

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEEETING, SHALER TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 P.M. by Chairman David Shutter. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Chairman asked the Secretary to call the roll as follows:

PRESENT: Iozzo, Boyle, Cross, Shutter, Wagner, Mizgorski, Fisher
ALSO PRESENT: Timothy Rogers, Manager; Judith Kording, Assistant Manager; Amanda Jennings, Assistant Finance Director; Elaina DiBucci, Administrative Assistant; Michael Garver, Public Works Parks and Recreation Foreman; Matt Francis, Architect

Introduction of Board of Commissioners/Township Staff/Architects

Mr. Shutter stated the purpose of this meeting is for informational purposes and to hear comments from the public. He stated the Township has been in negotiations for the last 2 years with the Shaler Area School District and has finally come to an agreement for the Township to purchase the former Jeffery Elementary School. Mr. Shutter stated this survey was created for residents of the Township to participate in and to help the Township figure out what to do with the site and how to enhance Kiwanis Park to better Shaler Township. The results will be presented tonight through a PowerPoint slideshow.

Mr. Shutter thanked Cherry City Volunteer Fire Company for hosting this meeting.

Results of Survey

A PowerPoint was presented on the results of the community center survey explaining residents responses to the questions presented.

Mr. Shutter thanked Judy, Amanda and Elaina for their work on this PowerPoint presentation and coordinating this public meeting.

Citizens Comments – time limit of 3 minutes per speaker

Kevin Riley - 118 Joan Drive

Mr. Riley stated some concerns he had regarding turning this property into part of the public works garage. He was wondering if there was any federal funding available for this property. Lastly, he stated that the Township already supports the Shaler North Hills Library (SNHL) and he is not sure on the square footage needs of the SNHL, but wants to know if the Township could possibly combine both functions of the SNHL and the community center into one and sell the current SNHL building.

Frank Jans - 30 Scobbo Drive

Mr. Jans stated some results were confusing. He stated he would not want to sell the SNHL as that is an important part of the Township. He stated he has visited other community centers in surrounding communities and believes that the Township has similar population sizes and milage rates. He thinks the Township could be creative with funding for the community center. He

stated that the building and space has much potential. He discussed different ideas on how he believes this space and land could be utilized to better the community. **Mr. Jans** stated the availability for gyms is nearly impossible to get as sports teams have been practicing continuously at the gyms available in the schools. He doesn't agree that this center would take over the use of other facilities in the area.

Upon inquiry from Mr. Jans, Mr. Rogers stated that the Township is looking at alternative sites for the additional public works garages. Mr. Rogers stated the reserves include pension monies, so there are monies set aside for pension payments and the pension funds are fully funded. He stated that the Township has no debt. The Township could afford this, but it would involve a tax increase for Township residents. He stated the Township does not own SHEMS property. Mr. Rogers explained how surrounding communities differ from the Township. He stated that the Township is a bedroom/ blue collar community. He stated one of the biggest problems the Township faces is Route 8 being a floodplain. Giant Eagle had to spend almost a half a million dollars on stormwater management. Forms and Surfaces experienced a lot of issues with stormwater management as well as a major tax increase from the School District. Mr. Rogers said he spoke with a few different restaurants and in order for them to be successful in an area like Route 8 in Shaler Township, they would have to turn over 2.5 times a day to meet costs, which is not very reasonable for the area. He stated that all the Commissioners and Township Management visited and toured the surrounding community centers. He stated that Upper St. Clair Community Center was losing \$250,000 a month during the pandemic. He stated on a good year the pool loses \$50,000 and on a bad year up to \$200,000. Mr. Rogers advice to the Board is to not compete with surrounding areas as anything that would be in a new community center, the Township already has available for the community.

Michael - 238 Davis Avenue

He thinks it is naïve to compare ourselves to Hampton or Pine Township. He thinks this center is going to hemorrhage money and not make money. It is going to be an ongoing cost. He stated it would require a lot of people to get this center working and be sufficient. He stated there is a lot of good resources in the township, residents should use those as current services do not get enough money as it is. He stated the pool does not make a profit and suggested that people review the Townships statics that were provided in the presentation tonight. He believes that a community center would be the same and just cause the Township to lose money and be in debt. He also does not want the Township to have a tax increase because of a community center.

