

PALMER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING
MARCH 27, 2012

A general business meeting of the Palmer Township Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, March 27, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Palmer Library with four Supervisors in attendance: Robert Lammi, Michael Mitchell, Ann-Marie Panella and Robert Smith. David Colver was absent. Also in attendance were the Township Manager, Director of Public Services, Planning Director, Police Chief, Township Solicitor and Attorney Victoria Opthof. Dino Ciliberti from Patch Internet News represented the news media. Vice Chairman Lammi convened the meeting and led those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS – MARCH 27, 2012

The report will be provided at the meeting.

DISCUSSION

On motion by Mitchell, seconded by Panella, and agreed by four, the Board approved the disbursement of funds for March 27, 2012.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 12, 2012

DISCUSSION

On motion by Smith, seconded by Panella, and agreed by four, the Board approved the minutes of March 12, 2012. Lammi abstained since he was absent at the March 12 meeting.

4. SWEARING IN OF NEW POLICE CHIEF LAWRENCE PALMER

INFORMATION

District Judge Jackie Taschner will swear in new Police Chief Lawrence Palmer.

DISCUSSION

District Judge Jackie Taschner swore in Lawrence Palmer as Police Chief of the township effective April 2, 2012.

Township Manager Christopher Christman welcomed Chief Palmer to the township and presented him with his Chief of Police shield.

Deacon Walter Bright, Deacon of Shiloh Baptist Church said six years ago they had three teenage boys killed within three days in their church community. Bright said Pastor Davis said we can't sit around as a church and watch our children get killed. Bright said we set up a meeting with Chief Palmer that lasted four hours. Bright said he previously lived in Houston and their church in Houston had a summer basketball league that was funded by the city's athletic association. Bright said here in Easton we had nothing for the kids to do in the summer except get into trouble. Bright said Chief Palmer told us if we organized it – he would fund it. He has

had such an impact on these kids. Bright presented a plaque to Chief Palmer on behalf of the Greater Shiloh Church community and the community basketball league recognizing his impact on over 500 kids that have gone through the program. Bright also thanked former Mayor Mitman for his support of the program.

Philip Mitman, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, shared a photo of one of the proudest days in his life when he was serving as Mayor for the City of Easton while serving with Larry. Mitman said the photo was from August 2007 when the city received Police Accreditation from the State of Pennsylvania. Mitman said we went from being a challenged department to one of the 50 best departments in the state. Mitman said Larry lead us through the accreditation process. Mitman said Larry Palmer is a man of integrity, character and is trustworthy. Palmer Township has an incredible chief.

Mrs. Beverly Palmer-Martineau said she is very proud of Larry, because he is her son.

5. KEYSTONE PIZZA PARTNERS, LLC REQUEST FOR LIQUOR LICENSE TRANSFER AND RESOLUTION APPROVAL

INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the resolution approving the liquor license transfer.

DISCUSSION

Bruno said this item has been publicly advertised for an inter-municipal transfer of a liquor license. Keystone Pizza Partners, LLC is looking for the Boards approval tonight to allow them to operate with a liquor license in the township. Attorney Mark Kozar, Flaherty & O'Hara, Attorneys at Law from Pittsburg, introduced Sue Wilkinson from Pizza Hut. Kozar said they are here to request the transfer of a liquor license. Kozar said they are a privately held company headquartered in Kansas with 26 Pizza Huts in the state of Pennsylvania. Kozar said Pizza Hut used to have a restaurant at another location in the township but the building no longer complied with Pizza Hut's corporate standards so they purchased the building on Freemansburg Avenue. They had it gutted and rebuilt. Kozar said their restaurant will not have a bar, live music, video games or pool tables. Hours of operation are Sunday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday through Sunday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. We believe the license would complement the food we serve.

On motion by Panella, seconded by Mitchell, and agreed by all, the Board approved the resolution approving the liquor license transfer related to Keystone Pizza Partners, LLC.

6. OFF-PREMISES SIGN ORDINANCE

INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the Off-Premises Sign Ordinance.

DISCUSSION

Carman said in December we passed a digital and electronic sign ordinance. This amendment is to clean-up an item in our ordinance related to off premises signs or billboards that included a different measurement from a residential district. Carman said this amendment requires the measurement be done in the same manner regardless of the type of sign which is 300 feet from any residential lot line. Carman said when we wrote the digital ordinance it was five feet along the roadway in front of the sign not the radius around it. This will require it to be measured the same for all signs and they must be 300 feet from any residential lot line. Lammi said the only section of the ordinance being changed is section G6 where we added how the 300 feet is to be measured.

On motion by Smith, seconded by Mitchell, and agreed by four, the Board approved the Off-Premises Sign Ordinance.

7. REQUEST TO ENTERTAIN ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

INFORMATION

This is a follow-up item from the January 24, 2012 Board of Supervisors meeting. Mr. Oieni has attempted to contact the neighboring property owner. The Board needs to approve/disapprove the rezoning request.

