

**Gregg Township Board of Supervisor's
Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 13, 2025 @ 6:30 pm
Room 203**

Meeting called to order @ 6:30 pm by Chair Ben Haupt. Present are BOS: Ben Haupt, Carol Gingrich, Vicky Vanada and Solicitor John Lhota.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. Lisa Bierlein:
 - a. Lisa questioned why February's draft minutes were not posted online, along with the March agenda. Lisa was told that at a recent PSATS training that the secretary is not to give previous month's meeting minutes until it is approved by the BOS. Lisa asked how are the township residents to make corrections. PSATS explained that the meeting minutes are to be corrected and approved only by the BOS, not the township residents.
 - b. Lisa wanted to let new BOS member, Carol Gingrich, know that she (Lisa) wants Pamela Hackenburg's case to go to trial.
 - c. Lisa had a question on the Balance Sheet under 11000 Accounts Receivable for the amount of \$8,343.44
2. Charles Bierlein: Would like to reserve his time to talk later, if he feels the need.

ROADMASTER:

- a. Took down snow fence. Online CoStar salt contract completed. Brandon said that he needs to get the 2025 stone bids and he needs a motion to get the bids out. Brandon said that the bids would be opened on April 10, 2025 @ noon. Carol Gingrich made a motion to get the 2025 stone bids out. 2nd by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.
- b. Discussion on box culvert for Bitner Hollow Road.

LIAISON REPORTS:

1. Solicitor: John Lhota:

- a. **Smith Hearing began at 6:41 pm.** Stated their names as John Smith, Catherine Smith, and Ian Smith. They own 68 acres on Brush Mountain Road and it is an Ag Zone area. John said they took the farm out of farming about 25 years ago and that the farm is rich in ecological resources. For the past ten years, they have put in mowed paths, bird watching, and nature walks. John also said that they publish a newsletter. John said that they built a barn 3-4 years ago and they have made minor modifications so that they can do workshops and gatherings. John said they would like to exhibit barn drawings in the upstairs of the barn. There is a Conservation Easement on the property and does not allow subdivision. They cannot hold commercial events. Would like to have weddings and all natural events. Made a request for Conditional Use so they can do indoor/outdoor events and use the barn for those events. The Smith's said that Mike Lesniak advised them to do a Conditional Use. John said that the barn is away from the road and there is considerable parking around it. He

said that they can park about a dozen cars in that area. John said that they do not plan on having events that are loud and he sees this as an asset to the community. John said that Gregg Township has literature with conservation activities. John said they would like to have public or semi-public activities. They would like to have barn workshops that would include drawing or painting in the winter.

Catherine Smith said that it impacts the surrounding neighbors and they have not had any negative reactions from the neighbors. Catherine said that she has contacted all the adjoining neighbors and all of the ones she spoke to were fine with their idea.

Sonya Stitzer (Ryan) spoke up and said that they have been talking about the bird watching that they have been doing for the past few years. Sonya said that she is concerned that people will be walking onto their property. The Smiths replied that they have 7-8 events a year and they send out a newsletter of scheduled events. They said that sometimes the State College Bird Club will come to their place if they have an interest on what is mailed to the group. John said that they have a collection of six-foot trails and none of the trails go close to the neighbor's property. John said that on April 19th, they are having Joe Gyekis, Bird Safe Penn State Advisor and Associate and they are going to walk the trail quietly. John does not expect there to be a substantial number of cars to be parked. The Smiths said that they want to respect the boundaries of their neighbors and they gave Sonya Stitzer a newsletter.

Ian Smith said to ease the neighbor's concerns, this is not about expanding, it is about being able to use the barn for the events. They need to change the permit for this. They cannot charge money for the weddings.

Catherine said that the land is in the conservative perpetuate, which means that any owner of the property after them, would have to follow the same guidelines.

The Smiths said that want people to come to their farm, but they want them to send a text so that they know someone is coming. They said they would be pleased to have people come occasionally. John said that they have the grassland and they have benches around that people can come and get in touch with themselves.

