

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
JOINT MEETING
MAY 12, 2016

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Joint Meeting on Thursday, May 12, 2016, in the Board Room, in the Township Building in King of Prussia. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by a pledge to the flag.

DISCUSSIONS:

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Philips, Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Erika Spott, and Carole Kenney. Also present were: Dave Kraynik, Township Manager; Sally Slook, Assistant Township Manager; Kyle Brown, Associate Planner; Alanna Strohecker, Vice Chairperson; and Scott Sibley.

Alanna Strohecker discussed ECDC's activities in 2015: Highlights as follows:

- "Love My Local" campaign to recognize local businesses and community members utilizing township publications and social media
- Beer Garden – advise and support Parks and Recreation on beer garden initiative when needed.

Highlights of ECDC's activities planned in 2016:

- New Business Welcome Committee and offer a way to become part of the community
- Facilitate a "chamber of commerce" role by working with the BID and include businesses outside of the BID territory
- Generate interest in contributing to the township
- Promote "more than the mall"
- Networking opportunities for small businesses
- Evaluate and provide recommendation for Township Foundation grants and fundraising opportunities
- Strategic Planning – held workshop meeting to discuss strengths of group, opportunities, identify where ECDC would like to focus and have most impact and reevaluate strategic mission of the group

Mr. Scott Sibley stated there are some citizen boards that work directly with a department such as Parks and Recreation. He said it would be helpful as

ECDC works through its strategic analysis to look for more staff support on ideas. Ms. Strohecker said ECDC would like to bounce their ideas off of other people.

Mrs. Spott commented what a positive step it is to have the “Love My Local” up and running.

Mr. Sibley said the ECDC is continuing to see what areas of the township need some help in economic and community development.

Mr. Philips stated the new business welcome idea is a good one and the ECDC should reach out to Kathy Brandon, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, and her staff since many of our resident businesses are members.

Mr. Philips also pointed out there is a lot of high end development and not a lot of affordable housing. He suggested the ECDC may want to explore ways with the township planner to figure out how to attract developers who would provide a good balance in the housing market.

Mr. Jenaway commented unlike many communities of our size we do not have an economic development director. He said the BID fills that role in some ways and the planning department fills it when someone comes to them as opposed to reaching out to try to get those types of developments.

Mr. Jenaway said he has had a concern for a number of years that there is too much of a focus on a retail multi-use type of environment. He pointed out there are two or three specific types of industries we do not have in Upper Merion Township that are futuristic that could bring balance and a totally difference type of feel to portions of Upper Merion Township. Mr. Jenaway said if we start looking more at bringing true health care partners to Upper Merion Township it would provide extreme value and we have the facilities and space to accommodate them. He pointed out there is an entire business park that is prime for renovation. Another plus is Upper Merion is the hub of transportation in this county.

Mrs. Kenney mentioned she would like to see the new chief public information officer prioritize the welcome packet for new residents and also work with the ECDC on contacting the new businesses. She said she would also like to see proactive contact with the businesses to encourage them to support our fire and emergency services fundraising campaigns as many of our businesses are lax in their participation. It was noted residents have been very generous. Mrs. Kenney suggested obtaining figures from the Fire & Rescue Services Board about the number of calls they receive for the mall, for example, per day, per week, per month and per year and how many calls they get from businesses.

Mrs. Kenney asked for an explanation of the difference between a beer fest and a beer garden. Mrs. Spott responded a beer fest is an event at which a

variety of beers are available for purchase. There may be beers from a particular area or a particular brewing style. A beer garden is a community event held regularly (not just one day or weekend event) and is envisioned as a family place in a park and close to recreation where there is food and music.

Ms. Strohecker said Park and Recreation has taken the lead with regard to the beer garden idea and once this idea is implemented, ECDC will have the opportunity to become involved and be supportive.

Mr. Waks asked if ECDC has thought about revisiting Vision 2020 to either update or work it in with a smart analysis. Ms. Strohecker responded the ECDC has not talked about that for a year or so and she would be interested in talking this over with the ECDC members. Mr. Sibley commented Vision 2020 could be used as source material for further discussion.

