

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CAMBRIDGE
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REGULAR MEETING

APRIL 12, 2021

CALL TO ORDER, MOMENT OF SILENCE, AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG: Chairman Cole called the April 12, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Supervisors to order at 7:00 PM, in the Municipal Building, 22530 Electric Drive, Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, followed by a moment of silence and the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL: Supervisors in attendance were Kevin Cole, Charlie Bauer, and Bernie Blystone. Also present was Secretary/Treasurer/Zoning Officer, Debra E. Merritt; Roadmaster, Dan Klapthor; Residents, Josh Snow, Nicole DeFrances, Kristin Wallace, Connie Bullock, Ben Bullock, Mike Kostelnik, Esther Kostelnik, John Anderson, Juely Anderson, Dulcie Anderson, Tom Anderson, Steve Reisenauer, Dale Crandell, Jim Reagles, Ken Bernosky, Melinda Bernosky and Michael Barron; and visitors, Linda King, Stephen Miller, Lindsey White, Robin Ernst, Cathy Hutchinson, Mark Hutchinson and Bill Buchanan.

IDENTIFICATION OF RECORDING DEVICES: There were no recording devices identified.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: There were no comments from the public at this time.

SUPERVISOR COMMENTS: There were no comments from the Supervisors.

PUBLIC REQUESTS BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT: Josh Snow stated that he was in attendance to request the Board consider holding a Township clean-up day. He noted that it had been several years since one was last held and believed that there was need to provide one. He further stated that perhaps the Board would consider holding one every other year as a service to the residents. Mr. Cole confirmed that it had been some time since one was last held, however noted that there was so little participation, he did not feel it was a justifiable expense, especially with the variety of garbage service options available to the residents. Mr. Bauer stated that while he was not opposed to looking into the costs associated with holding such an event, he too was cautious since participation seemed to continue to decline year after year. John Anderson stated that he believed that there was a need to hold a clean-up day, as there seems to be an accumulation of junk within the Township. He suggested that the Board put out a survey to the residents to inquire whether there was a need and offered his assistance in doing so. Nicole DeFrances also offered to assist in circulating such a survey. The Board thanked the residents for their comments and that they would take their suggestions into consideration.

Mr. Cole stated that the Board is aware that there is a lot of public interest, and perhaps concerns, regarding the proposed solar energy ordinance. He noted that the Board would be holding a public hearing on the matter at a later date, which is required prior to taking any official action on the proposed ordinance. Ms. Merritt requested the public in attendance to please state their names, prior to commenting so that they be reflected accurately in the meeting minutes.

Nicole DeFrances stated that she was in attendance to address the Board on Pattern Energy's proposed solar energy project that being considered in Cambridge Township. She stated that it was her understanding that several residents have already signed leases with Pattern Energy, and that such a project would dynamically change the landscape of the Township. She encouraged the Board to listen to the public's concerns, in taking the appropriate actions moving forward. Regarding this project, she stated that she has been advised that the perimeter fence, enclosing the solar energy farm will consist of chain link with barb wire on top. Aesthetically, she did not believe that barb wire would be an appropriate fit with the existing landscape and encouraged the Board to keep the fencing away from the property lines.

Stephen Miller and Linda King of the Northwestern REC stated that they were in attendance to answer any questions the Board or the residents may have on the proposed project. Mr. Miller stated that this project would not adversely affect the REC, and that their only involvement with the project would be that they would be providing electric service to the site. He stated that solar energy systems generate electricity that is then sold to the connected electric utility and incorporated into their overall transmission grid. He stated that none of the generated electricity, nor the potential savings, gets passed directly onto the community, but rather is distributed across the entire electric system.

Cathy Hutchinson stated that she has been involved with Washington Township when they enacted their solar energy ordinance, and that she has several concerns. She reiterated the point that allowing for solar energy farms will greatly change the landscape of the Township. She further noted that it is imperative that the Board consider the noise that will be generated with the project, as well as the other detrimental aspects that such a project will produce. She said it was the Board's responsibility as elected officials to protect the residents and act in their best interests.

Ken Bernosky noted that he believes that agricultural lands should remain agricultural lands and that special considerations should be taken into account with regard to wildlife, specifically endangered species. He stated that he was aware that there was a bald eagle's nest located on the property proposed for development.

