

**MINUTES
COLLIER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

WORKSHOP MEETING

March 13, 2023

7:00 P.M.

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Commissioner Chiurazzi called the workshop meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 7:00 P.M.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. ROLL CALL:

BOARD

Tim Young – Present
Dawnlee Vaughn – Present
Debra Zymroz – Present
MaryAnn Cupples – Present
Wayne Chiurazzi, Esq.– Present

STAFF

Kate Diersen, Solicitor – Present
Travis Stanczyk, Engineer – Absent
Craig Campbell, Police Chief – Absent
Bob Caun, Planning Director – Absent
Jeff Hinds, Finance Director – Absent
Tom Plietz – Bldg/Fire Codes – Absent
Bob Palmosina, PW Director – Absent
Rob Shazer, Parks Director – Present
George Macino, Twp. Mgr. – Absent
Dana Slizik, Asst. Twp. Mgr. – Present
Valerie Salla, Twp. Secretary – Present

- C. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Was held prior to the meeting to discuss legal and personnel issues.

II. Board Discussion for Committees

A. Administrative/Public Affairs

Commissioner Vaughn reported the following:

1. *Franchise Fees* have been updated.
2. *Police Contract* – Meeting is scheduled for tomorrow.
3. *Steen Bridge Road* update.
4. *Street Paving Program* is on its way.
5. *Code Red* has been cancelled.
6. *Private Roads Letter*
7. *ALOM Conference* – Is April 13 through 16. There are a few Board members going and it is very educational.

B. Building/Codes

Commissioner Cupples reported the following:

1. 24 permits issued.
2. 8 permits for new construction.
3. Legacy Plan is underway. Issued permit for the first townhouse building.
4. Nautical Bowl opened in Collier Town Square serving healthy food bowls.
5. Fire Inspections are continuing.
6. There were 3 residential occupancies that were issued.
7. There were 7 tenant inspections.
8. 13 codes issued.
9. Attended GRB Code Enforcement training. Property Management and Housing Fundamentals in Hampton Township.
10. Demolition of 1290 Washington Pike completed by owner.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated that when you pull up to Chic-fil-la, they say Welcome to Collier Township Chick-fil-la. He thanked Mr. Macino, Mrs. Slizik and the Building and Codes Department for making this happen.

Commissioner Cupples stated that the Nautical Bowl is advertising they are in Bridgeville and someone needs to tell them they are in Collier Township in Collier Town Square.

Mrs. Slizik stated she would take care of that.

C. COG

Commissioner Vaughn reported the following:

1. *February Meeting.* Was held in Bridgeville. The next meeting will be this Thursday in McKees Rocks. A representative will be there to talk about micro surfacing and she passed this information on to Bob Palmosina to see if anyone wanted to attend.

2. Finance

Commissioner Young reported the following:

1. *Total Income* is close to 10 million 300 thousand for the year. In the last two (2) months, we spent one (1) million 500 thousand. This sounds like a lot, but we are within our budget and are in good shape financially.

3. Parks & Recreation

Commissioner Zymroz reported the following:

1. *Webb Park.* Pickle Ball Courts are completed.
2. *Webb Park.* Field was dragged.
3. *Public Works* are aerating the parks.
4. *Skavarka Park.* Upgrading swing sets
5. Rob Shazer has met with the CBSA and they will give a donation for upgrading Webb Field.
6. Rob Shazer met with people regarding Skavarka Park.

Mr. Macino added the following for Skavarka Park issues:

- The issues are critical enough to close the park for safety reasons. The health hazard is the geese droppings and the field has a lot of glass in it.
- The playground structure has very rough edges on it and we are taking care of that as well as putting up swings.
- The hillside is sliding and needs to be addressed.

Mr. Macino explained that after talking to the Public Works Department who prefer to wait till the water is turned back on, but that will not be till the end of March or early April. Instead, we have a tank that will go in one of the vehicles, go over and power wash the park, including the pavilion. As for the field, we met with Brian Zahuranic, from the United States Department of Agriculture. His purpose was to help us understand what was going on with the geese and what we could do and how to prevent it. He gave us information on material we could spray on the grass which we ordered and should be in the end of this week so we can spray it on the grass. For the short term, we sprayed a product called AJAX with an orange scent. This will help get the geese under control. To prevent another safety issue in the field itself, all games on that field this year have been cancelled. As for the play structure, Public Works will remove all the sharp edges and paint. New swings will be placed on the swing set. Also, a resident installed a coyote that spins on the infield. The US Department of Agriculture said that is a great idea and does help until after a while the geese realize it is not real.

Commissioner Zymroz stated the geese are an issue everywhere and we have spoken to other municipalities about what they do with the geese problem. They are at top Golf and at the primary school also.

Mr. Macino stated there are a couple of other options out there that can be done that are less desirable. One is we can get starter pistols with no bullets and we can fire it when the geese are there and it will chase the geese away. Also, the USDA has a permit to harvest the geese. We don't think these options are a good idea. The geese are a protected species and they can not be killed.

Commissioner Cupples asked when the playground equipment will be finished.

Mr. Macino stated Public Works has already started removing the sharp edges and should be done this week but we feel the park should remain closed until we get the other items addressed.

Commissioner Zymroz stated that safety is the number one thing. She would hate for a kid to get hurt. Safety is the number one

priority.

Commissioner Chiurazzi questioned where the glass is coming from.

Commissioner Zymroz stated it is coming up from underneath. It used to be a dump years and years ago.

Mr. Macino stated it used to be a waste site. When the field is dragged, the glass comes up to the surface.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated we are closing the field, but we are going to refurbish the dugouts. This makes no sense.

Mr. Shazer stated the dugouts are already done.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated that makes no sense. We are going to attract people to the dugouts and the fields cannot be used. Can we dig down 5 feet or what is the solution for this?

Mr. Shazer stated the field was dug out, a tarp was put down and infield mix was put down on the tarp. Over the years the tarp has started to rot away. Anytime the tarp rots away, the glass from underneath comes up. When the field is drug, the glass is pulled into the infield. When it rains, the glass goes onto the basketball court. We had three (3) different field companies come and it will cost between \$50,000 and \$60,000 for just the infield to get it to where it can be played on. As far as the opening of the playground, it will depend on the weather.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated we are doing attractive nuisance. We are fixing up swings and everything and you don't think a kid will run out onto the field and get cut by glass. We are attracting them to this site and how do you keep them off the field and basketball court?

Commissioner Cupples questioned if Mr. Macino had a conversation with someone about liability.

Mr. Macino stated when he spoke to Brian from the USDA, He asked what the recommendation was and we did put tape up to not cross and we also have signs up. Some residents put up signs to Save Skavarka Park. The Township has no intentions of dismantling this Park or getting rid of it. Our goal is to try and fix it and make it usable for everyone. We have done everything we can do right now to get the park to work. Maybe field turf is an option to look at but we do not have it in the budget right now.

Commissioner Zymroz stated that because of all these dangerous things, we decided at the last meeting was to close the park for now. If someone is on the playground, we do not want them running over to the field to get hurt on the glass. It was safer to close the Park all together. It is a temporary thing.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated what is being described is the glass is underground and will never stop coming up to the surface. We may have to just pave it and make it basketball courts, parking, etc. Outside of a hard surface, it will never be fixed. Kids will go on that field whether there is tape up or not.

Mr. Shazer stated that Brian Zahuranic suggested we pressure wash the whole park and get it ready for the play structures to be used. Shut down the field part until he gets it addressed and figure out what we will do in the fall. There are parking issues and the hillside falling over. We have 14 T-Ball teams with no where to go but have created a modified T-Ball field at Collier Park for them to use.

Commissioner Zymroz stated safety is a concern and the other Commissioners agreed.

A lengthy discussion took place on ideas of repairing the field.

Mr. Macino stated they will continue to work on a solution for the fields.