Mr. Waks commented he has been involved in a lot of SWOT analysis in the past and he found unless the W and T portion are brutally honest then it is not as valuable as it should be.

Referring to 600 pages of multi-year planning items that are being recommended, Mr. Jenaway said the idea of revisiting Vision 2020 and providing some economic development initiatives would fit into long term planning and would be very beneficial.

ZONING HEARING BOARD

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Philips, Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Erika Spott, and Carole Kenney. Also present were: Dave Kraynik, Township Manager; Sally Slook, Assistant Township Manager; John Tallman, Chairman; Mark DePillis, Vice Chairman; Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin.

Mr. John Tallman, Chairman, reviewed some of the Zoning Hearing Board statistics from 2015. He noted there were 26 cases presented to the Zoning Hearing Board. Of those 26 cases, 11 were commercial and of those 11, three were withdrawn and one is still pending. Four applications were approved and three were denied. One of the denials is currently in court, but it is not active. There were 15 residential cases, three were withdrawn, one is still pending, ten were approved and one was partially approved.

Mr. Jenaway asked if there were any trends to be aware of as the modification continues on certain portions of the zoning code. Mr. Tallman responded signs and sheds are two of the current trends. He also said they are receiving fewer applications which is due to some of the zoning changes being made. This year to date there have only been three cases.

Mark Zadroga, Zoning Officer, said he is constantly getting calls regarding digital signs. Mr. Jenaway commented this is a next generation issue that will have to be monitored as the technology changes.

Mrs. Spott asked if any of the 26 cases were particularly contested or had a community presence. Mr. Tallman responded the application for the tower on Hughes Road was the most contested by neighbors. It is likely that a different application will be submitted as this area needs to be covered for 911.

Mrs. Spott asked about the Airbnb's where people rent out a room in their homes and if it is something to be reviewed in the zoning code. Mr. Zadroga said there was one application and it was withdrawn.

Mrs. Spott asked about people who want to raise chickens. It was noted the code allows for that. Mr. Zadroga mentioned it is for people with a heavy deer population since the chickens or hens eat deer ticks.

Mr. Philips asked if the Zoning Hearing Board has had an opportunity to hear any variances based on the new zoning changes. Mr. Tallman responded they have not received any applications based on the new code.

Mr. Jenaway asked about the use of drones and if there is a need to have a restriction in various types of zoning districts. Mr. Zadroga responded he is not aware that it is addressed anywhere in the zoning code, but he understands the concern. Mr. Jenaway stated the use of drones can be an invasion of privacy and an invasion of business interests as well. He asked Mr. Zadroga to see if anybody is looking into that issue. He is aware the Chief of Police is looking into what ordinances might be applicable.

PLANNING COMMISSION

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Philips, Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Erika Spott, and Carole Kenney. Also present were: David Kraynik, Township Manager; Sally Slook, Assistant Township Manager; Rob Loeper, Township Planner, Kyle Brown, Associate Planner; Jaquelin Camp, Chairperson, Matthew Popek, Vice Chairperson; Todd Brown.

Ms. Jaquelin Camp, Chairperson, stated the Planning Commission held 16 meetings in 2015. They have also continued to work their way through a number of sections of the zoning code making some revisions, especially around the mixed-use development in the business park and transit oriented development (TOD) near some of the transit stations in the township. A fair amount of time has been spent discussing changes in the township looking at things such as impacts that are likely to happen from the extension of the rail

line. The commission is also working its way through the first test of the TOD ordinance and where else that might come into play.

As far as long range planning issues going forward, the rail extension will be a huge planning issue. Commission members have been participating in the SEPTA discussions at the public meetings that are being held to get a feel for community concerns. The commission will be active in SEPTA's planning process.

The other long range issue for the next year for the planning commission is to begin to look at the multi-year process of reworking the Comprehensive Plan. The Montgomery County Planning Commission will be taking the lead role, but the local planning commission will participate in the process and provide input that they need.

Ms. Camp stated as decisions are made about the routing of the Route 100 extension, the planning commission will take a real significant lead role to anticipate how those stations can best be planned for the community.

Mr. Rob Loeper, Township Planner, said he spoke with Liz Smith, Manager, Long Range Planning, SEPTA, today about the rail extension and also a few other development plans near railroad stations – the Losty and Renaissance plans. He said Mr. O'Neill will be reaching out to Ms. Smith to discuss what is being done at Renaissance as it might relate to the SEPTA rail station on the Route 100 line.

Mr. Loeper stated the county has started working on the Comprehensive Plan. Much of this initial phase consists of data collection, demographics, economics, and socio-economic data. He said the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) calls for the local planning commission to take the leadership role on a comprehensive plan and suggested the formation of a comprehensive plan steering committee to report back to the planning commission. Mr. Loeper said a successful planning effort will have the community engaged in the process.

Mr. Jenaway asked Mr. Kraynik to have the discussion of the process for a new comprehensive plan including the establishment of a steering committee placed on the June workshop agenda. Mr. Jenaway stated he has the opportunity in his daily work to review comprehensive plans and most fail to have comprehensive input from a variety of municipal departments. In order to enhance the ultimate outcome, he emphasized the importance of including the Transportation Authority, the Municipal Utility Authority, the Police Department, and Park and Recreation.

Matthew Popek, Vice Chairperson, stated he has had the opportunity to take part in one of the large scale workshops the county is doing on a comprehensive plan for the eastern part of the county and they were very

successful in getting a very large turnout to one of the visioning workshops. For a particularly small borough they had 150 people turn out one night to take an in depth look at what they wanted their town to look like in the next couple of decades.

Mrs. Kenney asked if there is a specific timeline envisioned for this process. Mr. Loeper responded the contract with the county is for three years.

Mr. Philips asked how the comprehensive plan process differs from the Vision 2020 process. Mr. Loeper responded Vision 2020 are ideas and concepts about things you would like to see achieved in the township. They are not necessarily measurable objectives or task oriented whereas the comprehensive plan should be much more focused and detailed. Mr. Loeper pointed out the notable transformation that has occurred in Upper Merion Township since 2000 and how this township is now on everyone's radar as the place to be. He said the fact that there is not a lot of raw land is not a reason to plan and he listed some of the promising opportunities that are presenting themselves now and in the future.

Mr. Waks said it is important to note that while Vision 2020 was accepted way back in time, it was never approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Mark McKee provided some of his insights about the comprehensive plan and said the next steps should be taken, implemented and enforced. With regard to the Fed Ex independent contractors, he would like to make it clear to the drivers they must not cut through neighborhoods and adhere to commitments made at public meetings.

Mr. Waks commented during recent zoning workshop meetings discussion focused on adjusting some of the heavy industrial areas to provide additional options for future housing as these areas get redeveloped. He pointed out there are a lot of areas of Upper Merion Township where there is heavy industrial zoning right next to residential zoning.

Mr. Jenaway stated the comprehensive plan will be a challenge for everyone involved but having this as an agenda item for the June workshop will be a good start to decide who will be on the team to work with the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES BOARD

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Philips, Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Erika Spott, and Carole Kenney. Also present were: Dave Kraynik, Township Manager; Sally Slook, Assistant Township Manager; Greg Amato, Lafayette

Ambulance; Gerry Recupido, Swedesburg Fire Company; Mike DeStefano; Bill Daywalt, Deputy Fire Marshal; Charles Rossi, Citizen Representative.

Bill Daywalt, Deputy Fire Marshal, provided 2015 statistics as follows:

