

Concord Township  
Government Study Commission (GSC)  
Minutes of Meeting of May 21, 2015

**I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**

The meeting was called to order by GSC Vice Chairman Rosemary Fiumara at 7:05 PM on May 21, 2015, at the Concord Township Municipal Building. GSC members who were present: Rosemary Fiumara, Diane Bohr, Joshua Twersky, Matthew Houtmann, Robert Tribit and Andrew Briner. Also present: GSC Solicitor Michael Maddren. Not present: Chairman James Gray. Following roll call, the meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS.**

None.

**III. OLD BUSINESS.**

- Motion by R. Tribit to approve the Minutes of May 7, 2015 meeting; seconded by J. Twersky. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.
- Official Transcript of May 13, 2015, public hearing has been received and distributed to all Commission members. A copy of the transcript will be posted on the GSC tab of the Township website, after it has been confirmed with the Registered Reporter that we have permission to do so.
- Solicitor Mike Maddren noted a correction to the transcript, namely, that he was quoted as saying that the “earliest” something would happen would be August 4 (taking a vote to maintain a second class township, switch to an option plan, or a decision regarding home rule ) - but that date (August 4) is actually the latest date for taking a vote.
- In addition, Mr. Maddren noted that there were some general misconceptions about the applicability of the law at the public hearing, since there were cries for a first class township, and aspects of a first class township that some residents seem to embrace, such as regional representation, which are available under some of the optional plans, as well as under a home rule charter, and the GSC certainly has the power to look at those aspects. Since the information is on the website, the residents have numerous resources to learn about the process, and what options are available to the GSC.
- With respect to the remarks made regarding the displeasure with the current Township planning and zoning process, Mr. Maddren pointed out that that these processes are governed by the Municipalities Planning Code, and the GSC cannot change that.
- With regard to the comment at the public hearing that the GSC failed to look at or study the First Class Code, Mr. Maddren pointed out that this was another misunderstanding, since, as a matter of law, becoming a First Class Township is NOT an option for Concord Township. Mr. Maddren reiterated that the GSC did a thorough and in-depth study and comparison of both the First and Second Class Township Codes.
- J. Twersky pointed out that the Chairman has included on every agenda “Public Comment on Agenda Items” at the beginning, and “Public Comment” at the end.

- R. Tribit expressed observations and concerns about the current zoning map and regional differences with respect to the population of various precincts.
- Several GSC members expressed their disappointment at the apparent lack of interest in the government of Concord Township by its residents, since only 15 residents appeared at the public hearing, and only 9 of them chose to put their concerns and opinions on the record.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS.**

The next step for the GSC would appear to be the preparation and advertising of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for professional consulting work related to drafting a Home Rule Charter. Mr. Maddren suggested that the GSC start by contacting the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and/or the PA Economy League (PEL). M. Houtmann made a motion, seconded by D. Bohr, for the Commission to authorize its Solicitor, Mike Maddren, to prepare a Request for Proposal for a consultant to help the Commission with drafting a home rule charter in the event that the Commission decides that will be its recommendation. A voice vote was called for, and Commission members voted unanimously to approve the motion. Sub-committee to assist Solicitor will consist of R. Tribit, M. Houtmann, and D. Bohr. Mr. Maddren suggested that an Expert/Consultant should be in place by beginning of August, and this could be spelled out in RFP.

There was a discussion regarding the preparation of the Commission's report - and a possible interim report - and what that report would include: Background of GSC, resources or appendix, recommendations (if any). Mr. Maddren emphasized that the additional 9 months to draft a home rule charter, IF the Commission decides on home rule, begins on the date of the vote. It would, therefore, be advisable to have a consensus by the end of July. The GSC will have to vote on the Report and recommendations at a public meeting.

Two GSC members are not available for the June 18 meeting. That meeting will tentatively be re-scheduled for Wednesday, June 24, but GSC members will double-check calendars and consult with the Chairman before making a final decision. Reminder from Mr. Maddren: The additional public meetings must be advertised.

#### **V. OTHER BUSINESS.**

- **Treasurer's Report:** GSC Treasurer Joshua Twersky submitted a bill from Norma Gerrity, Registered Reporter, in the amount of \$406.00 for the transcript of the May 13, 2015, public hearing. D. Bohr made a motion to approve payment of the bill; seconded by M. Houtmann. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

#### **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT.**

R. Miley, 22 Leopard Run, expressed concern that official transcript of public hearing is copyrighted material. Solicitor Maddren will check with Ms. Gerrity before it is posted on the website. Mr. Miley observed that turnout at most Township meetings is very low, not just for the GSC. Mr. Miley mentioned that, in addition to growth of population in Fox Hill Farm and Maris Grove, there has also been a growth of population in two large apartment complexes at Route 202 & Smithbridge Road and

Route 202 at Johnson Farm Drive. It is his opinion that the area west of Route 202 in Concord Township is “thinly populated” because a lot of it is wooded area, and Woodlawn Trust property.

D. Foster, 141 Andrien Road, expressed his opinion regarding the confusion and misconceptions regarding the First Class/Second Class Township issue, and his disappointment that a first class township form of government is not an option for consideration by the GSC. Mr. Foster suggested that one of the reasons people do not come to the GSC meetings is because they feel that the decision “is already preset ... predefined...how the turnout’s going to be.” He again voiced his frustration with the actions of the Board of Supervisors, and the lack of diversity on the Commission of both Democrats and Republicans. Mr. Foster asked if there was any way for citizens to send suggestions to the GSC anonymously, and was advised that email addresses for all Commission members are available on the website, but email would not be anonymous.

J. Schoenberger, 301 Sparrows Ridge (Maris Grove), expressed his disappointment with the small turnout at the public hearing, his opinion regarding the work of the Commission, and his frustration with several issues that are not within the purview or concern of the GSC.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT.**

There being no further business to discuss, M. Houtmann made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 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, June 4, 2015 at 7:00 P.M.