



Upper Mount Bethel Township

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UPPER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2024 – 7:00 PM

*This meeting was held in person and live streamed through the Upper Mount Bethel Township Facebook page.

I.

Supervisor Bermingham called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance were Supervisor Bermingham, Supervisor Erler, Supervisor Friedman, Supervisor Albert, Supervisor Eckman, Township Solicitor Karasek, and Township Manager Graziano.

II.

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Supervisor Bermingham would like to move Executive Session to Section IV. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Supervisor Eckman. Vote: 5-0.

III.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marty Pinter, Lindsey Lane, commented on the consultant that the BOS hired and his experience as a consultant and why they did not vet other consultants. Supervisor Bermingham stated that this consultant was highly recommended.

Judith Henckel, Robin Hood Rd., commented on the Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Plan that it is on the agenda. Supervisor Bermingham stated that this item will most likely be tabled.

Ron Angle, Million Dollar Hwy., commented on the Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Plan and he does not see any pluses for Upper Mt. Bethel Twp. Ron commented on the hiring of the consultant, it would be beneficial to have someone in the Township, who has experience, to be hired.

Lee McDonald, Belvidere Corner Rd., commented on anyone who is being considered to be appointed to a committee/board being fully financially transparent.

Mark Mezger, Scenic Ct., commented on the consultant that was hired and is being hired with taxpayers monies and understands that they will be discussing with the consultant in Executive Session and objects to that.

Ron Angle, Million Dollar Hwy., stated that is yet to be a complete and outside accounting of the Park Foundation.

Ray Higgins, Centerville Dr., commented on some ethical violation questions that he had and have not been answered yet and would like to know how the other Board members feel. Supervisor Bermingham stated that David Friedman is a stand-up Supervisor and thinks that he has been very transparent about the issue through the whole process. Ethics are subjective. Supervisor Erler stated that he would like a **MOTION** to censure. Solicitor Karasek explained that Supervisor Friedman can only be removed from office from the Senate of the State of Pennsylvania. Supervisor Erler stated that the motion is not to remove him, it is to address the violation that took place. Supervisor Erler stated that Supervisor Friedman has not made any statement on his ethics violation. Supervisor Bermingham asked for a second. Supervisor Eckman seconded the motion. Supervisor Erler stated that this is the Legislative Branch of the Township and we've been promoting being honest, open and transparent, there has been no acknowledgement of the violation. The Supervisors should hold true to their words. Supervisor Bermingham stated that he would like to think about it more, he's not ready to vote. Supervisor Erler asked for a point of information. What is Supervisor Friedman the liaison is for. Supervisor Friedman stated the office staff and the road crew. Supervisor Bermingham called for the vote. Vote: 1-3-1.

David Clunie Heiden Rd. read the definition of the word censure; Supervisor Friedman is an excellent Supervisor.

Ray Higgins stated that he would like to just hear Supervisor Friedman's side of the story.

Robert Teel, N. Delaware Dr., commented on the improprieties that were made about the previous Board. No one on the previous Board was convicted of an ethical violation. This Board is dealing with a multi-million-dollar company who has to believe their word. Supervisor Friedman has no word, he stated that he would resign, twice, publicly, and he hasn't, he did not keep his word. Supervisor Friedman made him say he would apologize to him if he was found not innocent.

Supervisor Friedman responded that he has irrefutable proof that you (Robert Teel) has a blatant violation of the conflict of interest, but he gave him that consideration that wasn't given to him.

Charles Cole, Riverton Rd., commented on the Concerned Citizens Group, the legal costs that were supposedly incurred, stop the backbiting, and look at the vision for the community.

Judith Henckel, Robin Hood Rd., commented on ethics, and as with her ethic violation, 20 years ago, it doesn't go away. Judy stated that she was fined because she filled out

the Statement of Financial Interest form incorrectly. It asks if you are employed, and she checked no. Technically she was employed by the Township.

Mark Mezger, Scenic Ct. wanted to remind the Board that it is the 283rd day since the Resolution to dissolve the Municipal Authority was passed. The fine is now at \$28,300 that remains outstanding.

IV.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Recess to Executive Session at 7:46 pm to discuss personnel matters.

The meeting reconvened at 8:33 pm. Supervisor Bermingham stated that in Executive Session they spoke with the Consultant about potential business opportunities and there are no actions to be taken.

V.

TABLED ITEMS

1. North Bangor FH Heating Equipment-**MOTION** by Supervisor Bermingham to table, seconded by Supervisor Friedman. Vote: 5-0.
2. Resolution No. 2024-30 Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Plan-**MOTION** by Supervisor Bermingham to table, seconded by Supervisor Eckman. Supervisor Erler stated that he has done some research and if any other Supervisors would like to hear his findings, let him know. Vote: 4-1.

VI.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Open Space Funding-Manager Graziano discussed two properties, the Nordstrom property and the Haddad property. The Township was partnering with Northampton County to pay for these properties for the Open Space program. The Resolutions were approved over a year ago, and now we need to rescind them, and add Heritage Conservancy instead of NC. A letter will need to be sent to Sherry Acevedo that we are returning the approved funds for the two properties. The amount for the Nordstrom property was \$507,852.95 (split amount is \$253,926.48) and the amount for the Haddad property was \$141,458.85 (split amount is \$70,729.43). **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to adopt a Resolution to return the funding to Northampton County, based upon review of the revised and updated changes that they have made to the Conservation Agreements, seconded by Supervisor Erler. Comment: Marty Pinter commented on following through with this, will this create any backlash from the County. Manager Graziano stated that he spoke with Sherry Acevedo, who runs the County Program, and this is not fracturing any relationship with the Township. Vote: 5-0. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to partner with Heritage Conservancy for the Open Space Funding for the Nordstrom and Haddad properties, seconded by Supervisor Erler. Vote: 5-0.
2. Property Maintenance Officer-**MOTION** by Supervisor Bermingham to table, seconded by Supervisor Friedman. Vote: 5-0.

3. Frank's Deli Improvement Agreement-Solicitor Karasek stated this was a Land Development Plan and a improvements agreement is prepared whereby the applicant agrees to make certain improvements to the property. The applicant wishes to extend the time to complete their improvements and according to the agreement that was signed, they had until the end of November to complete all the improvements. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to extend the paving and landscaping improvements for Frank's Deli until May 31, 2025, seconded by Supervisor Eckman. Supervisor Erler asked what the normal action is if the improvements aren't completed on time. Solicitor Karasek stated that they have security, either a bond or a letter of credit, so if the work is not completed, the Township can call in on the bond or letter of credit, get the fund and complete the improvements. Vote: 5-0. Solicitor Karasek will prepare the agreement.
4. Welder & Conveyor Chains-Municipal-Manager Graziano is looking for approval from the Board to sell the welder and conveyor chains on Municipal. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to put the welder and conveyor chains on Municipal, seconded by Supervisor Albert. Vote: 5-0.
5. Jacob Smith Resolution-Supervisor Bermingham stated that he would like to recognize Jacob's accomplishment of becoming an Eagle Scout by presenting him with a Resolution. His Eagle Scout project was redoing the dugouts and the new sign at the ballfields. **MOTION** by Supervisor Bermingham to draft a Resolution for Jacob Smith, seconded by Supervisor Friedman. Vote: 5-0. Supervisor Erler stated that he would be honored to present this to him on February 16, 2025, 1pm, at the Knights of Columbus.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ray Higgins, Centerville Dr. asked how the community can help with the residents who lost their home due to a fire in Evergreen Village. He will look for a used mobile home for them. The Community can help raise money for them.

Lee McDonald, Belvidere Corner Rd., commented on Open Space. 48% of the Township is in Act 319, 9% in Act 4, 9% in Federal Land, 8% in Act 515, 3% is owned by the County 1% by the State, 1% in Easements, and 1% in Township. Why are we spending the money, what are we getting out of this and does it affect our tax base. Supervisor Friedman stated "why not". There are other communities that wish they had open space. Just because its open space doesn't mean they are not paying taxes, the only tax we are not getting is from the County and the State.

Ron Angle, Million Dollar Hwy., commented on Supervisor Friedman's comment. The long and short of it in this Township, there's a limited amount of real estate taxes being paid because of a number of reasons. We need tax rateables in this Township.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor Erler announced he had a good turnout at his office hours. Supervisor Erler has narrowed down his top 3 homes for the Christmas Lights contest. Supervisor Bermingham stated the winners will be announced at the December 30th meeting. The first-place winner will receive a \$100 gift card, second place will receive a \$50 gift card, and third place will receive a \$20 gift card. M&M Vineyards will be donating six bottles of wine to the first-place winner, four bottles of wine to the second-place winner, and two bottles of wine to the third-place winner.

Supervisor Bermingham thanked all those who generously made donations to Joe and Anna. Santa will be at the Chelsea Sun on Sunday, December 22, 4pm-6pm.

Secretary Cindy Beck announced that we received a \$20k Grow NORCO grant for the softball fields at the Park.

Manager Graziano announced that the gate at the Park is finally done. For the winter months, it will open at 7am and close at 6pm. Summertime it will be opened dusk to dawn. Garbage bills and taxes are due 12/31/2024.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Supervisor Erler to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm, seconded by Supervisor Friedman. Vote: 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by Cindy Beck-Recording Secretary

