

**MINUTES
COLLIER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORKSHOP MEETING**

October 9, 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 moment of silence took place in honor of those lives lost on September 11, 2001.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. ROLL CALL:

BOARD

Ethan Styche – Present
Tim Young – Present
Dawnlee Vaughn – Present
MaryAnn Cupples – Present
Wayne Chiurazzi, Esq. – Present

STAFF

Kate Diersen, Solicitor – Absent
Travis Stanczyk, Engineer – Absent
Craig Campbell, Police Chief – Absent
Bob Caun, Planning Director – Present
Jeff Hinds, Finance Director – Absent
Tom Plietz – Bldg/Fire Codes – Absent
Bob Palmosina, PW Director – Absent
Rob Shazer, Parks Director – Absent
George Macino, Twp. Mgr. – Present
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. *Paper Shredding Event.* Thanked Representative Anita Kulik for hosting this event on September 30th at the Collier Township Community Center.
2. *Senior Fair.* Will take place on November 16th at the Community Center. It will be hosted by Senator Devlin Robinson and State Representative Anita Kulik. More information will be provided when finalized.
3. *Managers Coffee Hour.* Was held on October 2nd. The next one will be in February 2024.
4. *Employee Handbook.* Finalizing and working with the Committee on updating the handbook for the Township employees.

5. *Presto VFD Grant*. Assisting with Statewide grant for renovations with State Representative Kulik and Senator Robinson's Offices.
6. *Nomination*. Collier Township was nominated by Southwest Regional Chamber of Commerce as one of the best communities.
7. *COG (Council of Governments) recognized*. The Township received an award for having perfect attendance at the meetings in 2023.
8. *Website*. Updates and updating communication materials for Township departments.
9. *Flu Shot Clinic*. Collier EMS will be having a flu shot clinic on October 12th from 4:00p.m. to 8:00p.m. at the Community Center. This is free.
10. *2024 Budget*. Preparations are being made.
11. *RFP Audit*. IT Technology and Audit services.
12. *Veterans Memorial Flags*. Working on.

Commissioner Chiurazzi questioned when election day was.

Commissioner Cupples stated November 7th.

Commissioner Chiurazzi reminded everyone to vote.

B. Building/Codes

Commissioner Cupples reported the following:

1. Building Department:

- There have been 27 permits issued.
- 3 permits for new commercial construction. Grist House, Wet Go and Legacy Community Clubhouse.

Commissioner Chiurazzi asked for an update on the Grist House.

Mr. Caun stated Grist House received their demolition permit a couple of months ago and now they are through demolition and are ready to start construction. They have hired their contractor and are moving forward.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated they are by the Community Center.

Mr. Caun stated they will be across the street from the community center, next to the FAA.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated the Grist House is a microbrewery.

- 5 residential occupancies.
- 1 new business. 412 Waxing located at 1190 Washington Pike.

2. Code Enforcement:

- 7 Tenant inspections completed.
- 14 Code enforcement items.
- 2 hearings attended at the Magistrates Office.
- Attended a CBO Conference.

C. COG

Commissioner Styche reported the following:

1. *First Meeting.* Was a couple weeks ago after the summer break.
2. *Budget.* Was discussed from the last season.
3. *Rewards.* Collier Township was given their reward which Commissioner Vaughn mentioned in her report.
4. *Grant Approvals.* For all communities.
5. *Next meeting.* Wednesday, October 11th.

D. Finance

Commissioner Young reported the following:

1. *Revenues:* So far this year we have taken in close to 9 million dollars. The projection from last year's budget was 10 million 300 thousand.
2. *Real Estate Taxes received.* So far, we have received 3.8 million dollars. The projected was 4.1 million.
3. *Earned Income Taxes.* We received 2.8 million dollars. The projected was 3.6 million. There are still two (2) pay periods left.
4. *Expenses.* So far, we have paid out a little over 6 million 700 thousand dollars. We expected to spend over 10 million, but we are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the year.
5. *Bonds.* We have two (2) bonds we keep paying off for building the Community Center. We now owe less than 5 million dollars on both bonds and will be paid off on August 1, 2031.

Commissioner Young added we are in good shape financially.