DISCUSSION

Lammi reviewed the parcels around Mr. Oieni's property where he is requesting a zoning change from LI (Light Industrial) to GC (General Commercial). Carman said when this was previously discussed there was concern about leaving a small island of LI in the area. Carman said we requested Mr. Oieni contact the adjoining property owner. Mr. Oieni attempted to contact the property owner but he has not received any reply and has been told he is out of the country. Bruno asked if the Planning Director had any issues making the area all GC. Carman said she had no problem with that. Lammi said the property next door would be grandfathered in as LI. Carman clarified that if the property next door was rezoned to GC the existing use would be grandfathered. Bruno said if the process to rezone was started, all property owners would receive direct notice and posting notice. Nothing could be done without that notice being given. That would give that property owner the opportunity to be heard. Smith said if we entertain doing it on the corner we should entertain it for all properties in the area. Carman noted the church is also in the LI district. Lammi said he would be concerned about spot zoning so he would only agree with it if we would be making the three parcels GC. Lammi said he has no problem allowing the zoning process to begin. Carman asked if the township wants to require Mr. Oieni to submit his request for all three properties. Bruno agreed it would be best.

On motion by Smith, seconded by Panella, and agreed by four, the Board agreed to entertain the zoning map amendment conditioned on it including all three parcels and the applicant post the required escrow to cover professional fees incurred in the process.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

9. REPORTS

Solicitor

- Bruno handed a proposed ordinance to the Board to review related to the Palmer Township Municipal Sewer Authority. Bruno noted no action is required tonight. Bruno said after the Board reviews the ordinance it can be put on the next agenda for discussion and if acceptable at that time, it could be approved for advertising. Lammi said a member of the Tatamy Sewer Authority contacted him and said he was under the impression unless all debt was resolved this could not be done. From his perspective he thought our authority was still paying Tatamy for the common line going along the Bushkill Creek. Bruno said he would have to look into it because he was informed there was no debt. Christman said the PTMSA does not have any outstanding bonds or payments of debt. Christman said he will revisit the issue with Mr. Hosking tomorrow.
- Bruno had an extension agreement for Penn's Grant Estates, LP requesting an extension until April 30, 2013 to be able to complete their public improvements. Carman said they have a number of lots not yet sold or built on. Carman said they don't want to finish the roads until the construction is finished. Lammi said the law passed two years ago puts the law on the side of the builder related to improvements. Bruno said they are asking for a period of time still shorter than the law allows. On motion by Smith, seconded by Panella, and agreed by four, the Board authorized the Chairman to sign the extension agreement.
- Bruno had a resolution to accept dedication of right-of-way for the Pigliacampi/Polomchak lot line adjustment plan located along Mine Lane Road for .017 acres. On motion by Smith, seconded by Panella, and agreed by four, the Board authorized the Chairman to sign the resolution accepting the right-of-way.
- Bruno had an extension request for the Valla Medical Office requesting an extension until October 25, 2012, to be able to post security and enter into their land development agreement. On motion by Smith, seconded by Panella, and agreed by four, the Board authorized the Chairman to sign the extension agreement.
- Bruno had an extension request from Gary Strausser for the Sheetz development requesting an extension of time until May 31, 2012, to enter into an agreement with the township to record their plan and enter into a land development improvements agreement. On motion by Smith, seconded by Mitchell, and agreed by four, the Board authorized the Chairman to sign the extension agreement.
- Bruno had one litigation item for executive session.

Township Manager

- Christman welcomed Paul Weiss from Bethlehem Township.
- Christman thanked Bruce Fretz for his service to the township and recognized that tonight would be his last official Board meeting as Chief. Christman said for the ten months I've been manager Bruce has been very forthcoming with information. Christman said thank you for over 40 years of service to Palmer Township.
- Christman said back in April 2011 there was a sewer backup at 2989 Old Nazareth Road. Christman said he had an Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement ready to be signed by the Vice Chairman tonight related to that sewer blockage. On motion by Mitchell, seconded by Panella, and agreed by four, the Board authorized the Vice Chairman to sign the agreement.
- Christman had one personnel item for executive session.

Planning Director

- Carman reviewed the items on the upcoming Zoning Hearing Board notice with the Board.

Public Services Director

- Adams said the township Recycling Coordinator has asked for assistance in filing a Section 902 Grant for upgrading and relocating the existing Hartley Avenue recycling center. Adams said he will be assisting her with that request.

Police Chief

- Chief Fretz said the new speed board arrived and it includes two units that can also be mounted on poles. Fretz said the cost was \$17,000 and was paid for from forfeiture funds.
- Fretz said he appreciated the opportunity to serve Palmer Township for the past 41-½ years.

Supervisors

- Smith thanked Chief Fretz for his service and said he has always been a great guy to work with and he appreciated all the time served to the township.
- Smith had one personnel item for executive session.
- Lammi said he and Chief Fretz go way back because they live in the same neighborhood and their kids grew up together. Lammi said he has always respected Bruce and his family and he is a very good Chief and he appreciates everything he has done for the township. Lammi said as the only retired supervisor on the Board, I believe you will love retirement. Good luck.
- Panella wished Chief Fretz the very best and said to enjoy life. Panella wished all the happiness to Bruce and his family.
- Mitchell thanked Chief Fretz noting they used to work together. Mitchell said to enjoy and relax and wished him luck.

On motion by Smith, seconded by Panella, and agreed by four, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. with two personnel and one litigation item for executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher S. Christman
Township Manager