Bethel Township
Board of Supervisors
Planning Commission Member Removal Hearing
January 12, 2021

The Bethel Township Board of Supervisors Planning Commission Member Removal Hearing was called to order by Chairman Jacob Meyer at 6:00 p.m. in the Bethel Township Meeting Room, Bethel PA.

Attending the hearing were Robbi Lane, Michael Graby and Jacob Meyer. Also, in attendance were Solicitor Stephen Price and Township Sec. Treas. Jayne Seifrit.

Jake Meyer stated there is a sign in sheet. Jake Meyer turned the hearing over to Solicitor Stephen Price.

Stephen Price: Tonight, is the hearing with respect to the removal of Lisa Hassler from the Bethel Township Planning Commission. A motion was made at a prior meeting which was seconded to remove Mrs. Hassler from the Planning Commission based upon some incidences which occurred which at least two of the Supervisors thought it merited that action. Notice was placed on the Township building and notice was placed in the Reading Eagle. Mrs. Hassler’s attorney Mr. Rush is here and I have been in communication with him and we coordinated this hearing with him as well. I believe Jim Smith or Mr. Bukowski is supposed to be here for you Mrs. Martin, and we are waiting for them they should be here shortly. I’ll be honest with you this is a first, in thirty-one years of doing this, this is the first one of these I am doing. I would like to run similarly to a zoning hearing. There is a recording to be filed in the official minute book. Stephen Price stated what the MPC states about removal of a Planning Commission member. Mr. Rush entered his appearance as Lisa Hassler’s attorney. Stephen Price stated the hearing is called to order at 6:05 pm. He entered several items as exhibits. Mike Graby was sworn in to give testimony which included the following: He attended a Planning Meeting a couple of months ago and the discussion was about the chicken houses going in on Stauffer Lane and a woman being concerned, also about people parking on Stauffer Lane. She was told to call the police; Lisa Hassler made a cocky remark against the police department; He also stated Lisa Hassler said she can sell the Bowman property for pig farm threatening the residents in that area. Mike Graby also said Lisa Hassler does not like any branch of Local Government, why would she want to be on it. He commented she instigates problems that keep the zoning from being completed. He believes Lisa Hassler’s actions and remarks warrant getting rid of her from Planning Commission as do some residents of the Township. Mr. Rush asked Mike Graby what he meant by get rid of because of a cocky remark, Mike Graby said step down from Planning Commission. Was asked for specifics about cocky remark, Mike Graby recalled it was at a Planning meeting but not more specifics. Mr. Rush asked Mike Graby about if he knows Lisa Hassler is doing anything inappropriate as a realtor and PC member. Mike Graby stated he did not know. Corey Houser questioned Robert’s Rules for conducting meetings, Stephen Price explained process for this hearing. Corey Houser stated Mike Graby makes snide remarks all the time.

Judy Apgar testified she doesn’t believe Lisa Hassler should remain on the Planning Commission. As a member of PC, you need to be impartial; you have not showed impartiality with the Bowman issue. You need to act fairly and just, not call people stupid. Mr. Rush asked for clarification from Judy Apgar. PC minutes were also reviewed for content.
Mr. Jeff Bukowski arrived and entered his appearance.

Betty Martin shared her prepared statement. Betty Martin is aware in a community of our size there are friends on all sides of issues that come before the various boards. She stated those serving on a board have a duty to act impartial and not be demeaning to those that don’t agree with her. Betty Martin feels Lisa Hassler did not act appropriately but instead called those opposing her view stupid. There were objections at the meeting, Lisa Hassler said sorry, I didn’t mean that. At a later meeting Lisa Hassler denied ever saying it, which Betty Martin stated it shows a lack of sincerity for the original statement and integrity. Betty Martin believes Lisa Hassler’s name calling and related actions demonstrates she doesn’t have the demeanor or temperament to serve on a board for Bethel Township and keeping her on reflects poorly on the Township. Betty Martin observed and heard more name calling and actions at subsequent meetings (dumb and dumber, intimidation tactics etc.). Betty Martin stated Michael Orendo, a member of the PC that doesn’t agree with her position, however he has never resorted to any of the tactics Mrs. Hassler continues to use. Mr. Rush asked for specifics whether comment of dumb and dumber was at a public meeting. It was not.

Gerald Bowman stated it appears they don’t want any dissent in any shape or form. Not able to have public at the meetings. We need to have freedom.

Corey Houser stated he did not believe Lisa Hassler meant to call people stupid, it was a mistake.

Dean Klopp commented he also heard the dumb and dumber comment by Mrs. Hassler. He has seen the bullying by the Hassler’s. He pointed out Lisa Hassler helped Mike Graby get elected a little more then a year ago with the stance of no more warehouses and protect farms. She changed her stance on the Planning Commission. Jake Meyer pointed out that Mike Graby was in favor of the Bowman property changing to IC from Ag. People can change their minds. Jake Meyer just wanted to point out people are allowed to change their minds and he has based on what he learns and is in the best interest of the residents. Mr. Rush asked if Mr. Klopp was here for the alleged stupid meeting; he stated he was not. Mr. Rush asked if there is only one farm in the Township, Dean Klopp said obviously not.

Steve Burkart stated he is friendly with both sides of the issue. He knows she is a realtor and hopes there is not a conflict of interest. As a member of the PC, members should not have a conflict of interest.

Mr. Rush posed questions to Lisa Hassler once she was sworn in. He asked if she called anyone stupid…she stated no, but did use it in a context when she was explaining plan a versus plan b and that was stupid. Mr. Rush asked Lisa Hassler if she knows Pete Heim. She said she does, he is a realtor for a different brokerage firm and is the Bowmans realtor.

Several items were entered into the hearing as additional exhibits, minutes etc.

Mr. Rush stated there is scant evidence and the case is based on assumptions. People are allowed to be passionate about issues.

Mr. Bukowski pointed out it is the way Mrs. Hassler has made residents feel intimidated if opposed to her view.

Stephen Price thanked everyone for how well people conducted themselves. Stephen Price asked the Board if they believe Malfeasance is an issue, the Board said no, asked the Board about Misfeasance, the Board said no, asked the Board about Nonfeasance, the Board said no not an issue. He then asked about just cause. Robbi Lane made a motion to remove Lisa Hassler from Planning Commission for just cause, seconded by Mike Graby. Robbi Lane stated she didn’t know Lisa Hassler before she got involved as a Supervisor, she has been on the opposite
side of you. Robbi Lane stated, she has nothing against the Hassler's, but feels she needs to do what is best for the residents she represents, Jake Meyer stated he believes this has been blown out of proportion, Robbi Lane and Mike Graby voted aye, Jake Meyer opposed. Motion carried. Stephen Price stated he will get a decision out to the attorneys.

The hearing closed at 7:05 pm, the Board of Supervisors meeting will start approximately at 7:10pm.

Respectfully submitted

Jayne K Seifrit
Township Secretary