

**Upper Merion Township Economic and Community Development Committee  
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for September 16, 2019**

The Economic and Community Development Committee (ECDC) met for its regularly scheduled meeting on September 16, 2019 in the Upper Merion Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Andrea Esqueda, Chair  
Frank Buttarò, Vice-Chair  
Clara Martis  
Joe Brophy  
Kyle Brown, Associate Planner  
Tim Dooner  
Tina Garzillo, Board Liaison

**Guest Speakers:**  
Tony Hamaday, Township Manager  
Pete Henry, Senior Designer  
Ari Christakis, Vice President of Development

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

The minutes from the August 2019 meeting were adjusted to reflect the correct names in regard to a meeting. Following the adjustment, the motion to approve was made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Mr. Dooner with all in favor.

**GUEST SPEAKER:** *Tony Hamaday, Township Manager*

Mr. Hamaday introduced himself to the committee as the new Township Manager for Upper Merion Township, a position he has held for two months. When asked about what his focus for the township will be, he expressed a desire to foster a sense of intimacy and community among residents by increasing walkability and exploring opportunities to create more community events.

**GUEST SPEAKER:** *Catalyst Experiential – Ari Christakis, Vice President of Development; Pete Henry, Senior Designer*

Catalyst Experiential, a company that creates different types of signage specifically for municipalities, proposed several projects to be completed throughout Upper Merion Township. In addition to signage at Bob White Park, there would be a network of trails added through the woods, a picnic pavilion, and a permanent restroom structure. It was agreed that additional parking would be necessary as well as an inquiry into public opinion of the sign stating King of Prussia/Upper Merion Township considering the fact that the park is technically in Wayne. At Betzwood Bridge, there would be spires installed on each side of 422 with the signage. The area where the Halloween Store used to be (795 W. DeKalb Pike) will be returned to a more natural condition, following the example at Bob White Park, while a 28-foot structure with heavily natural landscaping is installed. It was agreed that security cameras could be installed to ensure safety. Catalyst Experiential is offering the township one 7-second advertising spot per 2-minute loop on the digital signage, which would include graphic design assistance as needed, free of charge. In addition to advertising space for the township, the signage would be used for emergency messages (like Amber Alerts). The next phase will be for Catalyst Experiential to present to the Board of Supervisors and apply for ordinance amendments relating to land-use (recreational to commercial to allow for signage).

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**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS UPDATES:**

*New Members*

Interviews for new members of the ECDC are still ongoing, and current members are still encouraged to seek out additional applicants in the meantime.

*Public Information Office*

Delays should be expected from the Public Information Office as Ms. Pimm continues her maternity leave, and Ms. Conlan has resigned.

*Sinkhole Mediation*

Sinkhole mediation has begun at the juncture of 202 and 76 on the eastbound side and is projected to continue through April 2020.

*Citizen's Board Mixer*

The second citizen's board mixer received lots of positive feedback aside from the date conflicting with back to school night, so future mixers will be planned around school events.

**2019 KEY PROJECT UPDATES:**

*Small Business Saturday*

Ms. Esqueda, Mr. Brophy, and Ms. Martis will generally take over the initiative and work towards creating a business forum which would be open to small businesses throughout the township. An advertisement will be placed in the UM Township Lines newsletter for the forum to generate more awareness.

*Skating Park*

At this time the vendor has become especially busy and has not been able to provide a more detailed quote. It is expected that they will come to Upper Merion Township sometime in October to further discuss development plans.

Ram Sports, another vendor, has expressed interest in creating an indoor ice rink near Heuser Park, but it was determined that this would be a direct competitor to the outdoor rink currently in discussion.

*Moore-Irwin House*

A roofer came to assess the extensive damage to the roof and a quote for the quickest, cheapest repair option is expected in the near future.

The work at the arboretum has begun and progress is already moving steadily. Volunteers involved in the stream and park clean-up will make their way to that area to assist in clearing the area further.

Based on the different reports over the years, the township is working to hire an independent engineer to establish finalized data regarding the structure and remediation of the existing structure.

*Gathering People*

At the moment there are no major updates. It was discussed that going neighborhood-by-neighborhood to establish gathering areas and the recreational needs of those areas would be an effective way to generate more events for residents that they would be more likely to attend due to locality and access.

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*Transitional and Affordable Housing*

Mr. Dooner spoke to a non-profit that administers HUD, the County Housing Authority, but unfortunately, they do not work directly with municipalities regarding specific plans. They directed him to the Montgomery County Housing and Community Development program which has the potential to support 15-20 individuals for every \$100,000.00 raised.

Mr. Hamaday mentioned several rebate programs associated with sewer discounts that would be an effective way to identify those in need as they have already been evaluated by way of rebate processes. As Accessory Dwelling Units will be in the Comp Plan, the discussion of whether the ECDC will endorse Comp Plan recommendations. Mr. Brown will make a draft of the Comp Plan available to the members of the ECDC once it has reached the public-comment stage, and those interested can review the plan and offer suggestions or comments on behalf of the committee.

*Transportation*

Ms. Martis and Mr. Brophy met with Beth Triolo, the social worker for the school district, to discuss the option to provide free transportation via the Rambler and Connector to those who are in need. The plan would be that beneficiaries would have a type of "access card" that allows them to use the transportation options freely. Ms. Triolo will gather information regarding those that may be considered to receive the service from the school district and get back to the committee with those figures.

*River Park*

The joint-committee with Parks & Recreation has been approved by the Board of Supervisors and will be made up of Ms. Esqueda, Mr. Brophy, Mike Trachtenburg and Neil Sardinas of Parks & Recreation, Erika Spott, Sangeetha Srinivasan, and John Tallman. The sub-committee will meet again in early to mid-October to discuss the trajectory and scope of projects for the upcoming year, as well as their recommendation to obtain the land-parcel to the Board of Supervisors, which was addressed in the August meeting.

**OTHER PROJECTS:**

*Family-Friendly Businesses*

Ms. Martis suggested following the example of some counties who provide awards or "badges of honor" to companies who promote positive work-life balance. It would be tied to a list of criteria related to policies that are "family friendly" in regard to leave practices and other family support, which businesses could then advertise in order to entice job-seekers.

*Community Nutrition Initiative*

In response to the amount of children and families in need, Ms. Martis pointed out that it would be in the best interest of the committee to look into how to better provide nutritional options to those families through a formalized structure. The idea of ordinances in place to reduce the amount of food waste that is allowed to be disposed of by local businesses was discussed, as well as the possibility of working with the Environmental Advisory Council in coming up with a more definitive plan of action.

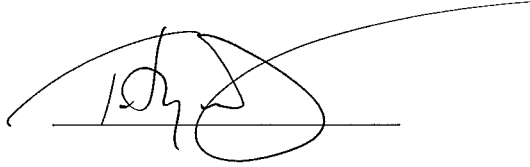
*Community Garden Donations*

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The food pantry has received donations from the Community Garden over the last year, however the tracking of weight donated was not well measured so the full impact is not currently known.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Dooner made the motion to adjourn with Mr. Brophy seconding and all in favor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Dooner', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and includes a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that extends to the right.

Tim Dooner, Secretary, ECDC