Elizabeth Hanulek - 17 Vilsack Street

Ms. Hanulek instructs the yoga program in the summertime at the Kiwanis Park tennis courts. She thinks it's amazing the township has no debt. She volunteers her services, and it costs the township nothing. She hoped that she could have a year-round program for residents, but knows that is not reasonable with space and weather. She stated Allegheny County is about to have a class action suit with assessments and people are going to struggle with a tax increase. She stated there is a standstill right now as the tax assessments are going to go up and people are already going up.

Kayla Detwiler - 114 Lilly drive

Ms. Detwiler thanked the Township for the survey and the meeting. Tonight. She stated she is a nurse looking at the health and wellbeing of the community, as is important to her. She encourages the Township to speak with the Pine Creek Youth Center. She is concerned for the garages and traffic going through the park will cause issues. She stated the young people she works with wish they had more gyms for pickup basketball games and other activities in the Township. She stated the Township could pair with non-profit groups that would like to use this center as well and help with costs.

Arch and Erin Autenreith - 430 Spencer Lane ext.

Mr. and Mrs. Autenreith, both Real Estate Agents, believe it would be nice to be creative to have a community center, and it would be an asset to the senior citizens of the area. They stated community centers are used during the day a lot in other areas for senior citizens to socialize. They think Shaler Township is a great area as it is close to everything, and it is affordable. **Upon inquiry from Tim, they stated sellers** do not ask about community centers. They stated they know homes in Shaler go very fast and believe a community center would be an asset to the area.

Sharon McRae - Head Librarian at the Shaler North Hills Library (SNHL)

Ms. McRae stated she loves reading the comments from the survey to see where the library fits into what the community wants to do. She stated if the library is moved, they would have to reinvent the financial wheel of everything that is done at the SNHL. She stated the staff of the library does what they can primarily with the parking, as they have limited parking. She stated the people that work at the library love the community and if they had more parking, more events and things could take place there. She stated there are so many more events they have to offer other than specifically with books like; car cruises, touch a truck, etc. She welcomed residents if they had a gift that they would love to show the world, the SNHL would be glad to help them explore that more and present it to the community.

Upon inquiry from a Resident, it was confirmed that the SNHL is on a bus route.

Terry Brown - Topaz Drive

Mr. Brown want to focus on the possibilities of a community center. He stated that maybe the Township could explore an outside opportunity like partnering with a YMCA or something similar. He provided an example, up in Kittanning, they have a nice facility, and they have a name on the building with whom they partnered with. He stated this building is a great place for seniors to use. He stated there is lazy river and water aerobics there for seniors. He expressed that he believes there are many different options the Township could pursue for a community center.

Architects Presentation

Matt Francis, Architect

Mr. Francis stated that the Township requested an evaluation of the existing Jeffery School Building and the feasibility of making the building a community center. He looked at the possibilities of what this community center could be. He stated it was the unbiased opinion of the existing building and the practicality for use and what the cost would be to incur and renovate the building. He stated there were more deficiencies in the building than attributes. He stated the age and function of the building would perhaps not be the best use for a renovation. The structure

has infiltrating water into the walls in the two additions. Also, the structure is a mason building which means the interior corridor supports the roof structure so the interior corridor walls are masonry bearing. He stated they are undersized classrooms and removing walls would be very limited and complicated because a lot of walls are needed for support. He stated the flat rubber roof was replaced in 1997 and it is out of warranty and leaking. He stated the windows are original to 1987 and the corrosion is starting to rust affecting the frame of the window leaking air, water and gaps of light coming in resulting in all windows needing to be replaced. He stated the plumbing and HVAC systems are outdated and the water service is leaking. He stated there are multiple ADA issues throughout the building. All floor tile is original and there is asbestos all over the building. Access around the building is very limited, so the building would need to be leveled and a new facility to be constructed. He stated the size of the building is oversized for what a community center would need to be as it is over 30,000 square feet and an average community center is usually half of that size. He stated the asbestos was tested in the building by an independent consultant and asbestos was found to be throughout the entire building.

Citizens Comments – time limit of 3 minutes per speaker

There were no more comments at this time.

Information Under Advisement

Mr. Shutter stated the Shaler Township Board of Commissioners and Township Management visited surrounding community centers recently to get a good idea of how they operate and what they include. He stated costs of everything are very high right now, making this an even more complicated decision for the Township.

Mr. Boyle stated the Board has a lot to digest and discuss and they will be back and have another public meeting to communicate with the public further.

Mr. Shutter thanked Cherry City for the use of their facility for this public meeting.

There being no further business, **the meeting be adjourned at 8:02 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy J. Rogers, Secretary
Seal