

COLLEGE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

MAY 24, 1984

4:00 PM

The second regular monthly meeting was called to order on Thursday, May 24, 1984, at 4:00 pm by Chairman Taricani in the College Township Municipal Building.

Members present: Gale L Dargitz, Fred E Smith, Herbert W Stewart,
Dolores A Taricani - Chairman

Member absent: Max E Hartswick

Others present: C Thomas Lechner - Manager
Beulah L Houser - Administrative Assistant
Robert Watkins - Senior Planner for CRPC

Taricani announced that before tending to the established agenda items, Council would consider two issues in need of immediate decisions.

1. Proposed Nursing Home for Brookline Retirement Village

Taricani reviewed the situation saying that administrators for the Brookline Retirement Village located between Hills Plaza and the Gordon Kissinger property has applied to the Health Systems Agency to build a nursing home as another phase in their retirement village complex. Recently, another firm in Pittsburgh also applied with the Agency to build a nursing home in Ferguson Township. The Central PA Health Systems Agency will approve only one application.

Taricani added that the original Brookline plan included the nursing home concept as an integral part of their overall proposal. If elderly residents of the Village needed nursing home care they could move temporarily the short distance from the home into the nursing home facility. When their condition improved they could return to their homes but remain under the support system which the Village would offer. Under this plan, "nursing home" would no longer mean a locked-in, dead-end kind of situation. This, said Taricani, was why she felt Brookline should have its' application approved. The other nursing home proposal was for a nursing home only.

In the discussion that followed, Smith emphasized that Council was not endorsing the Brookline nursing home but they did consider it to be an asset to the community.

Smith then moved that Council acknowledge that the Brookline Retirement Village has met all the Township's planning and zoning requirements and that Council send a letter to the Central PA Health Systems Agency communicating this information. After Dargitz's second, Council unanimously approved the motion.

Taricani then asked Lechner to send the letter, and also to inquire about the time of the meeting when each firm will present its case before the Health Systems Agency. The Chairman asked Lechner to attend the meeting as Council's spokesman.

2. Request for Study Endorsement of Sewer Extension

Thora Hardy, who has rental property at 115 Old Houserville Road, said that in 1979 she was told it would cost \$40,000 to have the public sewer extended to her property. For now the alternative suggested is an on-site, sand-mound system, which she feels is unacceptable. Besides, its \$8,000 cost, she said, would "go down the drain" if the public sewer is extended to her property in the future.

The previous Friday, Hardy continued, she received a letter from David Allison of the College-Harris Joint Authority instructing her to get Council's endorsement of a cost-benefit study to consider extending the public sewer to her property. If approved, she was to give the endorsement to the Authority before their May 29th meeting.

After some discussion, Dargitz moved and Smith seconded Council's endorsement of the cost-benefit study for extending the sewer to the Hardy property and other properties in that area. The motion carried.

Taricani asked Lechner to send the letter to the College-Harris Joint Authority communicating Council's endorsement of the study.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Open Space and Storm Water Detention Maintenance

A memorandum, dated May 17, 1984, was received from Solicitor Reed McCormick concerning the maintenance of open land as part of Subdivisions in the Township. Acknowledgement was made of having received the letter and Taricani said they would refer to it as Council considered the Centre Hills Subdivision.

2. Welch Pool Open House

A letter, dated May 4, 1984, was received from James Winck, Centre Regional Recreation Authority Chairman, inviting Council to the Welch Pool Open House on Saturday, June 2, 1984.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Intersection at Benner Pike and Proposed Darlington Subdivision

A meeting will be held on June 4, 1984, to discuss the proposed intersection. PennDOT officials have asked the Planning Commission, Council and concerned property owners to attend. Dargitz said that Hartswick is now Council's Representative to the MPO and should attend. Little discussion took place. (See notes at the end of the meeting.)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Centre Hills Subdivision, Block 1 and 2

Tom Songer, Uni-Tec Engineer, summarized the project saying that five years had

elapsed since the last approval of this plan. Gordon Kissinger did not proceed with construction in that time period so, according to the Subdivision Ordinance, the plans must be re-submitted for approval.