Alan Stover spoke up and said that he is an adjoining landowner but they did not reach out to him. Alan said that people going to his events get lost and they pull into his driveway. Alan said that he has a driveway that is half a loop and they enter one end of the driveway and then keep driving to exit at the end of the loop. Alan said that it is a safety concern because he has kids and animals. John said that they put a sign up at the end of their lane and Alan said that it continues to happen, even with their sign up. Catherine Smith said to let her know when this happens again because she would like to correct this issue. Allen said that it happened six to seven times last summer. Catherine said that she is surprised that it happened that often. John said that they will add this correction to their newsletter.

Rachael Stroup spoke up and said to Catherine Smith that Catherine stood in her driveway and told her that they could have up to 100 people for music concerts. Catherine said that Rachael misunderstood and that is not what she said. Rachael said that is absolutely what Catherine told her. Rachael then asked how they are going to keep their guests from leaving the trails and onto neighbor's property. John said that he has trails mowed and the trails are away from the neighbor's property. They would like the public to call or text before coming to walk the trails. Catherine said that they are trying to be sensible but people need to understand that this land is private land. Rachael asked if there would be surveillance cameras put up. John Smith said that they have 60 acres of land and there would not be cameras. Catherine said that they bought the farm in 1974 and there were damages to the farm. Ian Smith said that there is no change to the use of the property. The barn is in an Ag Zone and that the only

change is to use the barn for events. The groups from State College have been using their farm for 4-5 years and they are into different variations of birds.

John said that he submitted the Conditional Use application and is looking for acceptance of the application.

Carol Gingrich asked how soon the Smiths plan to open. The Smiths said they have an event planned for April 19 and whether the Conditional Use is approved or not, they will be having that event because it is on private property.

The Smiths said that they will need architectural changes and they will have an engineer design the changes. They said the ground floor will need windows and heat and a couple of ADA compliant restrooms. In the large open area of the barn, they would like to catalogue the barn logs.

The Smiths were asked what would be a reason to have an event after 11 pm. The Smiths said that a naturalist or conservative lecture might need later hours for their lectures.

Sonya Stitzer asked if there were going to be any bands. Catherine Smith said that for private parties or there may be blue grass bands. Catherine said there would not be all day music festivities.

Catherine said this farm has been classified as a non-productive farm operation for 25 years. Catherine said their goal is to make the property be the best that it can be with plants and animals and they want others to come and enjoy it.

Chris Dobson asked the Smiths when their first event will be and the Smiths said that April 19th will be and they will have it without a permit. They said that this event has nothing to do with the Conditional Use application. John Smith said that the Conditional Use was approved by the Planning Commission last week.

John Lhota asked if there was anything else from the applicants and they said that there was not anything else.

The **Conditional Use hearing for John & Catherine Smith closed at 7:11 pm**. John Lhota explained that there will be a written decision provided at a later date.

- b. **Robert Myers for Sweitzer Subdivision Planning Module.** Robert said that he has two things to address: He needs approval for road name "Shirley Lane" and a decision on when payment is made on Recreation Fee-In-Lieu.
Robert said that the Planning Module went through Planning Commission last week. Carol Gingrich made a motion to approve the Planning Module. Second by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous. Ben Haupt, Chair signed the Planning Module.
Motion to approve the road name of "Shirley Lane" by Vicky Vanada. Second by Carol Gingrich. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.
- c. John Lhota gave update on previous secretary. Bond company is still working through the paperwork.
- d. Kylie Topeka spoke up and said that the Auman's had a dumpster delivered but they will not have the garbage cleaned up by Monday (March 17). Kylie asked if the court

paperwork is ready to go for Tuesday, March 18. Kylie said she wanted to make sure that everyone knew their 45 days is up on Monday, March 17, 2025.

2. **Emergency Management Coordinator** – Jim Smith is not present

3. **Gregg Township Fire Company** – Troy Parker is not present

4. **Old Gregg School**

a. **Advisory Board** – Molly Miller said that they received a \$500 donation from the baseball league. They have their Spring Craft Fair on April 5th. The Advisory Board voted unanimously to have the approximately 25-year-old sliding board closest to the gym removed due to damage created to the sliding board last summer. Motion made by Carol Gingrich to removed the damaged sliding board. Second by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

Molly said that Matt Stover, from the baseball league talked to the Advisory Board about repairs needed at the ball field. Advisory Board voted to take out the volleyball court area and Matt Stover said they were having a work day on Saturday, March 15 and they could take out the volley ball court. The volley ball court is to be removed under the supervision of Brandon Ripka, Roadmaster. The volleyball net is to be given to Molly Miller and Molly will donate the net the Coburn Park. Motion to remove the volleyball court was made by Carol Gingrich. Second by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

Beth Znaniecki reached out to parole and was able to find out that some people need to do community service projects and they will do mulching and weeding weekly from May to September. No paroles are registered sex offenders.

Molly said a letter to the YMCA requesting a donation for the use of the playground equipment and use of bathroom supplies during the Summer Childcare Program had been drafted and requested BOS approval. Carol Gingrich made a motion to approve the YMCA letter to request a donation. Second by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

Molly has a Baseball Maintenance Agreement to be reviewed by the BOS. Carol Gingrich made a motion to approve the Baseball Maintenance Agreement. Second by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

b. **Maintenance** – Dave Sweeley was not present.

5. **Penns Valley Code Enforcement Agency (PVCEA)** – Justin Dashem is not present. Monthly written report provided.

6. **Penns Valley Emergency Medical Services (PVEMS)** – Carol Gingrich said that she attended the meeting on March 12, 2025 and they need to make a decision on whether to buy an ambulance with chains or a 4-wheel drive. Also reported that their membership is down but they are hoping they get more memberships returned.

7. **Penns Valley Regional Planning Commission (PVRPC)** – Ben Haupt said they have not had a meeting.

8. **Planning Commission** – Ben Haupt said the Planning Commission met and the approved the Smith's Conditional Use and the Sweitzer Subdivision and Road Name.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT:

Motion to approve the February 13, 2025 BOS Meeting Minutes by Carol Gingrich. Second by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

Motion to approve the January 2025 Balance Sheet and P&L (Profit & Loss) by Carol Gingrich. Second by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. John Lhota, Solicitor called the **Public Hearing for the Rec Fee-In-Lieu to order at 7:28 pm**. The proposed amendment is to include the word "maintaining" the playground. John Lhota reminded everyone that this amendment is to determine when the Rec Fee-In-Lieu is paid, not who pays the fee.

The proposed amendment was advertised in the newspaper. Motion to add the word “maintaining” to the Rec Fee-In-Lieu was made by Carol Gingrich. Second by Ben Haupt. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous. **Public hearing ended at 7:40 pm.**

2.Reestablish Agricultural Security Area – There was an application submitted by Robert & Briany Myers. John Lhota said there is already an ordinance, but needs to be updated. David Gaines will need to advertise for next month’s meeting. For this evening, the BOS need to approve or disapprove the Myers application. Motion made by Vicky Vanada to approve the Myers Agricultural Security Area application. Second by Carol Gingrich. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

3.Robert Myers will need an email stating the Rec Fee-In-Lieu is collected when a building permit is issued.

4.Mike Lesnick’s concerns regarding the language with new dwellings in the Agricultural District and the requirement of open space. Currently a lot size of 0.5 – 2.0 acres is required to have 1.5 acres of open space area. It is not possible to require 1.5 acres of open space on a parcel that is smaller than 1.5 acres. Motion by Carol Gingrich to table this and to allow the Planning Commission to discuss this. Second by Vicky Vanada. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

5. Received a Boiler Preventative Maintenance Agreement Proposal from the McClure Company. An estimate of \$4,796.00 was provided. Motion by Vicky Vanada to have the McClure Company do the preventative care on both boilers. Second by Carol Gingrich. No further discussion. Vote was unanimous.

6. Looking into CoStar participants for the parking lot, electrical upgrade, and roof repairs.

Correspondence: None

Adjourn meeting – Motion made by Vicky Vanada to adjourn the BOS meeting at 7:49 pm. Second by Carol Gingrich. Vote was unanimous.

Next BOS meeting is on Thursday, April 10, 2025 @ 6:30 pm.