

**Concord Township
Government Study Commission (GSC)
MINUTES OF MEETING OF DECEMBER 16, 2014**

I. CALL TO ORDER.

The meeting was called to order by GSC Chairman James Gray at 7:13 PM on December 16, 2014, at the Concord Township Municipal Building. The following GSC members were present: James Gray, Rosemary Fiumara, Diane Bohr, Joshua Twersky, Andrew Briner, Matthew Houtmann, and Robert Tribit.

Also present were Concord Township Supervisors Dominic Pileggi, John Gillespie, and Elizabeth Salvucci, and Solicitor Hugh Donaghue.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS.

Chairman Gray announced proposed guidelines and time limits for public comments and questions about the Agenda items only, noting that there would be an opportunity for further comments and questions during the New Business segment.

Rufus Miley, 22 Leopard Run, voiced concern about the form of agenda being followed by GSC.

Dan Levin, (address inaudible), made comments and had questions about Agenda items 1, 3 and 4 [under New Business]. Township Solicitor Hugh Donaghue volunteered to provide an answer, but Chairman Gray reminded those in attendance that questions would be answered under New Business.

IV. OLD BUSINESS.

1. Motion by R. Fiumara to approve Minutes of November 25, 2014 meeting; seconded by R. Tribit. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

V. NEW BUSINESS.

1. Consider Approval of GSC Attorney.

R. Tribit made a motion, seconded by R. Fiumara, to table this item until January 8, 2015. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

2. Consider Appointment of an Alternate GSC Member.

R. Fiumara made a motion that the GSC consider the appointment of an alternate GSC member, seconded by R. Tribit. M. Houtmann commented on the role of alternate on the Zoning Hearing Board. R. Tribit offered comments on criteria for serving as alternate. R. Fiumara clarified her motion, stating: 1) that an alternate would be appointed only if one of the seven Commission members stepped down, and 2) that her motion pertains to the Commission considering the notion of appointment of an alternate; that, in the future, the GSC discuss who and how an alternate would be appointed. Motion amended to consider one alternate to the GSC through advertising and reaching out to parties who were part of the election process, and the consideration of all interested parties before a vote is cast. R. Tribit seconded motion. Motion carried 4-3 (D. Bohr, J. Twersky and M. Houtmann voted no).

3. Presentation of and Consideration for Approval of 2015 Budget.

J. Twersky presented a proposed a budget of \$19,700.00 for calendar year 2015, enumerated as follows: Legal assistance \$13,500.00, which will include attorney's fees as yet to be negotiated; Clerical assistance \$3,200.00; Court reporters, consultants and research \$1,000.00; Printing and postage \$1,750.00; Community outreach, travel, and training \$250.00. M. Houtmann made a motion to accept the 2015 budget as presented; seconded by A. Briner. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

4. Petition to Intervene: Supreme Court of PA, Docket No. 126 MAP 2014.

Township Solicitor Hugh Donaghue provided an explanation of the timeline involved in the filing of the petition to intervene; that the brief was filed by Mr. Sheridan at the Solicitor's direction, on behalf of Concord Township, because of the results of the election, since Concord Township put the question of the formation of the Government Study Commission on the ballot. He emphasized that this is a legal issue that will be decided by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, not the GSC, or anyone else.

J. Twersky opined that GSC should have its own counsel before making any decision regarding the Petition. R. Tribit voiced objection to Mr. Sheridan filing documents as the attorney for GSC. M. Houtmann thanked Mr. Donaghue for the explanation. R. Fiumara asked Mr. Donaghue to explain the parameters of the Supreme Court briefing schedule. M. Houtmann made a motion that the GSC ratify the petition and amicus brief filed by Mr. Sheridan, seconded by R. Fiumara. (Motion later withdrawn)

J. Twersky made a motion to table a decision regarding the petition to intervene until January 8, 2015, when GSC anticipates having its own legal counsel, seconded by R. Tribit. Motion carried 5-2 (R. Fiumara and M. Houtmann voted no).

5. 2nd Class Township Code – Q & A with Concord Township Officials.

At the request of GSC members, Supervisors Dominic Pileggi, John Gillespie and Elizabeth Salvucci provided answers and opinions regarding the governance of a Township of the

Second Class; what they consider to be the advantages of expanding the Board of Supervisors from 5 to 7 members; representation by geography rather than at-large; the pros and cons of 4-year terms and 6-year terms; the need to carefully consider how ordinances and code enforcement would change with a Home Rule charter.

6. Public Comment and Questions.

R. Miley asked whether minutes of GSC meetings will be posted on Township website, and also inquired about the need for an alternate member. He was advised that the minutes will be posted after approval.

Joe Hostetler (Maris Grove) - gave his opinions on the need for legal counsel and the petition to intervene.

Dan Levin commented on the filing of the amicus brief, legal fees and expenses, and expressed his opinion regarding the hiring of the GSC attorney.

Dan Bonner (Fox Valley) - also asked if minutes will be posted on township website.

Steve Mason, 3 Cobbler Lane - asked about process for choosing GSC attorney, and also expressed views on behalf of Concord First.

Dan Foster, 141 Andrien Road, is in favor of an alternate GSC member to sit in on meetings. He also asked if budget items would be on website, and was informed that budget items can be found in approved minutes.

Michael Carroll, 100 Stirrup Lane, Thornton - expressed his opinion regarding the selection of the GSC attorney.

Julius Flynn, 132 Fox Valley Lane, expressed willingness to serve as alternate, and thanked GSC members for their efforts to carry out an important task.

7. JANUARY MEETINGS: FORMAT AND TOPIC.

Chairman J. Gray advised that the January 8 speaker will be Elam Herr, the Assistant Executive Director of the PA State Association of Township Supervisors. Mr. Herr has expertise in the areas of Second Class and First Class Township Codes as well as Home Rule charters.

There was unanimous agreement that holding the first Public Hearing on January 29, 2015, was too early in the process.

8. AGENDA DEVELOPMENT.

GSC members were asked to make suggestions for speakers to be invited to address the Commission at future meetings.

9. CONSIDER PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY FOR GSC MEETINGS.

Reasonable time limits (preferably 3 minutes or less) for comments and questions were discussed.

10. COMMUNITY OUTREACH.

The benefit of Concord Connection as a helpful communication tool for many residents was discussed, but concern was expressed about the method to be used if residents, who don't have computers, want to offer comments or suggestions in writing.

M. Houtmann volunteered to be the point person to establish a database for civic, religious, and private organizations in Concord Township.

Representatives from Concord First were invited to attend a meeting and present their views on the advantages of Concord Township becoming a Township of the First Class.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS.

Chairman Gray expressed the need to purchase an audio recorder for the GSC at a cost of approximately \$85.00. Since there are sufficient funds in the budget for this item, the Secretary will arrange for the purchase.

VII. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business to discuss, R. Fiumara made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 PM, seconded by J. Twersky. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane S. Bohr, Secretary
Concord Township
Government Study Commission

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 7:00 P.M.