
MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP PUBLIC HEARING

APRIL 23, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Elected officials present were: Mr. Phil Beck, Mr. Kenneth Bryant, Mrs. Jodie Leis, and Ms. Carol Sims.

Also present: Brian Elliff - Township Administrator; Bill Pitman - Director of Public Works.

The purpose of the Public Hearing was to receive public comment on a proposed JEDZ district in Symmes Township.

MR. ELLIFF provided a Powerpoint presentation on information regarding the need for additional revenue and explained the proposed JEDZ.

MRS. LEIS thanked Mr. Elliff for this presentation and opened the hearing for public comments.

TOM GOILA, 8500 GLENDALE MILFORD (45111) - Advised he was the CFO of AIM located in Symmes Township. Mr. Goila stated AIM is currently building a new facility in Miamiville and there are plans to expand the Camp Dennison facility. Mr. Goila further stated that if the JEDZ is passed, AIM will re-locate all its employees to the Miamiville facility. Being located in a community with no income tax is an advantage.

KAREN DIEHL, 10092 LINCOLN (45111) - Expressed concern regarding the information in tonight's presentation. The Township should look at cutting expenditures rather than increasing revenue. There is no JEDZ plan in existence. It appears this is a short term problem and the Board's solution is a very long term plan.

GAIL TRICKEY, 7879 CAMP RD (45111) - Questioned how long the Township was aware of the tax cuts and what does the General Fund cover.

MR. ELLIFF stated the revenue cuts have been occurring since 2009. The General Fund can be used for any expenses and it covers administrative and facility costs. In the past, the General Fund was used to cover any shortfall in other funds.

MRS. TRICKEY stated residents recently approved a continuous Park Levy and all park expenses are being covered. Residents have always approved any levy for Safety Services and it appears there will be funds to cover these expenses. Therefore, the need reflected in the presentation is not a true statement. Mrs. Tricky questioned how much money the City of Milford will receive.

MR. ELLIFF advised the Township is required to partner with a municipal entity in order to collect an income tax. The proposed split is 92/8 is a very good rate.

JUDY HAVILL, 9976 LINCOLN RD (45111) - Stated she understood the intent of this legislation to allow Township to link up with another entity for economic development which would benefit those communities. It appears this proposed JEDZ is just a way to fill the void in revenue. The Township has always been conservative in its spending and services are taken out of levies and not the general fund. This just appears to be a back door attempt to increase revenue. It is important not to have an income tax, especially since there is no actual economic development plan. Mrs. Havill questioned if businesses will be willing to re-locate to Symmes Township if there is an income tax.

D'ARCY HAVILL, 9976 LINCOLN RD (45111) - Questioned who would be affected with this income tax.

MR. ELLIFF explained it would be both an income tax on employees as well as a business tax.

CAROL SUTTER, 11966 HARBORTOWN (45249) - Questioned if there would be any recourse by voters to end this JEDZ and how is the income tax applied.

MR. ELLIFF stated there is no process to end the JEDZ. The term is by the contract which is fifty years and then one hundred years renewable. The tax would be on any business and employees within the designated JEDZ zones. The Township's contract provides that should there be a change in State revenue, the Board could elect to change or end the district.

MRS. SUTTER questioned if there are any negatives to this proposal.

MR. ELLIFF stated some businesses do not feel there is any impact; however, there was comment tonight that it would. It is important to some and no so important to others.

ERIC DIEHL, 10072 LINCOLN (45111) - Questioned when the Board will be making a decision on the proposed JEDZ.

MR. ELLIFF noted there is a special meeting scheduled for tonight after this hearing at which time the Board will be discussing the issue.

MR. DIEHL stated he does not understand why the Board would move forward with the possibility of losing existing businesses because of this income tax proposal. Mr. Diehl questioned the status of pending state JEDZ legislation.

MR. BECK stated revision to the language is being considered.

MR. DIEHL stated the purpose of this new legislation is to end JEDZs since this program has been abused. It appears the Township is moving ahead with its proposed JEDZ to beat the deadline to place on the ballot.

MIKE HOWELL, 7810 CLEMENT (45111) - Questioned how many in the Township would be affected by this income tax and the average income of those employees who will have to pay the tax.

MR. ELLIFF stated there has been a revenue analysis and it appears there would be approximately 8,000 residents. The analysis did not look at actual wages, but at the type of business.

MR. HOWELL stated the majority of employees who would be affected are those in low-paying jobs. Mr. Howell questioned how many levy mills would be needed to replace this lost revenue.

MR. ELLIFF stated it would be approximately 3.5 mil levy.

SKIP THOLE, 10440 BRENTMOOR (45249) - Advised he was the owner of Skip's Bagel located in the Township. Mr. Thole stated he agreed with the comments tonight and is not sure if there is a solution to the problem and not convinced the Board has looked at all alternatives. There should be more discussion and review before a decision is made. Mr. Thole questioned what the Board will do if the proposed JEDZ is not passed.

MRS. LEIS stated the Board would need to look at property tax; however, selling park property will not be an option. There are limited options available to the Township in order to reduce expenditures.

DOUG RICH, 8868 HUMPHREY (45242) - Expressed concern regarding the excessive length of the contract and questioned why the City of Milford is being considered as the partner and why the resolution is being passed as an emergency.

MR. ELLIFF advised the City of Milford partners with other townships and therefore has experience in administrating a JEDZ.

JUDY HAVILL, 9976 LINCOLN (45111) - Stated that any future presentations should not include safety, parks and roads as there are levies to support these areas and are not in jeopardy. It is clearly the General Fund and voters need to understand what is paid from the General Fund.

KAREN DIEHL, 10072 LINCOLN (45111) - Questioned why the resolution is being considered an emergency and what is the status of the resident rebate which was previously discussed.

MR. ELLIFF advised the terms of the resolution states the reason for the emergency.

MRS. DIEHL stated she felt adoption as an emergency provides less time for residents to review. Mrs. Diehl further stated she felt there was very little communication to residents regarding this public hearing.

MRS. LEIS advised Sycamore Township currently has a rebate process and Symmes Township is still looking at how this works.

MR. BRYANT stated he wanted to listen tonight and to hear comments from residents.

MR. BECK stated this is a lean-run Township. The Board is proud of its safety services, roads, parks and cemeteries. The Township needs to generate income and that happens with either levies or a JEDZ.

MR. BRYANT stated it is the Board's responsibility to make residents aware of issues and to receive comments before making a decision. Township voters will have the final decision.

MR. BECK stated the Board feels it is important to communicate with residents on this issue with public hearings. However, the pending legislation has accelerated the process. The Board is working diligently on the agreement and other options.

The Public Hearing adjourned at 8:35 p.m.