

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
JOINT MEETING WITH CITIZEN BOARD CHAIRS
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Joint Meeting of the Citizen Board Chairs on Thursday, February 12, 2015, in the Board Room, in the Township Building in King of Prussia. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Waks, Greg Philips, Bill Jenaway, Carole Kenney. Also present were: Dave Kraynik, Township Manager; Sally Slook, Assistant Township Manager; Dave Rassbach, Chairperson, Media Communications Advisory Board; Jenn Lyons, ECDC; John Waters, Chief Fire Marshal; Mike Trachtenberg, Park and Recreation Board; Jerome Ocker, Shade Tree and Beautification Commission; Jenn Schauble, Chairperson, Police Citizen Advisory Board; Marv Meneeley, Transportation and General Authorities; Jim Gallagher, Fire & Rescue Services Board; Pam Forster, Lafayette Ambulance; Linda Noll, Library Board of Directors; Jaquelin Camp, Chairperson, Planning Commission. Supervisor Spott was absent.

POWER POINT PRESENTATION – FUTURE OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP

Supervisor Bill Jenaway stated the concept of strategic long term planning for all the fire and rescue services in the township has been a theme the Fire and Rescue Services Board has incorporated in their objectives for the coming year. Current activities include discussions about the next comprehensive plan for the township.

Mr. Jenaway noted a few years ago while he was still Board liaison to the Fire and Rescue Services Board, the strategic plan they had worked on had expired in 2011. At that point in time the Fire and Rescue Services Board made an attempt to put a plan together, but found that some external help was needed.

Each year during the PSATS Conference more and more is heard about comprehensive planning that is done by all departments. The Police Department does a mini-strategic plan as part of their accreditation process. More departments across the state have been looking at shared services and trying to determine ways to take advantage of shared services and equipment. This is the type of thinking going into the current generation of strategic planning.

The plans last three to five years and sometimes longer, but the objective is to then do the individual plans to build a more comprehensive township-wide plan so that the Board of Supervisors can look strategically how best to invest the taxpayers' money to build the best infrastructure for the community

John Waters, Chief, Fire Marshal, stated Fire & Rescue Services in Upper Merion Township is provided by three volunteer fire companies and a combination of volunteer and career ambulance service. The Fire and Rescue Services Board is comprised of the three fire chiefs: Jim Gallagher (King of Prussia), Gerry Recupido (Swedesburg), Dennis Orangers (Swedeland), and Pam Forster, Lafayette Ambulance, a Board of Supervisors Liaison, a member of the Safety/Codes Department, and a citizen representative who advise the Board of Supervisors on such things as apparatus purchases and division-wide policies.

Mr. Jenaway provided some background on strategic planning for public safety and stated it came about a few years ago as part of a state initiative recognizing major challenges coming up within the Commonwealth dealing with Fire and EMS systems dealing with money, people and political issues. In further explaining the strategic planning process, Mr. Jenaway discussed the decision making factors such as what resources are needed to solve a particular problem, response time for a certain type of incident and with what type of resource, and what percentage of the time. This information establishes what resources are needed to accomplish the goal. EMS is governed by county-wide protocols and the fire departments have established their protocols based upon current performance levels and maintaining those current performance levels and 90% of the time the response is better than the national standard. This factors into developing the master plan which looks at what is needed to meet the goals over "x" period of time.

Mr. Waters stated there was a third party consultant in 1992 and 2002 reviewing changes and the direction for the future. The Fire and Rescue Services Board did their own plan in 2004 and changes continue and are in evidence throughout the township which will affect fire and rescue services from a delivery standpoint. In addition there are various zoning code changes for the US 202 corridor and First Avenue. There were once 24/7 industrial park operations resulting with many night shift volunteers who were available during the day. The township has changed significantly and one of the issues now is finding volunteers who are available during daytime hours.

Mr. Jenaway said in developing any community there is a growth management assessment that needs to be done for public safety. He provided the example of a new development amounting to the number of people found in a small town going through the complex each day thereby putting a large number of people in a very small dense area. People drive public safety responsibilities and calls and the more people in a small confined space the more challenges it poses for fire and EMS and the police department as well.

In today's changing environment, it will be important having someone come in and look at the current organization and the relationship between the new population density and the requirements for performance for this totally different level of need and expectations.

Mr. Waters provided a timeline for the Request for Performance (RFP). He stated the RFP went out on December 4, 2014 with a January 29, 2015 due date for response. Twenty (20) entities responded and their proposals are now being reviewed by the Fire and Rescue Services Board. The proposals are to be evaluated by March 31st at which time the top three will be selected. Interviews of the top three will be completed by May 29th and a contract signed and awarded by June 18th. Once the contract is awarded the consultant has 182 days to submit a draft report to the Fire and Rescue Services Board and Board of Supervisors with a final report issued within 30 days.

Mrs. Kenney noted since two of the twenty proposals included the price, they were eliminated and there are 18 proposals under review.

Mrs. Kenney asked about the cost of the 1992 evaluation. Mr. Waters responded he will have to look at the file.

Mr. Waters pointed out the RFP is to be submitted in two envelopes. One envelope is for the proposal and the second envelope contains the proposed charges. The cost envelopes are not opened. The rationale for that is when a proposal is reviewed it should not be influenced by the lowest possible bidder. The idea is to look at these totally independent of the cost itself. It is a matter of reviewing the proposals objectively on the basis of the proposal itself.

Mr. Jenaway stated within the request for proposal process there is a conceptual scope of work on what would be done and how it would be done. The consultant has the right to modify the scope of the work if they believe it would be valuable for a particular project, but it is driven by the scope of work. This gives the Fire and Rescue Services Board as well as the Board of Supervisors a better appreciation of what is expected of the consultant.

Mr. Waters mentioned included in the RFP is not only a list of who they would be expected to talk to, but also a list of deliverables.

Mr. Kraynik noted it took about three months, and seven drafts, for the RFP to be vetted by the Board of Supervisors, the Fire and Rescue Services Board and staff.

A member of the group asked where the pool of volunteers is drawn from. Mr. Waters responded the consultant will be providing recommendations on recruitment and retention.

Mr. Jenaway stated the Park and Recreation Board is now in the midst of the Park and Recreation Master Plan. A survey is currently underway online. Public meetings were held and additional meetings are scheduled. One of the suggestions advocated for a dog park. Michael Trachtenberg commented the Park and Recreation Board has received over 750 responses to the survey.

A member of the group asked how volunteers are recruited for volunteer fire companies. Dennis Orangers, Chairperson, Fire & Rescue Services Board said grant money is helping with some of the recruiting. Public service announcements on UMGA-TV are done with the help of township staff, solicitations door to door, putting flyers in fund drive letters, and taking advantage of various events such as fire prevention and other public service events. He noted it is critical in day time allowing employees who are volunteer fire fighters and if they are available to respond to certain types of incidents.

A member of the group asked if there is a minimum age for volunteers and was informed at age 14 and 15 volunteers can do first aid and CPR. They are limited in the amount of time that can be spent at the station and this increases as they get older.

Pam Forster, Lafayette Ambulance, stated a few years ago in Montgomery County EMS used pagers and EMS would respond from their homes. The county and state issued minimum requirements to have a truck out the door within four minutes. For some responders it was not feasible to go from home to the station and get a truck out within that time. EMS personnel must now be in the station on duty when the call comes in.

A discussion followed during which members of the group offered suggestions for recruiting volunteers.

Ms. Forster commented a lot of younger people are interested in volunteering because their parents have volunteered to some degree. High schools have been more cooperative in having EMS personnel in for career days for students who are interested in a medical field.

Mr. Jenaway mentioned the successful response as a result of the fire service participation in volunteer day at the high school. He also noted the creation of a 40-hour program community service credit program for students to do various administrative tasks and learn more about how a volunteer agency operates after which they received a certificate.

