

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORKSHOP MEETING
APRIL 4, 2019

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Workshop Meeting on Thursday, April 4, 2019, in the Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., followed by a pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Waks, Carole Kenney, Bill Jenaway, Greg Philips and Tina Garzillo. Also present were: John Walko, Township Solicitor; Robert Loeper, Township Planner; Mark Zardoga, Township Code Enforcement Director; Todd Lachenmayer, Public Works Superintendent; Laura Arnhold, Township Library Director. Absent: Sally Slook, Acting Township Manager.

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS: -None.

DISCUSSIONS:

POTENTIAL BOND REFINANCING

Mr. Wolf announced he was here to alert the Board of the opportunity to refinance the 2014 bonds. If we are successful in refinancing, this would be the 14th time in 30 years that the Township has taken advantage of lower interest rates. The analogy would be like refinancing your home. Mr. Wolf noted that the plan would be to refinance almost all of the 2014 bonds which were used for the purpose of the Community Center. We would be refinancing \$9.8 million dollars of old bonds and with today's interest rates, would be able to save about \$400,000.00 a year. It was noted that we want to stay under \$10 million dollars total, in order to be bank qualified with lower interest rates and a more favorable prepayment. Mr. Wolf also presented the history of bonds in Upper Merion since 1988, noting the sum total of all the refunding's done to date is \$5.2 million dollars and we can add another half a million to that if we are successful.

The Board expressed their gratitude to Mr. Wolf for always presenting money saving options.

Public Comments:

Mr. Mike Napolitan, a resident from 360 Garrison Way, asked what the cost to refinance is and what the payback time is. Mr. Wolf responded and stated we are not extending debt. The upfront cost of issuance is about \$150,000.00 dollars. Saving about \$40,000.00 the first year, it wouldn't take very long to

recapture the cost of issuance. It was also noted that the gross savings over the life is multiple times the cost of issuance.

REALEN EMS/FIRE STATION/GUTHRIE ROAD

Mr. Frye presented an overview of the EMS/Fire Station project, noting the location of the site is on 400 Guthrie Road. The first slide consisted of the site plan that was done by Boulder Engineering. The first floor has 6,500 square feet for the fire station on the north side. Underneath the first floor are 25 parking spaces with 9 spaces dedicated to the EMS Fire Station and recently a special spot was added for Chief Rubin out front. On the south side of the project is the ground floor office for the storage facility. There are also two elevators, one on the right hand side and off to the left is one that will serve the storage. The EMS facility will also have its own elevator and this will be there for the additional floor for the EMS station. Mr. Frye went over a few more details the facility would have like a fire pole, restrooms, locker rooms, and a workout area. It was noted that back on 2008 we were required to build a 5,000 square foot station and we are now over 10,000 square feet with this design. A discussion ensued regarding the station's floors.

Public Comments:

Mr. Mitch Thurman, a resident from Valley Forge Towers, asked what the current response times are and what the improved times will be. Chief Nolan responded and stated he would be able to provide the current response times however the new times will be hard to give at this time. Mr. Frye stated that currently the Montgomery County response standard is twelve minutes which are currently being met now however with two ambulances around the clock times, this eliminates the need to use an outside service. Mr. Matthew Popek, a resident from Valley Forge Towers, asked if all of the fire truck accesses would be directly from Guthrie Road and Mr. Nolan confirmed that this was correct. Mr. Napolitan asked how the new location of the station was chosen and Mr. Frye and Chief Nolan responded and stated that there was a study done which indicated that the location would be the best case scenario with the court order since it had to be within the Village of Valley Forge.

MANCILL MILL ROAD ZONING DISCUSSION TO ALLOW TOWNHOMES

Mr. Skip Bryan presented the different unit types (as requested by the Board) for 119 townhomes and the parking with the zoning requirements being met. Mr. Bryan also stated that he met with the Valley Forge Towers team to get feedback. Ms. Kenney asked for clarification regarding where the proposed hotel from three years ago fits in this plan. Mr. Bryan responded and stated that if what is being proposed is approved by the Township, then it would be 119 townhouses and one hotel. The hotel has already been approved and is under agreement to a hotel building. It was further explained that if the proposal were to

be approved by the Township then an additional exit would be pursued. Mr. Loeper stated that in order to build the townhomes, that portion of the property would probably have to be rezoned and the hotel would be a permitted use in that district.

A question was raised regarding how the parking would be managed given the amount of units being built to avoid parking issues. Mr. Loeper stated that plans would need to be further refined to figure out what additional parking is going to be required and where it would be located. Mr. Bryan also noted that there is opportunity to add an overflow in addition to the parking already in the plans. It was also asked if Mancill Mill would have to be expanded and if a traffic study would be needed. Mr. Loeper stated that a traffic study would have to be looked at primarily due to the activity at Mancill Hill and PA 23. Ms. Garzillo asked whether there were any safety concerns for pedestrian crossings and Mr. Frye stated that they would talk to the county for recommendations. It was also stated that two feet of clean soil would be placed on top of the cap and the utilities are planned to be installed on top of the clean soil. Mr. Napolitan asked a few questions and expressed some concerns.

Mr. Waks stated there is residential support from the immediate members from the Valley Forge Towers for the proposed amendments and asked the Board if they were okay with Mr. Loeper and counsel looking into possible zoning changes. Mr. Waks further stated it would be a good idea to communicate with the Stormwater Authority and it was confirmed that a meeting is already set with them later this month.

UPDATE ON CROW CREEK DESIGN

Chris Burkett, Senior Executive Vice President of Gilmore and Associates, stated that they have been working with the Township for several months to finalize the entire Crow Creek Trail. There are segments that have already been constructed and they are here to connect all those segments through grant money that has been given to the Township for this project. Mr. Burkett also noted that to gain better accuracy, a brand new aerial photography flight was done in December of last year when the trees were defoliated and an environmental consultant was brought in to do wetland mappings to avoid future wildlife habitat issues. Mr. Burkett stated that the most ideal route for the trail would be to go along the Middle School to avoid wetlands and also mentioned that the segments can be made in segments as further plan information is made known regarding the new High School as it can present some benefits as well as challenges. A discussion ensued regarding plans for Heuser Park's involvement with the trail. Mr. Napolitan asked some questions and expressed some concerns.

ADJOURNMENT:

Board Action:

It was moved by Mr. Jenaway, seconded by Ms. Kenney, all voting "Aye" to adjourn the meeting. None opposed. Adjournment occurred.



SALLY SLOOK
ACTING TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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Minutes Approved:
Minutes Entered: