

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ZONING WORKSHOP MEETING
MARCH 3, 2022

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Zoning Workshop Meeting on Thursday, March 3, 2022, in the Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 6:17 p.m., followed by a pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Bill Jenaway, Tina Garzillo, Greg Waks and Greg Philips. Supervisor Kenney was absent. Also present were: Anthony Hamaday, Township Manager; John Walko, Township Solicitor; and Ashton Jones, Township Planner.

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS:

Vice Chair Garzillo announced that Chairperson Kenney is absent this evening due to other commitments but she will be at the March 10, 2022 Business Meeting. She also gave an update on the Township Mask Mandate. On February 25th the CDC announced relaxing of mask guidelines in areas considered low to medium risk. The CDC is advising that people can go indoors without wearing a mask. Therefore, on March 1st the Township will enforce a policy of mask optional in the Township Building, the Community Center, and Nor View Farm.

Vice Chair Garzillo also acknowledged that March is Women's History Month, which is a celebration of women's contributions to history, culture and society.

She also announced that an Executive Session will take place following the Workshop Meeting.

DISCUSSIONS:

DRAFT UPPER MERION 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – NEXT STEPS

Vice Chair Garzillo read eight items to be considered in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and they are as follows:

1. Re-engage the Comp Plan Committee or continue with BOS, Staff and County.
2. KPMU/Septa Line

3. Public Safety – Police/Fire EMS & Hospital
4. Consideration of new uses/current trend Township is experiencing such as life sciences, warehouse and increase requests for apartments
5. Traffic especially in the area around the Mall/202 corridor and River Road/320 to West Conshohocken
6. Sustainability with Township facilities as well as incentives for property owners, i.e. permit reductions, credits, etc.
7. Items that have changed based on the 2020 census
8. The impact of the Village at Valley Forge – infrastructure, density

Vice Chair Garzillo mentioned that Eric Jerrell of the Montgomery County Planning Commission indicated that certain items were missing from the comp plan because other documents were recently adopted or being drafted such as the stormwater plan, parks plan and trails.

Board Comments:

Supervisor Jenaway commented that he feels that the Board needs to be more involved in the development of this plan. He stated that the Board should have been more engaged in the vision of the plan as opposed to being told what the Board's vision is by outsiders. In his opinion there are major items missing in this document, specifically the Zoning Map of the future which the Board has been working on. He feels the need to go back and implement the important things the Board would like to see in the Township such as life science facilities and perhaps a hospital. Supervisor Jenaway also stated that the Board needs to engage the homeowner associations and apartment complex leadership to offer input and help to develop this plan.

Supervisor Philips agreed with the comments made by Supervisor Jenaway.

After some discussion it was decided to keep this plan with the Board of Supervisors who will have a few zoning meetings to discuss their vision of the plan.

Anthony Hamaday, Township Manager stated that zoning meetings will be set up by categories within the plan and have the correct staff member attend the meeting and work on the specific issues.

There was a lot of discussion about the disconnect between the comp plan committee and the Board of Supervisors and Township Staff. There will be a renewed effort to do a better job with communication.

SMOKING LOUNGE AND PRIVATE CLUB REGULATIONS

Vice Chair Garzillo opened up this discussion by reminding everyone that this is driven by an establishment that was in the township that created some public safety concerns, noise concerns, code enforcement and the police had to get involved to address multiple issues. The purpose of the proposed ordinance before the Board tonight is to be pro-active about future establishments coming into the Township. The Solicitor and Township Planner worked together to draft an ordinance that would put some restrictions on where these types of businesses can reside within the Township.

The Solicitor read the definitions of a Hookah Bar, Smoke Shop and Smoking Parlor and explained the differences between them.

There was a lengthy discussion between the Board, the Township Planner and Township Solicitor on what restrictions to enforce in this ordinance including location, distance from certain uses, hours of operation, food/alcohol consumption, age, indoor use only, no live entertainment and ventilation requirements.

It was agreed by all to put permission to advertise this ordinance on the agenda for the March 10, 2022 Business Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Board Action:

It was moved by Supervisor Philips, seconded by Supervisor Jenaway, all voting "Aye" to adjourn the meeting. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0. Adjournment occurred at 7:18 pm.


ANTHONY HAMADAY
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

cd
Minutes Approved:
Minutes Entered: