

**TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES  
APRIL 5, 2022**

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**I. OPENING PROCEDURES**

- A. Call to Order by President Smith at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance led by President Smith.
- C. Roll Call

Council Members Present: Robert John Smith, President of Council; Cassandra R. Eccles\*\*, Vice-President of Council; Richard S. Hughes, First Ward; George H. Stewart, Second Ward; Michael F. Hammill, Third Ward; Olivia T. Payne\*, Fourth Ward; John R. Denny, Jr.\*, At-Large

Also Present: Greg Caprara, Township Treasurer; Julie A. Jakubec, CPA, CGMA, Township Manager; Dan Garfinkel, Township Solicitor; Charles W. Steinert, Jr., P.E., Township Engineer; Christopher Komora, Code Enforcement / Storm Water Coordinator; Loren R. Kephart, Public Service Superintendent; Scott K. Slagel, Police Superintendent; Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

(\* represents attending via zoom.com)

(\*\* represents attended via zoom.com and later in person)

**II. VISITOR**

- A. Presentation by Mosites – R-47 Proposed Development

Mr. Steve Mosites and Mr. Chris Minnerly of Mosites Construction Company, and Mr. Richard Martz, of Live Work Learn Play were in attendance to present a vision for the Allegheny Riverfront development.

Mr. Mosites recalled working on the project for about six years. After purchasing additional acreage, 17 acres are located in O'Hara Township and 35 acres are located in Sharpsburg. Mr. Mosites then introduced Mr. Martz.

Manager Jakubec clarified the presentation is conceptual and nothing has been officially submitted to the Township.

Mr. Stewart asked if any of the other prior presentations, such as the water company, were part of this plan. Mr. Martz answered 'no.'

Mr. Martz explained the vision is to create a mixed use wellness community, connect the districts which are separated by a rail corridor, and develop the site so it feels like a part of this region. The

goal is to activate the riverfront by providing access to small businesses, cultural opportunities, economic development, and a range of housing opportunities for diversity.

Mr. Martz explained the proposed plan includes access improvements, a flyover by the Highland Park Bridge, and trails that connect to the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Six acres of land recently acquired were sold to Allegheny River Trail Park and includes a permanent easement.

Mr. Martz noted they are pursuing a number of grants. The zoning and approval processes, ownership of the regional connector from Route 28 and future maintenance are items being explored. He also noted the railroad is aware of the proposed Route 28 connector.

Councilmembers noted the number of families and children will have an impact on school services; and flooding at 13<sup>th</sup> Street are concerns for consideration. Mr. Minnerly indicated 13<sup>th</sup> Street would be reconfigured so that it is not as impacted by flooding.

Mr. Denny, Jr. stated he hopes they are able to work out all the details; Ms. Payne requested a copy of the presentation.

Vice President Eccles arrived and took her seat at 7:51 p.m.

Stacey Vernallis, Chapel Harbor, past President of Friends of the Riverfront, inquired about the easement given to Allegheny Riverfront Park, a private organization. She noted Friends of the Riverfront owns the easement in Allegheny Riverfront Park for the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Ms. Vernallis also questioned if Penn DOT knows about the flyover, which Mr. Martz confirmed.

Ms. Vernallis questioned if there had been public meetings with Penn DOT regarding the flyover? Mr. Minnerly stated a traffic impact study had been done and there will be public meetings after the study has been vetted, the exact design has been worked out, the study is updated, and Penn DOT's procedures have been followed. Then it would be available to the public.

Ms. Vernallis encouraged Council to ensure that Darla Cravotta, at the County, is kept informed throughout the review process, since she is responsible for the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

Ms. Vernallis noted Friends of the Riverfront have trades they want to make with the railroad, and noted the importance of making sure when the developer negotiates with the railroad that the other stakeholders are aware of the trades they want to make. She also hoped Council would keep the stakeholders up to date during the process, as it directly implicates a trail system Council has already invested in. Mr. Martz indicated they had been in contact with Darla. The landscape architect is a Pittsburgh-based group and knows the trail network very well. They are committed to a very robust riverfront park along the full length of the site, with a place for the Three Rivers Heritage Trail throughout the site that works with everything else in the network.

Ms. Cindy Harris, 53 Fox Pointe, inquired about the time frame for building the flyover in O'Hara. Mr. Martz noted permitting and approval processes needed from Penn DOT and did not think construction would start sooner than three or four years.

