

CONCORD TOWNSHIP
GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING
November 25, 2014

Dominic A. Pileggi, Chairman of the Concord Township Board of Supervisors, called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm on November 25, 2014, at the Township Building. He stated the purpose of the meeting was to introduce the seven newly-elected members of the Concord Township Government Study Commission. He emphasized that it was not a Supervisors' meeting. Also Supervisors John Gillespie, Libby Salvucci, and Dominic Cappelli were present. Township Solicitor Hugh A. Donaghue, Esquire, Magisterial District Judge Wendy Roberts, and Christina Mahoney of Concord Township were also present.

Mr. Donaghue advised that the election results of November 5, 2014, had been certified, and that the swearing-in of the members of the Government Study Commission could proceed.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE

The oath of office was administered by MDJ Wendy Roberts to each of the seven members in attendance: Robert Tribit, Matthew Houtmann, Joshua Twersky, Andrew Briner, Diane Bohr, Rosemary Fiumara, and James Gray.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Joshua Twersky made a motion, seconded by Rosemary Fiumara, that James Gray serve as Chairman of the commission. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion. J. Gray made a motion, seconded by D. Bohr, that Rosemary Fiumara serve as Vice Chairman of the commission. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion. Fiumara made a motion, seconded by M. Houtmann, that Joshua Twersky serve as Treasurer of the commission. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion. A. Briner made a motion, seconded by R. Fiumara, that Diane Bohr serve as Secretary of the Commission. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FROM TOWNSHIP SOLICITOR

Mr. Donaghue provided the Commissioners with an outline/suggested starting points with regard to setting meetings and hearings, emphasizing that public hearings must be advertised. The outline is attached here as part of the GSC's record. Since the Commission's tasks should be completed in 18 months, a schedule should be created establishing certain goals. It was suggested that the first public hearing be held in January 2015; the second public hearing in June 2015; a third public hearing and presentation of recommendations in January 2016; and a fourth public hearing - at which the Final Written Study with Recommendations and/or Home Rule Charter would be presented - in May 2016.

Mr. Donaghue advised the Commissioners that certain Township resources are available to them, including clerical support and advertising, inclusion of items on the Township website and in the newsletters, and the possible incorporation of surveys and questionnaires therein.

Mr. Donaghue also suggested that the Commission request that the Township Supervisors provide for and compensate counsel for the Government Study Commission, (an attorney other than the Township Solicitor.) There was general agreement among Commission members regarding the appointment of an attorney (other than the Township Solicitor) to

represent the Commission and to include the related expense in negotiations with the Township Board of Supervisors regarding the Commissions annual budget.

Mr. Donaghue further advised that there are numerous experts and professionals who are available from the Governor's Center for Local Government Services in Harrisburg, professionals who can explain the various forms of government, Home Rule possibilities and ramifications, etc.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Chairman Gray suggested the need for the Commission to meet twice a month, at least initially. R. Tribit requested that we meet once in December, and then twice a month thereafter, in view of holiday and family commitments. After discussion, it was agreed that the meetings would be held at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, December 16, 2014, and in 2015 on the following Thursdays: January 8 and January 29; February 5 and February 19; March 5 and March 19; April 2 and April 16; May 7 and May 21; June 4 and June 18; July 2 and July 16; August 6 and August 20; September 3 and September 17; October 1 and October 15; November 5 and November 19; and December 3 and December 17.

There was discussion as to whether the Public Hearings - at which comments from the citizenry would be taken - would be in addition to the above schedule of meetings, or in place of one of the meetings. A final decision on this was tabled.

MEETING: DECEMBER 16, 2014

Chairman Gray suggested that we establish some goals and express what the Commission hopes to accomplish. One of the first questions might be: How has Concord Township been operating/governing for the past decades? It was suggested that we begin by interviewing Concord Township Supervisors, the Township Manager, and various Township employees to obtain a better understanding of the current government, reviewing the electoral process (i.e., the number of Supervisors, terms, district and/or at-large) for the purpose of understanding how Supervisors are elected in Concord Township. Chairman Gray then requested that D. Pileggi and other Supervisors attend the meeting on December 16.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Commission should seek the expertise of others, such as the President of the Board of a First Class Township; political science professors who may have served in local governmental positions. There is also a clear need to study the differences between first class townships and second class townships, and to consult with officials from both.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Donaghue advised the Commissioners that public comments must be taken at public hearings; but the point during the meeting at which those public comments will occur is at the discretion of the Commission. Following discussion, it was agreed that, time permitting, the Commission could ask for public comments prior to the reading of the minutes and at the end of the agenda.

BUDGET

J. Twersky volunteered to meet with the Supervisors to discuss the funds that may be available to the Commission.

MISCELLANEOUS

R. Fiumara asked if the Commission could have a link on the Township website. In addition to the township newsletter and local newspapers, the citizenry would be kept apprised of

what the Commission is doing, what it hopes to accomplish, etc. Most importantly, it might provide a place for the Commissioners to obtain ideas and suggestions from the citizens of Concord Township. R. Tribit asked if the minutes of the Commission's meetings could also be posted on the website. Supervisor L. Salvucci assured that it would be possible, and suggested that all requests be sent to Lisa Waldron at the Township, (with a copy to Township Manager Bob Willert and L. Salvucci).

M. Houtmann expressed the need for guidance from governmental experts in Harrisburg, which is crucial in the early stages in order to compare and contrast the various forms of government. J. Gray suggested contacting a representative from the Second Class Townships Association and/or a Political Science professor. Solicitor Donaghue advised that there is a Local Government Office in Harrisburg, and he would provide the address. J. Gray agreed to contact that office to seek the assistance of a representative of that office.

J. Twersky asked whether one or more members of the Commission should be assigned to go to Township meetings to become more familiar with the current process of governing. It was suggested that the Commissioners - as well as all citizens of Concord Township - are welcome to attend meetings, and should do so, if they choose.

R. Tribit asked whether the Commission would be divided into committees. After discussion, it was decided that, for now, there would be no separate committees. If there is a need later on for ad hoc committees, they can be established.

R. Fiumara suggested that the Commission develop a short list of FAQs for the link on the Township website. There was unanimous agreement regarding this suggestion, and R. Fiumara volunteered to put the list together.

R. Tribit asked about holding meetings at other sites in the Township - such as Fox Hill Farm and Maris Grove - as a way of obtaining public input. Chairman Pileggi advised that the Township Supervisors have often held many "non-work" meetings at various locations within the Township.

Chairman Gray commented that the goals and purpose of the Government Study Commission are to engage the public in the process because we need and want their input and to be excited about the work we have been elected to do. We hope to share our findings with civic associations, and get conversations started with the concerned citizens of Concord Township.

R. Miley of 22 Leopard Run asked why Christina Mahoney was on the dais with the Commission members, and he was advised that she, on behalf of Concord Township, was recording the meeting. Mr. Donaghue reminded those in attendance that the minutes of the Secretary of the Commission are the official minutes, not any recording. In addition, he informed those in attendance of the need for a court reporter at all public hearings, and that the court reporter's notes and transcript are the official minutes of the public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, a motion to adjourn the meeting of November 25, 2014, was made at 7:30 pm by Chairman James Gray, seconded by Vice Chair Rosemary Fiumara, and approved by unanimous vote of the Commission.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane S. Bohr, Secretary

Concord Township
Government Study Commission