

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORKSHOP MEETING
NOVEMBER 3, 2016

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Workshop Meeting on Thursday, November 3, 2016, in the Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m., followed by a pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Philips, Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, and Carole Kenney. Also present were: Dave Kraynik, Township Manager; Joseph McGrory, Solicitor; Rob Loeper, Township Planner; Bill Daywalt, Deputy Fire Marshal. Supervisor Erika Spott was absent.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

Chairman Jenaway reported a second series of budget meetings were held earlier this afternoon covering three departments which completes the budget workshops scheduled for 2016. A budget presentation is scheduled for the November 17th business meeting and the budget will be posted immediately thereafter.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mr. Jenaway stated there is one item for the Consent Agenda – appointment of Evelyn Ankers, Christopher Levy, and Sharon Davis to the Community Center Advisory Board. He said with these appointments there will be a full complement of five members on this advisory board.

Board Action:

It was moved by Mr. Philips, seconded by Mr. Waks, all voting “Aye” to appoint the above named individuals to the Community Center Advisory Board. None opposed. Motion approved 4-0.

DISCUSSIONS:

UPDATE ON FIRE AND EMS STUDY

Brian P. Duggan, Director, Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management Services for Municipal Resources, provided an overview of the fire and EMS organizational study. The purpose of the study was to review the level of service provided in the community and the structure and operations of the existing fire

and rescue services. There were 133 recommendations provided for potential improvements.

Mr. Duggan stated there is a recognition of the strain of recruitment and retention and the dwindling number of volunteers which is forefront both in the report and in the community. It was noted currently the rescue services do a good job of handling incidents and the community should be proud because good value is being provided to the community as a whole. Other positive comments concern the proactive fire sprinkler requirement; currently about 15% of the housing is covered by residential sprinklers.

Peter J. Finley, project manager, Municipal Resources, Inc., stated despite the fact the fire and rescue services do a very good job there are some areas of concern and a need for improvement.

Mr. Finley indicated Upper Merion has about 57-66 truly active members of the fire and rescue services which are far short of the 90-125 that are often stated. He said the township has started an active program to recruit and retain volunteer personnel which is a very positive Best Management Practice and should be continued. Mr. Finley mentioned the township's digital sign as a positive recruiting tool which will be used by Municipal Resources in other reports as an example of a good recruiting practice.

Mr. Duggan commented it is clear the community is proactively engaged in recruiting new volunteers and retaining current membership. He observed the multiple venues the township uses for recruiting purposes including programming on UMGA-TV, the township's Government Access channel.

Mr. Finley discussed response time for incidents. He said the target is to have a unit on location within nine minutes of dispatch 90% of the time. Staffing is particularly limited during the day which is something to be expected in a community staffed by volunteers. People have their primary jobs and tend to be more available nights and weekends and traffic conditions throughout the township render the traditional volunteer response model obsolete.

Mr. Finley stated station locations no longer best serve the needs of current day and future Upper Merion. He said Swedeland and Swedesburg developed in a different era and are not well positioned within their own district just a block and a half from Bridgeport. Mr. Finley pointed out some of the issues with these stations.

Mr. Finley pointed out the apparatus fleet is too large and exceeds the needs of the community. Some units respond to less than 100 incidents per year. The busiest company is King of Prussia which responded to approximately 320 calls last year. For communities with a comparable population of 25,000-50,000 about 46% have three or four pumpers. Just a quarter have five or more

and Upper Merion currently has seven (7). It was noted the replacement plan and time line are overly generous and costly.

With regard to the rapid growth in the western part of the township, Mr. Finley stated emergency services are not well poised to serve that area. Some estimates indicate that the township's population could increase by 20% or more based upon development occurring there. A 20% increase in population will increase call volume and response times which are concerns. On a positive note everything will be equipped with fire suppression systems which will lessen the chances of having a serious fire.

Mr. Duggan offered the following recommendations in terms of organizational structure:

- Eliminate the fire and rescue services board in its current form and restructure
- Reorganize the fire and rescue services as a stand-alone department within township government creating not four entities, but a single Upper Merion Fire and Rescue Department
- Safety and Codes Enforcement should be a division within Fire and Rescue Services
- One of the most important considerations is the consolidation of the command structure providing direction oversight from a single person who would be a new career Fire and Rescue Chief
- Reorganize the remainder of fire and rescue services under the township umbrella and stress the township-wide identity as one single organization.
- Policies, rules, procedures and training should all be established and coordinated township-wide for consistency
- Continue to enhance volunteer recruitment and retention efforts
- Hire five career firefighter EMT's to supplement staff during the day when volunteer availability is low.
- Looking at the community, the projected growth of the community and the traffic patterns is the ability to meet the standard of cover and the requirements of NFPA 1720 using the volunteer model. This would provide in station duty crews that would still be volunteers but allow response to be generated from the stations quicker.
- Implement revised standard of cover benchmarks and improve compliance percentages.
- Decisions to repurpose or surplus units need to be made to right size the fleet.
- Relocating King of Prussia's Ladder 47 from Station A to Station B (i.e., the headquarter's station) closer to development and the King of Prussia Mall.
- Develop standardized township-wide apparatus specifications.
- Revise apparatus replacement schedule to keep pumpers in front line service for 15-20 years and spare status for an additional 5-10 years. This

would mean in a community where the run volume is relatively low you would have an engine 15 to 20 years in front line service depending on condition and an additional five or ten as spare apparatus. The idea of a spare or reserve apparatus offers flexibility because it is not owned by a single organization and can shift from station to station if another piece of apparatus goes down and is in need.

Mr. Finley stated because of the concerns about the growing area of the west end of the township it is recommended the township enter into a serious discussion with Tredyffrin Township regarding the possibilities for a joint shared services endeavor regarding the Guthrie Road Station. Upper Merion Township has been offered a piece of land to have a fire station built at the Village at Valley Forge on the western township border. With the station in that location only half of the radius around is going to be in Upper Merion but it will provide good 4 minute coverage into areas without that coverage currently and will provide response for multiple directions into some of the areas where there is the heaviest congestion in the township right now.

Mr. Finley discussed the opposite end of the township where Swedesburg is only a block and a half from Bridgeport which is a borough of about 3/4th of a square mile with two fire companies. Swedesburg often has to go past those stations to get to other areas. He said it would make sense to consolidate those three stations into a single station and perhaps move it somewhere better suited to the changing needs of the community but still have easy access into the traditional areas. If that were negotiated and accomplished then the Swedeland Station could be moved further south which would take care of some of the areas where the 4 minute response is exceeded. It may also provide an opportunity to enter into discussions about a regional or shared services agreement with West Conshohocken. Mr. Finley indicated these are good ideas and any time it is possible to regionalize or share services today will be beneficial, but each municipality has to determine if the benefits are going to outweigh any negatives.

With regard to Lafayette Ambulance, Mr. Finley stated they need either a new station or possibly consideration if some of these station consolidations occur deploying from two different locations. One of the concerns when discussing consolidating stations is that they did not want to lose the name of their station. Mr. Finley said there are ways to do this so that companies retain some semblance of their traditional identity.

Mr. Finley stated the 133 recommendations were developed into a strategic plan. Not all of the recommendations are in the strategic plan, but the most important ones are noted. The strategic plan should be viewed as a road map for the future direction of the fire and rescue services over the next decade. It is referred to as a road map rather than blueprint because a road map suggests there may be different ways to accomplish the same objective whereas a blueprint indicates it be done in a certain way.

The strategic plan included a S.W.O.T analysis for the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to Upper Merion Fire and Rescue. There were 11 task groups developed to be assigned responsibility for looking at recommendations and working to implement them. It includes timelines, critical tasks, what the township needs to do to implement those recommendations and potential barriers to implementation. Also are included challenges to overcome to implement recommendations. It is a living document that needs to be evaluated in an ongoing manner and updated as necessary. Once many of these recommendations are implemented it should be viewed as a tool to achieve accreditation on a township-wide basis as opposed to strictly one organization.

Mr. Finley stated the challenge is making the transition from old Upper Merion to new Upper Merion and changing the service delivery model to keep up with the demographics and development in the community.

Mr. Finley asked that each of the 133 recommendations be given careful consideration. Each recommendation should be viewed as a goal and approached strategically and systematically. He suggested developing short and long term goals broken down into manageable pieces and recognize each as an accomplishment.

Mr. Jenaway commented it is important to sustain the volunteerism aspect of Upper Merion's Fire and Rescue Service community.

