

# APPROVED

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**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 21, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Call to Order:**

Township Chairman Gerstenhaber called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. In attendance were Vice Chair Dea and Supervisors Dowling, Johnston, and Odgers. Also, in attendance on behalf of Franklin Township (FT) were Township Solicitor Guy Donatelli, Stanley Corbett of AECOM and Township Secretary Stacy Hollis. There were 8 members of the public in attendance.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment:** Resident John Auerbach gave his assessment that the Lexington Point development's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) was near completion and encouraged the Board to develop a plan to manage the daily operation and administrative responsibilities associated with taking ownership of the plant.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** Vice Chair Dea moved, seconded by Supervisor Odgers, to accept the minutes for the Board of Supervisors (BOS) Meeting from January 17, 2024, v2. Motion passed 5-0.

**Motion:** Vice Chair Dea moved, seconded by Supervisor Johnston, to accept the minutes for the Board of Supervisors Workshop Meeting from February 5, 2024, v2. Motion passed 5-0.

**Reports**

a. **Avondale Fire Department Report:** Executive Officer President, Guy Swift, provided the Board with the Department's 2023 end-of-year update, including statistics on fire and medical emergency response calls. He explained that a high volume of calls came from Bowling Green Brandywine Treatment Center. An agreement has been made so that the Avondale Fire Department can bill the facility as a donation request to help offset some of the expense of responding to the high volume of requests. Mr. Swift also commented on the grants secured by the department to help acquire a new washer/dryer for the station, an improved camera system and new tanker tires.

b. **Treasurer's Report:** Supervisor Johnston gave the FT January Treasurer's report as submitted by Township Controller/Office Manager, Melissa Ortega. The General Fund with disbursements and transfers of \$241,777.06; The Park and Recreation Fund with disbursements of \$627.46; the Open Space Fund with disbursements of \$114,808.46; the Capital Reserve Fund with disbursements of \$0; the Emergency Services Fund with disbursements of \$3,373.00 and the Fire Hydrant Fund with disbursements of \$580.80, leaving a balance in all funds totaling \$1,805,706.36.

**Motion:** Supervisor Johnston moved, seconded by Chairman Gerstenhaber, to accept the January 2024 Treasurer's Report as submitted by Melissa Ortega. Motion passed 5-0.

c. **Zoning Officer's Report:** Supervisor Odgers reported that in January, 4 permits were issued. \$500.00 in permit fees; \$0 in miscellaneous fees and \$0 in Recreations and Open Space fees, and \$0 in Impact Fees were collected. 24 inspections were performed.

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- d. Park, Recreation and Open Space (PRO) Report: PRO Chair Andrea Roberts updated the Board on the status of the “You Are Here” maps that will be placed in the upcoming new Eagle Scout kiosk project at the park. Member Macknis will put together a proposal for a raised flower bed project for Banffshire Preserve to be presented to the Board at a later time. Chairman Gerstenhaber shared the trail system improvement plan for Crossan Park and Franklin Preserve. The goal is to eliminate the use of old trails that have been overwrought with swamp like conditions and restore many of the existing trails. The Chairman discussed that the redesign would help create a lower cost of ownership for the Township by eliminating mowing in several trail areas. The Board will continue to work with the PRO and Matt Thompson of the Velo Amis bike club. Ms. Roberts also reported that there were several car break-ins at Peacedale Preserve. Patrons of Crossan Park and FT Preserves should protect their belongings by locking their cars and hiding any valuables in their vehicles.
- e. Friends of the Healing Garden: Supervisor Dowling updated the Board on the planned projects for Crossan Park. The Bluebird boxes have been cleaned by Supervisor Odgers and are ready for the spring season. Volunteer Amy Carletti will be modifying and monitoring the boxes. Patrons of Crossan Park are invited to comment and share photos of bird activity at the boxes on the group’s Facebook page. Supervisor Dowling will work with FT Operations Manager, Jeff Eastburn, on installing signage for the boxes at the park. The Avon Grove Library will once again host story time at the park during the summer. Supervisor Dowling also proposed developing a Little Library decorating contest for the three Little Libraries sponsored by the Township.  
Anyone interested in volunteering with the group should contact the office or message the group’s Facebook page.
- f. Planning Commission (PC) Report: PC Alternate Paul Lagassé reported that the PC met and discussed the Subdivision Sketch Plan Review for 543 Church Hill Road. The owner would like to split the parcel into two properties with a shared driveway. A plan was proposed to purchase a piece of property from the neighboring landowner. The PC agreed they had no reservations with the exploratory proposal. Next steps are for Pennoni Engineering to create a Subdivision and Land Development proposal for review by the PC and then the BOS.
- g. Historical Commission (HC)/Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB): HC/HARB Chairman Lagassé updated the Board that the group has been working on a Church Hill and Mount Olivet cemetery cleanup. Mr. Lagassé also discussed the historic ruins at the Big Elk Creek State Park and that the group has shared this information with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). There is a scheduled talk on Cape May history at the New London Township building on March 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, the Friends of the White Clay Creek will host a historic talk at the Deerfield Country Club at 6:30 p.m. Chairman Lagassé also announced his recommendation to the Board for the nomination of FT resident Beth Skalish as a HC/HARB member. He explained that her extensive background in real estate was of value to the group.  
**Motion**: Supervisor Odgers moved, seconded by Supervisor Johnston, to appoint Beth Skalish to a 5-year term (expiring December 31, 2028) as Historic Commission & Historical Architectural Review Board member. Motion passed 5-0.
- h. Franklin Sportsman’s Association (FSA): FSA Vice President Mark Zawada reported that the hunting season is over until September. The group harvested 14 deer from FT’s four preserves: Banffshire, White Clay Crescent, Franklin and Goodwin. The group has contributed 172