Ms. Harris noted O'Hara Township and Fox Chapel Borough are in the process of creating a Long Range Comprehensive Plan that covers the next ten years and suggested the developer talk to the Council Workshop Minutes  
April 5, 2022

committee and the consultant. Manager Jakubec stated Jenny, at Pashek, is aware of this proposed development and will schedule time to speak with them. Ms. Harris requested she be present for that meeting.

### III. CITIZEN COMMENTS CONCERNING NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. John Arch, 311 Kittanning Pike, noted the Township has plans to construct a detention pond at the rear of 261 Kittanning Pike, and the Township may need rights-of-way from five or six property owners. He explained two alternatives to obtaining several rights-of-way. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. explained the project is still in the planning stages.

Mr. Arch and Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. continued to discuss the particulars of the stormwater facility.

Ms. Christine Healey, 305 Kittanning Pike, stated she had never heard about the project and the stream has never been a problem. She questioned the process to determine the best place for this retention pond behind their houses. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. recalled meeting with the engineers to identify larger sites to build stormwater retention facilities throughout the Township that would have the most impact on downstream residents. Ms. Healey suggested catching the water where it comes together in Briar Cliff Park. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. explained a stormwater facility is proposed for Briar Cliff to catch water from Oakhurst Road and the neighborhood above. It could not be big enough to catch all the water from the entire watershed. Ms. Healey asked where all the stormwater facilities would be built. Manager Jakubec referred to monthly reports from Lennon Smith Souleret Engineers that are posted on the Township website. She explained this facility is to help decrease the amount of flooding that occurs on lower Kittanning Pike. Ms. Healey stated the flooding on Kittanning Pike has only happened in recent years. Manager Jakubec disagreed, recalling being trapped on someone's porch in 2007. Ms. Healey stated her neighbor, Sanford Leuba, is turning the area into natural habitats, which is another consideration. Manager Jakubec suggested Ms. Healey stop by the municipal building so staff could show her the plans for the entire Township. Ms. Healey asked if the residents could dispute the project. The Manager explained Ms. Healey has the option to not sign the easement agreement, but that does not mean the stormwater facility will not be built if there is another way.

Mr. Stewart suggested referring to the facilities as something other than 'ponds', which is confusing.

Ms. Lynn Jablonowski, 317 Kittanning Pike, explained the location of her property and stated since 2019 she has had a problem with the new school discharging their stormwater on to her property, which the Township Engineer is aware of. The Stormwater Act was in effect in 2019 and she had hoped the school district would have over-built the stormwater facility to contain their water. Ms. Jablonowski stated the erosion is great where the water discharges onto her property. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. explained prior to the school construction, the runoff spread over the ballfield and hillside. The water now goes into underground tanks and is released as a concentrated stream of water. The higher velocity and concentration is eroding their backyards. He also noted another reason is the pipe under the cemetery road used to be a flat discharge, and now there is a four-foot drop at the outfall. The school district needs to restore the channel back to how it was.

Manager Jakubec asked if the stormwater facility is as designed, Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. confirmed. The Manager stated she, Mr. Steinert and Mr. Komora would get this resolved. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. indicated the school district might be able to do a secondary system.

Vice President Eccles asked if the school district had been called, as they are notorious for not returning calls. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. indicated he had called on Friday.

Mr. Mark Jablonowski, 317 Kittanning Pike, questioned if his property was considered for the access road to the facility. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. explained the access road would be grass, but able to support the remote control mower.

#### IV. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

##### A. Update on the 2022 Road Improvement Program Contract

Manager Jakubec stated bids for the 2022 Road Improvement Program will be opened Thursday, April 7, 2022 by Fox Chapel Borough staff. If time allows for a proper review of the bids, staff will provide a recommendation for awarding the contract. The Township roads included for milling and resurfacing are Emily Drive, Farmington Road, Field Club Road, Jordan Avenue (North), Kappa Drive, Papercraft Avenue, Westchester Drive and Westchester Place. Alternates include Alpha Drive, Glen Brook Drive, Maurers Lane, and W. Marshall Drive.

The consensus of Council was to include a resolution on the April 12, 2022 regular meeting agenda to award the 2022 Road Improvement Program Contract, provided staff has time to review the bids and provide a recommendation.

##### B. Recommending Acceptance of Spring Commodities Bids Received by the South Hills Area Council of Governments ("SHACOG") Purchasing Alliance

The Manager stated the SHACOG opened bids they received for its spring commodities contracts on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Staff is requesting authorization to accept the bids in order to secure the quoted prices on an as needed basis and piggyback off the SHACOG bid.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution on the April 12, 2022 regular meeting agenda for consideration.