Robin Ernst of Ernst Seeds stated that she was in attendance to provide some information on the vegetation aspects of solar energy systems. She also noted while she understands the public's concerns on the transformation of the now agricultural lands, she noted that a lot of farmers are struggling to make ends meet, and leasing with solar energy developers are a way to allow a farmer to continue to profit off his lands. She said that Ernst Seeds works with several solar energy developers to develop an appropriate seed mixture that will work best in our area. She noted to the Board that one important thing to consider is ensuring that the lower drip edge of a solar panel is at least 36" above grade to ensure that area underneath the panel receives enough sunlight to foster growth of the ground cover. Nicole DeFrances added that one thing the past year has taught us, is the importance to support local, small businesses. She encouraged the Board to include a regulation requiring that the developer obtain the ground cover mixtures from a local vendor.

Steven Reisenauer stated that he lives on the corner of Kreitz Road and Old Route 86 and that his parcel is completely surrounded by property that has signed up for inclusion in the project. He questioned what setbacks are being proposed to protect existing residential dwellings. Ms. Merritt stated that the draft ordinance requires a 50' set back from all residential districts or residential parcels, while fencing must comply with the setbacks of the underlying zoning district. Ben Bullock questioned whether the Board would consider extending those setbacks to protect residential property owners' interests.

John Anderson stated that he has several concerns that he believes the Board should consider when developing a solar energy ordinance. He further stated that he does not feel that the Board should reinvent the wheel and recommended that they seek assistance from the County Planning Office as well as other municipalities that have already adopted such an ordinance. He noted that his main concerns focus on proposed setbacks from residences, fencing, decommissioning regulations, the loss of prime agricultural soils, and new transmission lines that may need to be installed. He stated that he believed that setbacks from residential parcels should be greatly increased from the proposed 50', and that fencing should also be required to be set back from adjoining property lines or road rights-of-way. He also expressed the need to have a strong decommissioning plan in the proposed ordinance, should the developer walk away from the project. He did not feel that the township, or its residents should have to foot the bill in order to return the property back to its original state. Mr. Anderson also noted that some of the property that is being proposed for the project consists of prime soils for agricultural production and felt that the land should continue to remain available for agricultural purposes. Regarding

transmission lines, he stated that he is genuinely concerned, and would find it unacceptable, to allow the developer to install new lines that could potentially run through his property.

Mr. Anderson suggested that the Board release the draft ordinance for the residents' review. He stated that without seeing the document, the public has no idea what the Board is considering with regard to proposed regulations. A number of the public in attendance encouraged the Board to provide access to the proposed ordinance so that residents could review the regulations that would ultimately affect them.

Mr. Cole stated that he believed the Township could post the proposed ordinance on their website and provide copies to those who would like them. Ms. Merritt reminded the Board and the public, that the proposed ordinance was a draft and could be subject to change. She requested that if any member of the public would have comments on the proposed ordinance to please submit them in writing so that they could be provided to the Board.

Mark Hutchinson stated that he was a local realtor and wanted to advise how this type of project would affect property values. He stated that he would anticipate a 40-45% loss in property value for parcels that are adjacent to the proposed solar energy farm.

Tom Anderson stated that he believes that the required screening needs to be as high as the solar panels, so that neighboring property owners are not visibility affected by them. He further questioned why the Township was not incorporating wind energy. He stated that if the Township is looking at renewal energy, he believed that wind energy should also be considered at this time.

Ben Bullock also questioned if the Board has considered site distances at intersections, noting that if the solar panels are sitting too close to the roadways, then site distance would be greatly compromised.

Mr. Cole questioned those in attendance if they overall supported the need for renewable energy. He further stated that while he understands that a large-scale solar energy project would change the landscape of the Township, he noted that the Township cannot exclude development of such projects. Mr. Bauer also noted that the Township did not reach out to Pattern Energy and request that they consider our area as a development location, but rather the request to allow for such development came from Township residents. The Board emphasized that they are doing their best to provide adequate protections to the Township residents, while also providing reasonable restrictions for developers.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

CAJA – Minutes from the March 2, 2021 were received from CAJA.

