brand new facility consisting of a 10 acre parcel with level elevation, centralized parking, ADA spaces, playground, multi-purpose fields, set up and oriented correctly to accommodate the sunset. This would allow the perimeter trail to come around the complex.

The fourth concept takes what Pashek MTR recommended, keeping Field #1 in-tact and turfed and moving the ADA parking to the lower field. There would still be steps to navigate from the lower and upper fields. Another terrace of parking would be added.

Mr. Jarquin stated that each of these concepts create more ADA accessibility; however, some would create more concrete work.

Mr. Jarquin provided the cost estimates for each concept:

Concept 1: 14.2 million

Concept 2: 12.4 million

Concept 3: 12.1 million

Concept 4: 10.7 million

Mr. Jarquin stated that most of the concepts can be phased out to keep portions of the complex functioning with temporary parking solutions while working on other areas; however, the third concept which levels the entire area would require shutting the entire complex down while the work is done. He shared that none of the concepts would impact the Volunteer Fire Department, located near the complex.

Commissioner Burlingame shared that hauling dirt from project sites due to leveling can be expensive and asked if these anticipated costs were included in the estimates provided. In response,

Mr. Jarquin stated that a standard \$25 per yard hauled off was applied; however, that cost could vary when the project begins.

Commissioner Burlingame asked how closing the fields may impact the Upper St. Clair Athletic Association. In response, Ms. Slagle stated that every concept would require the fields to close and safety concerns if left temporarily open due to construction equipment. While Pashek MTR worked with the existing design of the Morton Fields Complex to provide their recommendations which translated to Concept 4, once Gateway Engineers conducted the project survey, they realized that any option would require the fields to close which is why they proposed Concept 3 which levels out the terrain.

Commissioner Thomas thanked Gateway Engineers for their presentation and asked about the potential drainage differences within each concept. In response, Mr. Jarquin confirmed that storm water management would be implemented in each plan to find a discharge point to direct it to or take it where a discharge point exists.

Commissioner Pardini inquired if any of the concepts would negatively impact parking. Mr. Jarquin confirmed that each option adds parking spaces. There are currently 167 spaces. Concept 1 would have 204 spaces, Concept 2 would have 200 spaces, Concept 3 would have 221 spaces and Concept 4 would have 214 spaces.

In response to Commissioner Pardini's inquiry, Mr. Jarquin stated that the haul off figures stated earlier are an estimate; however, they could vary once the project begins.

Mr. Serakowski stated that the Township does not desire to lose the multi-purpose aspect of the fields within the complex and even though Gateway Engineers has proposed reorientating the fields, they would not be limited to just baseball.

Conversation ensued between the Commissioners and Gateway Engineers about potential solutions that have been considered if the Township decides to pursue a phased approach and the safety concerns of operating a partially functioning complex during the varied construction stages.

Since members of the Upper St. Clair Athletic Association and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board were in attendance, Commissioner Paoly asked if any members of the public would like to make comments.

Michael Mckenzie, 2593 Siesta Drive, expressed concerns with the idea of the phased approach which would keep the complex partially open during the construction phase. He stated that many children attend the games of their older siblings, and he could foresee issues with keeping them off the construction equipment that would need stored at the complex when not in use.

Commissioner Paoly asked if any estimates have been provided without synthetic turfing. In response, Mr. Jarquin stated that approximately \$3.2 million was factored into each estimate for the synthetic surface. Commissioner Burlingame stated that the long-term costs of natural field maintenance and impact to the Public Works department should be factored in as well, if there is consideration in not turfing fields.

Mr. Serakowski stated that where we are today is in response to the conceptual plan conducted by Pashek MTR which took over a year to accomplish. Through that plan it was identified that the Morton Fields Complex needs an upgrade. Mr. Serakowski asked the Board to remember the elements considered within the Pashek MTR plan as they review the four concepts presented by Gateway Engineers. While the cost is important to consider, the Township has been investigating financing options including bonds to consider all the concepts and phasing options.

Commissioner Burlingame asked the Commissioners to consider the difference between fixed and variable expenses as consideration is put into the future decisions to be made regarding this matter. He shared that while the cost of Concept 3 may be high, the unknown expenses needed to haul dirt with the remaining concepts could be costly as well.

In response to Commissioner Paoly's inquiry, Mr. Serakowski stated that the purpose of sharing this presentation this evening was to give the Board and public the opportunity to understand the options to be considered when the Morton Fields Complex project progresses while Staff continues to research the various financing options for funding. He stated that no current action is required and that this matter would be included again on a future Agenda. He suggested referring to option 3 as the "All-In" Concept.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any additional questions from the Board, and there were none.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – OLD BUSINESS

None.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing Re. PLC-22-0010 – Waffles INCaffienated – Unified Conditional Use/Preliminary and Final Land Development Approval.

Mr. Benigni stated the initial public hearing on an application filed by 155 McMurray, LLC for Unified Conditional Use/Preliminary and Final Land Development Approval at 155 McMurray Road for an increase in floor area for Waffles INCaffeinated. This application was reviewed by the Planning Commission at its regular meeting on August 18, 2022 and was recommended for approval. Following the applicant's presentation, staff will recommend that the hearing be continued to Monday, November 7, 2022, for the purpose of taking staff testimony.

Commissioner Plutko asked if the developers included a sidewalk in their design. In response, Mr. Bengini confirmed that a sidewalk has been included and that there is a scheduled scoping meeting with PennDOT this Friday so more information should be available after the meeting.

In response to Commissioner Paoly's inquiry, Mr. Bengini stated that the tentative business opening date has not been set.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any questions from the Board, and there were none.

Recommendation Re. Adoption of Resolution for Plan Revision for New Land Development (Planning Module) for PLC22-0005 – Maggie’s Farm Distillery – Unified Conditional Use/Preliminary and Final Land Development Approval.

Mr. Benigni stated the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection requires planning module approval for any new development in the ALCOSAN service area. The planning module for this project has been reviewed by the Township Engineer and has been found to be in good order. A Resolution adopting the planning module will be prepared for consideration by the Board on October 3, 2022.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any questions from the Board, and there were none.

OTHER AGENDA AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Re. Fire Prevention Week in Upper St. Clair (October 9-15, 2022) and Presentation of Volunteer Fire Department Certificates of Service.

Commissioner Paoly asked Commissioner Burlingame to present the Proclamation and Certificates for Fire Service week at the October 3, 2022 Board of Commissioners’ Regular meeting. This year’s theme is, “*Fire Won’t Wait. Plan Your Escape™*”. A Certificate of Appreciation for years of service will also be presented to the Volunteer Fire Department members listed below:

Dave Ickes – 30 years
Josh O’Connor – 15 years
Gary Salerno – 15 years

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any additional questions from the Board, and there were none.

Discussion Re. Recognition of Camp Cadet Attendees.

Commissioner Paoly asked Commissioner Pardini to present the Certificates of Achievement at the October 3, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board recognizing:

- Augustine Schmidt and Madeleine Thomas for their participation in Camp Cadet. Both participants are 7th grade students at Fort Couch Middle School.

Camp Cadet is a week-long event designed to give youth a better understanding of law enforcement activities while living in an atmosphere similar to a police training academy. The camp emphasizes improving self-discipline, building self-esteem and confidence through teamwork, and making new friends by participating in various activities including a mock crime scene investigation, mock criminal trial and sporting activities.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any additional questions from the Board, and there were none.

Discussion Re. Approval for a Grant Application through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Park Rehabilitation and Development Program for the Morton Complex/Park Rehabilitation and Development Project.

Mr. Mansfield stated the Township desires to apply for grant funding through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Park Rehabilitation and Development Program for the Morton Complex/Park Rehabilitation and Development Project.

Staff will prepare the appropriate Resolution for the October 3, 2022 Regular Board Meeting to authorize Mark S. Mansfield, Assistant Township Manager, to file all applications, documents, and forms between the Township of Upper St. Clair and DCNR.

Staff will recommend that the Resolution be adopted at the October 3, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board.

In response to Commissioner Paoly's inquiry, Mr. Mansfield stated that many things are factored into deciding how much funding to apply for when submitting a grant application.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any questions from the Board, and there were none.

Discussion Re. Approval of Contracts.

2022 Manhole to Manhole Lining

Mr. Mansfield stated on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, two (2) pre-qualified vendors submitted bids for the Township's 2022 Manhole to Manhole Lining contract. Insight Pipe Contracting, LLC, Harmony, PA was the best responsible bidder in the amount of \$315,125.00.

The funding source for the 2022 Manhole to Manhole Lining contract is allocated in the Sanitary Sewer Fund for Corrective Sewer Line Rehabilitation.

Staff will recommend that the proper Township Officials be authorized to enter into a contract with Insight Pipe Contracting, LLC in the amount of \$315,125.00 at the October 3, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any questions from the Board, and there were none.

USDA Wildlife Services

Mr. Mansfield stated the Township has made great progress over the last fourteen years reducing deer vehicle collisions by utilizing a "Special Use" culling permit issued by the PA Game Commission. USDA Wildlife Services performed the prescribed culling activities on behalf of the Township as part of a contractual arrangement.

The 2022 program removed 137 animals that were processed and given to needy families and food banks. Deer vehicle collisions currently average about 60 per year, down from over 250 when the

program began. The annual culling program continues to keep the herd at a safe and healthy level and has significantly reduced Upper St. Clair's Animal Control Services annual cost share.

USDA has tendered a contract proposal for culling activities to begin early next year in the amount of \$45,000. The 2023 Budget has a recommended allocation of \$45,000 for this program.

Therefore, Staff will recommend that the proper Township Officials be authorized to enter into a contract with USDA Wildlife Services in an amount not to exceed \$45,000 at the Regular Board meeting on October 3, 2022.

Mr. Mansfield also mentioned that Tri-Community South (TCS) has been working towards purchasing a Chevrolet Tahoe and Staff has found one under the co-stars program at a cost previously approved by the TCS Administrative Committee. This item will also be included with the contracts for approval next week at the Regular Board meeting.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any questions from the Board, and there were none.

Recommendation Re. Upper St. Clair Volunteer Fire Department Organization Assessment and Strategy Recommendations Study.

Mr. Serakowski stated on Tuesday, September 6, 2022, a Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held at 6:00 PM, with Rob Brady, Fire Service Strategic Planning Consultant of ROBB Consulting, LLC. Mr. Brady presented his findings and recommendations as contained within the final report of the "***Organization Assessment and Strategy Recommendations for the Upper St. Clair Volunteer Fire Department.***" In addition, at the Regular Meeting of September 6, 2022, the Board of Commissioners voted to table action on Resolution No. 1727 adopting the report and the recommendations. This was to allow for additional review and engagement with the members of the volunteer fire department and public.

The completion of the document is a result of over a year and a half of study, document review, operational assessment, and one-on-one and group interviews with fire department personnel, Township staff, the Board of Commissioners and the general public. The report includes the following eleven objectives and recommendations:

1. Appoint Township Fire Chief/Director of the Department of Fire Protection
2. Establish Ad Hoc Strategic Assessment Implementation Advisory Committee
3. Reorganize and Elevate the Department of Fire Protection
4. Continue to Update Volunteer Fire Department Administrative Governance
5. Continually Assess Need for Operational Staffing
6. Develop a Fire Officer Eligibility Policy
7. Develop a Formal Staffing Plan
8. Evaluate Dispatch Protocols and Capabilities
9. Adopt Apparatus Replacement Plan
10. Improve Member Recruitment and Retention
11. Continue to Develop Regional Relationships

Mr. Serakowski asked the Commissioners to share their thoughts from engagements they had with the members of the Fire Department over the past month. In response, Commissioner Burlingame thanked the Board for tabling this item at the September Regular meeting to give each Commissioner a chance to connect with the Fire Department. He shared that he and Commissioner Paoly visited the fire house last week and were impressed with the organizational structure and men and women who volunteer. They received a great deal of valued feedback and met with the fire chief and president to learn more about how the Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) runs.

Commissioner Burlingame stated that a topic that often came up with members is the idea of the Board of Commissioners and VFD having a closer relationship with increased communication. He would like to see an Ad Hoc Committee implemented, starting with five to seven representatives, holding their first meeting within the month of October.

Commissioner Paoly recommended that any Commissioner would be welcome to visit the VFD on Wednesday evenings when members are at the station for drill night. He stated that much was learned and he looks forward to moving forward with the increased communication with the VFD.

Commissioner Thomas stated in follow up to his comments made at the September Regular meeting, he still has reservations about the first objective to appoint a full-time paid chief to the Fire Department. He expressed concern that this step could be the first in a domino effect leading to a paid fire company which the Township would have to keep sustainable. He stated that over the past month many VFD members have spoken with him and shared that they are collectively against having a paid chief, indicating they would resign should that occur.

Commissioner Thomas expressed support for the Ad Hoc committee and would like the committee to review and prioritize the 11 recommendations to condense them into the essential items. He shared that the VFD leadership should be responsible and accountable to the Township through the Ad Hoc Committee to address leadership issues effectively.

He stated that many members have expressed unfair treatment and requested that the Township's open paid fire marshal position should be filled as soon as possible and prioritized over appointing a paid chief. He shared that a major need of the VFD is recruiting more members for day-time coverage. One of the disadvantages to their current recruitment relates to the bylaws in that they cannot accept volunteers from other fire departments. If the bylaws were adjusted to allow members to be a part of multiple fire departments, there could be a great deal of interest to increase volunteers.

Commissioner Thomas suggested that regionalization be considered to work with other communities for the purchasing and use of costly equipment such as the aerial ladder. Since there are not many high-rises in our Township and surrounding communities, this piece of equipment could be a shared expense and a shared use.

In response, Commissioner Paoly stated that through conversations with VFD members, a takeaway has been the fear expressed in not clearly knowing the role of the proposed paid chief and if this person would have their back in a fire emergency or if they would solely be a daytime administrator. He stated that clearly defining the roles of this position should be a priority.

Commissioner Enck reiterated that through her conversations with VFD members over the past month, the desire for increased communication was the topic that came up most frequently. She expressed support for all 11 objectives and the structural change of having a paid chief and encouraged the Board to take turns representing the Township at VFD meetings.

Commissioner Burlingame stated that the report only shows one paid individual not an entire paid department, expressing support for the first objective to hire a paid chief.

Commissioner Pardini expressed support for the paid chief stating that when the roles are defined, the Township and Board of Commissioners should affirm that this individual would be responsible to be on call and on the scene in a fire emergency and not just a daytime administrator.

Conversation ensued between Commissioner Paoly and Mr. Serakowski regarding how a paid fire chief may affect VFD membership. Mr. Serakowski stated the Township and Board does not desire a fully paid department and would like to offer more engagement through the paid chief to build the ranks of volunteers within the fire department.

Commissioner Plutko expressed support for the first objective to hire a paid chief and reiterated that the Board and Township would make it clear when defining the roles of this position that it is expected to be on call in cases of emergency.

Mr. Serakowski stated that the Board may take action to formally adopt the report by Resolution at the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners, Monday, October 3, 2022.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any additional questions from the Board, and there were none.

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Status Report Re. Budget & Finance Committee Meeting of September 26, 2022.

Commissioner Enck reported that the August 2022 Financial Statements and initial budget assumptions for 2023 were discussed at the recent Budget & Finance Committee meeting. She shared that there was discussion regarding the financially difficult period from 2019-2021 and how Staff brought the Township through in strong financial condition. While we remain in strong condition today, like everyone else, we are facing difficult economic conditions based on current financial trends. Township Staff has a plan in place to support rising costs and decreased revenues.

Commissioner Enck thanked the Staff for implementing the priorities indicated through the Capital Projects Fund and Community & Recreation Center Fund. She shared that the budget is in good shape and that Staff will continue to lead cautiously.

Commissioner Burlingame and Commissioner Thomas agreed with Commissioner Enck's comments regarding the Budget & Finance Committee Meeting of September 26, 2022.

Commissioner Paoly acknowledged Mr. Romito and stated that the Board supports Staff's efforts in the initial budget assumptions for 2023.

Review of the Informational and General Affairs Meeting Minutes of August 29, 2022.

Commissioner Burlingame moved to approve the Informational and General Affairs Meeting Minutes of August 29, 2022. This was seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried with a 6-0 voice vote.

Consideration of the September 2022 Bill Sheet.

Commissioner Paoly stated the Board received the September 2022 Bill sheet and there were no questions. Commissioner Enck moved for approval of the September 2022 Bill Sheet, which was seconded by Commissioner Burlingame and approved with a 6-0 voice vote.

Acknowledge Receipt of Financial Statements for the Eight-Month Period ending August 31, 2022.

Commissioner Paoly acknowledged receipt of the Financial Statements and there were no comments.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Commissioner Paoly stated that upon adjournment, the Board would be meeting for an Executive Session to discuss legal and personnel matters.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Thomas moved to adjourn the Informational & General Affairs Meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Pardini. This was approved by a 6-0 voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40PM.

Laura Long
Recording Secretary
September 26, 2022