Mr. Waks asked for clarification about the report's critique of the Fire and Rescue Services Board, Mr. Finley responded it was recommended that the fire chief be the department head and then the Fire and Rescue Services Board reconfigured as an advisory to the chief the same way the police advisory board is to the police chief.

Mr. Waks asked how to get more businesses and those with financial resources involved in helping to provide additional economic resources to fire companies as opposed to putting the burden on the taxpayers. Mr. Duggan responded the key is community outreach and being a physical presence as businesses are opening or being developed and letting people know there is a path to benefit fire and rescue services as a whole. Mr. Finley commented some departments have also formed foundations to make those connections with the business community.

Mr. Jenaway asked a question about equipment (off microphone). Mr. Finley responded they tried to balance the equipment needs throughout the community and felt that as the department is deployed currently knowing that some of the decisions such as station relocations are several years in the future there should be four first line pumpers, two ladders because of the amount of

commercial growth and two rescues in service. It was noted once a fire is dispatched wherever it is in the township additional resources are available from neighboring municipalities that are bringing additional apparatus and personnel on the initial response. Mr. Finley said it is a matter of balancing the staffing and the needs of the community and trying to keep it spread throughout the township as a whole. He pointed out the older areas of the township that are not as heavily sprinklered are the most significant fire problem.

Mr. Jenaway asked what should be advocated for placement of a vehicle at the proposed station at the Village at Valley Forge since that would have to go into the mix of the apparatus. Mr. Finley responded initially a pumper and an ambulance would be appropriate resources if that was a secondary deployment area.

Mr. Jenaway stated he did not hear much comment about the EMS systems data management or the integration of EMS into the fire department yet it is recommended to have a person in theory running both fire and EMS. Mr. Finley responded he believes the EMS reporting system had some limitations with regard to the plotting of locations and it was not possible for Municipal Resources to look at the data to get a good handle on that. With regard to the second question, Mr. Finley called attention to the organizational structure they set up for a career fire and rescue chief and six deputy chiefs – one for King of Prussia, Swedeland, Swedesburg and Lafayette and a deputy chief would be in charge of codes and life safety and a deputy chief for training and volunteer recruitment and retention which would integrate EMS into the overall organizational structure.

Mr. Jenaway commented he did not see mention of the proposed implementation of working with the health care systems for any type of community para-medical services. Mr. Finley responded he believes that was mentioned in the report. He stated it is definitely something the township should continue to look at since it would be very beneficial.

Mrs. Kenney asked for more details regarding the mention of the oversupply of apparatus, particularly in view of the proposed station at Guthrie Road in the western portion of the township. Mr. Finley responded if that station were to come to fruition and be built there would be a need for an engine there which would total five front line engines. He said they are not recommending that all the spare engines be eliminated, but are recommending the oldest one which is about 19 years old be surplused and auctioned off. The other two are recommended for reserve status which is a unit out of service but that can be utilized if there is a major fire. The object is to keep them so they are not in day to day use, but preserved so they can fill in holes when other units are out of service.

With regard to the possible location on Guthrie Road, Mrs. Kenney asked

if there is a sense of how large that station should be. Mr. Duggan responded that was viewed as a smaller 5,000 square foot two-bay substation. Two bays wide and double deep with appropriate meeting and living facilities attached.

Mr. Jenaway stated the Fire and Rescue Services Board now has the opportunity discuss this report at a series of meetings and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors with their concept and implementation plan. He said it is the full intent to use this report in moving forward for public safety in Upper Merion Township.

SHADE TREE COMMISSION AND REPRESENTATIVE FROM DCNR TO DISCUSS EMERALD ASH BORER ISSUE ALONG HEUSER PARK TRAIL

Donald A. Eggen, Division Chief, Forest Health Division, Bureau of Forestry, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, provided an update on the entrance of the emerald ash borer (EAB) into Montgomery County and reported on his October 20th site visit along the Heuser Park trail where several ash trees are threatened by this invasive insect.

Mr. Eggen explained the beetles are hard to detect because they do their work out of sight, tunneling into ash trees and feeding under the bark. By the time borer damage becomes evident in the form of a thinning crown, it is too late to save the tree. The problem is when an ash tree dies it becomes very brittle. An oak or maple when it dies can stand for a while. Because dead ashes are so dangerous to cut down, arborists charge steep fees to remove them. While the cost of prevention can be steep, it is cheaper in the long run. The most expensive option is doing nothing.

