

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS of NETHER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP – August 20, 2020

Virtual Meeting held via Zoom and shown on YouTube

A public meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Nether Providence Township was called to order at 7:00 PM on Thursday, August 20, 2020 via Zoom call and shown on YouTube.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioner Knapp
Commissioner O'Connor
Commissioner Cooper
Commissioner Molloy
Commissioner Garson
Commissioner McKenzie
Commissioner Spangler (arrived late)

ALSO PRESENT:

Dave Grady	Township Manager
Bob Scott	Township Solicitor
Darryl Dixon	Public Works Director

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Eric Townes- 614 Washington Avenue - Mr. Townes explained he is running the South Media Athletic Association's basketball league, and they are doing everything possible to be careful with the COVID risks, including masks, taking temperatures, and social distancing. Mr. Townes asked about an email he received from Mr. Knapp regarding the league shutting down for COVID, but Mr. Townes felt he was not given enough notice. Mr. Knapp clarified that he had received many concerns from people within the community about the league gathering, but at the time, he was not aware of the guidelines that Mr. Townes' league had in place. He also believed that Nether Providence Soccer and Nether Swarthmore Baseball would be stopping operations as well when he sent his email. He still expressed concerns about basketball playing, but he understands that children need an outlet for exercise. Mr. Knapp wanted to make sure that the players would continue to monitor for symptoms, wash hands, wear masks off the court, and take other preventative actions.

Michael Keller – 4 Strathmore Court – Mr. Keller provided a statement on behalf of the Board of Nether - Swarthmore Baseball, explaining the actions taken to protect the players, coaches, spectators, and umpires. He said they developed a COVID-19 plan following the guidelines from the State, which they published on their website and shared with registered families. He said 385 kids signed up this year. He noted that Governor Wolf issued a strong recommendation for youth sports to suspend play on August 6th, and Nether-Swarthmore Baseball followed the recommendation. However, he noted the league had since resumed play, following the guidance of medical experts. He said they are requiring all players to wear masks during games when their team is at bat and coaches will designate a team parent to monitor. There will be no tournament games played. He asked the Commissioners to vote in favor of allowing the league to play, with the exception of travel games.

Ms. McKenzie wanted to know if "Fall Ball" would be starting. Mr. Keller said no decision had been made yet. Mr. Molloy wanted to verify the Tournament teams were shut down, and Mr. Keller said they are not allowed to play at this time. Mr. Molloy wanted to make sure the field was accessible to Township kids first. Mr. Cooper asked who exactly is wearing masks. Mr. Keller said players are always wearing the masks, even the pitchers, but explained that it can be tough for the catchers because of the equipment. They are requiring that kids stay 6 feet apart, and lines are marked on the field to remind them to socially distance. Mr. Cooper thanked him for following precautions. Mr. Knapp asked when the season ends, and Mr. Keller said it would end the week of September 11th and said playoffs could go through the end of September.

Ms. McKenzie asked if this all could be re-assessed if the School District should change their plan or Gov. Wolf should offer new guidance. Mr. Keller agreed that the league would reconsider based on updated guidance.

Athletic Field Usage – Mr. Knapp said all future permits for parks or public utilities will be reviewed by the Board to avoid any confusion. Mr. Garson said he feels they should be approved if they are pledging to follow the State’s guidelines and comply with all of the requirements of the permits. Mr. Knapp feels the Board should be consistent with allowing events at parks, and the size of the event matters. Mr. Molloy wanted to know how many events we have requests for. Mr. Grady responded that there were two requests pending, which would require coordination with other permittees. He also noted there is a request for basketball at Sapovitz Park. He said the Board should discuss and he will coordinate with Mr. Townes so no interference will occur.

Mr. Dixon asked if the playgrounds and other parks equipment should be disinfected. Ms. McKenzie said no, but she said they should reassess if the situation gets worse.

The Board agreed to allow the organizations to continue with their activities, so long as there were no travel games being played with other communities. Mr. Molloy mentioned that they are distinguishing between outdoor and indoor play, and the Board’s guidelines only apply to outdoor play. Mr. Cooper agreed.

Other Business - Mr. Knapp said he will be on vacation the week of the August 27th Board meeting, so Mr. Garson will be leading that meeting. Mr. Knapp also noted that Commissioner Spangler is moving from the Township and a replacement will be needed.

Trash Hauler - Mr. Knapp mentioned two trash haulers have requested that their customers sign a three-year contract. His concern is that a resident could be stuck with the contract, even if the Township moves to a single-hauler. He noted he is disappointed that the haulers sent these letters especially without speaking to the township. He said the Board may or may not look at hiring a single trash hauler for the Township. Mr. Molloy mentioned the predatory practice the two trash haulers have taken by sending these letters. He wanted to note that he strongly disapproved of how they handled it. Ms. McKenzie said she was frustrated as well and mentioned possibly having a committee of residents discuss the idea of a single-hauler. She also suggested the idea of creating different zones where different haulers could bid. Mr. Knapp mentioned the Board is always concerned with small businesses and looks at these issues very thoughtfully.

Adjournment – Mr. Knapp noted the next meeting is the combined working and legislative session on August 27th.