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service hours to the Township from July 2023 through February 12, 2024. Mr. Zawada thanked the Board for another great hunting season within the Township.

### **Business**

a. Eagle Scout Project Proposal-Liam Kelley: Eagle Scout, Liam Kelley, presented the Board with the costs and timeline for his project at Crossan Park and Franklin Preserve. Mr. Kelley will build a kiosk at the park and install trail posts and directional markers for trails in the Franklin Preserve. Historically, the Board contributes up to \$500 towards supplies for Eagle Scout projects. Mr. Kelley's project was estimated to cost less than \$500. The Board agreed to contribute \$400. If more funds are needed, Mr. Kelley should return to the Board for further discussion.

**Motion:** Supervisor Johnston moved, seconded by Chairman Gerstenhaber, to contribute \$400 towards Liam Kelley's Eagle Scout project. Motion passed 5-0.

b. Crossan Park Easter Egg Hunt: Supervisor Dowling updated the Board on the upcoming Easter egg hunt at Crossan Park. The event is scheduled for Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. until noon. In addition to the hunt, there will be egg decorating, face painting, and a plant sapling give away.

c. Franklin Township Clean-Up Day: Resident John Auerbach discussed the annual clean-up day for FT. Mr. Auerbach will coordinate with FT Operations Manager, Jeff Eastburn, to obtain supplies and signage for the event. The clean-up day is scheduled for Earth Day, Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>.

d. Big Elk Creek (BEC) State Park Development Project Advisory Committee: Chairman Gerstenhaber reported that the Township hosted a meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup> with fellow stakeholders to announce the individuals who were appointed as representatives for the BEC Advisory Board. The Chairman has drafted a letter outlining the next steps for the Advisory Board including a recommendation for the Advisory Board to appoint two Co-Chairs, one from DCNR and one individual from the stakeholder representatives. A draft mission statement was also suggested. It was concluded that the Advisory Board meetings are not required to be public; however, the public should receive periodic updates on the issues discussed.

e. Solicitor's Report:

- General Code: FT Solicitor, Guy Donatelli, reported that the Township's General Code legislation is ready to be codified in a Township ordinance. No new legislation has been introduced. The Township's General Code is now readily accessible in eForm.

**Motion:** Vice Chair Dea moved, seconded by Supervisor Johnston, to approve **Ordinance 2024-01** as presented by the Township Solicitor, Guy Donatelli. Motion passed 5-0.

- Lexington Point: FT Sanitary Engineer, Stanley Corbett of AECOM updated the Board on the Lexington Point development's WWTP. The construction of the plant is nearing completion. The developer will retain ownership of the WWTP until all requirements have been met within the July 6<sup>th</sup> AECOM memorandum detailing the start-up and operation of the plant. The earliest date for the Township to take ownership of the plant was estimated to be September 2025. Vice Chair Dea requested that the information within the July 6<sup>th</sup> memo be drafted into a checklist with timelines. Mr. Corbett will develop this for the Board. The Board clarified that only FT residents living in the Lexington Point development are responsible for the cost of the WWTP. What the fee will be, still needs to be determined.

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**Public Comment:** Chairman Gerstenhaber opened the floor for public comments. Resident Auerbach commented on the Lexington Point WWTP and suggested the Board contract out the work to manage the daily operations and administrative requirements for the plant. He complimented the Avondale Fire Department and added they are responsible for 10% of our Township's territory while West Grove Fire Department handles the remainder. Mr. Auerbach also recommended that the Board discuss future trail development using paved paths with our engineer, Ron Ragan.

**Adjourn:** Chairman Gerstenhaber moved, seconded by Supervisor Johnston, to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Hollis  
Township Secretary