

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORKSHOP MEETING
APRIL 15, 2010

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for an Informational Workshop Meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2010, in the Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 9:40 p.m., followed by a pledge to the flag.

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Joseph Bartlett, Edward McBride and Erika Spott. Also present were: Ron Wagenmann, Township Manager, Joseph Pizonka, Township Solicitor, Rob Loeper, Township Planner and Angela Caramenico, Assistant to the Township Manager.

DISCUSSIONS:

CONSTELLATION ENERGY ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AGREEMENT

Note: Prior to calling the Workshop Meeting to order, Lou Cohen, a consultant for a statewide group of municipalities gave a presentation on this supplier of electric power. The basic finding was that the cost will go up approximately 10% but then level off and remain steady. PECO will soon become just a distributor of power but not a producer of power. The 10% increase is considered a bargain since most electrical costs are going up even more.

Mr. Wagenmann discussed the electric bids and indicated that prices were obtained from Constellation, but other bids will be obtained. The SRA accounts will be segregated from the General Fund accounts and he explained the reasoning for this approach. New quotes will be obtained before next week's meeting. Mr. Wagenmann noted that the window of acceptance is very short because the prices change.

COMVERGE ENERGY AGREEMENT

Mr. Wagenmann stated that this is a power shaving contract at no cost to Upper Merion. A test will be run with the generators at the Matsunk Wastewater Treatment Plant at the Abrams Pumping Station to demonstrate that the shaving can be done. A benefit of about \$17,000 would be realized by the township just for being in the system. Mr. Wagenmann noted that Comverge is also under the COSTARS system in the state and the township can deal directly with them. It will not be necessary to go out and bid for that service. The Board was given a possible agreement which if acceptable would be approved at a later date.

“KEY TO THE TOWNSHIP” PROGRAM

Mr. Waks stated that the idea is to find a way to honor visiting groups who meet in the township such as the recent visit of the Tuskegee Airmen. The “Key to the Township” program might also honor and thank individuals and groups from within the township who have contributed to the quality of life in Upper Merion. There might be a ceremony at a township event once or twice a year such as the Community Fair or the July 4th celebration. This would be a way to strengthen relationships and capitalize on these events to promote the township without much expense.

Mr. McBride suggested that other municipalities with similar programs be contacted for their feedback and suggestions. He also said that the Public Information Officer should scan the newspapers for events and ideas.

Mr. Wagenmann indicated that he would bring this to the attention of the Consortium and put out a general question. There are approximately 30 communities in Montgomery County that will respond. He also stated that a section will be placed in the budget for this program.

Mr. Loeper suggested that the Visitors and Convention Bureau would be able to provide a list of upcoming events.

Mr. Jenaway indicated that Code Enforcement receives a list for the Convention Center and other locations so that they can do necessary inspections.

FLAG LOT ORDINANCE

Mr. Rob Loeper presented the final draft of the flag lot ordinance that is ready for formal county review pending Board comment. He stated that based on Board suggestions it was moved to restrict flag lots only to the R-1 and R-1A lots (half acre and one acre lots) and create them as a conditional use in the zoning codes. Mr. Loeper explained that it takes it out of subdivision and into zoning as part of the dimensional criteria which makes it stronger. It is no longer a waiver issue. There are ten criteria that have to be met:

1. they would have to demonstrate that this would be the only way they could do it
2. they would have to demonstrate that they can meet PennDOT requirements
3. the access strip is not included in any area calculations

4. no more than two access strips abutting each other
5. multiple flag lots would be prohibited
6. the width of the access strip would be between 15 and 25 feet
7. Both lots would be required to have a shared driveway (that is something the Planning Commission suggested)
8. deals with what constitutes a front lot line
9. one of the lots would have to be 150% the minimum of the underlying lot. *Mr. Loeper noted that initially it was the flag lot – the Planning Commission decided to switch it – it could be either one.*
10. the front and rear yard would be increased a minimum of ten feet from the underlying zoning district.

Utilizing an aerial illustration, Mr. Loeper pointed out that it would restrict this to very few properties within the township based on the initial criteria staff reviewed on the GIS.

Mr. Waks asked if the planning commission approved this final draft. Mr. Loeper responded that while the planning commission has looked at it several times it still has to go back for formal approval.

Mr. Waks asked for clarification about certain lots in problematic areas that could be subdivided or flag lotted. Mr. Loeper said that in talking with the township zoning official he was in agreement that if it is restricted to the half acre and larger lots, it is generally not a problem. It is the 10,000 square foot lots that are really problematic.

In response to Mrs. Spott's request for clarification on the draft, Mr. Loeper stated that since all the work has been done to combine all the single family districts, specific language could be inserted that this only applies to these two districts and it does not apply to the other three single family districts.

Mrs. Spott indicated that whatever the Board approves here is fine for R-1 and R-1A, but the real issue is in the R-2's. Mr. Loeper said he would take a look and see if additional adjustments are necessary.

Mr. Wagenmann suggested that one way to do it would be that it would have to be 50 feet continuous.

Mrs. Spott asked about the timing for county approval if the draft could be tightened up this week. Mr. Loeper indicated that from the time it is sent to the county they have 30 days and if a response is not forthcoming in that time then we can move forward.

Mr. Wagenmann noted that it would have to be advertised twice.

RECYCLING PROGRAM

Mr. Waks discussed the idea of electronic and hazardous waste recycling. Since there are no costs with the county program, the county was contacted regarding the possibility of hosting a hazardous waste collection pick up site in Upper Merion Township. The township will make formal application after October 23.

Mr. Wagenmann stated that the last collection was held on the Lockheed Martin parking lot across from the movie theater. He suggested contacting Lockheed Martin to see if it is acceptable with them and then go back to the county.

Mr. Waks pointed out that we can get the word out on the new website, UMGA-TV and the e-newsletter.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS:

School Board Meetings

Mr. Waks asked for an update on school officials meetings to discuss mutual issues. Mr. Wagenmann responded that he had two conversations with Dr. Jamula and he will come back to the Board once he receives a response with two dates – one for the spring and one in the fall.

Business Improvement District (BID)

Mr. Waks indicated that the Business Improvement District may have some temporary up front costs.

Mr. Wagenmann stated that the change order has been requested since the initiative has taken a lot longer and it includes more areas. They have asked that an amendment to the contract be approved in the amount of \$50,000 and the township would be reimbursed. Mr. Wagenmann noted that \$20,000 is in the township's 2010 budget and we would have to advance the \$30,000. He explained that they cannot get their funding until next year's real estate tax bill when the assessment will be collected. In order to be up and running in the fall

the BID needs operating money for their first six to eight months of operation until they start having a cash flow.

Mr. Wagenmann stated there are two questions: one would the township advance the money or work with them to secure a loan by guaranteeing the note since the BID will be established as a non profit organization.

Mr. Wagenmann pointed out that the BID accommodated the industrial properties that are within the service area by saying they would be excluded until they would change use to a commercial designation under the County's assessment program then that property would be subject to the assessment for the district. He also reported that entrance areas to the township have been identified for beautification as well as service projects and advertisements to provide better recognition for King of Prussia.

Mrs. Spott asked for clarification about the funding. Mr. Wagenmann responded that it is a \$50,000. \$20,000 was budgeted and the township would be advancing \$30,000. If it is successful we would be reimbursed and if it is not successful that is the risk we take.

Mr. Waks indicated that when he was ECDC Chair he stressed on many occasions how very important it is that residents of Upper Merion Township see actual physical improvements in the township.

Capital Budget

Mr. Wagenmann indicated that Senator Leach's office provided some guidelines with regard to the Capital Budget request. He explained that it is a two-step process. First the county puts in a request and then it has to be authorized and appropriated. Mr. Wagenmann listed the projects that were submitted should such authorization and appropriation come about. The include trails, sidewalks, a parking lot, a drainage program and other projects including the Business Improvement District. The King of Prussia Players are interested in applying.

Mr. Wagenmann stated that the Friends of Valley Forge Park have asked the Board for funding for renovations to the current Visitors Center at the park. If there is no problem then the Chairman can sign a letter to be forwarded to Senator Specter.

CMX

Mr. Wagenmann discussed the dissolution of CMX, their final billing, and legal rights to township project files within their possession.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

RONALD G. WAGENMANN
SECRETARY-TREASURER/
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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Minutes Approved:

Minute Entered:

NOTE: The entire proceedings of the business transacted at this Informational Meeting were full recorded on audio tape, and all documents submitted in connection thereto are on file and available for public inspection. This is not a verbatim account of the meeting, as the tape is the official record and is available for that purpose.