

Franklin Township Trustees
Tuesday, May 27, 2025
Regular Meeting Minutes

At 7:00pm Chairperson Kellie Kapusta called the meeting to order. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved, with a correction made to a public comment section, by a motion made by Glenn Russell; 2nd Scott Swan. Roll call votes: Mr. Russell – yes, Mr. Swan – yes, Mrs. Kapusta – yes. Mrs. Kapusta explained that Mr. Swan would be very limited in participating verbally in tonight's discussions due to a medical issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mark Cox – property owner of a fishing lot (#124) on North Blvd. – addressed the trustees with a request to allow him access to his landlocked parcel. Mr. Cox contacted the road supervisor with a request to have the road department install (at his own personal expense) a culvert on North Blvd. The road superintendent had the crew complete the work and Mr. Cox was billed for the materials. It was not known at the time of installation that there is a paper road, township owned property, that is what prohibits Mr. Cox's access to his property. Mr. Cox, assuming he now had the right to clear the area so that he could access his fishing lot, cleared property that doesn't belong to him. He spelled out what he wants to do with the property – place a picnic table and gravel a parking area on his lot, a gravel driveway (across township property), plantings surrounding the area to conceal his property as much as possible and restore the area visible from the street to as close to original as possible. Mr. Cox is asking the trustees to allow him access from township property onto his own.
- Romi Fox – 1559 North Blvd. – questioned why the culvert was put in on North Blvd in the first place and expressed concerns about what precedent such approval would set for the other landlocked properties around that area.
- Terry Cessna – 1573 South Blvd. – is also an owner of a landlocked fishing lot adjacent to Mr. Cox's lot. He questioned the setting of a precedent also, asking if he would be granted access to his lot located on South Blvd through the same access point as Mr. Cox. And questioned whether or not the owners of the lot directly "next door" to Mr. Cox (the Goldthwaits) would be granted the same.
- Jill Grimm – 1509 Merrill – added that the Twin Lakes Association has no jurisdiction over private property and there is nothing in their Deed Owners Association bylaws that address this issue.

Mr. Swan stated first, that each request made by residents are considered on a case by case basis. Granting a request, if approved by the board, does not mean every request, whether similar or not, would be approved after all is taken into consideration. Mr. Russell responded that he has already reached out to Tom McCarty at the prosecutor's office for a legal opinion on what recourse the township has, what options are legally available to us, and what might be the best way to proceed. He is waiting for a response. Following some discussion among residents in the audience, Mrs. Kapusta stated for the record, and to Mr. Cox, that residents sharing concerns about his request are not doing so out of mean spiritedness; they are just looking out for their investments as property owners in the same association. Joe Ciccozzi asked if vacating the road would be an option and Mr. Russell responded that it is an option but he would not necessarily support the approval of giving away township property. Due to the proximity of where the line would be split in this case wouldn't resolve the situation anyway. Mr. Russell suggested tabling the issue for now as we await communication for the prosecutor's office. Mr. Ciccozzi has contact information for Mr. Cox and will make it available to the trustees to keep him informed about, as well as neighbors, as to when a decision might be made on this request.

- Anne Boyles – 1521 Merrill – as president of the TLA asked if there were any other concerns from neighbors in attendance that could be better addressed here in this setting or later at an association meeting so that all property owners can work collectively to come to a reasonable solution. No new concerns were shared.
- Mike Bowerman – of Parkside Church on Rhodes Road – introduced himself to the board of trustees as a new neighbor in Franklin Township. He hopes to be holding services in the church very soon.
- John Cameron – 641 Avon Drive, Aurora – is the new pastor and states he is glad to be a part of this community. He is a former ice hockey player (at the KSU ice arena) and happy to be back in the area.
- Carol Dorscher – 65089 Westshore – asked about an update on the drainage and water runoff issues she faces on her property. Mr. Akerley explained that he does have some solutions that he feels will help with some resolution but reminded her that the township cannot legally perform work on private property. Glenn Russell and Mrs. Kapusta both elaborated by stating that Eric Long, the Portage County Storm Water Engineer, explained at a

recently attend meeting that property owners are not exempt from accepting water that flows onto their properties. Residents can then address how best to handle the water coming onto their property – without directly diverting it onto someone else’s land or aimed at a neighbor’s structure. John Dorscher, of the same resident, made some suggestions regarding an existing culvert at Walton/Westshore.

- Austin Lesak – 124 Wanda Court – thanked Mr. Akerley and the road crew for the installation of the No Parking signs in Germain Reserve. He also asked for help in contacting someone at Tinker’s Creek Watershed Partnerships.

ROAD REPORT

Submitted as written by Dave Akerley and is on file at town hall as part of the official record. Additionally, he submitted a quote from Daniels Fence to close in the pickleball courts at Phillips Park in the amount of \$28,700.00. Scott Swan made a motion to approve the installation of the fence as quoted; 2nd Glenn Russell. Roll call votes Mr. Russell – yes, Mr. Swan – yes, Mrs. Kapusta – yes.

ZONING REPORT

Submitted as written by Joe Ciccozzi and is on file at town hall as part of the official record. Additionally, there was discussion regarding snipe signs conveying messages about DEI (Diversity Equity and Inclusion). Mr. Ciccozzi is of the opinion that they do not qualify as political signs and wanted to take them down when seen in the township. The trustees, after discussing the issue, stated the signs should be left alone. They are viewed as political statements and it is important Franklin Township and its officials remain neutral on political issues. Mr. Russell also asked Mr. Ciccozzi to follow up on a fence on Ravenna Road that was to be moved due to its noncompliance with our zoning code. The BZA ruled earlier that the fence be moved back. Part of it is done but part remains noncompliant. Mr. Ciccozzi will follow up. Mr. Russell then stated for the record that he is mindful that more often residents are asking forgiveness rather than permission when it comes to complying with zoning code regarding fences, accessory structures, permitted uses, etc. He would like to see residents held accountable for doing their due diligence first when considering changes to their properties to make sure they are within guidelines.

FIRE UPDATE

Richard Smith reported that there was a hazmat spill at Schneller that was handled very efficiently. The spill was cleaned up the same day it happened and was contained to that specific area. The response teams worked effectively and there was no EPA involvement. Also, Glenn Russell added that he met with an electrician at Brady Lake Park to ask for a quote to get electricity at the parks to assist with installation of the AEDs. Mr. Smith then reported that a resident at 228 Judson Road frequently burns fires larger than allowed by guidelines. Mr. Smith will continue to monitor the situation.

OLD BUSINESS

- The 2025 Memorial Day Parade was held May 26, 2025. Franklin Township had two plow trucks in the parade with children/grandchildren of township employees throwing candy from one truck and Trustee Kellie Kapusta throwing candy from the other. Thank you to Adam Boron and Mike Middleton, road crew employees, for driving the trucks. It was great to see Franklin Township represented!

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2025-11 is a resolution approving the county engineer’s schedule for advertising and bidding for the OPWC Hudson Road Project. Bids will be opened at the June 24th meeting. Kellie Kapusta motioned to approve the resolution; 2nd Scott Swan. Roll call votes Mr. Russell – yes, Mr. Swan – yes, Mrs. Kapusta – yes.

FINANCES

Submitted by Lisé Russell and is on file at town hall as part of the official record. Additionally, payment of bills, warrants #26584 through #26599, including payment vouchers, and totaling \$242,126.14 was approved by a motion made by Glenn Russell; 2nd Scott Swan. Roll call votes Mr. Russell – yes, Mr. Swan – yes, Mrs. Kapusta – yes.

At 8:20pm a motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Scott Swan; 2nd Glenn Russell. Roll call votes Mr. Russell – yes, Mr. Swan – yes, Mrs. Kapusta – yes.

Date _____ Fiscal Officer _____

Chairperson _____