- Lafayette Ambulance responded to 3,349 emergency incidents
- Swedeland, Swedesburg and King of Prussia Volunteer Fire Companies responded to a total of 1,095 emergency incidents
- Incidents per Response District
 - Swedeland VFC – 246 incidents
 - Swedesburg VFC – 100 incidents
 - King of Prussia VFC – 611 incidents
 - Mutual Aid Outside UMT – 137 incidents
- Highlights all three fire companies:
 - Recognized for their Fire and Life Safety Prevention Programs
 - Recognized by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner for meeting National training standards
 - Received re-certification at various levels for rescue operations from Department of Health
- Lafayette Ambulance
 - Renewed their BLS and ALS license from Department of Health
 - Pursuing CAAS accreditation which is a multi-step, multi-year comprehensive initiative that will improve overall performance, increase quality and reduce risk and liability
 - Pursuing a “Prepared for Pediatrics” recognition program from the Department of Health
- Other Highlights:
 - All volunteer fire companies and ambulance squad have received various, federal, state and local grants that were obtained to support operations, building maintenance and building improvements and recruitment and retention
 - Fire and Rescue Services Board has also received and reviewing the consultant’s draft Report Fire and Rescue Services & Strategic Plan
 - Comments and clarification regarding the draft report and plan are due back to the Township by June 15, 2016
 - Township staff will collect and submit comments to the consultant for their review, comment and edits to the report and plan
 - Final draft anticipated August 2016
- In addition to handling 911 emergencies:
 - Mandatory training
 - Skill based training
 - Public relations events
 - Community training
 - Services at community events
 - School programs through UMASD

- Community business partnerships
- Fundraising
- Attend various local, county and state meetings
- Administrative tasks

Mr. Daywalt stated they are currently recruiting from volunteers to fill various tasks such as firefighters, emergency medical services, and administrative help with the departments.

Mr. Philips asked for more details about recruitment and retention for the fire and rescue services. Mr. Daywalt responded they are always looking for emergency responders, firefighters, paramedics, and EMT's. They are recruiting some of the younger members in the community from the school district and training them. Mr. Daywalt said the problem with the young volunteers is they may not come back after college.

Mr. Philips said a certain number of people are needed to fight a fire or run the engine and asked how they make sure these positions are recruited and filled. Response: We try to get as many people as we can. When you go to an emergency if you do not have enough personnel you can always call for help.

Mr. Daywalt outlined some of the programs the fire departments have with the school district such as "Alcohol Awareness" during prom season, fire prevention and career days.

Mr. Jenaway mentioned discussions held with the Media Board and ECDC regarding a welcome packet for new residents which could include information about the fire departments and ambulance squad as well as a membership application. It was noted the discussion also focused on ways to engage the business community into better fundraising opportunities for fire and EMS.

Mr. Jenaway asked Mr. DeStefano to talk about the success his son had last year at the national competitions for firefighting.

Mr. Waks noted if our fire and rescue services were fully paid for by the taxpayers as opposed to being volunteer based it would cost the taxpayers approximately \$9 million. Mr. Waks said while saving lives is more important than saving money the fact that the volunteer services make it easier for our residents financially is appreciated as well.

Mr. Jenaway mentioned at last year's State Firemen's Association Convention Upper Merion came away with prizes, plaques and financial awards for our fire prevention education in the community.

TRANSPORTATION/GENERAL AUTHORITIES

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Philips, Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Erika Spott, and Carole Kenney. Also present were: Dave Kraynik, Township Manager and Executive Secretary to the Authorities; Sally Slook, Assistant Township Manager; Tom Kohler, Chairman, Carlton Stuart, Secretary.

Mr. Tom Kohler, Chairperson, mentioned his predecessor, Mike Santillo, who was the chair of this Authority for over 30 years and passed away last fall. It was noted Mike was a great leader for the Transportation Authority in ushering in many projects across the township and his years of service are deeply appreciated by the Transportation Authority and Upper Merion community.

Mr. Kohler stated the Transportation Authority works with stakeholders to design construction projects and provide the public with safe and efficient travel throughout the township. The Authority has been in existence since the early to mid-1980's and has worked to complete over \$1 billion worth of road work in Upper Merion Township. Some of the stakeholders include residents, businesses, Board of Supervisors, other state and local elected officials, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Montgomery County, the National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration.

Mr. Kohler discussed some of the recently completed and current projects which include:

- Valley Forge Roadway Improvements (near the Community Center) at Caley Road and General Knox Road adding a long desired traffic signal for safety.
- I-76 West Ramps at Henderson Road & Widenings (Phase 1)
- South Henderson Road Widening (Phase II) between Monroe Boulevard and Queen Drive
- US 422 Projects and Sullivan's Trail over Schuylkill River
- PA 23 Trout Creek Bridge Replacement
- Church Road Bridge over SEPTA Route 100 Line

Mrs. Kenney asked about the portion of the Schuylkill trail that is closed now for safety reasons due to construction. Mr. Kohler responded there are two components to the trail. He explained there is a component that still has to be constructed on land that is still owned by the state and was never conveyed to the National Park Service in the mid-70's when Valley Forge State Park became a national park. Mr. Kohler said he (through Rep. Tim Briggs Office) and Mr. Kraynik were working to get the land transfer through the state legislature. Once the parcels are transferred, by the end of the year, the township can finish its portion of the trail. The remaining portion under 422 will be completed as part of

PennDOT's bridge project. PennDOT will build an asphalt trail underneath 422 which will tie into the new Sullivan's Bridge. With regard to the trail portion that is closed due to construction, Mr. Kraynik stated the closure is only temporary. Currently it is a safety issue with heavy equipment and as soon as that is out of the immediate area PennDOT has indicated they will reopen the trail.

With regard to Beidler Road/Valley Forge Road, Mr. Jenaway asked if anything would be needed to be done to modify access points in view of the new development. Mr. Kohler responded the reason why this was redesigned is that the original plan had Beidler Road from approximately Vandenburg down to Valley Forge Road one way to eliminate left turns at that spot. It is now proposed to put in a left turn lane and keep it a two lane road. Mr. Kohler stated it is worth noting the original plan had a sidewalk on the north side and the new design will have sidewalks on both sides of the road.

Future Projects Include:

- Prince Frederick Extension
- Community Center potential multi-use trails
- Potential PA Turnpike Interchange at Henderson Road
- Potential PA Turnpike Interchange at Valley Forge Road
- Remaining S. Gulph Road and Henderson Road Widening (Phase 3)
- South Gulph Road Widening – Church Road to Long Road

Mr. Jenaway observed a couple of the items on the drawing board will address some key issues. He pointed out in looking at the demographics of where employees come from to get to Upper Merion Township there are three items that will be directly impacted positively to get people in and out of Upper Merion and relieve some of the traffic congestions.

Mr. Kohler said the Henderson Road ramps for the Turnpike alone have the potential to make some drastic changes.

As Board liaison to the Transportation Authority, Mr. Philips commented the Transportation Authority represents one of the best examples of forward thinking progress in the township. He said a lot of the projects have a long lead time and the Authority has the foresight to identify what is going to make a difference in the community.

Although not specifically an Authority project, Mr. Kohler mentioned the signalization upgrades with traffic adaptive signals on US 202 and Henderson Road that help keep traffic flowing.

Mr. Kohler pointed out the Transportation Authority does a lot of the groundwork whether it is a right-of-way acquisition or engineering and preliminary design. The benefit of that foresight is the project for the Henderson Road

Ramps off the Schuylkill was “shovel ready” when the economic stimulus project was announced. Because the land was acquired and engineering and design were completed this project was completed about three years ahead of schedule.

Mr. Philips said the Transportation Authority engineer Jack Smyth, Jr. and his firm, Boles Smyth, are looked to as the experts in this area for transportation projects. When the county decided to do the Pennsylvania Turnpike study they came to our Authority to get that expertise.

With regard to the township’s adaptive traffic signaling system, Mr. Jenaway stated the township received one regional award and one state-award for that innovative system.

Mr. Kohler commented the Keebler Road Bridge by the Upper Merion Middle School will be closing this summer for reconstruction. It is part of a PennDOT bundling project. People will use the detour along Valley Forge Road.

Mr. Jenaway asked when the Church Road Bridge project is anticipated to begin. Mr. Kohler responded there is not an exact date as yet; however, it is hoped it will start by the end of the year. This project will involve a detour using Crooked Lane, Yerkes Road, Shoemaker Road and Henderson Road.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved by Mr. Jenaway, seconded by Mr. Waks, all voting “Aye” to adjourn the joint meeting at 10:00 p.m. None opposed. Motion approved 4-0.

DAVID G. KRAYNIK
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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Minutes Approved:
Minutes Entered: