

Reflections on a snowy day

Published 02/10/2010 - 7:14 p.m. EDT

It's been pretty quiet in the Chadds Ford area lately, except maybe for the sounds of shoveling and plowing. So what to do on a snowy afternoon than to muse about what little has been happening?

The verdict is not yet in on the value of the new supervisors' workshops the Chadds Ford Board has implemented. There's only been one so far. That was held a week before the February 1 regular meeting of the supervisors.

The workshops are public meetings where the supervisors, along with the township manager and engineer discuss the possible agenda items for the regular session. There is no voting at the workshops, just a discussion with each of the supervisors given a chance to voice an opinion.

Workshop number one, held Jan. 25, did seem to help streamline the regular meeting in February. And that's what Supervisors' Chairman Deborah Love hopes they'll do. While that February meeting was far from efficient, it was far more so than most of the previous meetings held in Chadds Ford, and it lasted less than an hour. There's still too much side talk, but so far, so good.

One action the board took during the February meeting—appointing Joe Barakat as deputy code enforcement officer—deserves comment.

We wonder if the township is relying too heavily on one person. Mr. Barakat is also the volunteer roadmaster, emergency management coordinator and the paid township manager.

This is in no way an indictment against Mr. Barakat or his abilities. And it makes sense to have many of his additional—unpaid—duties fall under the supervision and responsibility of the township manager, but we just question the wisdom of putting so much on one person's plate. Accident or illness could put many things in disarray.

At best, township residents are getting the most of the salary they are paying the township manager through their taxes. But the increased number of functions seems to be a portent of a larger township government sometime within the next few years. More employees and a larger payroll can't be too far away.

But one thing must happen, and the sooner the better. The township needs to update its Web site. The site is still showing the next meeting to be October 2009.