

**WEST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TELECONFERENCE BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING
February 2, 2021**

Township Supervisors:

Mr. Shaun Walsh, Chair
Ms. Ashley Gagné, Vice-Chair
Ms. Robin Stuntebeck, Member
Mr. John Hellmann, Member
Mr. Hugh J. Purnell, Member

Township Officials:

Mr. Casey LaLonde, Township Manager
Mr. Derek Davis, Asst. Township Manager
Ms. Christine Riffey, Finance Director
Mr. Bill Keenan, Tax Collector
Mr. Rick Craig, Township Engineer

The February 2021 board workshop meeting of the Board of Supervisors was called to order by Mr. Walsh, Chair of the West Goshen board, at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 2nd, 2021, virtually, via GoToMeeting due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Walsh opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mr. Walsh announced the meeting was being recorded via GoToMeeting and asked the public to mute themselves when not speaking to eliminate background noise. He also stated with each topic that requires a vote will be discussed by board members, followed by public comment, and finally a full roll call vote. He asked that people wanting to speak announce their name. He also stated there would also be an opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Walsh made an announcement that the board met in executive discussion earlier in the evening to discuss personnel matters.

Continued Discussion of Tax Collector 2022-2025 Responsibilities and Compensation

Mr. Walsh announced that any changes to the Tax Collector's responsibilities and/or compensation has to be memorialized in a resolution by February 15th of this year for the next term to be from 2022 through 2025. Mr. Walsh stated that the board discussed alternatives at the January 19th board meeting to the current arrangement such as outsourcing to a third-party or bringing more of the Tax Collector work in-house. He also said that the board requested at the January 19th meeting to have Finance Director, Christine Riffey, be able to write down her thoughts on the matter for the board to consider and that Ms. Riffey subsequently provided the board with a memo.

Mr. Hellmann indicated that the Tax Collector currently makes, with salary and individual certification fees that go to him, a total of anywhere between \$32,000-\$33,000 per year and that many of the Tax Collector duties are being performed in-house at this point. Mr. Hellmann said that the resolution being considered by the board was to more appropriately set the compensation for the Tax Collector position for next term and to see what other duties could be brought in-house. Mr. Hellmann stated he would

like to move forward with the resolution and was prepared to offer a suggestion on appropriate compensation.

Ms. Stuntebeck asked if we would also be doing certifications in-house as well to which Mr. Hellmann replied that we would, and that the certification money would now go to the township under this new set up. Ms. Riffey said that this would most likely be a training item and that, although there is already in-house certifications with sewer issues, this would a new item and require more hours to process.

Mr. Hellmann said the Tax Collector position would still exists by code and would still play a role in items such as reconciliation of the monthly report which would still be given to the township by the Tax Collector. He also stated that the Tax Collector would have input in problems that arise with residents such as liens or late payments and having to make decisions based on those circumstances.

Ms. Gagné inquired whether the Finance Department would have an increase in pay to some extent that would coincide with the decrease in Tax Collector compensation as it was her opinion that extra workload needs to be compensated.

Mr. Walsh stated that his view was that there is a better and more efficient way to process this duty and that bringing it in-house with existing staff is a model that works for some surrounding municipalities and that this model should work here as well. Mr. Walsh said he believed that the Finance Department has some time to think about how this would work internally given that this would not be implemented until next year, and that there should be enough staff to do the work given the hiring of a financial analyst scheduled for 2021. He also indicated he supported Mr. Hellmann's proposed division of labor discussed earlier in the meeting between the Tax Collector and in-house staff. Mr. Walsh stated he was supportive of the resolution before the board.

