

**TOWNSHIP OF BYRAM
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 30, 2024
PUBLIC HEARING – 7:30 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER –Mayor Rubenstein called the meeting to order.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Both adequate and electronic notice of the meeting has been provided, specifying the time, place. In addition, a copy of this notice is available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk, posted on the main door, the bulletin board of the Municipal Building, on the Township website at: https://www.byramtwp.org/index.php/town_hall/township_council, and has been forwarded to those persons requesting notice.

ROLL CALL OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL –Councilwoman Franco, here; Councilman Gallagher, here; Councilman Proctor, here; Councilman Roseff, here; Mayor Rubenstein, here. Also present was Township Manager Joseph Sabatini, Attorney Tom Collins and Township Clerk, Cynthia Church

FLAG SALUTE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Proctor to approve the agenda.

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

PUBLIC HEARING ON IMPROVEMENTS AT C.O. JOHNSON PARK PLAYGROUND – CIP

Mayor Rubenstein stated that the purpose of this meeting is to have a public hearing on the proposed changes to the CO Johnson Park Playground. They have been in the process for the last two weeks putting together what is needed for the grant, part of the grant application set forth by the DEP and Green Acres is to have a public hearing to allow the public to make a statement or ask questions regarding the project.

Mr. Sabatini advised that all the information on this project has been posted on the township website, including the full application package. The minutes of tonight’s meeting will be adopted at the next scheduled council meeting along with a resolution of support to submit with the application, which will become part of the final grant application package. As part of that package there is a concept plan, cost estimate and an environmental impact assessment. This is a grant application for municipalities for 2024. The grant application and package are due by midnight February 7, 2024. There has been a lot of work that has gone into the preparation of the grant and thanked the Deputy Manager, Phil Crosson, Superintendent of Public Works, Mike Orgera and Recreation Director, Deb Armeno. A Completely Inclusive Playground goes beyond the typical ADA requirements for a playground which has been defined by Jakes Law. The key component of a CIP is to have unitary surface such as poured rubberized surface, a minimum of 20% square footage of shaded surface, it needs to be enclosed, and needs to have a quiet play area. Mr. Sabatini worked with a vendor who has experience designing CIP playgrounds and worked with the township engineer on access to the park. The cost estimate of this project is divided into construction costs that includes playground equipment, installation, surface, installation, site clearing prep and demolition, disposal, curbing, fencing, asphalt ADA compliant path at \$528,023.48. Included in this are also construction contingency costs of 10% that is an additional \$52,832.95. The total cost of the project is \$618,825.83. If the grant is awarded, they will receive up to 75% (\$464,119.37). The remaining would come out of the Operating Budget or the Open Space Trust Fund to be defined by the Mayor and Council.

Motion Councilwoman Franco second Councilman Proctor to give floor to the public.

Deb Armeno – Recreation Director – said that she is excited about the project for not only the kids, but for also grandparents, and parents of disabled children.

Courtney Gallagher – Little Paint Way - Asked where the playground is going to be. Mayor Rubenstein said it will be in the same footprint it is now. She is excited about the project.

David Pelletier – Frenches Grove Road - Thanked everyone involved in this project, and asked what he can do to help support the project. Mayor Rubenstein said that coming to the meeting, visiting the township website, and completing a letter of support by the end of the week is helpful. Mr. Pelletier feels that this is a great idea.

Jacueline Richards – In full support of the project and has already submitted a letter of support. Hopes to get the grant and get started on the project.

Dina Trunzo – Lake Drive – Is in complete support of the project as a certified exposure therapist, working over 34 years in community parks and recreation, this is a project that near and dear to her heart, not only because she has a sibling with a disability, but because she is a professional in the field. A playground is the #1 place where children with disabilities

can form friendships and socialize. It is the starting point for building a more inclusive community. Ms. Trunzo clarified what is meant by a “language board”, it is a communication board that allows someone with limited speech to communicate. It needs to be built around what the kids are using and is willing to work with the Recreation Director and the Speech Therapist at the school. Needs to be made to what the community needs are. It is a very important component of the process.

Councilman Gallagher asked Dina her opinion on the road noise. Dina did not see it as an issue as that is what the quiet areas are for.

Anneliese DeMagistris – North Shore Road – Loves the idea of the project. Has children with disabilities in her day care center. The playground will bring everyone together.

Councilwoman Franco thinks this is a great opportunity for our community and inviting children from neighboring towns to enjoy it as well. Would be one of the only ones in Sussex County and will draw a lot of attention to Byram Township.

Councilman Gallagher – Thinks this will be a great opportunity for families. The only concern that he has been asked about is road noise, however, he does not think it will be an issue as it is not now.

Councilman Proctor – Asked about the statistics that was used for 17 disabled children in the township. Mr. Sabatini said that it was census data that was provided to the township.

Councilman Roseff – asked why they went with the poured surface rather than the tiles. Mr. Sabatini said for maintenance purposes, they received guidance from experts, the vendor and the Superintendent of Public Works who has had experience with tiles that require more maintenance and cost more.

Councilwoman Franco asked about the time frame for availability of supplies, Mr. Sabatini said around the beginning of July for the Ordinance introduction with possible installation by March of 2025.

Mr. Roseff asked about the durability of the surface and if it will be an issue. Mr. Sabatini said there is a possibility of damage, but there is a maintenance plan.

AJ Agnor – Very Supportive of the playground as he has two children that play there often. Asked if the council were confident in getting the grant and will they get the playground regardless.


Mayor Rubenstein – Feels confident they will get something from the grant and are willing to do what they can to get the playground complete.

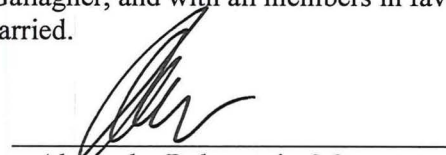
Mr. Sabatini said this is not just for Byram, but for surrounding communities as well. He is very hopeful in getting the grant as there are no CIP playgrounds in Sussex County at this time.

Motion by Councilwoman Franco, Seconded by Councilman Gallagher to close to the public.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Gallagher, and with all members in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. All members were in favor. Motion carried.


Cynthia Church, RMC
Township Clerk


Alexander Rubenstein, Mayor