

Concord Township
Government Study Commission (GSC)
Minutes of Meeting of March 25, 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

The meeting was called to order by GSC Chairman James Gray at 7:00 PM on March 25, 2015, at the Concord Township Municipal Building. The following GSC members were present: James Gray, Joshua Twersky, Andrew Briner, Matthew Houtmann, and Robert Tribit. GSC Members who were not present: Rosemary Fiumara and Diane Bohr. Also present: GSC Solicitor Michael Maddren; Township Director of Code Enforcement Manos Kavadias; Township Finance Director/Treasurer JoAnne Demnicki; and Township Supervisor John Gillespie. The meeting was then opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS.

None.

III. OLD BUSINESS.

Motion by J. Twersky to approve the Minutes of February 19, 2015 meeting; seconded by M. Houtmann. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. NEW BUSINESS.

- **Treasurer's Report:** Motion by J. Twersky to approve payment of the invoice in the amount of \$1,125.00 from Michael Maddren, GSC Solicitor, for legal services rendered; seconded by J. Gray. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

- **Public Outreach Update.**

R. Tribit and J. Twersky provided a brief summary of their GSC Outreach to Maris Grove Resident Advisory Council on February 23, 2015. J. Twersky made a brief presentation using the PowerPoint slides he developed for the purpose. Presentation was limited to 15 minutes with a short Q&A after.

The next scheduled GSC Outreach by J. Twersky, R. Tribit and R. Fiumara will take place at Fox Hill Farm on March 26, 2015.

- **Township Finance Director/Treasurer – JoAnne Demnicki**

The Township has been using an outside audit firm to do the annual audit of the Township finances. The three elected auditors review the audit and one of the elected auditors presents the audit summary at a public meeting.

The Deputy Tax Collector is appointed by the elected Tax Collector. The Deputy, a paid consultant, accomplishes the day-to-day record keeping and processing of the Township taxes. The Treasurer's Office deals with most of the day-to-day interactions with the citizens, relieving the Tax Collector's

Office of this task. The Tax Collector, after processing the tax payments, deposits funds into one of four tax bank accounts, which are in the name of the Township (not the Tax Collector). The Township then uses these accounts to pay for Township expenses. The Township Treasurer's Office and the Tax Collector's Office provide a two-person checks and balance oversight of the Township tax dollars. Historically, 2% of the Township taxes remain uncollected. Tax records are maintained by the Tax Collector's Office, separate from the Township's records.

Approximately 10% of the Township Operating Budget comes from property taxes. The rest of the Operating Budget revenues come from real estate transfer taxes, local services and amusement taxes, Code permits (building, electric, plumbing), rental and lease payments, state grants, and the commercial and rental license and inspections, and the cable franchise fees. The 2013 Township Audit and 2014 "condensed financials" are available on the Township website.

The three Sewer Department funds are kept completely separate from the other Township funds. No taxes are used to fund the Sewer Department.

Salary increases are the same percentage for all Township employees - across the board. The percentage is decided by the Board of Supervisors.

The Treasurer reviewed the purpose of each of the Township's funds.

- Township Director of Code Enforcement – Manos Kavadias.

Mr. Kavadias prefers the term "Construction Code Administration" rather than "Code Enforcement." The Code Administration Office uses standardized checklists to more efficiently process permits, and uses both scanned records and hard copies.

Very few code violations end up in court. Most are resolved with a standard citation letter. Complaints from residents mostly involve property maintenance. Commercial complaints most often involve non-compliance with the codes and zoning. The Township uses paid consultants to do inspections, in addition to the Township staff.

The Property Safety Department is responsible for the annual inspections of leased spaces. An employee of the PA Department of Agriculture performs the annual Township health inspections.

- Agenda Development.

Chairman Gray distributed a Schedule of Meetings, together with a list of officials from Concord Township and elsewhere, who the GSC had previously suggested might be contacted or visited in order to complete its study of all forms of government.

Chairman Gray asked the GSC members to be prepared to both brief and discuss their individual assignments comparing the 2nd Class Township and the 1st Class Township Codes at the April 2, 2015 meeting. Jerry Gross, from the PA Economy League, has been invited to the April 16, 2015, GSC meeting to discuss what is involved in a Home Rule Charter form of government.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT.

John Gillespie, Township Supervisor, added to the comments by JoAnne Demnicki concerning the processing of Township invoices. He indicated that each Township invoice is reviewed by the Township Manager and one of the Township Supervisors. Checks to pay these invoices require three separate signatures from the following group of individuals: Township Manager, and members of the Board of Supervisors.

J. Schoenberger, Maris Grove, commented about the Maris Grove Outreach. He indicated that the Resident Advisory Council limit of 15 minutes was inadequate and requested that we find a means to revisit Maris Grove for a more in-depth presentation. He also indicated Maris Grove residents were concerned about density issues and the impact on property taxes.

John Gillespie suggested that, perhaps, a “Maris Grove TV” interview of a couple of members might be a way to share information with and from the Commission, instead of at a Resident Advisory Council meeting.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS.

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business to discuss, J. Gray made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 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, April 2, 2015 at 7:00 P.M.