Mr. Eggen stated something definitely needs to be done about the ash along the trail. He recommended a management plan as a first step in order to obtain direction on what should also be done with the trees farther back in the forest.

Mr. Eggen explained the process for treating some trees with a systemic insecticide to save them. The trees are injected at the base with an insecticide that travels up the trunk with the sap.

Once the management plan is completed it will be possible to know if there is an option to have someone pay to remove the trees for fire wood. Mr. Eggen pointed out there are a few trees that will provide good size logs. Other funds might be obtained through the federal government and DCNR for restoration. He said DCNR has helped about 10 communities in Pennsylvania develop ash management plans and obtain cost share funding to treat trees in their parks and along their streets.

Mr. Jenaway asked about a reasonable timeline to take action on a

remedial plan. Response: it depends on what the decisions are as to options. When the management plan is formulated there will be a better idea of expectations and which options to pursue. For a timber harvest it should be done during a dry year so the ground is operable probably late summer into fall or winter.

Mr. Jenaway asked when damage starts to occur if nothing is done. Mr. Eggen responded it is not possible to tell if the emerald ash borer is attacking the ash tree until it is too late. He said his best guess is that it is probably already here and over the next 5-6 years there would be visible damage and mortality. Mr. Eggen mentioned he always advises people if they do not see the damage and want to treat the tree with insecticide do it now before there is a problem.

Mr. Jenaway stated there is more planning to be done with coordination with the Park and Recreation Board once the management study is completed to see how everything fits into the bigger picture and also to determine what the costs might be.

Mr. Philips asked for more details about the treatment and the effectiveness of treating the ash trees with a chemical. Mr. Eggen responded with emamectin benzoate the treatment is 100% effective for two years. Research has shown it can last up to 3-5 years with a single inoculation. The insecticide is injected into sap wood at the base of the tree and goes through the tree's circulatory system up to the top of the tree and stays in the sapwood where the larvae feed.

Mr. Philips asked the cost of the treatment for each tree. Mr. Eggen responded it is based on the size of the diameter of the tree and indicated the costs are listed on their webpage.

Mr. Philips asked about the tree inventory conducted by the Shade Tree Commission. Ms. Barley Van Clief responded she and Bob Dempsey were assigned the tree inventory at the Heuser Park trail and they were overwhelmed by the massive amount of ash trees which were too numerous to count. She noted the trees next to the trail are 90% ash.

Mr. Philips asked if cost sharing would be available for the chemical treatment for the 90% ash trees along the trail. Mr. Eggen responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Philips asked what type of replacement trees are recommended. Mr. Eggen responded that would be determined in the management plan as to what other species to use. He did not recommend replanting ash at this time.

Mrs. Kenney asked where the emerald ash borer is now in Montgomery County. Mr. Eggen responded it is very close to the Bucks County line. He

mentioned that is just where it was detected, but it could be in other places since they are not doing systematic surveys.

Mrs. Kenney asked about the infestations that have already occurred in other places in the country and if the emerald ash borer population declines in an area when their food source is gone. Mr. Eggen responded the emerald ash borer does decline; however, the beetle can attack a tree down to the diameter of one inch.

Mrs. Kenney asked for more details about the ash trees at Heuser Park. Mr. Eggen responded the trees that have to be removed are the ones along the trail because those are the hazard trees. The trees back in the woods will not hit anything when they fall down; however, there are a lot of them. A management plan would provide a tree inventory and dictate various options for harvesting.

Mr. Philips pointed out a notation on a brochure indicating, "do not move firewood because you can spread emerald ash borer." Mr. Eggen commented that is how the emerald ash borer got to Colorado.

Mr. Philips said if the management plan calls for harvesting some of the ash trees how is it possible to know where the trees are going and if the pest is going with them. Mr. Eggen responded the trees that are harvested can be shipped to anywhere inside Pennsylvania.

Mr. Jenaway stated as the management plan is developed appropriate outreach to the general public will be determined.

CALEY ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 435
CROSSFIELD ROAD, REPLACEMENT SCHOOL WITH ASSOCIATED
FEATURES, AMENITIES AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT. 19.62 ACRES,
R-2A RESIDENTIAL

Dr. John Toleno, Superintendent, Upper Merion Area School District, stated the proposal to replace the Caley building with a new school will be discussed at this meeting. He mentioned there is also a proposal not before the Board of Supervisors at this meeting to replace the current Gulph School (which is not operational as a school) with a school building. Each of the buildings will be approximately 525 students.

Dr. Toleno stated the proposed new Caley School building will be built behind the current structure because it will be necessary to keep the current structure in operation as the new one is built. Once construction of the new building is completed the original Caley School will be removed. Construction is anticipated late spring with completion in time for school opening in September 2018.

Mr. Ken Bissinger, site engineer, Renew Design Group, reviewed the site plan for Caley Elementary School and pointed out various aspects of the proposal including the new entry way for parent drop off, parking for the school, new bus entrance and bus loop for pick up and drop off. The bus pick up and parent drop off are separated as a safety consideration. Mr. Bissinger also pointed out the various play fields.

The township ordinance calls for a significant buffer from all the residential areas as well as a significant stormwater management plan. The site naturally flows from the back to the front toward Caley Road. There is no existing stormwater management on the site. A combination of detention infiltration basins is proposed along the front of the property. The basins will be landscaped heavily in the bottom to meet DEP requirements to handle both water quantity and water quality.

Mr. Bissinger indicated the applicant was before the planning commission recently with several residents in attendance. Most of the residents questions concerned stormwater and current loitering in the parking area causing minor disturbances. They also discussed lighting in the parking lot. Mr. Bissinger said the township has a reasonably stringent lighting ordinance and the applicant has developed a lighting plan showing how the ordinance is met. It was noted the parking lot is well lit but does not spill onto the residential areas.

Mr. David Schrader, Schrader Group Architecture, reviewed the proposed floor plan of the two-story building, what it would look like and how it is structured inside. It was noted the overall building footprint would be decreased. The building composition is brick and some cementitious product to look more like siding on the homes in the area. There will be quite a bit of glass in the classroom structures to introduce daylight for the building spaces.

Dr. Toleno mentioned there will be two presentations at Caley for the community members who live within 500 feet of the property in the next two weeks.

Mr. Philips referred to the two baseball fields and soccer field listed on the site plan and asked how that compares with what is currently there. Dr. Toleno responded there are currently several softball fields in the back and in between one is used as a soccer field. He explained the reason why they went with baseball is because there are several softball fields in the community and it was decided that baseball would better meet the needs of the community.

Mr. Philips said one of the things the Board of Supervisors heard about this plan was that the fields were going away. Dr. Toleno responded the fields are going away for a period of time while they are constructing the building. Once the building is constructed there will be two baseball fields (instead of two softball fields) and a soccer field which is similar to what is there now. It was

noted the school district does not make very much use of softball fields and their need was for baseball fields as a replacement.

Mr. Philips asked for details about safety considerations to protect anything on Caley Road from outside the park baseballs. Response: there will be a whole series of back stops and fences on Caley Road.

Mr. Philips asked how emergency services vehicles will navigate around the north side of the site and if pavers will be provided in the grassy area. Response: the fire marshal has looked at this and the current access was pointed out on the plan. It was noted the fire marshal did not ask for any type of pavers to get around the site.

Mr. Philips asked if there is any intention to have green roofs on a portion of the first floor area. Mr. Schrader responded green roofs are not proposed on this project.

Mr. Philips asked if this project is going to be LEED certified or have energy efficient windows. Mr. Schrader responded this building is being built as if they were doing a LEED Silver project and it will have all of the qualifications that would typically go into it from the site and building requirements. The school district at this time is electing not to go with LEED as the certification but if they decided to do so it would be a LEED Silver project.

Mr. Philips asked when demolition is likely to occur. Mr. Schrader responded demolition is anticipated for the summer of 2018. It would be a phased project working around the building to get all the construction going on one side while the school is being accessed from the other side.

Mr. Waks asked if the planning commission made any recommendations. Mr. Loeper responded this will be on the next planning commission agenda. The Montgomery County Planning Commission letter as well as the first review letter from the Township Engineer have been received.

Mr. Waks asked for clarification about the idea/issue of porous pavement. Mr. Bissinger responded the idea of porous pavement was not outright rejected. He said they did find a couple of good areas for infiltration to handle a lot of the stormwater quality issues on the site. Mr. Bissinger said if they cannot handle the stormwater requirements without porous pavement then it might be considered. Mr. Bissinger felt the applicant is going to be able to meet the requirements with the stormwater system that is currently designed.