4. Planning and Land Use Development

Commissioner Cupples reported the following:

1. Planning Commission to meet on March 14 for the following:
 - Proposed Giant Eagle Wet Go final land development review.
2. Zoning Hearing Board will meet on March 21st for the following:
 - Request for 5 Below in the Chartiers Valley Shopping Center. To install a 113 square foot wall sign over the allowable 72.5 sq. ft permitted by ordinance.

5. Public Safety

Commissioner Young reported the following:

1. *Police Department.* No major accidents or thefts. In 2 weeks, there will be a luncheon for Sgt. Lamb's retirement.
2. *Presto VFD.* Chief Wauthier gave Commissioner Young a report that there were 38 incidents in February which is more than one a day. The members attended three (3) training missions in addition to their normal in-house training which included elevator rescue, lithium battery acid and basic water rescue awareness. The fish fries are going well. They will be putting out bids for the building renovations by the end of March.

3. *State Issue.* Anita Kulik and Devlin Robinson recognized an issue located in Collier Township. Our EMS transported people from a nursing home that were left alone with no staff. Commissioner Young thanked everyone for helping with this issue.

Mr. Macino stated we have had a reported number of break-ins in our community and surrounding communities. Commissioner Zymroz asked him to put something together to send out to the residents by our website, Facebook and eblasts. If you plan on going out of town on vacation, please don't put it on social media that you are going to be gone for a week. There has been a group of people monitoring people's Facebook pages to see when they were going to be gone so they could go to their homes and break in. We will be working with the Police Chief to put together some precautions for people to take.

Commissioner Cupples stated she heard there were several break ins in Bridgeville of unlocked cars and she requested this be added to the list of precautions.

Mr. Macino stated there have also been people coming up to people's doors and many of our housing plans have a no solicitation sign. If you do not want to be solicited at your home, you can call the police and they will put your address on a no solicitation list and the police can enforce this. The only solicitations you can't stop are religious and political solicitations. If you are being hassled by solicitations, then you can call the police.

Commissioner Zymroz stated these people are very bold and have been hitting houses at 7:00pm in the evening so it is not in the middle of the night. Keep your doors and windows locked and do not advertise you are going on vacation.

6. Public Works

Commissioner Vaughn reported the following:

1. *Pickleball poles and nets.* New poles and nets are installed and ready for playing.
2. *Webb Field.* Batting cage poles have been straightened and are safe for batting practice. Fixed backstop netting on big Webb.
3. *Ball fields.* All have been aerated.
4. *Webb Park.* New swings and chains have been ordered.
5. *Skavarka Park.* New swings and chains have been ordered. Spray for the geese was ordered and will be applied when it comes in. Working on safety issues so it can reopen.
6. *Roads.* Measurements have been taken and will be submitted to the engineer.
7. *Potholes.* There have been several results and we will start hot patching when the plant opens.

7. Sewer Department

Commissioner Cupples reported the following:

1. There were 13 sewer-related inspections performed.
2. There were two (2) failure reports which are waiting for completion of repairs.
3. Grease trap record request letters were mailed to businesses
4. Attended two (2) Three River Wet Weather meeting and one (1) MS4 meeting.

Commissioner Young questioned if there are bids coming in.

Mrs. Slizik stated yes. They are for CCTVing and repairs.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:

Nicole Larrow of 100 Delfred Drive, Carnegie, PA approached the Board with concerns. She stated she purchased her home seven (7) years ago located down the street from Skavarka Park. For seven years, her son has played on the fields, basketball courts and play structures. A few years ago, she had asked that the basketball courts be cleaned. They were once but never again. She didn't doubt the Township was aware of the drainage issues based on the disrepair of the basketball court for the last several years and is constantly covered in branches, rocks, mud and glass. Her daughter has known this park her entire life playing on the fields, court and playground. Once she started school, she and her friends would meet at the park after school to play with their babydolls which we refer to as the babydoll club. The children of the community have used the park constantly regardless of the seasons and weather. Her daughter has asked her to walk to the park often to see if the park is open and it is still closed. She was very disappointed. It is disheartening to see that the park is closed when it is not used. She never received a survey, or no one knocked at the door to ask or discuss if we use the park. Even when seeing the maintenance people at the park, no one asked the community members if the park is used. My complaints to Collier went unanswered and unresolved. She noticed in November and December an increase in geese mess but by the time Collier decided to respond to the geese mess and issues, the problems were worse and left the community without a park. She is dedicated to making sure their park is not forgotten and cared for like the other parks in the area. Our park needs to be a priority as well as others and needs to be constantly cleaned and updated like the other parks. The problems are not new and there is a clear outline of things that need to happen to restore the park. Issues raised by the community need to be addressed in a timely manner and not ignored. Our park cannot be forgotten any longer.

