

June 5, 2018

The Franklin Township Supervisors met on the above date at the Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Company located at 2440 Fairyland Road. Township Officials present were Supervisors Jason Frey, Robin Cressley, Barbara Beltz, and Secretary Brenda Neeb. An attendance sheet listing all others present is attached to the Minute Book. Chairman Frey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Chairman, Jason Frey stated that the purpose of the special meeting was to discuss what options we have regarding the Christman Ballfield property and to hear the public's comments. Some of the options are purchasing the properties, or an intermunicipal agreement.

Public Comment Period

Rod Green was the first person to speak. Mr. Green stated he served as a Franklin Township Supervisor for eighteen (18) years. He said throughout his terms everything has always worked great with the FTAA and now one guy comes along and everything is different. Franklin Township helps to maintain Christman Ballfield and does not understand why they want FTAA to buy the property, when FTAA has said that they do not want to purchase the property and wants Franklin Township to own the property. He said the community needs to pull together because all that is happening now is we are dividing the community, Soccer, and FTAA. He feels the best interest for the Township is to own the fields.

David Bradley a Franklin Township resident began speaking on how most people tend to get emotional and have tunnel vision and lose sight of morality. He thinks that the fields are a morality issue and has become a test to see who will harm who and for what. He said the government is supposed to prevent harm and sacrifice for the larger good he used the saying there were three wolves and a sheep. The government needs to protect the sheep from the wolves. Local citizens offered to help FTAA purchase the field and in turn through social media criticized them. He judges them as hypocrites. Parents should pay for baseball, people lose homes through high taxes, FTAA if willing to donate and trade land for open space for those in Franklin Township willing to use taxpayer dollars. He said if Franklin Township chooses to own the fields they should ask for donations before they use taxpayer's funds. Mr. Bradley also stated the if Township would go through eminent domain while people are willing to sell it is "not unlike a playground bully". He said through his research he found comparisons on the property and the FTAA could purchase the property for \$5,000.00 per acre. He said a copy was given of the comparison.

Gloria Bowman a resident of Franklin Township and past school board member spoke about how the township and school board need to work together on an agreeable transfer to have a community park for the all to enjoy.

Ed Rarick a Franklin Township resident and a FTAA coach. He said people are not aware of how important it is to continue having this field and how it helps children develop into becoming a contributing adult in society, it helps to instill values. All these things make an organization, it isn't about money. He feels that whatever happens to Christman Ballfield it can be turned into great space.

Susan Deem a Franklin Township resident, stated she felt the Township should purchase the entire school and its properties. She said, there are many things the Township could do with the school such as having a recreation center, dinners, gym, and keeping it as green space. She said it is something to think about.

Llewellyn Gower a Franklin Township resident and past Little League coach spoke about when he started coaching there were sixty kids in the program. He went on to say one of the fields was dedicated to his son when he passed away, and another field was also dedicated to another young man who passed away. He said he would hate to see the fields go it would just break his heart.

Thomas Beltz- a Franklin Township resident and retired Chief of Police said as a police officer for over thirty (30) years he was there when the Little League was formed and how parents, citizens and the township all worked together to put the field together. We have an opioid and drug epidemic and you want to sell the fields, where are these kids supposed to go? He said the School Board needs to get their heads together and put their petty differences aside and support kids.

Ernie Heckman a Franklin Township resident said he enjoys going to the games, it gives him something to do. He feels Bradley is the big burden and that as a taxpayer he feels that \$7500.00 to maintain the field is okay with him. The fields need to be owned by Franklin Township.

Tom Zellner a Franklin Township resident and Lions club member has worked on many community projects. Franklin Township, the Little League, Lions and School District always worked great together. When working together as a community partnerships you can obtain grants. He said "Let's work together, without outside support we will fail.

Jennifer Chavanic said she has been involved as player, coach/ volunteer for a long time. She said we have to work together to save this property for the kids.

Wayne Wentz a resident of Franklin Township for sixty-seven years (67) and has been involved with the Franklin Township Little League for thirty-six (36) years. He said Christman Ballfield was named after a veteran. He said we have good people, good administration, and a great Little League, and we need to sit down and find a way to work this out together to keep the fields.

Robby Cressley a lifetime resident of Franklin Township and a current Township Supervisor. He suggested that we split the costs of subdividing and keep it as it has been. It is simple but effective.

Barbara Beltz- resident of Franklin Township and current Township Supervisor said she was glad for all of the support shown. She said her goal was to get an idea on how everyone feels.

Rod Green said with all of this bickering going on nothing is going to happen and we are all going to lose.

Gail Maholick a Franklin Township resident and current School board member said she would not have a problem with just Christman Ballfield but when the soccer field was added that made it a problem. She feels the school value will go down, and the soccer field needs to remain with the Elementary School's property.

Public Comment Period Cont'd

Discussion among the public began:

Audience members asked why divide soccer and baseball? Will that change your vote? Maholick responded "it might" and repeated her thoughts that the soccer field needs to stay with the school.

Jason Frey- Township resident and Franklin Township Supervisor's chairman said he feels that with or without the soccer fields it won't make a difference.

Darlene Gower- Township resident said that maybe the hospital will buy the school.

Gerald Moulthrop – a Franklin Township resident said he recommended to the Board of Supervisors to buy the school and its properties. The township could rent it out, and use it for many purposes. He said how important the Little League is to the kids and how it instills character, teaches them sportsmanship and if the community works together it will bring unity. He said someone once told him if only one (1) kid benefits from his coaching then he is one hundred (100) percent successful. Go with the change of times and keep this property for future generations.

David Bradley spoke again and expressed that he agrees the property needs to remain a baseball Field. He said FTAA does not want to own the fields because they have concerns on liability, trespassing, and grass mowing.

Kevin O'Donnell said in April and May they have listened to presentations and still would like the Township to own the property. He had did some surveys and found that in Carbon, Schuylkill, and Luzerne Counties eleven (11) ballfields are owned by the municipality, two (2) by the School District, two (2) privately owned, and two (2) by an association.

Someone spoke out and said the Township will be here forever the FTAA may go out of business. Buy the field.

David Bradley if you go by eminent domain then you still have to pay the fair market value.

Stacy Duerst a Franklin Township resident and past School Board member asked if the Township has the money to purchase the fields.

Supervisor Beltz responded yes definitely for the fields. The Supervisors did a tour of the elementary school and after seeing how much work and maintenance it would take to be able to use the school for anything and also the cost of maintaining the school it would cost too much.

Concerns were mentioned that if the township would offer \$55,000.00 and someone outbids that amount.

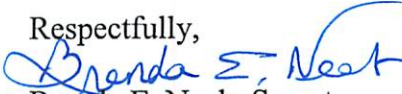
Public Comment Period Cont'd

Chairman Frey asked can't you just give us the intermunicipal agreement for one dollar (\$1.00)?

Rita Spinelli a township resident and current member of the school board said she wanted to explain the debt the school district has. They hold mortgages and it is no different then a homeowner having a mortgage and maintaining its household expenses. The school district has the same thing and is financially not in debt as Mr. Bradley wants everyone to think.

Jonathan Cleaver was asked if he would give the property to the Township. He said he cannot speak for the School Board but personally he thinks it is a no brainer. One concern he mentioned was if the Township is legally able to subdivide this property and it might need to be checked into by an attorney.

Jason Frey asked for a motion to adjourn. Barbara Beltz made a motion to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. Robin Cressley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully,

Brenda E. Neeb, Secretary