

Franklin Township Trustees
Tuesday, February 25, 2025
Regular Meeting Minutes

At 7:00pm Chairperson Kellie Kapusta called the meeting to order. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved by a motion made by Scott Swan; 2nd Glenn Russell. Votes – Mr. Russell – yes, Mr. Swan – yes, Mrs. Kapusta – yes. The motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- John Avouris – 5806 Horning Road – addressed the board of trustees and others in attendance to contact their state representative voicing concerns over cuts in funding directly related to higher education and research in light of Franklin Township’s close proximity to and relationship with Kent State University. The trustees thanked Mr. Avouris for his comments.
- Christine Craycroft – Portage Parks Executive Director – addressed the board of trustees to update them on projects upcoming for the district within the township. While the bridge located on Ravenna Road at the Towner’s Woods Park entrance is still closed and work dates still undetermined, the parks district plans to do some work at Towner’s Woods including separating the trail on the east side of the bridge and rerouting the PORTAGE to behind the Brady Tower to separate the trail from parking lot traffic; they will reduce the number of parking spaces and add walkways. The district also plans improvements to Brady tower and utilizing it for education of the railroad and park history and possibly new restrooms and enhanced greenspace. Ms. Craycroft also asked for a letter of support from the trustees in the park district’s efforts to secure funding for the expansion of the Franklin Connection. Plans are underway to secure land needed from the Norfolk Southern Railroad; and connections made to the Portage Hike and Bike Trail, Cleveland Metroparks Emerald Necklace Trail System, and the Summit Metroparks’ Hike and Bike Trail all the way to the Towpath. Davey Tree has expressed an interest in assisting by providing access for hikers/bikers from their SEED Campus.

ZONING REPORT

Submitted as written by Joe Ciccozzi and is on file at the township office as part of the official record. Additionally, Mr. Ciccozzi reported that the newly appointed alternate representative for Franklin Township to the Portage County Regional Planning Committee, Greg Huck, attended the most recent PCRPC meeting with Mr. Ciccozzi as an introduction. Mr. Huck will also attend the March 12th meeting.

ROAD REPORT

Submitted as written by Dave Akerley and is on file at the township office as part of the official record. As Mr. Akerley was excused from tonight’s meeting, there was no further discussion and the report was accepted as written.

FIRE UPDATE

Richard Smith reported that the new warning system siren on Ravenna Road was installed on the pole today. New batteries will be purchased and as soon as installed the system will be tested. Mr. Russell noted that residents of the area should be informed of the test prior to it being performed due to the siren being silent for so long that residents could become concerned. Mr. Smith will inform the township administrator the date and time of testing and Jenny August will post the notice on the website. Also, Coleman Health Services continues to work on repairing their alarm panel and Pebblebrook Apartments continues to work on an alarm issue they are having in one of their buildings.

OLD BUSINESS

- Previously discussed land parcels on Ravenna Road that were once owned by Franklin Township, transferred to the Portage County Commissioners for use as what was to be the Brady Lake Water Treatment Plant Project, and now in need of reverting back to the township per an agreement dated back in 1979 are still being researched by the county commissioner’s office staff. We are awaiting a status update.

- Discussion about possible financial support for the City of Kent’s upcoming purchase of a \$2million+ ladder truck was tabled for the time being. As the township is not sure yet what the financial commitment will be to complete Hudson Road and address further road resurfacing needs in 2025 and 2026 the trustees have opted to wait until we have a clearer picture in the coming weeks of what those needs will be.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Swan provided a status update on the Franklin Township/Sugar Bush Knolls JEDD Committee progress. The purpose for establishing the committee was twofold – 1) to generate revenue and 2) to protect the ST RT 43 north corridor from annexation attempts anticipated from the City of Kent. Since it’s inception, through research, the committee has learned that there is no protection from annexation if the property in question is located in a JEDD. Additionally, the committee has struggled to derive incentives for businesses to become members of a JEDD, thus assessing an income tax on their employees. The infrastructure is such in that area that tie ins to county or city water or sewer do not currently exist and would be very expensive to offer. The location makes it difficult to offer incentives. The committee will meet again in March and make a more definitive decision about whether or not to proceed at this time or revisit the idea at a later date. Mrs. Kapusta thanked Mr. Swan for his time and energy devoted to the committee and his efforts on the township’s behalf, Mr. Russell agreed.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Richard Smith informed the trustees that as officials of an entity that is a member of the Northeast Ohio Fire Prevention Agency they are invited to attend the annual NEOFPA meeting on March 3, 2025 at the Independence City Center to hear the state fire marshal and his staff speak. Mr. Smith will attend.
- Mr. Russell asked Mrs. Kapusta if there was an update of any kind on the survey conducted in 2023 in areas of Brady Lake in the hopes of qualifying for infrastructure updates. Mrs. Kapusta had no update at this time but expects to speak with someone at PCRPC soon and hopes to have an update for the next meeting. Additionally, Mr. Russell reported speaking with the county engineer’s office about a damaged guardrail at Diagonal Road and SR 43 and was told ODOT has been contacted.

FINANCE REPORT

Submitted by Lisé Russell and is on file at the township office as part of the official record. Additionally, payment of bills, warrants #26524 through 26532, including payment vouchers totaling \$51,916.49 was approved by a motion made by Scott Swan; 2nd Glenn Russell. Votes – Mr. Russell – yes, Mr. Swan – yes, Mrs. Kapusta – yes. The motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:00pm the meeting was adjourned by a motion made by Scott Swan; 2nd Glenn Russell. Votes – Mr. Russell – yes, Mr. Swan – yes, Mrs. Kapusta – yes. The motion carried.

Date _____ Fiscal Officer _____

Chairperson _____