- **Planning Commission:** There were no minutes received from the Planning Commission.
- **Zoning Hearing Board:** There were no matters before the Zoning Hearing Board.
- **Zoning Officer:** A written report was submitted by the Zoning Officer.

FRENCH CREEK COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS – The next meeting of the French Creek Council of Governments is scheduled for Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 11:30 AM at the Meadville Chamber of Commerce.

TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE – The next meeting of the Crawford County Tax Collection Committee is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, 2021, at 6:00 PM in the West Mead Township Building.

SEWAGE – There was no report received from Peter Homchenko, Sewage Enforcement Officer.

PROJECTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Bid Consideration. Ms. Merritt noted that bids for hard surface repairs and maintenance were opened on Thursday, April 1st at 1:00 p.m. at West Mead Township. Included in the 2021 Joint Bid was 791 tons of Superpave Asphalt Wearing (Leveling) Course, to be placed on Mitchell Drive (T800), Lake Drive

(T801), Sherwood Drive (T802), Maple Drive (T803), Berry Knolls Drive (T603), Pine Circle (T604), West Street (T849) and Birchard Road (T-682-250' south from Route 408) and 20,510 SY of Single Asphalt Seal Coat to be placed on Beach Avenue (T663), Fourth Street (T664), Felton Road (T667) and Center Street Extension (T680). Accordingly, the bid tabulations have been provided to the Board for their review and consideration.

Motion by Mr. Cole to award the Bid for 791 tons of Superpave Asphalt Wearing (Leveling) Course to Lindy Paving, at a unit price of \$92.15 per ton for a total contract amount of \$72,890.65. Second by Mr. Blystone.

Cole: Yes Bauer: Yes Blystone: Yes

Motion by Mr. Blystone to award the Bid for 20,510 SY of Single Asphalt Seal Coat to Suit-Kote Corporation, at a unit price of \$1.48 per SY for a total contract amount of \$30,354.80. Second by Mr. Bauer.

Cole: Yes Bauer: Yes Blystone: Yes

Solar Energy Ordinance. Mr. Cole stated that based upon hearing the residents' concerns this evening, he believed that it would be premature to schedule the required Public Hearing on the proposed solar energy ordinance. Accordingly, the motion to schedule a public hearing on the solar energy ordinance was tabled for a later date.

NEW BUSINESS:

Authorization for Requests for Quotes for Gravel.

Motion by Mr. Bauer to authorize the Secretary/Treasurer to obtain Request for Quotes for 3,732 tons of 2A Aggregate, tailgated to Walters (T781) and Ball (T757) Roads, in Cambridge Township at a rate of 650 tons per day, for consideration at the May 10, 2021 Regular Meeting. Second by Mr. Blystone.

Cole: Yes Bauer: Yes Blystone: Yes

Cambridge Springs Recreation Area. Motion by Mr. Bauer to authorize the Secretary/Treasurer to release the Township's 2021 donation in the amount of \$5,000.00, to the Cambridge Springs Recreation Fund. Second by Mr. Cole.

Cole: Yes Bauer: Yes Blystone: Yes

ROADMASTER'S REPORT: A written report has been submitted by the Roadmaster. Mr. Klapthor also reported that they had received the tractor back from Steiner Diesel. He stated that he anticipated sweeping intersections in the next month, as well as cutting back some brush along the township roadways.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT:

Motion by Mr. Cole to accept the Treasurer's Report and make Payment of the Bills as presented. Second by Mr. Blystone.

Cole: Yes Bauer: Yes Blystone: Yes

Motion by Mr. Blystone to accept the minutes of the March 8, 2021 Regular Meeting, as presented. Second by Mr. Bauer.

Cole: Yes Bauer: Yes Blystone: Yes

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Jim Reagles stated that he was in attendance to ask the Board what, if any, restrictions the Springs Rod and Gun Club is required to adhere to, as they have been shooting a half an hour to an hour after dark. Ms. Merritt stated that she was unaware of any particular restrictions that have been placed on them, however stated that she would review the files, and let him know.

FURTHER BUSINESS: There was no additional business for the Board to address.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Mr. Cole moved to adjourn, with a second by Mr. Bauer. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Debra E. Merritt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Debra E. Merritt, Secretary