

WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89257795108?pwd=cm9ZWjgzeHBuUkFHK3Jmd0k4K1JtZz09>

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Review of Minutes – August 5, 2020

Announcements

Open Discussion

1. Renewable Energy Transition Project
 - a. Interest in participating in a steering committee
2. Solid Waste Program Update
3. Parks Update
4. Public Works Update

What's Your Observation? A time for members to share items of importance to you or the community you live in.

Adjournment

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 5, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Public Services Commission regular monthly meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. Due to COVID-19, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom. The meeting was open to the public, and the link to join the meeting was listed on the agenda posted on the Township's website.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Brian Dakin
Lee Ann Embrey
John Ceschan
Rob Hall
Janice Gottesfeld
Kevin Moore
Joe Roscioli
Elizabeth Alakszay
Tim Hubbard

TOWNSHIP STAFF

Pam Gural-Bear, Assistant Township Manager
Ed Culp, Assistant Director of Public Works
Caroline O'Connor, Public Works Coordinator
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Rajesh Kumbhardare, Board of Supervisors Liaison

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Roscioli, seconded by Ms. Embrey, to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2020 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Dakin reported that paperwork to receive funding from the Sunshade Grant awarded in March has been submitted and the project will be moving forward to install dugout roofs on the baseball diamond at Boot Road Park.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

1. Welcome Lee Benson – Township's Commitment to Racial Justice

Mr. Dakin welcomed newly-hired Police Chief Lee Benson and thanked him for attending tonight's meeting. On June 24, 2020, the Board of Supervisors enacted Resolution 2020-27 outlining the Township's renewed efforts to end systemic racism and overcome bigotry. The Resolution reaffirmed the Board's pride in the Township's Police Department and stressed reaching out to the community for ideas and feedback on how we can work together to strengthen

community connections. Mr. Dakin said the Public Services Commission can act as a conduit for that reach-out effort.

Chief Benson advised that equal application of the law has always been the goal in his 35-year career in the field of law enforcement. He outlined the efforts that previous Police Chief Joseph Catov took to get the West Whiteland Police Department accredited, a voluntary program adopting policies and procedures to ensure a high standard of professionalism. He emphasized the importance of both internal and external training of Officers to ensure those policies and procedures are followed in highly-charged situations.

Mr. Hall asked about the percentage of arrests of African Americans made by the Department compared to the overall percentage of African Americans residing within the Township. Chief Benson said that with the Township's large number of commercial businesses, the majority of arrests made were for retail theft which Officers react to (responding to calls) rather than being proactive such as is the case with motor vehicle stops. He said records are kept on the details of arrests made by each Officer. If the data showed an Officer was making an inordinate number of arrests of African Americans, this would be a "red flag" to be investigated to guard against racial profiling.

Chief Benson emphasized the importance of building trust with the community. He said this is the job of every Officer, and they are trained to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

When asked to give a general overview of his impression of the Township, Chief Benson replied that the Police Department is extremely busy with Officers constantly running on calls but doing so with a high level of professionalism. When asked if the Department has a sufficient number of Officers for a community of its size, he replied that he will be evaluating that in the near future, but added that it's not just a matter of populations, but also the large volumes of traffic and commercial entities within the Township. He explained the agreements with surrounding municipalities to provide "Mutual Aid" to one another when needed and possible.

Ms. Alakszay asked if Chief Benson has a feel for how residents perceive the Township's Police Department. He said while he has only been with the Township for two months, he has received positive feedback from residents on Township Officers. He added that legitimacy comes from residents.

The importance of programs that give Officers a chance to interact with children was discussed. DARE-like programs still exist and allow children to feel more comfortable with Police.

While the Township has not yet experienced racial protesting, Chief Benson said there has been protesting over the Sunoco pipeline. He said it is important to listen to protesters' concerns and noted that listening is part of the de-escalation process.

The discussion continued on what more can be done. Ms. Gleason pointed out that the solution should not rest solely with the Police, but that everyone can and should play a role. Ms. O'Connor noted that some Township staff are reading the book "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo and will be discussing it. Ms. Alakszay suggested a possible larger scale discussion for residents. Ms. Gleason said local government can play a role and can get ideas of what residents

want. Having discussions and events that allow people to interact with diverse groups was suggested. Ms. Embrey suggested having a resource center on the Township's website.

2. Renewable Energy Transition Project

James Duffy and Caroline O'Connor are representing the Township in the efforts to begin engaging the community in taking steps toward renewable energy. The group is in the process of gathering resources, identifying stakeholders, branding, and general organization to begin educating the public on clean energy.

3. Discussion on Potential Projects/Budget

Mr. Culp reviewed the various projects proposed. Plans for Burke Road Park include increased parking, re-establishment of the nature trail, and pavilion renovation. Seal-coating and line-stripping is proposed for Boot Road Park and the Township building. Refreshing the tennis courts at Meadowbrook Manor and addition of lines for Pickle Ball are dependent on when pipeline activity in the area is complete.

Mr. Culp asked Commission members to email him with their project ideas. The newly-adopted Park Regulations have been posted at the kiosk.

When asked about a funding deficit, Ms. Gleason explained that Staff is proceeding cautiously at this time until the full financial impact of the COVID pandemic is known. The second quarter earned income tax receipts will be received later this month. Building permit fees and real estate transfer taxes are down this year.

Mr. Culp reported that the work at Boot Road Park North is progressing with the paving scheduled for next week and the sod to be put down in September.

Mr. Roscioli asked about signage for the Exton Crossroads and/or West Whiteland in general. Ms. Gleason said there is not a clear vision yet on what to emphasize (Crossroads or WWT), but said a project with Urban Land Institute is currently in the works to help identify a vision for the Exton Crossroads area that will support businesses and help protect the quality of life.

4. Public Works Update

Mr. Culp praised the Public Works team and Police Department for the great job done in response to yesterday's storm. Communication was great among the team members and tremendous efforts were given in removing downed trees, placing barricades where needed, handling flooding at the pump stations, and fielding numerous phone calls from concerned residents.

Mr. Kumbhardare advised that the Township received grant funding in the amount of \$950,000 for construction of the northern leg of the Ship Road Couplet.

Mr. Hall said the paving at the Exton Train Station looks great. He asked when traffic signals would be re-timed to accommodate the new multi-modal path to the Train Station. Ms.

Gleason said a new traffic light still needs to be installed and estimated that to be by the end of August. Ms. Gottesfeld asked if Whiteland Woods residents will now have pedestrian access to the Train Station. Mr. Kumbhardare explained that will be part of a bigger project in the future when an additional northbound lane is added to Route 100 with a new intersection planned for Whiteland Woods Boulevard and Valley View Road.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Hall made a motion, seconded by Ms. Alakszay, to adjourn the meeting; the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Moore, Secretary