Mr. Waters discussed the 5-day summer fire camp for children 10-15 years of age held every year by Bill Daywalt of his staff.

A question was asked if there is a social media outreach. Mr. Waters responded they are just getting into social media and it is one of the resources available for recruiting volunteers.

Mr. Philips commented it is not just EMS or volunteer fire services that are having the problem with volunteers, it is about every non-profit across the board. He also emphasized the importance of utilizing social media to get through to the younger population.

Mr. Jenaway expressed appreciation to all the members of the citizen boards for their volunteer service and for bringing their ideas and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION – ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND COOPERATION

Mr. Dave Rassbach, Chairperson, Media Communications Advisory Board, reported on working to come to a conclusion on the Comcast franchise negotiations, the 24/7 LED message board at the corner of Henderson Road and PA-23 for posting township information and emergency alerts, refreshing the township website, looking for ways to obtain real time traffic information, and opening of the Public Information Office. He said an idea he thought about during the discussion on volunteerism at this meeting is putting together a video about volunteerism for the fire departments.

Mr. Waks mentioned the township LED message board at Henderson Road and Valley Forge Road will be in a V-type configuration so the sign will be visible from all four directions. The traffic count at that location is in the range of 28,000 per day.

Mr. Marv Meneeley, Treasurer, Transportation Authority, stated as a corollary with the Community Center the Transportation Authority is working with the Board of Supervisors on long overdue road improvements on Valley Forge Road. Highlights as follows:

- Traffic signal will be installed at Caley Road
- South Henderson road improvements
- Working with supervisors to maximize sidewalks to promote a walking community
- Looking at improving South Gulph Road
- Working with surrounding communities on 422 bridge improvements
- Working with transportation engineer on new Betzwood Bridge and utilizing different technologies to minimize impact on the river
- New pedestrian bridge will be completed within the next year

- Exploring Prince Frederick extension down to Saulin Boulevard which will alleviate traffic on US 202 and improve safety response time for first responders.

Mr. Meneeley stated the Transportation Authority at its founding was known as the Roads Commission and was devoted strictly to improving roads. The scope of the Transportation Authority now encompasses bike trails, sidewalks, working with SEPTA and the Delaware Valley Transportation Authority to improve traffic flow and provide realistic alternatives.

Mr. Jenaway commented on the job well done for fixing North Gulph Road and Mall Boulevard which according to the Traffic Safety Department was the number one accident intersection in Upper Merion Township primarily because of the “pork chop.”

Jennifer M. Schauble, Chairperson, Police Citizen Advisory Board, stated the Board is trying to get public feedback about the police department as a whole. There have been some different ideas about how to obtain public feedback and more discussions are necessary before proceeding.

Mr. Rassbach mentioned the Media Board also discussed having a citizen survey since the last one occurred ten years ago. He said it will be an opportunity to obtain good information at this time of rapid changes in ways to communicate with the public. Mr. Rassbach believes telephone is still the most effective way to achieve a statistically justified survey.

A member of the group commented she would hope there would be a way for callers to identify that the call was coming from the township.

Jerome Ocker, Vice Chairman, Shade Tree and Beautification Commission, stated major headway has been made in establishing a pruning club. Two training seminar sessions have been conducted after which a group went out to Heuser Park and pruned 69 trees that were prunable from the ground using ladders. Over 900 trees have been inventoried in township parks and this effort is ongoing. Concern remains over the emerald ash borer and some of the largest ash trees are being treated. Davey Tree Service provided tree protection for all the trees that have been planted in the last two years, primarily for deer rubs. Last fall 35 more trees were planted in Whitegate Park with the help of volunteers. Bob Dempsey a member of the Shade Tree and Beautification Commission, is representing the commission at the Park and Recreation master plan meetings. Beautification awards were presented late last year. The commission is acquiring grant money to purchase trees and pruning tools. An application for a \$750 grant has been made to the Board of Community Assistance. A planting demo will be held on Arbor Day.

Mr. Waks noted for the first time citizen boards are eligible to apply for funds from the Board of Community Assistance and encouraged the citizen boards to consider making application for worthy projects before the March 15th deadline.

Michael Trachtenberg, Chairperson, Park and Recreation Board, stated the master plan is well underway and there are approximately 750 responses so far to the survey which is posted on the township website. In addition there were 50 phone interviews with various residents including supervisors and people involved with the senior center or athletics. One of the comments pointed out sometimes when outside groups use township facilities they do not necessarily take care of the fields when they are done. This is something the Park and Recreation Board is looking at while compiling a list of requirements, most of which deal with maintenance. Grants continue to be made in support of the local youth leagues and other organizations in the township. With regard to the Master Plan, the number one comment is that people do not know all the available facilities. Other comments include the need for a community pool, turf fields, trails, more passive activities and safety requirements. Community Center and trail at Valley Forge are preparing for September 2015 openings. New hires include an Assistant Director of Park and Recreation and a Marketing/Special Events person who are starting next week. There are plans to recommend that a high school student be allowed to be part of the Park and Recreation Board.

Mrs. Kenney asked if student members are full voting members. Mr. Jenaway responded they would be non-voting members but would be providing helpful input from their age bracket.

Jenn Lyons, Chairperson, Economic and Community Development Committee, stated some of the current ideas include generating interest in recruiting volunteers for the various boards. It was suggested that an open house or volunteer fair be held so that each board can talk about the work they do and their goals for the year. In terms of timing it might be done on Community Day.

Mrs. Kenney suggested Ms. Lyons talk to the Public Information Officer about a having a central place to inquire about volunteer possibilities in the township.

Ms. Forster suggested the opening of the Community Center might be an ideal time to hold a volunteer event.

Mr. Philips commented the Farmers Market is always a good opportunity to communicate with residents.

Mr. Meneeley suggested when the township website is redesigned there could be a tab leading to a data base to collect volunteers to help with the community and also serve as a clearinghouse to get information to the various

groups.

Mr. Jenaway commented about 10 or 12 years ago the township held an evening session with all the different boards during which each board had five minutes to talk about the work of their particular board and afterward there was an opportunity to network with attendees.

Mr. Rassbach said various forms of media could be used to attract people to the website including *Township Lines* and UMGA-TV.

Mrs. Kenney suggested having the Township Academy reinstated. Ms. Lyons mentioned this has been discussed at ECDC. Mr. Kraynik noted this is underway and he and the Assistant Township Manager have finalized an outline and will be discussing it at a Chair meeting next week to introduce the Citizens Academy this year.

A member of the group asked Mr. Kraynik for more details. Mr. Kraynik explained the Citizens Academy is an 8-10 week program where 15 to 20 citizens would be introduced and educated about the various departments in the township. One week the police department would do a presentation and the next week might be the fire and ambulance service, to provide an in depth introduction to township government. Supervisors and Township Manager would have a night to talk about how government works and how Upper Merion Township is structured.

Ms. Lyons said ECDC can definitely incorporate a volunteer night component within the Citizens Academy.

Mr. Rassbach commented one of the ideas the Media Board discussed was to do a program about the various boards and interview the members and chairs to talk about what they each do.

Ms. Lyons stated a recent college graduate is going to do a transition workshop which is envisioned as a series of nights devoted to needed transition skills such as resume writing, checkbook balancing, etc. Another ECDC initiative to be discussed with the police department is about having a safe trade zone in the township building where there would be a safe place to meet someone when purchasing items on Craig's List or Ebay.

Mr. Waks mentioned he has already discussed this matter with the Township Manager and Police Chief. He explained an associated issue that has prompted some municipalities to start repealing all their safe zone areas.

Ms. Lyons said the ECDC is also thinking about doing a "love local campaign" to raise awareness of locally owned businesses as well as have residents say why they love living in Upper Merion Township. Another initiative

the ECDC is considering is the implementation of a pop up beer garden for the township next summer.

Mr. Jenaway commented about the lack of affordable housing for those transitioning from college to a real work environment. There is a need to look at additional housing units to be available for this next generation. With ongoing development now underway in the township there will be an influx of young people and they are going to want these kinds of group activities.

Mr. Trachtenberg stated the Park and Recreation Board has already discussed the possibility of a pop up beer garden as a community at the summer concerts.

Mrs. Kenney commented on the food truck discussion that was held at the last workshop meeting where it was mentioned possibly having a food truck at the Concerts Under the Stars. She said that might tie into both the beer garden and food truck discussions.

Ms. Lyons said the first step is to talk to vendors and she agreed these are two of the trendiest things in the summer time.

Jaquelin Camp, Chairperson, Planning Commission, stated the commission is working its way through the review and revisions to the township zoning code. There has been an increase in the number of plans under review and some of them have generated a fair amount of discussion and interesting conversations. Once the process of reviewing and revamping the zoning code is completed it will be time to start thinking about updating the Comprehensive Plan. The trend in comprehensive planning is away from a single comprehensive plan document and toward a more organic process of updating individual areas as to what makes the most sense for those areas.

Ms. Camp commented on a county newsletter she received about a grant program focused on walkability in communities. Ms. Sally Slook, Assistant Township Manager, noted the township is now in initial discussions with the Business Improvement District to focus on walkability of the business park area.

Ms. Camp said her thinking was that part of the township is already getting all of the attention and would like consideration to some areas of the township with sidewalk disconnects. Ms. Slook said all areas are being looked at and sidewalk needs identified.

Mr. Philips stated Henderson Road and US 202 are all part of the BID's purview. Currently the focus is on First Avenue because that is the genesis of rebirth, but Henderson Road has been improved from US 202 through Franklin Maps and the goal is to go the rest of the way. He noted places like Swedeland could use a walkability study, especially with the proposed Fed Ex processing

distribution center it might signal a rebirth for Swedeland as well.

Mr. Rassbach asked about the status of the Henderson Road extension to South Gulph Road. Mr. Kraynik said with the new transportation funding bill approved in Harrisburg last year opportunities are now open for the next phase of Henderson Road. Upper Merion Township is well positioned because the Transportation Authority has already authorized much of the design and is on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) of the state through PennDOT. The township is well positioned as funding frees up to see some of these projects on the TIP happen in 2-4 years.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Philips expressed appreciation to all the boards and commissions for their forward thinking and hard work. As an example where project planning and engineering were advanced to the stage where they were ready to receive funds, he noted the Transportation Authority readiness with “shovel ready” projects to put out to bid.

Mr. Meneeley commented the Valley Forge Road improvements came about because it was synchronized and coordinated with construction of the Community Center to make some much needed road improvements.

Mr. Waks commented he is hopeful the electronic message board will help reach some of the 17,000 people who are currently not involved in township activities or communciations.

Mr. Lyons asked if the e-newsletter is posted on the township website. If not, she suggested having the content of the e-newsletter available on the township website so that it will be searchable on Google. Mr. Kraynik indicated he would mention this to the PIO staff.

NEXT MEETING AND DISCUSSION TOPIC

Mr. Philips stated the next joint meeting of the citizen board chairs will be held on Thursday, May 14th. Mr. Kraynik stated he would talk with the Chair and Vice Chair and come up with a topic and encouraged anyone who has topic suggestions to be in touch with him.

Mr. Jenaway noted the “Taste of the Suburbs” conducted by the Rotary Club and fire company is being held on April 12, 2015. There will be 35 participating restaurants from King of Prussia and it might be possible to get some tips about the beer garden idea. Mr. Kraynik said he received an email last night as a result of the last ECDC meeting about putting the ECDC in touch with the Rotary Club for that event.

Mr. Waks pointed out all the money goes to charities.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

DAVID G. KRAYNIK
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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Minutes Approved:
Minutes Entered: