

PennDOT will dismantle Geigle Hill Bridge April 3

Attempt will be made to salvage buttresses

Elizabeth Bowman

Supervisor Boyce Budd summarized the state of repair for Geigle Hill Bridge for Tinicum Township supervisors at their meeting March 18.

He said that recently Tinicum's solicitor was present at a meeting with PennDOT. To following up he sent a letter of intent outlining what had been agreed to in the discussion. Items included design that includes saving the existing buttresses, restoring them for use on the new span in a decorative fashion to maintain the historic nature of the bridge.

The agreement also included a take-back plan in which PennDOT would give Tinicum an agreed upon amount of money per foot to establish a fund for the future care of this bridge and others. The letter remains unsigned by PennDOT.

On March 17, Tinicum received a memorandum of agreement (MOA) from PennDOT and the Army Corps of Engineers and a permit issued by the DEP for demolition of the Geigle Hill Bridge on April 3. PennDOT officials agreed to try to save the buttresses but if they deem that impossible they plan to redesign the bridge, show the plan to the supervisors without asking for comments, and proceed with installation.

Budd said there appears to be a good faith effort on the part of PennDOT to close the agreement but it wants Tinicum to respond to the plan to demolish by Friday March 21, waiving the usual 30-day review period because PennDOT the bridge is unsafe for pedestrian traffic.

Tinicum empowered the solicitor to decide whether to concur with or object to the MOA and if the latter, begin an appeal

process immediately to stop demolition until all issues are resolved.

The supervisors opened their meeting by inviting the public to speak on any non-agenda item and several residents spoke out.

Herb Fineberg came to complain that he has been working with Zoning Officer Shawn McGlynn to get a variance so he can tear down his present house and rebuild on the spot. Fineberg believed that the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) had asked him to either establish an alternate site for a septic system or deed restrict the property to get the variance but the ZHB decision requires that he fulfill both conditions.

Supervisor Nick Forte told Fineberg that he would have to appeal the decision in court before the supervisors could take any action overruling the ZHB.

A contractor from Ottsville

complained that he applied for a permit to build a driveway and was informed of a list of unpaid invoices that he must settle before a permit will be issued. He averred that he had received no copies of the invoices until the application and he wanted an explanation. Forte suggested that he come to the municipal offices during the day and discuss the matter with the treasurer.

Attorney Tod Savariese was present with his client, Celeste Dasheid, who has been trying to build an addition on her facility on Cafferty Road to house the clients already present in rented space on the adjacent property. The board had an executive session to try and work things out with the applicant.

The owner of Evermay, an inn on the Delaware that has fallen on hard times due to floods and road closures, came to ask the supervisors to allow a company

called Open Aire to hold weddings and receptions regularly on the site for approximately 250 guests per event.

The supervisors quizzed the applicant on parking and facilities and the intention of the company to install seasonal tents for the events. Boyce Budd challenged the owner on the regrettable choice of landscapers he had employed to cut down the 100-year-old trees that lined the river side of the property and the subsequent choice to throw the debris into the river.

Budd insisted that trees be planted to ameliorate the situation. Budd assured the applicant that Tinicum fully supports local business and would like Evermay to succeed.

Ultimately Nick Forte suggested they come back to the planning commission for a hearing. The board retired for a lengthy executive session.