

Concord Township
Government Study Commission (GSC)
Minutes of Meeting of September 3, 2015

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

The meeting was called to order by GSC Chairman James Gray at 4:35 PM on September 3, 2015, at the Concord Township Municipal Building. GSC members who were present: James Gray, Rosemary Fiumara, Joshua Twersky, Diane Bohr, Robert Tribit, and Matthew Houtmann. Not present: Andrew Briner. (The Chairman was advised prior to the meeting that Mr. Briner would not be present.) Also present: GSC Solicitor Michael Maddren. Following roll call, the meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS.

None.

III. OLD BUSINESS.

Approval of Minutes: R. Fiumara made a motion to approve the Minutes of August 20, 2015 meeting; motion seconded by M. Houtmann. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously (5-to-0) to approve the motion. (R. Tribit abstained)

Budget Update:

Chairman Gray advised that the GSC is still working with the Board of Supervisors with regard to funding and hopes to have a definitive answer by the next meeting.

Consider Interim Report:

Mr. Maddren had distributed the Interim Report via email to all members which incorporated the changes discussed at the GSC meeting of August 20. Following a short discussion, M. Houtmann made a motion to accept the Interim Report dated September 3, 2015; motion seconded by J. Twersky. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously (6-to-0) to approve the motion. The GSC Interim Report was then distributed to Concord residents in attendance at the meeting, and it will be posted on the GSC website.

IV. NEW BUSINESS.

PA Economy League (PEL) - Introduction: Joseph L. Boyle of PEL and Paul G. Janssen, Director of the Center for Excellence in Local Government at Albright College, explained the arduous, detailed, and complicated process involved in drafting a Home Rule Charter. PEL will provide the topics and then encourage and moderate discussions while leading the GSC members through the process. PEL will note the questions, opinions and ideas discussed and debated at public meetings, and then PEL will take that information and will draft the charter articles - as directed by the GSC - and distribute those suggestions before the next meeting. Basically, this will be the process Article-by-Article in the drafting of a HRC. Mr. Janssen emphasized that the GSC should not hesitate to revisit topics as the process goes forward and considerations may be made in different areas.

As for the timeframe, it is anticipated that the Charter will be ready by February 2016, together with a Final Report, in order to have the question regarding the adoption of the Home Rule Charter on the ballot for the April 2016 Primary Election.

Mr. Boyle advised that PEL has access to a mapping service, but suggested that representatives in Harrisburg be contacted to craft a map of the current population of Concord Township within, perhaps, four districts. Mr. Janssen cautioned the members to be mindful of potential growth in the Township to assure that lines, once drawn, will stay intact as development occurs.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT.

R. Miley, 22 Leopard Run, made comments and suggestions regarding boundaries and wards, and current representation by an at-large Board of Supervisors.

K. Brown and A. Mueller, 850 Shavertown Road, had questions and made comments regarding the cost of hiring PEL to assist and guide the GSC in the drafting of the Home Rule Charter. Chairman Gray responded that the cost of hiring PEL was a not-to-exceed amount and that the GSC is waiting for approval of the budget adjustment from the Concord Township Board of Supervisors. Chairman Gray also stressed the GSC was conscious of the amount requested and would be focused on coming in under budget.

K. Brown and A. Mueller, 850 Shavertown Road, then engaged the GSC members in a lively and extended exchange of opinions and information concerning past history of the formation of the GSC and of alleged GSC actions. All GSC actions have been appropriately recorded in the official minutes which are posted on the Concord Township website. The GSC had no part in the alleged actions which took place prior to the official formation of the GSC. GSC members reiterated that the truth and the facts have been misconstrued and misrepresented, and that false information has been repeatedly spread in multiple forums and public meetings by numerous individuals on both sides of the issue. The GSC members have agreed that the GSC has been and will continue to be focused 100% on the task they were elected to complete.

VII. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business to discuss, J. Twersky made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 PM, seconded by R. Fiumara. A voice vote was called for and Commission Members voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane S. Bohr, Secretary
Concord Township Government Study Commission