

**WEST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TELECONFERENCE BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING
January 6, 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

The January 2021 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, January 6, 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 board members will discuss the topic first followed by public comment and that there would also be an opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting. He asked that people wanting to speak announce their name.

\$10,000 Donation for Fame Fire Company in 2021

Mr. Walsh said he wanted to address a topic that was not on the agenda but was from the board reorganization meeting on January 4th. He stated that Ms. Margie Swart (resident) had brought up the fact that Fame Fire Company received a grant of \$1 Million and whether it would be prudent for the board to rescind a \$10,000 planned donation to the fire company in order to use it elsewhere in the budget. Mr. Purnell stated that he had talked to the President of Fame Fire Company today and that Fame Fire Company was planning on a meeting to discuss where they were from a financial perspective and that the \$1 Million grant was not in the bank as of yet. Mr. Purnell indicated he asked the Fame Fire Company President if it were possible to defer the donation for a year and elaborated that Mr. William Ronayne, who gave the initial presentation to the board on the needed donation, would get back to West Goshen even though he felt they would still need it due to expenses exceeding the \$1 Million. Mr. Walsh asked Mr. Purnell if it was his suggestion that the board put the topic on hold in order to give Fame more time to get back to the board and give another presentation. Mr. Purnell stated that this was correct.

Ms. Gagné stated she was not in favor of giving these funds to Fame from the beginning as she thought they were already well funded. Ms. Gagné further elaborated that it is bad practice to rescind donations after it was already decided upon but that she also thought other Fire Companies could use the money this year so perhaps it actually is best to give it to one of those other companies because of the grant going to Fame Fire Company. Mr. Hellmann stated his feeling on the issue is that the original idea was to remove \$10,000 from Goshen Fire Company toward Fame Fire Company for this ongoing capital project, but, now that they have this grant, he would be in favor of giving \$10,000 back to Goshen Fire Company. Mr. Hellmann said that having to cancel the Goshen Fair was a significant financial loss for

Goshen Fire Company and they would be in more need of the money at this time. He also stated that all contributions to all Fire Companies need to be revisited next year and fire companies need to come to the township to have a dialogue about the level of funding they are requesting.

Mr. Purnell stated that the board needs to look at the total financial picture of these fire companies. He said that Goshen Fire Company has more of a reserve even if their income has decreased this year and that Fame Fire is in more of a dire situation right now. Mr. Walsh stated he felt that because the township has a contract through the West Chester Fire Department (which includes Fame) and, presumably, that income goes to ongoing expenses, and that Fame Fire made a decision to make a capital commitment in order to provide improvements to their house which is why they made a late request for such a donation, he would be more inclined, as Mr. Hellmann specified, to give the money back to Goshen Fire Company even though he is willing to hear what Fame Fire Company has to say. Mr. Walsh further suggested that the board put a hold on the \$10,000 commitment until Fame Fire had a chance to come back before the board to give more information on their grant and financial status.

Mr. Purnell clarified that the West Chester Fire Department consists of three companies and that the West Chester Borough owns the trucks and apparatuses and that the contract the township has with the borough is for the trucks rather than operating expenses, which the Fire Companies cover themselves. Ms. Gagné stated she was fine waiting on a decision but did not see a need for Fame to make another presentation since they already made their case for why they want the donation from the township.

The decision was made to put a hold on the payment to Fame Fire Company until more information is known about how their potential grant and, at a later date to be determined, make a decision between keeping the \$10,000 with Fame Fire Company or moving it to Goshen Fire Company.

Ms. Stuntebeck indicated, although she was on mute during the conversation, she heard it and was in agreement with the board's approach.

Ms. Margie Swart thanked the board for revisiting this issue.

Tree City, U.S.A Designation for West Goshen Township

Susan Charkes, member of the West Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee, gave a presentation on the Tree City, U.S.A designation that can be obtained by municipalities and to request that the Board of Supervisors move forward with pursuing such a designation for West Goshen.

Ms. Charkes explained that Tree City, U.S.A is a designation put forth by the *Arbor Day Foundation* that shows a community's commitment to care for trees as a community asset and that it is a "badge of pride" for many places.

Ms. Charkes elaborated on the importance of trees for a municipality such as community pride, real estate values, beautification of the community, and a connection to history. It was said by Ms. Charkes that there are 4 standards that must be met in the application:

1) Must have a tree board or tree department

- Ms. Charkes stated that this responsibility can be assigned to another board such as a Sustainability Advisory Committee or a Parks and Recreation board as well as a Township Manager.

2) Must have a Tree Care Ordinance

- Ms. Charkes indicated that most of the requirements in such an ordinance can be found in various ordinances that West Goshen already has and that it may be feasible to move this language to a stand-alone tree ordinance. She did state that one aspect that was missing was tree protection on public property or at least she did not see it in our current ordinances.

3) Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at least \$2 per Capita

- Ms. Charkes said that this can be “cobbled” together in various ways and include staff time, volunteer time, Christmas Tree pickups, and other little items that would help reach this goal. Ms. Charkes stated that, based on numbers that she gathered with the help of Ms. Gagné, West Goshen is already spending more than \$2 per Capita.

4) Arbor Day Proclamation and Observance

- Ms. Charkes stated that this is probably the easiest standard to meet and celebrations can also be held virtually nowadays due to COVID-19. She also stated that West Goshen does have some history with such an event since there was a proclamation and observation of Arbor Day in 2018 even though, at the time, the township did not move forward with the Tree City, U.S.A designation.

Ms. Charkes indicated that, once you submit the application, it is reviewed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). She also said the only costs for submitting the application would be the solicitor’s time to review the ordinance. These are standards that must be met on a yearly basis.

Ms. Charkes stated she has been in touch with London Grove and, as the newest municipality in the County to receive the Tree City, U.S.A designation, they would be happy to assist with the application and West Chester Borough may be able to assist as well. Ms. Charkes again requested the board to move forward with the application and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Purnell stated that he was supportive of this initiative in 2018 and asked if Ms. Eunice Alexander (West Goshen Tree Tenders) was still involved in the Arbor Day efforts. Ms. Charkes said that Ms. Alexander was involved in the original Arbor Day planting and is still involved in such efforts through the Tree Tenders group. Mr. Walsh asked if the proposal was to not form a new Tree Board but to instead designate the Sustainability Advisory Committee as taking on that role. Ms. Charkes said that is an option but perhaps there should be more discussion on who should take on that responsibility.

Ms. Gagné stated it can be somewhat complicated at times as far as who should take on responsibility internally for the Tree City, U.S.A initiatives. She elaborated on the fact that it can be a variety of employees or boards depending on the municipality and that the Sustainability Advisory Committee could function in such a role for West Goshen but that it also could be the Parks Department that would have more of a legal responsibility for ensuring we are doing what we need to in order to keep up with Tree City, U.S.A standards. Ms. Gagné asked Mr. LaLonde and Mr. Davis who internally would be the best person to take on that responsibility. Mr. LaLonde stated that most likely would be Ms. Dorine McClune, Parks Superintendent, as the primary person in the township who deals with tree maintenance.

Ms. Charkes elaborated on how London Grove designates the “legal responsibility” of Tree City, U.S.A. in their ordinance and suggested the township may look at their set up as well since the term “legal responsibility” may be a little misleading in terms of what it actually entails.

Mr. Walsh followed up by asking who would develop a tree plan going forward. Ms. Charkes indicated that the Sustainability Advisory Committee could take that up but that, long term, there may be a benefit to having a specialized tree committee. Overall, Ms. Charkes said, it is important for citizens and committees to be involved since it is a community endeavor. Ms. Gagné agreed that, long-term, a committee may be the best group to formalize plans but that, for getting approved this year, it may be better to look at staff that are heavily involved in tree maintenance. Mr. Hellmann asked for the London Grove ordinance so that the township can use it as a model. Ms. Gagné stated that this initiative was started in 2018 and that the Sustainability Advisory Committee would simply like to follow through on this process in 2021.

Mr. Hellmann stated that the township should be able to fill out the application now since we meet all the requirements. Ms. Charkes so that is mostly true except there would need to be some upfront work on the actual tree ordinance. Mr. Hellmann furthered his point that we meet enough requirements to get the application moving forward to apply for the Tree City, U.S.A designation. Mr. Walsh supported the overall efforts but wanted more information with regard to what requirements there would be on staff time for meeting the 4 standards. Ms. Gagné stated she thought it would not require any more staff time as we already meet many requirements with current staff efforts. Mr. Hellmann asked who would fill out the application. Ms. Gagné said the Sustainability Advisory Committee can handle the application but that there does need to be someone to sign off on the application such as the Township Manager or Chair of the board.

After discussion, it was decided that a formal motion should be made to give the Sustainability Advisory Committee the task of pursuing the designation of Tree City, U.S.A for 2021 and to handle the application process. The motion was made by Ms. Gagné. Seconded by Mr. Hellmann. Dr. Douglas White stated he was in favor of this effort and asked that the Substantiality Advisory Committee join him at the Planning Commission to help save mature trees during land development and to possibly prevent clear cutting.

On the motion and second to give the Sustainability Advisory Committee the task of pursuing the designation of Tree City, U.S.A for 2021 and to handle the application process, the full vote of the board passed 5-0.

Tax Collector and Sign Ordinance Discussions

Mr. Walsh stated that because there was a failure to stay on track from a time perspective, the tax collector and sign ordinance issues would not have ample time to be discussed. Mr. Walsh asked that these items be pushed to the next board meeting the 3rd week in January. Mr. Walsh asked Mr. LaLonde about the Tax Collector issue and the deadline of February 15th to decide on how the board wants to pursue the Tax Collector's role going forward. Mr. LaLonde stated there would need to be a resolution but that there was enough time to discuss the issue on January 19th and possibly pass any resolution on February 2nd at the next workshop. The board members agreed with the approach of speaking about the Tax Collector issue on January 19th and adopt a resolution on February 2nd if there was agreement to do so at that time. Mr. Walsh apologized to Mr. William Keenan (Tax Collector) for not getting to the issue tonight.

Mr. Hellman asked if there was enough time to quickly speak about the sign ordinance. Mr. Davis elaborated on the sign ordinance issue with regard to political signs in right-of-way and the problem with them getting larger over the past few years. The proposal would take political signs out of the section they currently reside in the ordinance and make them a temporary sign which would allow greater control over size. It was stated that this strictly would be for township and PennDot rights-of-way and would not apply to private property. Mr. Walsh asked if Ms. Kristin Camp, Township Solicitor, was ok with the approach to put political signs in the temporary sign section. Mr. Davis stated that Ms. Camp was comfortable with this approach and that the language does exempt political signs from permits which are usually required for temporary signage. Mr. Purnell commented that it may be a good idea to check with the solicitor on the consecutive days these signs would be allowed to be up as there seemed to be some discrepancy in the language.

Mr. Walsh asked if the sign ordinance issue was going to be brought up formally at the January 19th meeting. Mr. Davis stated that he thought they would talk about it more in-depth at tonight's meeting, but it would be up to the board what they are comfortable with. Mr. LaLonde stated it had to be advertised but that it is probably just a seven-day advertisement requirement if it is not in the Zoning Ordinance. If it is in the Zoning Ordinance, it would be a 30-day advertisement requirement. It was decided to include the Sign Ordinance discussion for the January 19th agenda.

Mr. Purnell made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Walsh. On the motion and second, the full vote to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Derek Davis
Recording Secretary