

## ORDINANCE EFFECTIVE DATE

### Township supervisor works with legislator to bring welcome change to Township Code

Familiar refrains say that government gets nothing done or that partisanship stands in the way of progress. Well, there is a township supervisor and a state representative who beg to differ. These two, from opposite sides of the aisle, worked together to see that a necessary change to the Second Class Township Code made it to the governor's desk.

Act 3 of 2025 amends the Code so that an ordinance adopted by elected township officials takes effect immediately, not five days after adoption as previously mandated. Boroughs, townships of the first class, and cities have no such restriction on effective dates in their codes, which make an ordinance effective immediately upon adoption.

#### Developers take advantage of delay

The discrepancy was brought to light by Leonard Altieri III, a supervisor for Newtown Township in Delaware County. There, an attorney attended a meeting where the supervisors were addressing changes to the zoning ordinance. The attorney relayed the changes to developers, who rushed applications to the township so they could be grandfathered in during the five-day wait for the zoning changes to take effect.

Altieri was perturbed by this chain of events.

"We adopted the ordinance on a Monday, and they filed on Friday...two applications," he says.

Altieri began his own research and discovered the discrepancy in codes.

Altieri, a Republican, reached out to his state representative, Democrat Lisa Borowski. They

already knew each other, having served on neighboring school boards years ago. More recently, Borowski was a township commissioner whose ward bordered Newtown Township.

"I called Lisa and said, 'This is the legislation,'" says Altieri. "I think you can honestly fix it by deleting [several] words. All the normal notices and provisions are still in there."

Borowski went to work and introduced House Bill 209. Altieri testified before the Local Government Committee and was there every step of the way as the legislation progressed through the House and Senate committees.

"It's an example of good governance," says Borowski. "I used to be a township commissioner, and this kind of wonky local government stuff is right up my alley."

"I give Leonard a lot of credit," she continues. "I told him that I would do what I could with my leadership, and I would talk with the Democratic chair. The Senate is Republican controlled. He's a Republican and he went over to the Senate, made contacts, and that collaboration was also helpful in getting the legislation through committees and moving it forward."

#### 'Work collaboratively'

Borowski credits Altieri with doing the research and having a plan to enact change. It is the kind of partnership she says can exist between local leaders and their state legislators. Altieri credits Borowski with being receptive and eager to assist.

"Everyone is jaded with politics," says Altieri. "They think politicians aren't working. Here you had a resident with an issue who reached

out to the local representative, and they worked together to craft language [to change the code]. Together, we did something that will impact almost half the residents of Pennsylvania."

Borowski reminds township officials that their legislators are there to work for the residents of the commonwealth.

"I've really made it a goal to be in close contact with our townships," she says. "Me, my staff... we want them [to be] aware of state-related support, grant opportunities, support on PennDOT issues. I really see myself as a facilitator to make their jobs easier, to make sure they understand how the state can be supportive."

"Work collaboratively to get things done," advises Altieri. "Since day one, every time we call Lisa, she answers her phone. Put the politics aside and remember what you're there for: to work for residents."

Act 3 was signed by Gov. Josh Shapiro on June 27.



State Rep. Lisa Borowski meets with Newtown Township supervisors Paul Sanfrancesco, left, and Leonard Altieri III at the State Capitol.