Jessica Hill of 212 Sarah Street, Carnegie, PA approached the Board with concerns for Skavarka Park. Having a park that she could walk to had a huge decision on her purchasing her home in this neighborhood over 10 years ago. Over the years, the park has been taken care of less and less. Her son, who is now 19, loved to play basketball at the park and now the courts are caked with leaves and glass making it unsafe. She and her two (2) 10-year-old girls love

taking walks to the park but the recent influx of geese has made the feces on the ground unbearable. When a few of us neighbors reached out about the park we were met with disappointment when the park was closed. We felt like we were being punished for speaking up. She is happy to hear the Township is working on upgrades, but we want to make sure they are done in a timely manner and not put off or neglected like they have been in the past. It is disheartening to see the other parks in Collier Township being upgraded and remodeled while our beloved Skavarka Park is neglected. As a frequent visitor to the recreation center, she knows how many employees are on staff and the other countless luxuries are available. It seems like a small allocation of funds could go a long way in maintaining our park but for some reason, Skavarka has been overlooked. This is also about a message this sends to our community. We should all have access to safe outdoor spaces. It is time for us to come together and demand accountability for those responsible for maintaining our park. She pledges to continue coming to community meetings and working with her neighbors until we see real changes in Skavarka Park. Our children deserve a place that is safe, clean and inviting. She added that she did not think it would be a bad idea for the problem with parking, to get rid of the baseball field completely and make it parking or more basketball courts. She does have girls that play softball and finding a place to practice is impossible for the coaches. The Township should find a field replacement somewhere that would be suitable. She suggested a few areas but didn't know if Collier owned the property or not.

Commissioner Chiurazzi suggested getting a neighborhood committee together to meet with Rob, George and Dana to figure out what needs to be done. This Board wants to do good for the community.

Mrs. Hill stated they thought about knocking on doors and getting a petition going or surveying the community. Would this be solicitation?

Commissioner Cupples was not sure.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated to get a community group together to meet with Rob, George and Dana so we can work this out.

Commissioner Cupples stated that one of the residents came to a Friends of Collier meeting and wants to help raise money for Skavarka Park. She is one of the speakers here tonight.

Kristie Goldie of 138 Delfred Drive approached the Board with concerns about Skavarka Park. She has lived there for 8 years but grew up on Cabbage Hill and has played at Skavarka Park. She also joined Friends of Collier the other night. She has long-term solutions. She spoke about the playground structure being old and the hillside collapsing. She requested a contingency fund specifically for Skavarka Park improvements. She requested the creation of a planning committee for these improvements. With the long-term solutions in place, we can start the improvements without delay and caution tape. She stated the infield needs to be replaced.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated how about the outfield.

Mrs. Goldie stated it is not the outfield. The reason the glass is in the infield is because every time the dragging occurs, you are getting rid of more dirt. The water runoff gets rid of more dirt. In the outfield you never notice glass. Kids play soccer in the outfield and slide in the outfield and she doesn't believe there is glass in the outfield.