E. Parks & Recreation

Commissioner Cupples reported the following:

1. *Fall Programs.*
 - Breakfast with Santa on December 10th from 10:00a.m. to 12 noon.
 - Halloween Easter Egg Hunt on October 21 from 5:00p.m. to 7:00p.m.
 - Holiday Craft and Vendor Show on November 25 from Noon to 4:00p.m.
 - Holiday Basketball Shoot out on November 25th and 26th from 9:00a.m. to 7:00p.m.
 - Zumba Class starts October 26th to November 30th from 9:30a.m. to 10:30a.m.
 - Line Dancing every Monday and Wednesday. Started on October 2 to November 8 from 5:30p.m. to 6:30p.m.
 - Holiday Hang Out. This is a parent's night out. You can drop the children off and go shopping for Christmas. This is on December 8th from 6:00p.m to 8: 00p.m
 - Veteran's Brunch. Held on November 9th from 10:00a.m. to 11:30a.m. There will be speakers.

2. *Meetings and Plannings.*

- 2024 Budget. Finalizing with Commissioners Cupples and Vaughn.
- 2024 Collierfest. Scheduled El Derado. Sponsored by the Collier Police Department.
- Big Webb Project. Working with Bob Palmosina and CBSA to finalize remodeling.
- Meeting. With Travis and Paula from South Fayette to discuss the plans for the new ballfield. We are looking for Grant money.
- New Laminate Floors. Being installed behind the Community Center front desk and the banquet hall serving area by Steinberg Floors.
- Meeting. With Mt. Lebanon Awning to cover the patio area with a new awning so it can be used during rainy days and keep shaded during sunny days.
- Utility Vehicle. Looking for quotes which the Friends of Collier plan to pay for. This vehicle is needed for the parks department.

F. Planning/Zoning and Land Use Development

Commissioner Cupples reported the following:

1. *Planning Commission.*

- Comprehensive Plan Open House will be held on Wednesday, October 25th from 5:30p.m. to 7:00p.m. Everyone that attends will be entered in a raffle for one of the following businesses: Rennerdale Corner Store, Nautical Bowls, DJ Ribs, and Mission BBQ. This is an opportunity for all residents to come and discuss their vision for the future growth of our community. Commissioner Cupples and Debra Zymroz are doing registration. We hope to see everyone there.
- Planning Commission is currently working on an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance regarding digital billboards.

G. Public Safety

Commissioner Young reported the following:

1. Fire Departments. All three (3) fire departments had a busy month. There were no major fires.
2. EMS Department. Had two (2) major incidents which involved the fire and police departments. One was a motorcycle accident on Interstate 79 on Wednesday, October 4th at 6:45pm. The accident occurred close to the Collier/Kirwan Heights Route 50 exit but on Interstate 79. The person was in serious condition and transported to the hospital. He didn't know if the person survived or not. The other incident that involved everyone was the major gas leak that happened on Wednesday, September 27th around 12:45a.m. It was a 10-inch gas pipe. They were working on Route 50/Vanadium Road. All departments were there for four (4) hours until it was repaired. People within a 2-block area had to be evacuated from their homes. There were no major incidents with this, but it could have been a serious one. One of the Chiefs said they couldn't smell the gas because it was going straight up in the air. They could smell the gas towards the end when they got it capped. Traffic was diverted away from

the area. There were Police from Scott Township there to help. Bower Hill VFD and Bridgeville VFD helped.

Also, between October 1 and October 5th, the EMS responded to 122 situations both emergency and non-emergency.

3. *Police Department.* We are having problems with some of the police vehicles and we are trying to get new ones. The maintenance costs have been high. We are in the process of hiring a new officer and we may hire two (2) because one of the senior officers will be retiring in early 2025 but with medical problems and vacation it will be sometime in 2024. We lost an officer who took a job at Keystone School District. Our goal is to hire two (2) officers and we have already started the process of interviews. We also have in the budget to get cameras for the intersections. Currently, Nevillewood has cameras set up. The Township needs to buy the software to be able to connect to these cameras. Once we get this software, we can connect to all the cameras and even cameras in other communities.

The number of calls for the police department in the month of September was 783. Year to date calls are 8,181. Officers performed 99 business checks, 172 park checks, 218 school checks and attended 2 community events.

H. Public Works

Commissioner Vaughn reported the following:

1. *Meadow Path Trail.* Was Cut
2. *Anna Ewing Bench.* Was installed.

Commissioner Cupples stated the bench was donated by the Friends of Collier. Anna Ewing was a member of the Friends Board and she passed away last year. The bench is located on the big bend on Hilltop Trail. This is in her honor.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated this is the Discovery Trail.

Commissioner Cupples stated the Friends Board will be purchasing other benches. The next one is in honor of Commissioner Dan Styche who passed away. This was Commissioner Ethan Styche's father.

3. *State Roads.* Were cut back per agility agreement.
4. *Patch Work.* Completed at Cherry Hill.
5. *Collierfest.* Set up and clean up. Public Works donated free train rides to all the kids. Donated left over hay bales to Heidelberg and Scott Township.
6. *Shift work.* Weekend shift work ended.
7. *Training.* Public Works attended MS4 training.

Commissioner Vaughn added that Public Works did an amazing job at Collierfest. They do this every year. We did not have good weather this year, but they were there working hard for the community and she thanked them for that.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated Public Works did a great job on the Cherry Hill Roads. They also cut the shrubs down on the State Roads by Trader Jacks.

I. Sewer Department

Commissioner Cupples reported the following:

- 22 inspections completed. Includes 16 dye tests and 6 laterals.
- \$2,163.53 collected from Jordan Tax for delinquent accounts.
- Received 1 developer and 2 commercial tap in applications for new construction.
- 9 Sanitary Certification letters sent for property sales transfers.
- 1 Three Rivers Wet Weather SSS Committee meeting attended virtual.
- Nassco Force Main Assessment Class completed by Wilson and Patie.
- DEP MCM Certificate minimum control measures parts 1, 2 and 3 completed.
- Reviewed 18,762.9 feet of video footage for CCTV contract project.
- Deduct letters were mailed to all registered meter owners to submit for refunds.

Commissioner Young added the following for finances:

- In 2024, two older areas of homes have older terra cotta pipes and we will be renewing some of those in 2024.
- There is a significant amount of money saved for this purpose and we are in good shape financially even though there will be significant finances in 2024.

Commissioner Chiurazzi added that several years ago the Board decided to take over the sewer department and it has been very good for Collier Township and we are proud of it.

III. OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Cupples stated that on Thoms Run Road the traffic is becoming a problem especially at the beginning of the school day and at dismissal. She doesn't know if the Township can do anything about this or not, but cars are starting to back up onto Thoms Run Road all the way down and cars are jockeying between two (2) lanes when there are three (3) lanes of traffic there. This is also the same with high school. She suggested the Township look into this and maybe have a meeting with the school board to see if there is a better way of doing this because someone is going to get hurt.

Commissioner Young stated the problem is on Thoms Run Road. It is a County Road.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated Thoms Run Road is County, the bottom of Forsythe Road is a State Road and we still don't have a left turning lane and that backs up everyone especially when there is a bus setting there and cars are coming from the Presto area. There is going to be a light over at Presto Sygan Road and Thoms Run Road. He asked Chief Dan Wauthier if he knew when that light was going to be done.

Chief Wauthier stated he did not know.

Commissioner Vaughn stated we could have a police officer there during those busy times.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated we have talked about this for over a decade and we just don't have the people power to do that.

Commissioner Cupples stated we could meet with the school and maybe they could alternate when kids are picked up. When she drove by there today at 3:13p.m., it wasn't onto the road yet, but the cars were all the way to Thoms Run and all the way up the school driveway with parents waiting to pick up their children. She doesn't know what the answer is but was hoping we could find an answer.

Mr. Macino stated that part of the issue is when the parent is there to pick up their child and the child is not there yet. The traffic backs up and for long periods of time, the traffic does not move. We will talk to the school to see if there is something we can do to queue up when the children come up. Some people want to be there early and the kids are not ready to get out yet.

Commissioner Cupples stated they need her son because her son does this at his school and he knows what car belongs to what kid and he shuffles them out. He has a good system and if we need his help, we will call him also.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated this is a difficult one because everything comes out onto Thoms Run Road and there is no other way out.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cupples, seconded by Commissioner Vaughn, to accept the Board's committee reports. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:

John Martin of 1703 Grand Cypress Lane, Presto, PA. He was representing the HOA of Cherry Hill and the Nevillewood HOA. He is the President of the Cherry Hill HOA and serves on the Nevillewood HOA Board. He approached the Board to discuss the Woodville Associates Development. There are about 500 homes in the Nevillewood Community. In Cherry Hill, there are 72 homes.

Some of the homes face the center and some face the green space. The Woodville Development is the green space that half of the Cherry Hill residents will be looking at every day. We expect the developer will be clearing all the land and all the trees to build this community. He understands an official document has not been submitted for this development but there have been examples of what they are planning going around. He is asking the Township Officials to help them moderate the closeness of this development to the Cherry Hill property. The Cherry Hill residents would like the following changes in the plan:

- A tree buffer for privacy and the residents can look at green space rather than the roofs of buildings.
- In the Woodville Associates plans is a road called "F" with a turnaround circle that is at the Cherry Hill property line. The Cherry Hill residents in buildings 11 and 12 will be looking at a cul-de-sac. Hopefully they can turn this toward the development instead of turning towards Cherry Hill and plant some trees for a buffer.
- Road "E". Road "E" goes up and almost touches the Cherry Hill property by buildings 8, 9, 10 and 11. That cul-de-sac has duplex patio homes. The Cherry Hill residents are asking this be moved about 10, 15 or 20 feet down and have a tree buffer.

The Cherry Hill residents feel these changes are important for continuing privacy and enjoying this development. They are not against this development but want some privacy. They hope the Township Officials can help them out by encouraging the developers to have a tree border between Cherry Hill and what the development is doing.

Mr. Martin stated he had a meeting today with Mr. Macino and Mr. Caun and talked about what the Township can do for them. He also had a phone conversation with Mr. Cargnoni and they discussed the two (2) cul-de-sacs. He also hopes the Township and Mr. Cargnoni can discuss having a tree border for privacy.

Mr. Martin then wanted to speak about the new road from this development going in that will intersect with Hilltop Road at the Oak Hill Community. Oak Hill is part of the Nevillewood Community. The concern with the Nevillewood Community is that everyone will have their night-time headlights going right into the building that may be 15 feet off this road. They hope this road can be directed to a different way. A lot of the residents in Cherry Hill are concerned about traffic congestion now on Hilltop Road, especially the intersection of Collier Ave and Route 50 that gets backed up. They hope when the traffic study is done, something will be suggested for all the traffic. Nevillewood has invested in security cameras for the three (3) entrances into the Nevillewood Community. This new road will be four (4) roads. We hope the Township will require the developer to put in security cameras to keep the security system whole.

Mr. Martin stated the last item he had for a Cherry Hill resident is that we can discourage people from using the new road with speed bumps or something. In conclusion, he stated the residents of Cherry Hill and Nevillewood are not against this new development. They want it to be done properly and help in providing green space to the residents. He thanked the Commissioners for listening.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated this Board will work with the residents. The Board has already had a lot of discussions about this new development and will see what the Board can do. This Board will be a partner with the residents. A lot of things Mr. Martin has already spoken about have been discussed and the residents will be happy with them. There are two (2) Commissioners that will be looking up to this development and still have to approve it. It is for the betterment of the Township and this Board is proud of progress that helps Collier Township. The Board thanked Mr. Martin for his time.

Cheryl Covato of 1107 Cherry Hill Drive, Presto, PA approached the Board stating that Cherry Hill needs the Boards help. They embrace progress and residential growth; they have the following concerns that will negatively impact their community: Copies were given to the Board.

- The original woods and greenery. Buildings 6 through 12 face the woods and are their front yard. This is a selling point of beauty, privacy, feeling safe and having protection from intruders. Severe weather conditions like high winds, rain and snow have been diverted due to the height and density of the trees and bushes. The homes have sustained very little damage. These original woods were wisely and tastefully kept by the Cherry Hill Developers. They create a buffer and a healthy community environment.
- The road coming from the development to Hilltop Road. This location of the road is not a good idea. This road will create major congestion along Hilltop Road and serious back ups on to Collier Avenue due to long unsynchronized traffic lights at Collier Avenue and Route 50 as well as Route 50 and Greentree Road. It will be disastrous if emergency vehicles need to get through. We do not have this kind of infrastructure in this immediate area for that amount of traffic.
- Devaluation of property. Cherry Hill Villas is a much sought after well managed community in which to live. Many have resided there for over 20 years. This community is chosen for many reasons like location, views, comfort and contentment. The removal of the trees will diminish these infractions along with the front yards. This will create devaluation of their properties, possible financial hardships and life altered decisions regarding their homes.
- Mine Subsidence. We know that our area and all southwestern Pennsylvania is undermined. All of Cherry Hill sits on fill. Disturbing the integrity of the slopes with heavy equipment on or near their property can create cracking or sinking. Mrs. Covato currently has cracking floors and walls which started shortly after the digging began below the Discovery Path a few years ago. She is concerned the cracking will get worse as soon as the heavy equipment starts disturbing the slopes around them.

- Insurance. Cherry Hill has always had mine subsidence insurance which gives them some peace of mind, but it doesn't cover mud or landslides. Damage to one (1) of the villas will affect the whole building. If her villa that faces the woods sits on land that begins to shift, or drift downward, due to the newly disturbed slopes, all four (4) villas will suffer damage. Who becomes liable for this?
- Mud slides and landslides. The front yard of one of the villas that faces the woods is approximately 24 feet from the edge of the driveway to the existing slope. Disturbing and un-anchoring roots of existing trees and vegetation can create a nuisance zone which overtime and followed by melting ice and snow or down pours, will be a continuing problem.

Cherry Hill residents are asking for help and are requesting from building site to Cherry Hill property line that the Township leave at least 100 feet of existing trees. These trees may not be pretty, but they act as a protective barrier from the blowing dirt, saw dust from downed trees, toxic odors and noise pollution commonly found at building sites. She asked these same steps to be taken for residents with medical dangers to the neighbors that have severe respiratory problems. Planting new trees and bushes in Cherry Hill is not the answer to the immediate problem. The more existing trees we keep, the more protection they will have from carbon dioxide omitted from construction vehicles and vehicles of future residents in this new development. The existing trees can continue to serve our communities as both privacy and an enjoyable forest preservation boundary for which the developers will be applauded by environmentalists, Neville Park and the Cherry Hill neighbors.

The Board thanked Mrs. Covato for her comments and thanked everyone for coming.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Motion to adopt Ordinance 729, which amends Chapter 1 Part 5 (C) of the Township Code of Ordinances and dissolves the Township's Parks and Recreation Board.

Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, seconded by Commissioner Cupples, to adopt Ordinance 729 as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion passed.

2. Motion to adopt Ordinance 730, which amends Chapter 15, Section 406, of the Township Code of Ordinances, to prohibit the overnight parking of non-passenger vehicles on Township streets.

Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, seconded by Commissioner Vaughn, to adopt Ordinance 730 as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion passed.

3. Motion to enter into an agreement with Woodville Associates for an access road for Neville Park 2.

Commissioner Young stated this motion involves an agreement between the Township and a developer regarding the Township allowing the developer through the Collier Township meadow path. The Township is not simply giving this right of way to the developer. There has been a lot of discussion and give and take back and forth. In the final analysis, there was one thing that Commissioner Young was hoping to occur and did not to his satisfaction, so Commissioner Young is against it. When they voted on the zoning change, it was the one meeting that Commissioner Young missed since January of 2022 because he was on a cruise, so he did not vote for the zoning change and he would have voted against it.

Motion was made by Commissioner Vaughn, seconded by Commissioner Cupples, to enter into an agreement with Woodville Associates as stated above. Commissioner Young voted no. By a 4 to 1 vote, the motion passed.

A resident asked to speak and the Board allowed it.

David Choura of 705 Cherry Hill Drive, Presto, PA stated if the Commissioners have been to the beautiful park, it is possible to put a road through that doesn't go through the park and damage the park and all the safety issues. It is one of the best parks and having a road going through it will not help that park. He is not an engineer but there are ways to put a road in to access Hilltop Road that doesn't go through the park.

Commissioner Chiurazzi states this Board has gone over this and the land with the trees on it is not owned by the Township. The Township does own the park and we made a deal that is good for Collier Township. It is not going to affect the safety of the residents on the Discovery Path. The developer has an obligation for a couple of accesses on any development like this and this one along with all the pros and cons and going back and forth made the most sense. It was about making the right financial deal to benefit Collier Township. Like in any settlement, both sides are disappointed at the end of the day. Commissioner Young is not against the development. He is against the financial end of the agreement. The agreement will be public tomorrow.

Mr. Macino stated it will be public through a right to know request.

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

Invoices Paid, Checks Written and Bills Requested September 26, 2023, to October 9, 2023:

- General Fund in the amount of \$793,621.73
- Capital Fund in the amount of \$1,568.88 and
- Sewer Fund in the amount of \$96,616.67.

Motion was made by Commissioner Styche, seconded by Commissioner Young, to approve the General, Capital and Sewer Fund Account items as to what the numbers are to be. By unanimous vote, the motion passed.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Chiurazzi thanked the Cherry Hill residents for coming to the meeting and stated the Township will work with them and this Board cares very much about their neighborhood, Nevillewood and all of Collier. The Board will work jubilantly to try and make things work for them that benefits the Township. In the agreement that they will see, several of the items were addressed already and he is pleased but no one is ever 100% satisfied. We would want the woods to be there forever but that was not going to be in the cards. We are all here for the residents and are going to do what is best for Collier.

Motion was made by Commissioner Vaughn, seconded by Commissioner Cupples; to adjourn the workshop meeting at 7:52p.m. By unanimous vote of the Board the motion passed.

Wayne M. Chiurazzi, President
Board of Commissioners

Valerie A. Salla
Township Secretary