##### C. Recommending Awarding a Contract for the Epsilon Stormwater Retention Facility Project

Manager Jakubec referenced a memo from Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. recommending the Township piggyback on the Allegheny County Contract No. 8493 for the construction of the Epsilon stormwater retention facility and awarding the contract to Pugliano Construction Co., Inc. in the amount of \$736,981.00, contingent on receipt of needed signed easements. She noted all businesses have indicated they would sign the easement agreements. She stated the cost came in higher than budgeted. Funds from the American Rescue Plan would make up the cost difference.

Mr. Stewart questioned what the County's contract covers, which Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. noted.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution for consideration on the April 12<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda.

D. Requesting Authorization to Purchase Public Service Department Equipment

The Manager referenced a memo from Public Service Superintendent Loren Kephart requesting authorization to purchase two new 2022 Dinkmar Manufacturing Leaf Master Leaf Vacuums, as specified, from U.S. Municipal of Huntingdon, PA, by piggy backing on the Pennsylvania CoStars Contract No. 025-019. The total cost for the two leaf vacuums is \$160,310, which is \$17,440 below budget.

Mr. Stewart questioned the purpose of a 'breakaway system', which Mr. Kephart explained.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution on the April 12<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda for consideration.

E. Application for Banner Community Status

Manager Jakubec explained part of the requirements for the Township to be considered a "Banner Community" include promoting local government. The Township provides for the health, safety, and welfare of the general public, as well as educational programs, including but not limited to preserving the ecosystem, storm water management, and recycling. Township staff and Councilmembers communicate openly with Township residents through traditional means and social media.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution for consideration on the April 12<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda.

F. Properties not Connected to Saxonburg Sanitary Sewer System

The Manager recalled during the March 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop Council discussed options to address the ten properties that have not yet connected to the Saxonburg Sanitary Sewer System. Some of the property owners have paid the special purpose part tapping fee, and some have not. The properties need to connect to the sanitary sewer system. She noted payment options that were made available to all the property owners.

Mr. Denny, Jr. noted the property owners have to pay to tap into the sewer and to have the work done. Manager Jakubec stated the property owners can do the work themselves or pay a contractor.

It was noted a letter to the ten residents would include an added condition that if they do not connect to the sanitary sewer system, the information would be turned over to the County.

Mr. Stewart recommended including in the letter that the residents have had ample warning, versus County enforcement. He suggested allowing 90 days for residents to connect.

Vice President Eccles recommended sending the list of properties to the County now.

After further discussion, the consensus of Council was to allow the ten property owners 60 days to connect to the sanitary sewer system or be turned over to Allegheny County Health Department.

G. Update on Process and Procedures for Redistricting Township Wards and Districts

Manager Jakubec stated she reached out to Allegheny County Board of Elections, and they requested time to research. She noted the Township Solicitor provided three names. She called Concerned Citizens for Democracy, a non-partisan group, but they had not returned her call.

Mr. Denny, Jr. had never heard of that group. Solicitor Garfinkel stated he had asked government groups that they represent.

The Manager noted software is available to assist with redistricting at a cost of \$5,000. Mr. Denny, Jr. noted Dave's Redistricting Software has been used.

President Smith stated the Township has to get moving on this project. Manager Jakubec noted the Township could work on it but changes could not be made until after the November election.

H. Consideration of Contribution to Cooper Siegel Library

The Manager recalled Ms. Jill McConnell, Executive Director of the library responded to Council's questions. The library has requested equitable support from the communities served by the library. Vice President Eccles had provided information to Council during the March 8<sup>th</sup> regular meeting regarding the Cooper Siegel Library and the Sharpsburg Library Branch. During the 2022 Budget review, Council agreed to leave the allocation in the budget as a place holder and discuss with the 2022 Council. She noted the place holder is \$20,000.

Vice President Eccles noted one question from Treasurer Caprara was not answered. She also got the impression that Ms. McConnell does not communicate with Sara, the Sharpsburg Library Manager.

Mr. Stewart commented that the answer to question no. 1 does not make sense.

Mr. Denny, Jr. suggested whatever Council decides should be done on an annual basis. He recommended giving the \$20,000, but most, if not all, to the Sharpsburg Library Branch in a way that Treasurer Caprara had suggested.

Treasurer Caprara recalled it as a non-sub-plantive gift. The money goes to the Sharpsburg Library Branch and Cooper Siegel Library is not allowed to reduce Sharpsburg's budget.

Vice President Eccles recommended gifting \$20,000 to the Sharpsburg Library Branch for operations. Mr. Stewart noted that is where the money is needed.

President Smith stated he agreed, but felt funny, as there would not be a Sharpsburg Library Branch if not for Cooper Siegel Library. He also felt the Township was telling Cooper Siegel Library how to run their business.

Treasurer Caprara and Mr. Hammill stated they live in the Township's Third Ward and that is the area the Sharpsburg Library serves.

Ms. Payne stated the Township is not telling them how to run their business. People are appreciative that they have the Sharpsburg Library, but Cooper Siegel Library should not have the attitude 'be happy with what we give them.' She suggested making sure the Sharpsburg Library budget is equitable and everyone is getting an equitable share.

Mr. Hughes noted as a Township, he sees the greatest need to invest in the Sharpsburg Library to improve operations. Council will reconsider next year after we see what happens.

Mr. Denny, Jr. noted Cooper Siegel Library will be going into a capital campaign.

President Smith suggested staff prepare the wording for the motion to be included on the April 12<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda for consideration.

I. Solicitor's March 15, 2022 Invoice

Mr. Stewart presented a question to Solicitor Garfinkel. Solicitor Garfinkel noted the invoice is privileged information which he would answer in Executive Session.

J. Proposed April 12, 2022 Regular Meeting Agenda (a)

Manager Jakubec noted additions to the proposed agenda.

V. CONCERNS OF COUNCIL

Vice President Eccles inquired about the Bed and Breakfast on Field Club Road. Manager Jakubec stated a Cease and Desist notice was issued. Mr. Komora stated he received a letter stating the owner would comply.

Mr. Stewart stated he received a phone call from the volunteer fire community in Fox Chapel. They suggested, based on their experience, Rob Consulting, LLC for the study, and he could provide Rob Brady's contact information. Mr. Denny, Jr. stated the Fox Chapel Fire Department has absolutely no room to make any recommendation on this. They decided not to participate; they are not interested in what emergency services would look like in this area; and he did not want to share the study with them when it's completed.

Mr. Stewart stated the other issue Council should think about is the possibility of having another outside agency as part of the Long Range Comprehensive Plan process, that deals with environmental and sustainability issues. The committee is going to be talking about that in the Long Range Plan and perhaps that's something Council could consider. Manager Jakubec indicated the avenue for that is the Long Range Implementable Plan. They should determine if it should be a joint community. She suggested the committee talk to Jenny, the consultant. The Manager noted the committee would have the climate action information that Lindsay, the Penn State student prepared. That would be implementable as part of the plan.

Mr. Hammill recalled an incident on the property next to his involving flying debris from clearing trees. Mud was splattered on his house and flying woodchips put holes in one of his window screens and his neighbor's screen. Mr. Hammill stated the contractor power-washed everything

and cleaned up most of the debris. Manager Jakubec stated the screens will be replaced. She talked with the developer and the developer was told to rectify the issues. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. noted the developer is Sante Berarducci, a land development company.

Vice President Eccles asked when the new equipment would be installed in the parks. Manager Jakubec indicated the equipment would be shipped in May. She noted Lindsay came up with wording for the sign for the game that creates energy. The Manager stated Slim Jim Park will have a bench so guardians can watch the kids play; a sign will be ordered to identify the park; and a new plexi-glass basketball backboard will be installed.

Mr. Stewart stated if the Township decides to replace some picnic tables, Harrison Township would take the old tables. The Manager indicated any old picnic tables that could be fixed, possibly as an Eagle Scout project, would be given to Harrison Township. She also stated the Township Public Service employees have been working very diligently all winter building new picnic tables.

Ms. Harris indicated Council should have concerns about Fox Chapel not participating in the fire study. Her concern is how the joint Long Range Comprehensive Plan will develop. Mr. Denny, Jr. asked if the Fox Chapel committee has been cooperative or obstructive. Ms. Harris indicated the Fox Chapel committee has not been obstructive. She acknowledged Fox Chapel has very specific reasons for doing the Plan with O'Hara, which are different from O'Hara's reasons. There is a tendency among the Fox Chapel group to focus on things already known, and O'Hara's focus is on what isn't known. Ms. Harris would like the Plan to be an active template on how to continue to develop. The way O'Hara adds new equipment in parks; the idea of retention ponds to improve an entire neighborhood is very visionary. She senses that Fox Chapel prefers to remain the same, except for things they need. Ms. Harris noted significant differences between O'Hara and Fox Chapel such as property tax; zoning codes; attitudes about parks. Fox Chapel is not in sync with O'Hara's vision.

Mr. Stewart thought the last meeting was very productive. As for the fire study, there are two representatives working that area. It seems O'Hara and Fox Chapel firefighters are co-mingling and should continue for the time being.

