

# Upper Makefield residents challenge supervisors

## Meeting debates called "fighting over the crayons"

Stuart Lee Friedman

The Upper Makefield supervisors opened a meeting on March 18 on a defensive note, fielding public comments expressing displeasure with the tenor of debate that had developed into personal attacks.

Supervisor Chairman Tom Cino responded with acknowledgment. "No matter which side of the issue you're on, we really need to maintain a level of respect amongst each other. It's the only way we're going to get things done."

The comment follows previous meetings this year that were marked with heated debate that at one point had supervisor Mike

Tierney question Cino's integrity over being fair on a vote on a modified financial advisory committee. Cino admonished Tierney not to question the fairness of anyone on the board.

Resident Mary Lou Gaffney addressed the supervisors, "I respectfully ask the board to publicly denounce any effort to call any sitting member's character into question and to resolve to discharge their duties with dignity and mutual respect."

Gaffney also expressed concern with unsolicited e-mails, which she described as being "aimed at trashing the reputation of a sitting supervisor." She went on to describe the words contained in

the email, including misogyny, sexism and bullying, as "reprehensible and untrue."

Resident Ruth Bannon said she spoke with an arborist at Penn State regarding Supervisor Larry Breeden's suggestion that property owners be responsible for trimming their own trees around power lines rather than PECO. She gave examples of costs per residence of up to \$80,000, and her concerns of mudslides resulting from landscape destabilization. "We have to use common sense before we suggest something as ridiculous as removing these trees," she said.

"You're supposed to be a supervisor that's for all the people, not just some of the people," Bannon

said to Supervisor Larry Breeden. She said that she found Breeden's description of environmentalists as "greenies" to be derogatory. "Please don't be rude and insulting to the residents," she said. "We deserve more."

Referring to the meeting video on the township web site, she added, "When you watch that tape, it looks ugly." She chastised Tierney for the "embarrassing" things he said to Cino.

Referring to the financial advisory committee, which was pushed by Breeden and Tierney but modified by the rest of the supervisors, Bannon said, "We have wonderful, great, knowledgeable volunteers. And I guess you

want your friends in there." She said that the township lost six dedicated employees in the past four years, saying, "And you know why they left."

"None of us up here are friends. We all pretend to be friends," Tierney said. "It's back-stabbing all the way." He referred to "orchestrated displays" at the meetings and claimed he was "ambushed."

Comparing the supervisors to "kids," resident Steven Markham said, "There's a lot of resentment out there that the board is taking the time to fight among themselves over the crayons, instead of taking care of the people's business."

# Riparian grant application held for EAC discussion

Stuart Lee Friedman

Upper Makefield supervisors discussed an application for a riparian grant at their March 18 meeting. They decided that a meeting with the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) would take place before the supervisors vote on the application.

The riparian fund was established as part of a court settlement on behalf of residents and requires of the supervisors a unanimous 5-0 vote, rather than a simple majority.

The riparian fund was established in 2007 as part of a court settlement on behalf of residents

and requires of the supervisors a unanimous 5-0 vote for approval, rather than a simple majority.

Supervisor Larry Breeden expressed his concerns with the bidding process but felt that the process was ready to move forward. He said he would like to see a three-bid process by the homeowner.

Township solicitor Mary Eberle testified that the property owner was required to get three bids. While the supervisors were ready to move ahead, Supervisor Mike Tierney was not, questioning the design of the grant. Chair Thomas Cino reminded Tierney they only needed to proceed with an agree-

ment on process, and that the design of the proposal could be discussed at the next step.

Cino reviewed the concern, which involved a single applicant who was now ready to approach the board after taking a year to prepare.

Supervisor Mary Ryan said that it seemed Tierney wanted a comprehensive plan before advancing any further plans. But she said that the Environmental Advisory Council recommended a study.

"You don't need to have a study," Tierney said. He explained that they could simply have the problems addressed by engineers from the community who would

volunteer to work for the township pro bono.

Ryan said that a strong, focused request for proposals (RFP) was recommended by the EAC since many engineering factors were involved, requiring a watershed study.

Cino asked Tierney what he would require to hear the applicant and start the process.

Tierney argued that simply planting saplings along a stream was mismanagement on the part of the board and argued that the proposal design should be decided first.

Ryan said that the terms of the court settlement gave direction to

how the project would proceed. Supervisors Dan Rattigan and Cino both then asked Tierney what he wanted to do. Tierney agreed with a suggestion by Rattigan that he meet with the EAC and discuss the situation further with them.

Cathy Magliocchetti, vice chair of the EAC, said, "The EAC is resolute in that we do need a study in order to manage the \$3 million fund effectively." She recommended a watershed study and said neither volunteers nor in-house expertise was adequate to meet the challenge, which would likely require input from academia as well.

# Social work and weights and measures highlighted

## Commissioners approve contracts at monthly meeting

During its final business session at the Courthouse before heading out on the road for spring and summer meetings, the Bucks County Commissioners approved 24 contract resolutions on the morning of Wednesday, March 19.

The three-member board of Robert Loughery, chairman, Charles Martin and Diane Ellis-Marsaglia also issued a pair of proclamations in recognition of Social Work Month and Weights and Measures (March 24-28).

The majority of the agenda

items involved the Children & Youth Social Services Agency, as 10 contracts gained acceptance. Among them were a one-year, \$1.715 million contract renewal with Christ's Home for Children of Warminster for group home services, transitional living services, and a mother-baby program.

The commissioners also approved a contract with CSG Global of Conshohocken for delivery and installation of telephone voice system equipment and maintenance for the new Children & Youth offices in

Furlong. The contract runs through Jan. 14, 2017.

A one-year \$215,595 contract with K/S Consultants Inc. of Warrington to provide truancy prevention and diversion to youth was questioned by Martin and former commissioner Andrew Warren.

Children & Youth Executive Director Lynne Rainey explained that the program impacted 73 truant youngsters. After that discussion, Martin voted against the contract, which passed by 2-1. The board unanimously

approved a pair of one-year contracts for Labor Children's Services in Doylestown, an \$896,180 renewal to provide life skills and transitional support for moving out of the foster care system, and a \$450,000 agreement to provide intensive family services.

For the Family Service Association of Bucks County, the board approved a \$150,000 resolution to appropriate funds for housing and emergency shelter services.

Chief Clerk Lynn Bush report-

ed that Bucks County recently was one of 10 Pennsylvania counties to receive a state transportation grant intended to address driving congestion. The \$1.75 million allocation will be used to install traffic signals along Street Road (Route 132) in Bensalem Township and along the Newtown Bypass (Route 332) in Newtown Township.

The next commissioners' will take place at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 2, in the Tabors Children's Services headquarters.

# Flemington sees redevelopment as key to future

Demographic changes and redevelopment potential are creating significant opportunities for the Borough of Flemington — and now is the time to seize them.

That's the message Robert Shore, chairman of the Flemington Business Improvement District (BID), is bringing to residents, workers and shoppers as the BID plans ways to make downtown Flemington a more attractive place to live, work and enjoy recreational and cultural amenities. The BID has just released a new vision for redevelopment at six key locations in the borough.

"We've done the necessary studies, listened to our members, residents and the developer community," Shore said. "The message is clear that the demand exists and the time for change is now. We have a plan." Flemington must focus on attracting members of the "millennial" generation (roughly those born in the 1980s and 1990s), as well as "empty nesters" who are looking to live in walkable communities that boast housing with contemporary amenities and ready access to shopping, recreation and transportation, Shore said.

At a recent Flemington



Flemington BID saw an opportunity to buy a lighted sign and support borough police at the same time. The sign will be used by the police for emergencies or street closures. The police will house the unit and position the sign where it can be used most effectively to notify the public of planned events. Board messages are programmed via a hand-held device managed by BID office personnel. At the new sign are, FBID members, from left, Robert Shore, Bob Benjamin, Megan Jones-Holt, Karen Shankoff and Matt McPherson.

Planning Board and Council joint meeting, planner Tim Delorm of the TerraNoble Design Group, who is working for the BID, presented a strategic plan with pro-

posed development ideas for six sections of Flemington: Global Ag at the north end by Walter E. Foran Boulevard; the Daiboch property along Park Avenue;

Turntable Junction; the Union Hotel block, which includes property from Main to Spring streets and Chorister Place to Bloomfield Avenue; the Cut Glass property; and property along Fulper Road to Central Avenue.

More than 100 people in attendance viewed artists' renderings of what the locations could look like in the near future. Delorm assured those in attendance that these changes will provide millennials and empty-nesters with exactly what they're looking for — suitable housing and an exciting downtown business community to enjoy.

"It's time to transform Flemington to a bustling fun place to live for all ages — and that's our plan," Shore said. The new vision for downtown Flemington comes on the heels of a comprehensive report from the BID 18 months ago on demographics and the borough's need for redevelopment. In keeping with national trends, the report showed that millennials and empty-nesters are growing groups with surprisingly similar demands

when it comes to housing, transportation, recreation and culture.

Shore and others involved with the BID are confident that the new vision for downtown Flemington can be achieved by bringing in first-class retailers and amenities, making the borough a premier destination, as well as an attractive place to live. Getting people out on the streets, going from shop to shop and enjoying the downtown will create a cycle of growth, opportunity and, ultimately, prosperity.

"Feet on the street will attract the kind of stores we need in Flemington," Shore said. "Everyone talks about bringing quality stores like Trader Joe's and Starbucks. And everyone wants increased transportation opportunities including a bus stop on Main Street and a commuter rail system to New York City. We'd all like to see a performing arts center and an arts district in town, along with great restaurants and shops. We can have all of these things and more once we embrace the changes that are necessary."

# Cherry Blossom Festival set for Philadelphia

The Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia (JASGP) presents the Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival of Greater Philadelphia, April 2 to April 13. Dozens of family-friendly events are planned throughout the region. Without leaving home, Philadelphia-area residents can experience the best parts of Japan, including international performances, time-honored arts and craft and the colorful contemporary cultures of cosplay and anime.

The centerpiece event is Sakura Sunday on April 13 at the Fairmount Park Horticulture Center. The day long outdoor celebration of all things Japanese offers food, live music and dance performances, athletics, crafts and activities for all ages.

The festival opens with a new event — Karaoke Kickoff — and the final weekend features another new event, Sakura Under the Stars, an ohanami party beneath the blossoming cherry trees with



Dancers perform at a recent Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival of Greater Philadelphia. This year's festival, presented by the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia, takes place April 2 to April 13.

food, drink and entertainment. The Cherry Blossom 5K takes place on Saturday, April 12.

For event information, visit subaracherryblossom.org or call 215-790-3810.

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