CALL TO ORDER

President Martin called the December 1, 2021 Board of Commissioners regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. A moment of silence was observed, and The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all. Roll Call was taken by Mr. Fraser.

PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Martin noted receipt of a thank you card from Beth O’Mare, President of the Upper Allen Woman’s Club, for the Board’s passage of Resolution #1058, recognizing them on their 50th Anniversary. He also noted receipt of a thank you from Jeff Palm, Executive Director of the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce, for Upper Allen Township’s sponsorship of the 2021 Halloween parade.

President Martin noted that after the regular meeting, the Board will have Executive Session to discuss potential litigation and a personnel issue.

CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

President Martin asked for any comments or corrections to the Minutes of the November 3, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting. There were none, and Commissioner Cochran made a MOTION to approve the Minutes of the November 3, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting, SECONDED by Commissioner Anderson. The motion carried unanimously.

PRESIDENT’S RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Presentation of Evaluation of Buildings at 1215 McCormick Road by Doug Tilley of TKS Architects, Inc. – President Martin commented that the Township purchased 1215 McCormick Road and the Board has stated several times that they want to have a patient, slow, and deliberate process. He said the Township engaged Derck & Edson, a land planning consulting firm, and they went through a series of exams of the property. He said many residents participated in the initial input as to what we might do with the farm. Derck & Edson is still looking at the results of surveys, focus groups, open houses, etc. He continued that the Board engaged Doug Tilley, of TKS Architects, to examine the buildings at 1215 McCormick Road and make a determination on their condition, and
to look for items of past historic value. He noted that the Township’s website is currently under reconstruction due to a vendor mishap, so after the website is up we can post the presentation; in the meantime, he indicated that residents should contact the Township office for a copy. Finally, he said that after the presentation he will allow the audience to ask for items of verification and clarification, but noted that the Board is not interested in taking comments about the future use of the property tonight.

Mr. Tilley said he is Managing Principal and President of TKS Architects and has been engaged to evaluate the condition of the structures of the house and barn, primarily. He said it is not his role to make any decision on future use; he is just documenting existing conditions. He said he was asked to research the recorded history, physically tour the house and barn, document the plans of both buildings, photograph the existing conditions, evaluate any historic features, and prepare a presentation of his findings. He noted that the property is outside of the historic district, and added that when the Early Architecture in Upper Allen Township book was created, these facilities were not included. He said the property is made up of four parcels—two large parcels of 34 and 24 acres, a piece that extends to Route 114, and one that extends down to the Yellow Breeches Creek. He said there is a total of about 62 acres. Zoning for the area is low density residential, and lots have to be at least one acre to be developed.

Mr. Tilley continued that the original house from 1855 is a 4-bay German Georgian house and that is why there were originally two front doors. Reasons for that are thought to be for formal versus informal entrances, or for design/symmetry. He noted that people of that time were used to patterned symmetry, . More practically, he said one door was formal and entered a parlor, and the other entered into a mudroom or similar room. The 4-bay style evolved from a 5-bay Georgian floor plan, which had 4 bays plus a 5th in the middle.

Mr. Tilley displayed a series of slides depicting historical information about the property as well as the current state of the house and barn. The barn was built by William Scott in 1789 and a log home existed on the site prior to the construction of the house by Michael and Mary Lambert in 1855. Mr. Tilley displayed and explained the original floor plan and its similarity to other homes in the surrounding area. He documented the later additions to the original floor plan and explained changes that have been made over the years. On the exterior, this includes removal of the original front grand stairway and addition of a vestibule that obscures the original two front doors, as well as addition of a wooden deck. The house has three levels. The main level contains the living room, den, office, kitchen, vestibule, deck and main bedroom. The upper level contains a second floor to the main bedroom as well as three other bedrooms, a bathroom, and deck. The lower level contains a rec room, utility room, mechanical room, bathroom, sunroom, greenhouse, and storage.

Mr. Tilley pointed out the inconsistent window headers across the front of the house. Also noted were the sagging porches that were added later and not incorporated as part of the structure. The den addition includes a new chimney. Also noted was that corners of the building do not line up as additions were added. The vestibule addition is constructed of wood and vinyl siding, with aluminum windows and vinyl flooring, drywall walls, and hot water heat with no air conditioning, none of which are considered historic. The wood sills are rotted. Behind the vestibule, the two front doors are not the same. One appears to be an original door with original hardware and a stained-glass window, while the other appears to be of much newer construction with newer hardware.
The living room features plaster walls, hot water heat and no air conditioning, electric wire molding attached to the wall above the baseboard heat, wood flooring overlay, replacement windows, and a wood stove and cupboard that have replaced the original fireplace. A bulkhead in the room seems to indicate that there was a wall there at one time, making two rooms.

There was no indoor kitchen originally and the house does not have a dining room. The current kitchen is a very small galley style, with plaster and drywall walls, electric heat with no air conditioning, dated electric appliances, one duplex outlet, ceramic tile countertops and backsplash, ceramic tile flooring overlay, and a replacement window.

The den addition features wood stud construction, hardwood flooring, hot water heat and no air conditioning, “sticky stone” gas fireplace with added chimney, exposed wood vaulted ceiling, wood paneled walls, and an exposed original brick wall.

The office and bathroom features drywall and paneling on the walls, hardwood flooring overlay in the office, hot water heat and no air conditioning, ceramic tile in the bathroom. The original fireplace has been removed.

The main level master bedroom, features a two-story space with lots of stairs. Mr. Tilley believes this space was built around 1980, noting that it was not included with the house when the Early Architecture in Upper Allen Township book was published in 1976. Additional features include drywall and paneling wall construction, carpet, hot water heat, air conditioning (mini-split), and closets located upstairs from the main bedroom level. The master bathroom is 3’, 6” wide and features drywall and paneling wall construction, porcelain tile flooring, a ceramic tile shower, electric heat, and no air conditioning. The upper level of the master bedroom includes a loft-like area including a wall of closets.

The stairs and hallway in the original section of the house features stairs of 2’, 9” wide, a 3’, 3” wide hallway, drywall wall construction, carpet over wood flooring, hot water heat with no air conditioning, and a door to the exterior balcony/stairs. There is no connection between the master bedroom upper level and this level.

The rear bedroom is approximately 11’ x 12’ in size and features plaster and drywall walls, carpet over wood flooring, hot water heat and no air conditioning, electric wire molding attached to the walls above the baseboard heat, a side window filled in with shelving, a replacement window, and a 6’ high hollow core door.

The front south bedroom is approximately 14’, 7” x 11’ and features plaster and drywall walls, carpet over wood flooring, hot water heat, window air conditioning, electric wire molding attached to the wall above the baseboard heat, replacement windows, and a 6’ high hollow core door. Mr. Tilley noted numerous dead birds in this room.

The north front bedroom is approximately 14’, 7” x 11’ and features plaster and drywall walls, carpet over wood flooring, hot water heat with no air conditioning, electric wire molding attached to the wall above the baseboard heat, replacement windows, a 6’ four-panel, solid door with a “frame” where the hinges are attached to the wall rather than the wood frame. Mr. Tilley said this door may be original. This room has a moisture penetration issue.
The upper level bathroom features plaster and drywall walls, ceramic tile wainscot and shower, porcelain tile flooring, plastic laminate countertop, hot water heat and no air conditioning, “salmon” colored fixtures, a jetted tub, and replacement windows.

The lower level rec room features drywall wall construction, wood wainscot, wood ceiling, recesses lighting, carpet on concrete flooring, ceramic tile countertop, wood cabinetry, hot water heat with no air conditioning, a flue for a wood stove in the original chimney, and replacement windows. Mr. Tilley noted that this space has formerly been used as a day care space.

The sunroom and greenhouse feature drywall wall construction, wood wainscot, carpet on concrete with quarry tile, suspended ceiling with recessed lighting, hot water heat, air conditioning (mini-split), and aluminum windows.

The utility room features a utility sink and washer/dryer hookups, electrical panel with 200 amp capacity, oil fired boiler, and a 40-gallon hot water heater. The bathroom features drywall construction, porcelain tile flooring, drywall ceiling, and hot water heat with no air conditioning.

The storage room under the deck holds two oil tanks.

The attic space of the house features original plank flooring, a drywall ceiling, no heat or air conditioning, and a trust constructed of dimensional lumber at the south end supporting the roof, with an iron turnbuckle supporting the lower chord.

Mr. Tilley displayed examples of overlaid flooring throughout the house; for example, hardwood and ceramic tile over the original wood floors. Closets also demonstrate non-continuous flooring. Additional findings include water damage, moisture penetration, and black mold.

Mr. Tilley next discussed the barn, which he said pre-dates the house by about 30 years. He noted the original wrought iron hinges on the barn and the symmetry of the brick area on the north face of the barn. The east face features the original brick work, while the west face features newer materials inside and out. He said the barn is in magnificent condition for its 1825 build date, and he noted that the roof is in perfect, outstanding shape. The second floor of the barn features a change in flooring materials. There is plywood flooring on the west end, rough-sawn lumber on the middle section, and dimensional lumber on the east end. The dimensional lumber is fastened with wooden pegs even though it is a newer lumber. The west end of the barn was reconstructed with block walls and dimensional lumber, and Mr. Tilley speculated that the original silo collapsed and took out the original end of the barn, resulting in the need to construct a new block wall and dimensional lumber flooring. He noted the former silo location. The lower level of the barn features massive hand-hewn lumber timbers, still showing their original bark. Steel beams were added at some point for support.

Finally, Mr. Tilley addressed outside elements. The large riding ring and the round riding ring are overgrown and would have to be completely excavated and started over from scratch. The swimming pool is filled with plant material and trees.

President Martin complimented Mr. Tilley on his comprehensive report, noting that when actually going inside to look at the house and barn you get a much better feel for the structures than when just driving by. He agreed with the hypothesis that the silo fell over, and commented that if someone can verify what happened to that end of the barn, he will buy them a steak dinner.
Commissioner Anderson asked Mr. Tilley to explain the electric wire molding. He noted that rather than breaking into walls and running wire in the wall to an outlet, they run an aluminum strip with the wiring inside it along with plugs every 12 inches. It is all surface-mounted. Commissioner Anderson continued that the Township started hiring building inspectors in 1972. She questioned how they passed a 6-foot doorway. President Martin questioned when plywood came into vogue, and Mr. Tilley guessed around 1960.

Matt Taylor, of 900 McCormick Road, was in the audience. He rented the 1215 McCormick Road property several years ago while renovating the house he lives in now. He said it basically looked the same then, but didn’t have as much water damage. He agreed that there is not much of the original trim left but said there are one or two pieces that could be copied. He said all surfaces have been changed, and in his opinion, it is not worth saving. He said the layout is terrible, the additions are terrible, all additions leak where they meet the house, and the side porches don’t drain. He said it seems like if all the additions are torn off and the house gutted, then you would actually have something.

Janice Lynx, Executive Director of West Shore Historical Society, 2036 Sheepford Road, Mechanicsburg, said the State Historic Preservation Office has a system in place where interested parties can submit properties online for review to find out information on the property, and it may be helpful to the Board as they make their decision. She said the organization has noted how many historical properties are disappearing.

Jack Shambaugh, of 1236 McCormick Road since 1968, said the steel girders were added to the barn about 20 years ago. He said Jim Trout owned the property in the 60s, then Dave Stefani bought some of the ground in the 70s, and bought the whole farm around 1980, and that is when it became a horse farm. Regarding the block walls on the one end, he it could have been a wagon shed with doors for wagons to go in and out, with the hay loft over top.

Eric Fairchild, of 1224 McCormick Road, questioned whether a bad foundation could have been responsible for the silo to fall over, but Mr. Tilley said the foundation is still there and is still good. Mr. Fairchild questioned what is under the concrete block and how far they went down when it was rebuilt, but Mr. Tilley did not know. Mr. Fairchild said he has Mr. Stefani’s contact information and has previously talked to him about the farm house but not the barn. As for the 1970s addition, he said he has pictures of it himself, and said it is a very odd addition. He questioned whether the existing house could have been built over top of the William Scott cabin. Mr. Tilley said logistically, they would be living in the log house and building the new house. He said there is no evidence of any log construction in the house. He said it is a masonry facility. Commissioner Cochran commented that he thought the Scoot log cabin burned down. In looking at the cover of the Happy Yellow Breeches book, he said the house seems to be on the wrong side of the road. Commissioner Anderson said that rings bell with her too about the log house burning. Mr. Fairchild commented that this was a great presentation.

President Martin thanked Mr. Tilley and said he did a very good job. He said probably not before the holidays, but early next year we will get reports from Derck & Edson and by then he can guarantee we will have a functioning website to keep everyone informed.

Jo Ellen Bitzer, of 607 Keswick Court, said a member of this elected Board thinks it is ok to denigrate people in public on Facebook. She said it is totally unacceptable and said Commissioner Cochran had a problem when ABC News came to a recent open house on the 1215 McCormick Road.
Road property and Cumberland County Commissioner Foschi was there and was interviewed. He said Karen Overly Smith, Democratic candidate for Township Commissioner, was also there. She said he felt it necessary to denigrate them on Facebook. She read from a Facebook post in which Commissioner Cochran said “Yes, amazing that our Democrat County Commissioner and the failed Democrat candidate for Upper Allen Township Commissioner both just happened to be there when the TV cameras came, and they both ended up in the news. Strange coincidence?” She said he apologized to Ms. Smith but not Commissioner Foschi. Ms. Bitzer said Ms. Foschi spent 10 years on the Township’s Zoning Hearing Board and gave her time, and that is how he treats her. She said we should be acting first class in a First Class Township.

Commissioner Cochran said she is entitled to her opinion but regarding Commissioner Foschi, he said he finds it hard to accept that someone who has the ability to influence parks in Cumberland County does not. He said there are 976 acres of green space in Dauphin County, 1,700 acres in Lancaster County, and over 4,000 acres in York County, but she comes here and laments about the lack of green space, when she chooses not to make changes. He said if she would have identified herself as a citizen he would have been fine with it, but she identified herself as a Commissioner, and he takes offense when they turn to us to provide the green space and do nothing to help us. Ms. Bitzer said he could have taken it up with her in person and not on Facebook.

Karen Overly Smith, of 855 Oak Oval, said there is information on the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) website related to allocations for COVID relief. She said she saw that Upper Allen had been allocated about $1.06 million for May and June of 2021 and the next allocation of a similar amount will be 12 months later. She said allocations have five permitted uses—public health, negative economic impact for small businesses, replacement of Township revenue, pay for essential workers, and water/sewer/broadband improvements. She questioned the plan for it and whether there is a deadline to use the grant before it would have to be turned back. Mr. Fraser said the state distributes the funds, and Upper Allen has received the first half and will get the next half next year. He said there is no official plan for the funds yet. He said one item might be improvements to public buildings, noting that this building doesn’t have proper filtration. He said we are looking at sewer projects also. President Martin said we will spend the monies before any deadline, noting that we have several years to spend it. He said Board members have had very introductory discussions and have made no decisions yet. He said we may use the funds for something we might not otherwise do, like improving the HVAC system in the building. He said the bottom line is that we have not decided on use of the funds yet. Ms. Smith asked if the HVAC system complies with the uses allowed, and Commissioner Cochran said we are trying to establish that. He said the guidelines are not very clear. Mr. Fraser said currently the guidelines are 80 pages. He said we will line up projects and have them legally evaluated so they meet the requirements. Ms. Smith said DCED has the 5 opportunities online and they are easy to read. Mr. Fraser noted that management has reviewed those, but there are additional details that must be considered. He said we do have to spend it properly. In his experience with federal grants, he said this is similar and the categories are broad. He said we will assure we are doing it properly and to meet the intent of the program.

Commissioner Cochran noted that we have a belt filter press in the sewer plant that they don’t make any more, and we have been scavenging parts to fix it, and the modern version of that is a little over $1 million dollars because you have to take the roof off the building and take the old parts out and install the new. He said we are also talking about looking at doing an assessment of all Township buildings and whether there is something we should be looking at that we don’t know about that could be financed with some of this money. He said we want to see if there is a need there that we
could use this money for and not go to taxpayers for it. He added that the Board took a portion of it and paid COVID bonuses to our employees.
CONSENT AGENDA

There were no items for consideration.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Chief Parsons noted that as an accredited agency, they have a mock assessment every three years prior to the official launch where officials from around the state come and look at their operations ahead of time. He said that will be held next week. He said Officer Jory Harlan took it on and is doing a good job.

FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Chief Shumberger said Santa will go around the neighborhoods on December 11. He will publish the route on the Fire Department and Township websites.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE

ZONING HEARING BOARD (ZHB) HEARINGS FOR DECEMBER 9

There are no hearings scheduled.

HARB CASES FOR DECEMBER 21

There are no cases scheduled.

CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT WITH CHARTER HOMES FOR TATTERSALL DEVELOPMENT

This item is postponed to the December 15 meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Mrs. Boyer noted that the next Planning Commission meeting is December 27 at 7 p.m.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

There were no items for discussion.

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

There were no items for discussion.
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF C. S. DAVIDSON’S RATES FOR 2022

Mr. Reichard discussed the rate analysis he provided to the Board. He projected an overall rate increase of approximately 2.29% for the 2022 calendar year. The rate increase for Township projects may be in the range of 2.64% while the rate increase for subdivision and land development projects may be in the range of 1.28%. Although Vice President Castranio was absent from this meeting, President Martin said he talked with him and he indicated that he has no objection to the proposed rates.

Commissioner Cochran made a MOTION to accept the rates as presented, SECONDED by Commissioner Walter. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF 2022 HUMANE SOCIETY AGREEMENT

The Humane Society has submitted their proposal for 2022 Municipal Domestic Animal Protective Services for consideration. The agreement will work the same as in 2021, and Chief Parsons said he is happy with the service. He noted that a lot of the dogs found are posted on their website and claimed quickly, but for the few they do take over, they are satisfied with the service. Commissioner Cochran made a MOTION to approve the 2022 Humane Society Agreement, SECONDED by Commissioner Walter. The motion carried unanimously.

President Martin said he got a letter from a Meadowview resident regarding feral cats. The resident was concerned because their son was almost bitten. He said Mr. Fraser is working on this and we will get back to him. He said we have good success with dogs but feral cats are still a problem.

PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

CONSIDERATION TO BEGIN PHASE 1 SITE IMPROVEMENTS AT WINDING HILLS PARK NORTH

Mr. Reichard said C. S. Davidson was tasked with developing a site plan for improvements for the undeveloped remaining portion of Winding Hills Park North. He said they determined that the entire site should be brought up several feet. He said a large portion is considerably low and receives stormwater from upland areas. He said the area in question is several feet lower than the parking lot that was constructed recently. That parking lot will ultimately remain the access point for future field improvements, and he said it would be in our interest to start bringing in fill material to elevate the area. He noted that the topsoil is about 12” deep and we would want to remove the majority of that, which would be quite an undertaking. In talking with Mr. Fraser, they determined that there is an opportunity to advertise it as a fill site and start working with contractors to get material for free. He said the Public Improvements Committee concurs that the full Board needs to authorize them to proceed with some of the earth activity. He said they secured the NPDES permit for the site and can do it at any time. He questioned whether the Board is willing to disturb the area and work with local contractors to bring up the site. President Martin said he applauds Mr. Reichard for taking up the topsoil and distributing it. Mr. Reichard said we hope we can have a contractor remove the topsoil in exchange for fill because we don’t have a place to stockpile it. Mr. Fraser said he would take it if we had a place to stockpile it. President Martin suggested 1215 McCormick Road, but Mr. Fraser noted that there is no upper driveway so we don’t have access.
Martin commented that by matter of principle, he hates to see topsoil leave. Mr. Reichard said he thinks there’s an opportunity to keep a portion of it but questioned where we could store it. He said the Public Improvements Committee didn’t see an opportunity to store that much. There is potentially a little room at the quarry site but he said he hates to put it there after all the leveling work that was just done there. President Martin said 1215 McCormick would be an ideal place as we develop it but the access issue is unfortunate. Mr. Reichard said the permitting we have in place did incorporate an area to stockpile some material, so depending on how things end up in spring we may have an opportunity to take some.

Commissioner Cochran made a MOTION to approve beginning the Phase 1 Site Improvements at Winding Hills Park North, SECONDED by Commissioner Anderson. The motion carried unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS

TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE UPDATE

There was no discussion.

CAPITAL REGION COG UPDATE

President Martin noted that the annual dinner is scheduled for January 17, 2022 at the Central Hotel by Union Deposit. Reception is at 5:30 and dinner is at 6:30. Board members were asked to make their food choices. He said he does not know who the speaker is yet.

MUNICIPAL ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

There was no meeting.

PA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONERS (PSATC) UPDATE

Commissioner Anderson said there will be an Executive Board meeting in January and she will know a little bit more about some of the things they will have to lobby for at the House and Senate.

SOLICITOR UPDATE

There was nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

President Martin thanked the residents for coming out and listening to the presentation on 1215 McCormick Road. He said it is heartwarming that they all stayed until the end of the meeting.

Regarding the Township’s website, Commissioner Cochran noted that our website host was a small company and the owner had a behavioral health incident and thought a foreign government was trying to get our data, and locked us out of our own website. He said he was arrested and released, and then when he got out he shut down the websites of all his clients. He had an interaction with Police and was incarcerated. He said we have been struggling to get our data back and get our website back online. Mr. Fraser said total downtime was 2.5 weeks from notification of the issue. Commissioner Cochran said this incident was not something we ever anticipated and was hard to
believe. He said we are going with a larger organization now and included some backups in place to keep this from ever happening again. He said the host in question also had control of our Facebook page and it took us awhile to get that control back, but that’s why we weren’t able to post to the website. President Martin said staff responded well and assured everyone that we didn’t lose data and will be able to retain all that we had before, and hopefully will have a new and improved website.

President Martin noted that we received three proposals to in response to Mrs. Palmer’s RFP for a review of Township facilities, and staff is looking at them. He said they will be discussed at the next Administrative Committee meeting. He said he is pleased to get three bona fide responses.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Martin recessed the meeting at 8:28 p.m. for an Executive Session on potential litigation and personnel issues.

ADJOURNMENT

President Martin continued and adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m., with no further actions taken.