Ms. Gagné asked what extra compensation would look like for the Finance Department. Mr. Walsh said that we were saving roughly \$30,000 from the Tax Collector position under this resolution but alluded to the fact that there were some issues that needed to be sorted out internally for exactly how much of the savings would be needed to give to Finance in order to compensate for the extra workload. Ms. Riffey weighed in by stating that the extra hours are not broken up equally throughout 52 weeks and that much of this work is cyclical by nature and some time frames will be a lot busy than others. Mr. Walsh asked if a solution could be to use temporary help for a month or two during busy season to which Ms. Riffey replied that it could be an option. Ms. Riffey ultimately stated that the department will simply have to move forward, do their best, and see what works and what does not while implementing these new tasks. Mr. Walsh suggested the board look into allocating some additional funds in the 2022 budget to help Ms. Riffey in the event she does need extra help. Ms. Gagné said she shared some of Ms. Riffey's concerns but if the board thought it was best to move ahead collectively with the resolution, she would support it.

Mr. Bill Keenan, Tax Collector, stated that the board talked about reaching out to East Goshen in the last meeting and wanted to know if there was information provided on how much it cost East Goshen internally to process real estate taxes. Mr. Walsh and Ms. Riffey both said they did not obtain that information and Ms. Riffey stated she was more focused on getting information for staff allocation on

the subject. Mr. Keenan stated that, currently, he puts his name and contact on all information that goes out to residents and deals with all the inquiries himself. He stated he put in about 500-600 hours per year for the Tax Collector role. Mr. Keenan said that, right now, the tax collecting process is a little under \$50,000 as far as costs and that the township would have a hard time absorbing all that extra work for \$50,000. He stated he thinks it would be an added cost to the township. Mr. Keenan said that 80% of taxes being collected are from third parties and how that could be challenging due to them all having different systems. He also said that the online payment systems for residents can be challenging when residents process payments in the wrong way and that has to be dealt with as well.

Mr. Walsh said that the tax collection falls around the same time of year as a sewer and trash payment and that many residents expressed to him a desire to be able to pay online and that this could create less clerical work. Mr. Walsh also continued to express concern over the cost of tax collection for West Goshen versus some other municipalities. He said he felt like this was an opportunity to save money by consolidating work and increasing productivity.

Mr. Keenan states that West Goshen is the 2nd largest township in the county and that Tredyffrin is number one and they do all their tax collecting in-house. He said many of the other smaller municipalities that have less parcels outsource to the county and that makes sense for smaller municipalities. Mr. Keenan stated that he thinks more research should be done if outsourcing is the plan.

Mr. Walsh indicated that the county is not accepting new municipalities. He gave an example of West Whiteland Township who uses Keystone Collections and they pay less even though they have the same amount of parcels or possibly more. Mr. Hellmann stated he reached out to the county and that the \$1.75 per parcel they charge to send a bill would be under \$14,000 given our size. Mr. Keenan asked if Keystone responds to customer calls. Mr. Walsh stated Keystone does do it and that it was a transition at first but that, from his understanding, it has worked out well for West Whiteland.

Mr. Walsh opened it up for public comment and heard none. Mr. Hellmann asked if a motion could be put up at this point. Mr. Hellmann made a motion by reading the resolution and suggested a compensation of \$1,000 per year for the 2022-2025 Tax Collector term. Mr. Walsh asked Mr. LaLonde if we needed clarification of duties to which Mr. LaLonde stated that the most important item is the pay for the resolution. Mr. Walsh asked for a second for the motion and Ms. Stuntebeck seconded.

Ms. Margie Swart, resident, thanked the board for passing the resolution and stated that, as discussed in the previous meeting, 95% of the work is done by the Deputy Tax Collector anyway and that even without much pay there are always people to fill the Auditor positions.

On the motion and second to set the Tax Collector compensation for the 2022-2025 term at \$1,000 per year, the full vote of the board was 5-0 in favor.

Potential Quality Inn Redevelopment (943 South High Street)

A continuing discussion from the January 19th meeting ensued on the potential redevelopment at 943 South High Street which is currently a Quality Inn. Mr. Walsh reminded everyone that this was a

conceptual land development as the developer is proposing a 290-apartment building but would need zoning relief in the form of rezoning to the “Lifestyle Apartment” Zoning which exists in another area of the township. Mr. Walsh went on to describe the different topics covered in the January 19th meeting including the current zoning, crime incidents at the hotel, and traffic congestion within that area. Mr. Walsh opened it up for other board members to elaborate on their opinions.

Mr. Stuntebeck delved into some of her concerns with the proposal, namely the ingress and egress for the site, proximity to neighborhood, size of the building, and whether this would make some of the surrounding residents unhappy.

Mr. Purnell indicated he has been familiar with this site since the 1960s and that, in his opinion, the traffic situation there is as horrendous as it has ever been and that a proposal for 200+ apartments would make it worse.

Ms. Gagné stated she would not be supporting this effort and cited traffic and not being able to find a viable solution in her mind for that issue. She also said she had heard from several residents since the project had been proposed who are all against this apartment building going up. She said one of the reasons she originally ran for supervisor was frustration with traffic and overdevelopment and that she felt like enough people had spoken up against this proposal.

Mr. Hellmann indicated that this area in particular has many apartment complexes already and that this area is a “magnet of congestion” and, when developers come in and say these apartments do not add much traffic in and of themselves, he finds that hard to accept. He also said that if the developer could come up with a way to deal with the traffic than perhaps it could be something that would be considered. Mr. Hellmann stated, at this point, he is reluctant to change the zoning.

Mr. Walsh stated he is not in favor of rezoning this area for the lifestyle apartments as he believes, through his personal experience throughout the years, that the traffic issues in this area are simply too great and cannot really be improved without some very large-scale PennDot projects. He also cited the ingress and egress as being very poorly designed. Mr. Walsh acknowledged the criminal activity at the hotel but thought of it as an entirely separate issue that must be managed but it was not necessary to couple it with the redevelopment issue.

Mr. Walsh asked, absent interest by the board to move forward, whether or not a formal motion had to be made. Both Mr. LaLonde and Mr. Davis indicated it was not necessary to do so given that it was a conceptual land development that had not gone through the formal process. Mr. LaLonde did ask that the board consider some type of zoning change to that site in the future as the current use in the C-3 District, is preexisting and non-conforming in its current state.

Mr. Walsh opened up the discussion to public comment. Ms. Mary Tygh stated that the traffic is in fact horrendous and that it has been lower with COVID-19. She also stated it was not yet known what kind of impact the new apartment complex on the old Agway site will have on the neighborhood. She also discussed an undedicated street in that area that affects four houses and that some access for the previous hotel owners was through this undedicated street. Ms. Tygh also elaborated on the fact that

there are safety and criminal concerns from that property, and, although she said the police do a great job, she wanted to know what else could be done to protect the residents in that area.

Carol De Wolf, Westtown Supervisor, stated she had many calls and emails about this from surrounding residents who were very concerned about the ingress and egress. She commended the board for taking the stance that they did. Ms. De Wolf elaborated on some of the specific traffic issue surrounding the site.

Mr. Joe Tigue, a resident that lives directly behind the hotel, stated that he did not want to see this complex going up and would rather see something like townhomes go there. He also made comments about the undedicated road that himself and a few neighbors have to deal with as they put money into the road to be maintained. He also brought up the various criminal activities that go on at the hotel and implored everyone to work together to clean that site up from such activity in the future. Mr. Walsh indicated he understood the severity of the criminal activity issue as West Goshen Police had over 800 visits to the hotel in the last couple years. Mr. Tigue also discussed the traffic concerns as another ongoing issue.

Mr. Chad Weldon, resident near the site, stated that, in addition to traffic, there is also light pollution from the hotel that shines into the backyards of nearby properties. He also made comments regarding the traffic, their neighborhood being used as a cut through for cars, and the general concern for the safety of the children in that neighborhood with regard to traffic if a 290-unit apartment building went on that site.

Mr. Lou Colagreco, attorney for the possible developer, alluded to the fact that the hotel crime issues far exceed any crime issues from apartment complexes such as these that the township has approved in the past. He also made the point that the hotel may not always be an underperforming asset as it is now and, after COVID-19, if it comes back to full operation with the bar and banquet facility in use, the traffic could be even worse than their proposed use. He also stated that, with regard to the light pollution that a resident mentioned, the lighting may not be up to code and non-conforming. Mr. Colagreco indicated that it was the hope of this developer for this proposed project to be able to contribute some sort of "seed money" in order to start the conversation with PennDot and the township about needed traffic improvements. He also stated he felt that the land development impact would be minimal as they would be using the existing development footprint and that they were willing to engage the sustainability committee to come up with ideas as well. Mr. Colagreco stressed the fact that all of the issues that were brought up tonight could try to be addressed by the developer in the context of the application but will not be addressed by keeping the hotel. He told the board that they could be part of the solution.

Mr. Walsh again stated that the main issue for him is traffic and that some traffic studies done in the context of these project bothered him due to what he described as incorrect methodology since traffic patterns have evolved and changed.

Matt Hamond, traffic engineer for the possible developer, articulated his point made in the January 19th meeting about the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) study that suggested

alternatives for this particular area and the fact that this project could start the conversation on those alternatives.

The board decided to not pursue the possible redevelopment of this property any further.

Commemorative Naming Presentation

Mr. Walsh described the reason for this topic and the fact that the township was looking into some different ways to approach a commemorative naming program for parks and facilities.

Mr. Davis proceeded to give a presentation on his research regarding commemorative naming. He described his research and the various policies from a variety of municipalities and institutions throughout North America. Mr. Davis stated that this sort of policy, unlike many, is very open-ended as the board has a lot of flexibility in deciding what they want the program to look like.

Mr. Davis went on to describe the overarching themes he came across in his research of naming policies. Among these were deciding if a policy encompasses a financial naming aspect or only commemorative, time period before naming of a deceased person, what the process would entail, and what specific area would be designated for naming in the township.

Subsequently, Mr. Davis spoke of the how a procedure for commemorative naming would work. Namely, he described it as three phases which started out by coming up with criteria for being eligible for naming, making sure a process was being followed, and coming up with a decision at the end of said process. He gave specific examples of process and procedures from other municipalities including Chatham-Kent in Ontario, Saint Louis, DuPont in Washington, Chartiers Township in Pennsylvania, and Montgomery Township in Pennsylvania. Mr. Davis wrapped up the presentation by indicating he would be looking for preliminary feedback from the board and then go forward based on that.

Mr. Hellmann described his thoughts on the policy. He stated he agreed with Mr. Davis that Chatham-Kent was a good example to pull from as they seemed to have a comprehensive policy. He also stated that he thought the bar should be high for commemorative naming and that it should not focus on renaming of existing facilities. Mr. Hellmann also stated that he agreed with a one-year minimum time frame to rename for a deceased person and that there should be no naming for individuals still living. He also said that he felt there should be a specific request that should have to be made versus a general request of naming.

Ms. Stuntebeck stated she was glad the board was moving in this direction and asked Mr. Davis to sketch out some of these areas that the board should look at so they can start making decisions. She also stated she is not in favor of having a financial contribution component to this and that she wants to keep the process as simple as possible to achieve equity across all requests. She also commented on the Montgomery Township example of having one specific area for all requests that are approved and thought that was an interesting idea. Mr. Stuntebeck said she is not in favor of renaming any existing buildings.

Mr. Walsh asked Mr. LaLonde and Mr. Davis if they knew the history behind the naming of some parks. It was indicated that there is not a whole lot of knowledge on that front since the naming of most park facilities goes back decades.

Public Comments

Ms. Swart asked the board to consider a policy change on conceptual land development plans wherein the plans are received by the board in a timely matter so that the board and residents can be more informed prior to the meeting. Mr. Walsh stated that he appreciated the comments and recalled some instances in the past where that was a concern but stated he generally felt comfortable with initial deliberations when it is in the conceptual stage. He felt the process in this instance of the Quality Inn went "ok" even though it spanned two meetings. Ms. Stuntebeck agreed she was fine with having it work the way it did. Mr. Purnell agreed as well.

Mr. Purnell asked if a Snow Emergency Declaration was needed tonight. Mr. LaLonde indicated the board should do that for the previous Sunday starting at Noon until today at Noon. He said it was typically 48 hours but the board can also do until Noon on Wednesday as well after Mr. Hellmann stated he thought Mr. Dave Woodward, Public Works Directors, suggested that. Mr. LaLonde also said that it is not known how much we will get back in funding as this area was not as hard hit as areas to the north such as Allentown.

A motion was made by Mr. Purnell and seconded by Ms. Gagné to declare a snow emergency for the previously discussed periods of time. On a full vote of the board, the motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Joan Grande, resident, commended on the township on snow removal compared to other municipalities in the area. Ms. Grande brought up a concern about the Wawa on the corner of 5 Points Road and West Chester Pike. In particular, Ms. Grande was concerned about making a left out onto South 5 Points Road during high volume hours. Ms. Grande indicated that people coming out of that Wawa trying to make such a turn movement get tired of waiting and block traffic on 5 points. Ms. Gagné agreed it was an extremely busy intersection, especially with the CVS. She asked whether anyone knew what the discussion was surrounding this when the land development was constructed. Ms. Grande also brought up the Wawa on Greenhill Road in the northern section of the township and how there is a sign restricting left turns at certain time periods.

Mr. Craig, Township Engineer, said that there must be left turns allowed there because it would otherwise redirect traffic into certain neighborhoods that would create a whole new set of issues. Mr. Walsh asked if it was impossible to restrict it given the example that was stated for the Greenhill Road and Pottstown Pike Wawa. Mr. Craig suggested the police traffic safety group take a look at this in more detail.

Ms. Gagné asked if Mr. LaLonde or Mr. Davis remember this land development and the discussions surrounding the approval. Mr. Davis stated he remembered the land development but did not remember the specifics of the traffic conversation. Mr. Davis indicated that he remembered it was a by-

right use which sometimes limits what sort of traffic requests can be made but that he agreed with Ms. Grande that it is not an ideal situation. Mr. Davis asked Mr. Craig if he remembered anything about it as well.

Mr. Craig stated that during land development of the site, there was some discussions about a mountable traffic island to prevent people from acting on illegal traffic movements. Ms. Stuntebeck expressed some concerns about that Wawa and intersection congestion as well. Mr. LaLonde stated he did recall having conversation about a possible “right turn only” out of the complex onto 5 Points Road but that, as Mr. Craig indicated, would have a negative impact on the neighborhood adjacent to Wawa. Mr. LaLonde also suggested the traffic unit police look into it but was not sure what legal recourse there was at this point. Mr. Davis also added that trying to make a turn onto West Chester Pike and then a subsequent left-hand turn onto 5 Points road if one is trying to go straight across West Chester Pike is also a difficult feat which is probably another reason why restricting left turn there would not work.

Ms. Grande asked about extending the light to accommodate more cars passing through but Mr. Davis said that when the Wawa first opened there, traffic was even worse and the light had been subsequently tweaked a few times to try to accommodate traffic more appropriately but there may not be too much more to be done on that front to which Mr. Craig agreed. Ms. Grande asked about a red-light camera and Mr. Craig stated they are illegal outside the City of Philadelphia.

Mr. Walsh asked if the traffic island idea was still on the table and Mr. Craig said that would be a good thing to look into. Mr. Walsh asked if staff could please do that. Mr. LaLonde stated that, at the time, he thinks people may have been opposed to the island idea as it looked too industrial for a residential area. Mr. Craig stated that with the traffic being so bad there, the attitude of residents on that mountable traffic island may be different. Ms. Stuntebeck asked if this was a calming mechanism to which Mr. Craig and Mr. LaLonde indicated that it was.

Mr. Purnell made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Stuntebeck made a comment about Mr. Hellmann going out on a snowplow during the storm and thanked staff and public works for their efforts in snow removal and the excellence of our winter operations program. Mr. Purnell agreed. Ms. Gagné agreed and stated they should be paid accordingly.

Mr. Walsh seconded the motion to adjourn. On the motion and seconded to adjourn the meeting, the full vote of the board passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Derek Davis
Recording Secretary