Mrs. Goldie stated that this Spring has 14 T-Ball teams. There are 17 baseball/softball teams. This is using Webb and Skavarka fields. Now Skavarka is closed. She heard that Webb field will be getting updates and that will leave one (1) field for the Fall for these 17 teams. She requested the infield be replaced at Skavarka as soon as possible. You can dig down 8 feet and put down a new tarp. That would be \$50,000.00. Compared to the major investments made to Hilltop Park, a planned multi-million dollar remodel to the Community Center, she didn't think the residents are asking for too much. The improvements to Skavarka Park will draw more families with young kids to our community as well as increase the property values. Since she has joined Friends of Collier Parks, she has formed a community Facebook page for Skavarka Park and is willing to help raise funds. Fund raising has already started through Friends of Collier Parks. We have support of the neighbors and the Skavarka family and she has raised almost \$4,000.00 dollars this week. They really want their community park open and see a contingency fund just for Skavarka Park and would like to get the kids back to playing ball. As far as a barrier that was discussed, the fence does go all the way around and locks. There is one open barrier near the dugout and was not sure if that gate locks. For the basketball court runoff that was mentioned, we would see the public works department there after it rained to spray off the mud from the court. In the last two (2) years, they haven't seen the basketball court cleaned. However, public works was there last week doing maintenance work.

Devin Powell of 58 Cowan Road, Carnegie, PA approached the Board with concerns about Skavarka Park. He is a Collier baseball coach, CV football coach, den leader for scouts and helps with CCDC faith formation. As a coach that has been at Skavarka for five (5) years, if you are going to dig the field up, you need to put drainage in because of the runoff to the basketball courts. Parking is rough but we make it work. We use the parking lot and park on the streets. We have so many teams and the big concern is what do we do and where do we go. He would like to see the field restored and questioned if any other fields are available. He would appreciate any help for the kids.

Ken Skavarka of Carnegie stood up and said the ballfield was named after his father and has three (3) grandchildren that play at that park. He wants to see his father's legacy carry on.

Commissioner Zymroz stated the Township is not getting rid of Skavarka Park. We were just closing it until we get the safety items repaired. People on

Facebook were saying things that are not true and need to get the facts straight. It is closed for a temporary thing and it is a safety issue. We would never close a neighborhood park. Safety is first.

Commissioner Cupples stated she is the President of Friends and Commissioner Zymroz is the Treasurer. Our job is to raise funds for the parks. We have fundraisers all the time and we need the support of the residents to participate in these fundraisers. We can use some of the funds we raise to help rectify the problems at Skavarka.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated to form a committee and keep it organized. He would donate in a minute. He didn't know about these issues until tonight and we will act on them.

Commissioner Chiurazzi thanked the residents and advised management to work on these issues.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Consider action to amend the existing nepotism policy.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated this is to remove the third (3rd) paragraph of the nepotism policy.

Mr. Macino stated the paragraph currently states, should an employee have a parent become elected as a Commissioner, the employee could be terminated and we are doing away with that.

A motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, seconded by Commissioner Cupples to amend the existing nepotism policy. Commissioner Zymroz abstained. By a 4 to 1 vote, the motion passed.

V. Account Transfer(s)

1. Approval of the transfer of \$15,000.00 from the General Fund Account to the Capital Fund Checking Account.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zymroz, seconded by Commissioner Young, to approve the transfer as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion passed.

VI. Approval of General, Capital and Sewer Fund Operating Account items:

- Invoices Paid, Checks Written and Bills Requested February 28, 2023, to March 13, 2023:
 - General Fund in the amount of \$439,375.65
 - Capital Fund in the amount of \$15,379.47
 - Sewer Fund in the amount of \$5,735.92

Motion was made by Commissioner Vaughn, seconded by Commissioner Young, to approve the General, Capital and Sewer Fund Account items as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion passed.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Zymroz informed the public that two (2) of the CV Wrestlers, Brady and Dillion did great in Hershey. Congratulations to them. Also, the CV Life Skills bocce coach, Courtney Chiurazzi, are going to Hershey next week for the States. Good Luck to them. Also, the CV play is 9 to 5 on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Also, for Seniors, on Wednesday there is a Spaghetti Dinner held by the football team and cheerleaders. If you go to the dinner, you get a free ticket to the play.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zymroz, seconded by Commissioner Cupples; to adjourn the workshop meeting at 7:59p.m. By unanimous vote of the Board the motion passed.

Wayne M. Chiurazzi, President
Board of Commissioners

Valerie A. Salla
Township Secretary