Ms. Harris noted Fox Chapel's fire funding comes primarily from insurance companies that pay back a percentage of premiums to the community. When the amount of insurance premiums Fox Chapel and O'Hara receives are compared, Fox Chapel can afford to pay for their people to go to training. Manager Jakubec explained the premiums are set by a formula driven by the State. As of year-end last year the Township received \$63,660, which is included in this year's budget. That amount is divided by two. In addition the Township gives \$75,000 to each Township fire department and divides \$75,000 between the other first-alarm community fire departments. The Township also allocates \$30,000 to Parkview EMS.

Mr. Denny, Jr. stated Fox Chapel VFD made it very clear in their comments and their actions. Asking them to participate in a study that is extremely important to everyone in the Fox Chapel Area School District is not a big ask. The study will come up with recommendations which the municipality can accept or reject. He suggested the fire committee members and Council seriously



consider whether to make another payment to Fox Chapel VFD moving forward. Mr. Stewart disagreed. He believed the firefighters are working together, and the Long Range Planning Committee should get involved.

President Smith stated Fox Chapel Council voted that way because that is how the volunteer firefighters told them to vote. Fox Chapel Council does not want to piss off the firefighters, to which Mr. Stewart agreed.

Ms. Eccles questioned the amount O'Hara gives to Fox Chapel VFD. Manager Jakubec indicated she would have to look. President Smith recalled O'Hara divides the amount Guyasuta VFD used to receive among Blawnox, Sharpsburg, Aspinwall and Fox Chapel, which the Manager stated the Township still does.

Manager Jakubec believed the Planning Consultant and committee members would have to broker the differences, noting sometimes you have to agree to disagree. Fox Chapel's zoning requires an arborist to be consulted before cutting a tree down. O'Hara does not. There are certain things that the two roads shall never meet.

Vice President Eccles stated at the meeting, the people on the committee that spoke chose not to participate in the fire study, which she could not understand.

The Manager stated it is up to O'Hara to prepare an implementable Plan to know what we are going to do in the next ten years and be successful.

Mr. Hughes noted his observation is where it is advantageous, to partner with Fox Chapel Borough. He agreed with having a long range vision of the things we don't know and where we want to head, but five years from now it will look a lot different. He suggested the O'Hara Committee focus on O'Hara; what is advantageous to O'Hara; what are the most important pieces to work with Fox Chapel; and not waste time fighting on things that will not make much difference to O'Hara. Vice President Eccles noted those are good points; and suggested maybe the O'Hara Long Range Plan Committee just needs to sit down and talk. Ms. Harris agreed. The Manager noted the agreement with Fox Chapel allows O'Hara to meet and O'Hara can meet with the consultant.

Mr. Hughes noted the decision to put money to the Sharpsburg library is based on need. He questioned how the allocation is divided among the other fire departments. Manager Jakubec noted the money is based on the latest call volume from the County. The person at the County that ran the report has retired and it is very difficult to get the information. She would pull the numbers tomorrow. Mr. Hughes stated another way to look at it is which fire departments have the greatest need. He indicated in the interest of O'Hara recognizing all the services that all the fire departments provide, what makes the most sense. Vice President Eccles and Ms. Harris thought it was a good way to look at it.

The Manager explained the fire departments are all funded differently. Blawnox VFD building is owned by Blawnox Borough; Sharpsburg VFD owns the building. As part of the fire study, we can look into how those that are participating are funded.

The Manager anticipated receiving Sharpsburg VFD Letter of Intent tomorrow; Aspinwall VFD and Blawnox VFC are all participating. DCED had contacted her and would schedule a meeting once all the letters of intent are received. It will take time.

VI. CONCERNS OF STAFF

None.

Manager Jakubec requested Council to remain after the workshop for an Executive Session to discuss labor and legal matters.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The Workshop adjourned at 9:35 p.m. and Council entered into Executive Session.



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Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

Attachment – Sign-In Sheet

SIGN-IN SHEET

DATE 4-5-2022

TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA

Council Workshop  
Meeting

Name

Address or Organization

MARK + LYNN JABLONOWSKI

RESIDENTS

JOHN ARCH

"

BOB WEIR

"

Stacey Vernalis

"

Steve Masipis

TMC

Richard Martz

LWLP

CHAS MINNERLY

TMC

Christine Neely

resident ~~3018~~ Kittanning Pike

~~Bob Smith~~

710 EDGEWOOD

Jim Kapp - Virtual

Cindy Harris - Virtual