



Summer Caucuses with State Lawmakers

Township Caucus

Tuesday, August 3, 2021

Call to Order/Welcome – The Township Caucus met virtually on Tuesday, August 3, 2021, at 1:30 p.m. via GoToMeeting. Jacob Barnes, Springfield Township planning director and caucus facilitator, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

TMACOG members in attendance included:

- Jacob Barnes, Planning Director, Township of Springfield
- Walter Celley, Administrator, Township of Perrysburg
- Barry Cousino, Fire Chief, Township of Springfield Fire Department
- Meghan Gallagher, Regional Business Development Coordinator and Account Manager, Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission
- Mike Hampton, Administrator, Township of Springfield
- Sara Helbig, Executive Director of Marketing, Jones & Henry Engineers, Ltd.
- Kelly Hemminger, Zoning Administrator, Township of Perrysburg
- Rob Nash, Superintendent, Township of Sylvania
- Todd Ritzler, SVP, Government Relationship Manager, Huntington Bank
- Walter Ruhl, Supervisor, Township of Whiteford
- Mark Sattler, Trustee, Township of Jerusalem
- Joe Schaller, Trustee, Township of Perrysburg
- Mark Stahl, Commissioner, Ottawa County and Chair, TMACOG
- Tim Suter, Regional External Affairs, FirstEnergy/Toledo Edison
- Oliver Turner, Township Administrator, Township of Sylvania
- Eric Wagner, Zoning Administrator, Township of Monclova

Non-TMACOG members in attendance included:

- Lori Brodie, Northwest Regional Liaison, Office of Ohio Auditor Keith Faber
- Ohio Rep. Gary Click, 88th District
- Erica Krause, Northwest Ohio Regional Representative, Office of Ohio U.S Senator Sherrod Brown

TMACOG support staff in attendance included:

- Jennifer Allen, Executive Assistant
- Alex Aspacher, Public Information Specialist
- Marissa Bechstein, Transportation Planner
- William Best, Vice President of Finance and Administration
- Tim Brown, President
- Lance Dasher, Transportation Planner

- Mike Fuller, Transportation Planner
- Gilda Mitchell, Director of Membership and Outreach
- Nate Reiter, Accountant
- Mike Tippet, Director of Communications

Overview of Meeting – Discussion of Issues - The following topics were discussed by the caucus:

- **Availability of funding for townships**
 - Lance Dasher from TMACOG presented information about ODOT’s Township Stimulus Program. This is a one-time program with \$8 million available throughout the state for projects on township roads, culverts, and sidewalks. No local match is required, and projects are eligible for up to \$250,000. A question was asked about the eligibility of roads within parks. If the park is owned by the township, the roads are eligible. More information is available on ODOT’s website:
<https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odot/programs/local-funding-opportunities/guidance/township-stimulus-program-guidance>
- **Ohio Department of Job and Family Services/Unemployment**
 - It was noted that the department has been difficult to contact about scams and has been busy due to the volume of unemployment inquiries. Sen. Sherrod Brown’s office has received many calls about the department. It was noted that State Reps. Sobecki and Fedor are on unemployment committees, so they may have contacts. Rep. Click’s office has investigated scams.
- **Lucas County Sheriff road patrols**
 - Springfield Township discussed the new Lucas County jail. Townships are being asked to pay more for road patrols in the coming years. Springfield Township is exploring an independent option. Jerusalem Township noted that many residents already have tax withheld by the municipalities in which they work, so the sheriff’s proposal would make them pay twice.
- **The effect of public utilities on township zoning**
 - Springfield Township mentioned that new 5G microtowers are exempt from zoning. Monclova Township mentioned receiving more zoning complaints and permit requests during the pandemic. Springfield Township also saw more complaints during the pandemic and an increase in permit requests.
- **Open legislator updates and infrastructure**
 - Erica Krause provided an update on the infrastructure bill, noting an increase in use of American steel. They are also working on legislation related to childcare and similar services. Resources and assistance regarding American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds were offered. It was also noted that Sen. Brown is willing to provide

letters of support for federal grant applications. Springfield Township mentioned the Dorr Street and I-475 interchange opening.

- **Suggestions for legislators**

- Participants suggested allowing townships to receive bank loans, which is not currently permitted by Ohio Revised Code. Jerusalem Township noted that bond issues are too small for smaller townships. They currently have to pay cash from their reserves to finance purchases. It was noted that townships don't have home rule authority like other types of governments, so legislative action would be needed.

- **Open discussion**

- Lori Brodie offered assistance with CARES Act funding. She can be reached at 419-250-8965. Some links were provided related to Coronavirus funds:
 - <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRP-Quick-Reference-Guide-FINAL-508a.pdf>
 - <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRPFAQ.pdf>
- Whiteford Township in Michigan sees a significant benefit from being able to borrow money to pay for preliminary engineering.
- House Bill 43 regarding permanent permissive authority via teleconference has not been extended, but the bill is still alive. This authority has been granted to university boards of trustees. Tim Brown mentioned that perhaps councils of governments could be added to this. Virtual meetings wouldn't be used full time but would be a helpful option sometimes, since TMACOG members must travel from all over the region to attend in-person meetings.

Roundtable Discussion

- Springfield Township noted the economic growth opportunity of the new Dorr Street interchange.
- Perrysburg Township noted new commercial/retail development at the old French Quarter hotel site; the ODOT US-20 corridor and I-75 intersection; and using ARP dollars for road projects and traffic improvement.
- Monclova Township noted excitement about a new US-20A interchange and related development, as well as parks, roundabouts, and a new sledding hill.
- Whiteford Township noted that it is working on extending water service; and that a festival fundraiser for a new inclusive playground is planned on October 9.
- Sylvania Township noted it is considering uses for American Rescue Plan dollars; creating a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) with the City of Sylvania; consolidating safety services; and working on a new 10-year annexation agreement.
- There was some discussion of the current study to create a new highway connection between Toledo and Columbus.

Adjourn – Mr. Barnes thanked the attendees for their participation and adjourned the meeting.