

**West Vincent Township  
Board of Supervisors  
Workshop**

**February 3, 2020 7:00 PM**

Attendance: Mike Schneider, Chairman, Bernie Couris, Vice Chair, Sara Shick, Member, Erica Batdorf, Township Manager, Kathy Shillenn, Township Secretary

Chairman Schneider called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Schneider announced that an Executive Session was held on January 29, 2020 at 12:30 p.m. regarding Personnel.

**Presentations:**

**Ready for 100 Initiative** - Kathy McDevitt, along with Ken Witek from the Environmental Advisory Council gave a power point presentation on 100% Renewable Energy and the Resolution that the Environmental Advisory Council approved last month; the Sustainability Committee also endorsed this resolution. The Environmental Advisory Council is hoping that the Board of Supervisors will approve this resolution.

**Brian Curry, 512 Blackhorse Road** asked about the air quality and cleanliness and asked if Ms. McDevitt ever looked at the changes in air quality in the U.S. over the last 50 years. Ms. McDevitt stated that the air quality has been improved over the years. Mr. Curry has seen studies over the entire world and was surprised that the air quality has improved all over. It takes energy to improve the air quality. Mr. Curry asked how 100% renewable will be accomplished in 15 years. Ms. McDevitt stated that it will be a challenge. Mr. Witek stated that the 100% goal is an aspiration. Mr. Curry then discussed the issue of batteries and nuclear power plants and the fact that it will be very hard to be 100% renewable within 30 years. Mr. Curry also asked if they have looked at what the solar panels have done for the township. Ms. McDevitt stated that this resolution asks to form a team to start the process of goals, planning and requesting a stronger commitment at the state level. Mr. Curry asked what the costs would be to the residents of the township as to what they, the residents, would need to do.

Ms. Shick stated that Mr. Witek might want to clarify that it's a goal not a mandate. Mr. Schneider stated that residents can be forced to do things; the government forces people to do many things. At some point after educating and doing research you'll have to have mandates, it's not going to be 100% voluntary. Mr. Curry asked if the township engineer will be involved at all.

**Ken McCormick, Hilltop Road** has concern about the cost of this to the taxpayers. Not much renewable energy right now due to the cost being so expensive. How are we going to get a handle on this; are the taxpayers going to have the opportunity to vote on this or will these committees, who think it's a good idea, jam it down the residents throats. Where does the residents input come in? Ms. Shick stated that committees are advisory groups that advise the board and will not shove anything down anyone's throats. Mr. Schneider stated that when this does come up

the public will be notified and it will be up to the three sitting supervisors. Mr. McCormick stated that it makes him nervous about this open ended commitment.

**Ted Molligan** commented that we are talking about a goal not a mandate. Part of the strategy, moving ahead, should be making 100% easier to do. For example, geothermal is very cost effective; it helps with heat and a/c.

**Harriet Stone, 1645 Birchrun Road** is concerned that some people are very worried about the cost of mitigating this, they are not afraid of the cost of going the way we are now. There are huge costs to ignoring climate change.

**Paula Kline, Westtown Township** stated that she is on the advisory group that is part of the West Chester Area Council of Governments that has been working with a consultant over the last six months. She wanted to give a perspective of what it looks like to look down the road over the next two to five years. She stated that they want to share with the township and save the township money. She gave the township a little glimpse into what this would look like.

**Camp Hill Village Resident** stated that there are 120 people living at Camphill and they buy all the electricity from renewable sources; it actually isn't any more expensive. They have an older solar panel put up about 15 years ago that has more than paid for itself and are now getting money back from the power company.

**Ludwig's Corner Fire Company** – Jeff Kimes, Ludwig's Corner Fire Chief read a statement about the fire company and its future. West Vincent Township, consistently, over the past 10 years accounts for about 50% of their calls. Paul Mattes, the newly elected president also thanked the township and spoke about partnering with the township; the fire company is about to undertake a strategic planning initiative that will lay out a multi-year plan. Ms. Shick stated that she attended the Fire Company's Award Banquet a week ago and the West Vincent Township Police Department was given an award.

**Resident** stated that she respects and loves the fire company and backs them 100%. She thought that when the apartments were built that they were required to make a donation to the fire company. What is the status of the contribution? Paul Mattes stated that it's a very small contribution each year. She would like to see the township support the fire company; it might be better for the board to require an upfront donation instead of a little every year. Ms. Batdorf asked if the fire company has a consultant.

**Jamie McVickar, 407 Blackhorse Road** stated that this presentation is a great reminder of the value of open space.

**Donna Delaney, 2147 Beaver Hill Road** stated that the Old Hippie Band is playing at the fire company on Sunday for a fundraiser.

**Fair Districts PA - Jim Deisinger and John Barnett** - John Barnett gave a presentation regarding the Fair Districts PA initiative. This initiative is asking for district boundaries to be drawn and respected. For three or four decades these municipal boundaries have been violated. In PA, only politicians draw the maps. In 2021, the legislative districts will be redrawn again. Mr. Barnett and Mr. Deisinger are asking the Board to add a voice to take redistricting away from the politicians; to support a simple resolution that has already been signed by 357 governing bodies in PA. They are asking the board to join other boards to sign a resolution to support a citizen's

commission to establish redistricting. Mr. Deisinger stated that this is truly a non-partisan issue. Mr. Schneider asked if the districts would be on the border and would not stretch out beyond the township border. Mr. Couris asked how the citizen's commission would be decided. Mr. Barnett stated that there are qualifications that are written up.

**Yvonne Brownlee, 2843 Flowing Springs Road** stated that the Unitarian Universal Fellowship of Pottstown will be hosting a Fair Districts PA discussion on February 8<sup>th</sup> from 2pm to 4pm.

**Business Privilege/Mercantile Tax** - John Eldridge, 1634 Hilltop Road discussed this tax. It would be a tax on businesses. Businesses consume services of the township. Some townships have a municipal services tax, which would be a tax on the revenue of the business. It would apply generally to all businesses. Mr. Schneider ask how this idea came about. Is the township in need of money? Businesses pay property taxes. Why would we want to introduce another tax? Businesses provide services to residents.

**Suzanne Roth, 1360 Schoolhouse Lane** commented that Philadelphia has a business tax; it was onerous and terrible. It discourages people from having businesses.

**Ken Frame, 1205 Pottstown Pike** asked Chief Kimes how many times he has come to his business to give a service, none; how many times have you come to get a service, weekly at no charge. He feels the business supports the fire service and police any way they can.

**Chris Peck, Ludwig's Corner** thanked the fire company; he does help the fire company out and will so in the future. He manages the shopping center and the past year he had to lower the rent for two tenants because they could not make ends meet. Any type of tax on businesses would really hurt businesses.

**Jamie McVickar, 407 Blackhorse Road** stated that he is an auditor for the township as is John Eldridge. John is being modest when he said he's never provided any services for the township. He does a lot for the township, he audits the books, he's a hard worker and this tax is the stupidest idea.

**Maria Jacobs** commented that this township is all about buying local and eating local. When you start taxing businesses, businesses leave. Is this a WaWa tax?

**Resident** commented that local businesses allow people, who are volunteer firefighters to leave work and go to fires; this is another way that businesses keep giving.

**Neal Fisher, Hankin** stated when considering a tax you have to think about location. You want to encourage businesses to thrive and grow. An additional tax would only push businesses away. You need to incentivize businesses to locate here. A tax is very counterproductive to those goals.

**Township-Wide Earth Day Roadside Clean-Up - Peter Reitmeyer, 146 Windgate Drive** - Mr. Reitmeyer discussed possibly having a township-wide earth day clean-up. He sees a lot of garbage when he is riding around. He went out with bags on Westover and picked up five full bags of trash. He is trying to bring attention, community wide, to Earth Day. Last year he gathered 20 neighbors to get twenty bags of garbage in a two hour period. He would like to make this a big event to put together some committees to raise awareness and serve as a model for others to follow, organize township wide events for regular maintenance of township wide public and private lands.

**Yvonne Brownlee, 2843 Flowing Springs Road** stated that she is on the Sustainability Committee and Jim Goeke was appointed chairman. He sent Yvonne a list of things that he wanted to see for Earth Day clean-up. She will get this list out to everyone to take a look at. The Sustainability Committee is very interested in this happening.

**Carys Levin, 1912 Kimberton Road** loves this idea. Following up with West Vincent Elementary will be great; suspects walking along Rt. 401 could be a problem. She lives in the Kimberton Village area and thinks there would be value at breaking the township into zones and having a point person. We need to get point people for the different areas of the township. Ms. Levin also wanted to thank the supervisors for this first workshop meeting. It's nice to have community conversation.

Mr. Reitmeyer stated that they could have something at the park after the clean-up for the volunteers. He also believes that builders should be required to clean-up after they are finished a project.

**Camphill Resident** stated that when they do these clean-ups, she feels that Sunday mornings are much safer.

**Kip Archinal, 919 Fellowship Road** stated that she used to walk around the township a lot, even at night. Now no one walks, people fly through the township. They use the backroads for access routes. She is wondering if slow signs or some signs that say it is earth day can be placed on the roads so people would be safer when they are out walking. Maybe we could order earth day bags and hand them out to remind people of earth day.

**Maria Jacobs** stated that she loves this idea. She volunteered that Somerset Nursery could donate gloves for the volunteers.

**Discussion of Martin Luther King Day Off for Township** - Mr. Couris discussed this. We should honor him and give the staff a day off.

**Resident** stated that he really loved the idea and could see West Vincent Township having a day of service also.

**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:**

**Resident** wanted to say thank you for this informative workshop meeting. Some very exciting ideas have been brought forward. It seems that the township is becoming a big community, instead of little groups here and there.

**Harriet Stone, 1645 Birchrun Road** spoke regarding the amphibians. She wanted to let people know about the migration. If you are interested, see her after the meeting.

There being no further discussion, the **MOTION** to adjourn was brought forward by Mr. Couris; second by Ms. Shick. *Motion carries unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Shillenn  
Township Secretary