Songer continued explaining that the plan was the same as before; it showed a storm water detention area. Since the Township has no mechanism to maintain such facilities, Uni-Tec feels there is no other course except that the owner [Kissinger] continue to maintain it. This, Songer said, is indicated as a note on Sheet 6 of the plan.

As for the concept of a Homeowners' Association maintaining the water detention area, Songer recommended the idea, but not in this case since Blocks 1 and 2 are the last part of the project.

5. Information on Tax Assessment

Centre County Chief Assessor Gerald Dann presented an overview on County Tax assessments and re-assessments. He said that under Act 267 (1983) the State Tax Equalization Board voted and published a common level ratio for each County. The Common level ratio is the ratio of all valid sales in relation to their assessed value. Centre County's predetermined ratio is 20 percent. (As inflation goes up, the ratio goes down.)

Dann continued, saying the common level ratio tells the assessment office the actual sales in relation to the assessment. Last year's ratio was 10 percent. If an assessed value is \$8,000, dividing it by the 10 percent ratio gives the market value of \$80,000.

Dann said, if you feel commercial property is under-assessed, then my question is, in relation to what?

Taricani replied, properties in like and kind with which Dann agreed and added sales or something that indicates its market value.

Replying to Dargitz's question, if sales were used as a determinant in assessing commercial, industrial and apartment buildings, Dann replied yes.

Taricani asked about a business receiving a very low return in comparison to what it should be receiving. Dann replied that his office did not use actual operating statements in all cases for that reason. He explained they used economic rent in today's market and compared rent to other similar buildings. His office has a history of economic rent covering the last 10 years.

In the case of an appeal, Dann said they used the market value on the date of the appeal. The ratio cannot be challenged. He added that the assessed value equated 20 percent of the market value (land and buildings). The common level ratio now (1984) in Centre County is 8.8 percent. To find a quick estimate of property market value (commercial and residential), divide the assessed value of the property by 8.8 percent.

After more discussion Dann said an important gauge [to assessment] is how much rent is received from the building and is it similar to other buildings.

Dann added 136 commercial properties were in College Township and that he would, at a later time, give comments on any of them which Council thought should be re-assessed.

Asked by Smith what was involved in the appeal process, Dann replied they must receive a written intention of appeal before September 1st. A hearing is then scheduled with all involved parties notified to attend. Testimony at the Appeal Hearing is presented to the Board of Appeals (the three County Commissioners). Asked by Dargitz if the municipality would present its case which would require appraisals, Dann said the Township must present a property's appraisal which the Township feels it is worth. (Only a realtor can testify before the Board of Appeals.) Dann added the owner of the property could appeal the case to a higher court if he was dissatisfied with the verdict.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Parking

Asked if he would present an update on parking in the Township, Watkins said he would rather wait until he presented his report to the Planning Commission that evening and received their input.

2. Appointment to Centre Region Building and Housing Code Board of Appeals

Smith said that COG had asked that each municipality consider the appointment of William Meachem as an alternate to a position representing the handicapped on the Board of Appeals of the Centre Region Building and Housing Code. Council concurred with the appointment and Smith formalized it by moving that William Meachem be appointed to the Centre Region Building and Housing Board of Appeals. Stewart seconded and the motion carried.

3. Highway Developments

Dargitz reported that in a recent MPO meeting, PennDOT's David Zazworski stated that extending a fifth lane from Houserville Road to Shiloh Road was not justified.

Watkins added that this aspect had originally been discussed in an overall improvement plan for that area. He added that PennDOT plans to use Federal funding for turning lanes in that area and for the Benner Pike, Darlington property intersection, with 75 percent Federal Government funding and 25 percent funding from property owners.

ADJOURNMENT

With business concluded for the afternoon, Stewart moved and Smith seconded that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

C Thomas Lechner
Secretary

CTL:jh:key