Mr. Loeper commented the Montgomery County Planning Commission made some recommendations regarding the parking, landscaping and reconfiguration of the landscape islands to allow them to function more as a bioretention area.

Mr. Philips asked if it is the intention to have basins all along Caley Road. Mr. Schrader responded in the affirmative.

Mrs. Kenney pointed out Caley is used as a polling place and asked if the voting process would be affected in any way. Dr. Toleno responded they plan on leaving Caley as a polling place and their challenge for one day would be moving people around and working out temporary parking but they do not see that as an issue.

Since the footprint is being reduced from 70,000 to 56,000 square feet Mrs. Kenney asked if it reduces the amount of impervious overall. Response: it would not reduce impervious since more parking is being added and this will be addressed with the Zoning Hearing Board. It was noted the applicant is a few percentage points over. Currently the applicant is showing 150 parking spaces on the plan. There are about half that amount on the site right now. The thinking was the extra parking would be good for special events.

Mrs. Kenney questioned doubling the parking spaces and losing all the porosity for the very small number of occasions it would be used. Mr. Schrader responded the applicant will have to address all the stormwater regulations and thereby will not be releasing more water. It was noted the extra parking would also keep people off of Caley Road.

Mrs. Kenney asked if the basins would hold water. Mr. Schrader responded there will not be permanent water. They will have good filtration rates allowing the water to dissipate within a 72 hour period.

Mrs. Kenney said she was thinking in terms of possible danger to kids. Mr. Schrader said the basins will not be that deep. The average basin holds a maximum of 18 inches as it infiltrates into the ground.

Mr. Jenaway asked about the student increase from what it is today. Dr. Toleno responded the increase at Caley is not going to be much more than it is now. The increase district wide is the issue. He said the entire district is going to wind up being redistricted to fill these buildings.

Mr. Jenaway commented with regard to access for emergency vehicles and said he is more concerned with ambulances and police cars for any student injuries.

Mr. Philips asked if there will be any artifacts from the existing school that will be moved over to the new school. Mr. Schrader responded there is a mosaic wall at Caley they are trying to salvage and they are looking at removing a portion of the mosaic as part of the history of Caley to provide a sense of community and continuity in the new building.

Mr. Philips commented on the craftsmanship of the spectacular doors at Caley.

TNHYIF REIV UNIFORM LLC, DBA DOUBLETREE HOTEL; 301 W. DEKALB; REVIEW OF ZONING AND POSSIBLE PARTIAL REDEVELOPMENT. 7.74 ACRES, HI HIGH RISE DISTRICT

Mr. William Connor, Principal and Vice President, Project Management, Avison Young, stated his firm has been asked by DoubleTree Hotel to explore the feasibility of land development in front of the property along DeKalb Pike. Utilizing the aerial, he pointed out various aspects of the immediate area and called attention to the steep slopes which prohibit anyone from traveling along a section of the frontage. It was noted there are three different bus shelters along that entire frontage.

David Fahey, Principal and Managing Director, stated these parcels are ripe for a development to include either a high quality restaurant and/or high quality retail. It is envisioned to create a commercial quality pedestrian experience in the front where today there is nothing but a couple of bus stops. The proposed development as well as the pedestrian component would not only add to the hotel and guest experience but also the 650 units at the apartment complex in back. Mr. Fahey said the two parcels (either 10,000 square feet on each one or 20,000 square feet on one) would make a lot of sense.

Joseph Cirone, land planner, indicated the current High Rise (HI) zoning precludes the restaurant and hotel use and the applicant is interested in exploring whether the Board of Supervisors might be open to considering a different zoning classification which would allow for development along that frontage. The current zoning also requires a 150 foot setback for any buildings which is why that area is currently undeveloped.

Mr. Rob Loeper, Township Planner, indicated during preliminary discussions they discussed portions of the site with significant existing tree cover and it was suggested this should be preserved to the extent possible. The second consideration was walkability and providing for a pedestrian connection. Also discussed was the parking deck in front of the hotel and what could be done to make it more unified with the development. It was noted the concept would be extending the garage as part of what would be the new building and taking advantage of the character of the slope.

Mr. Philips commented the initial concept would be to put a 10,000 square footprint in front of the two-story garage. He asked if there is a concept developed to marry the building with the garage. Mr. Conner responded they have not developed their plans further because they wanted to come before the Board of Supervisors to “test the waters.”

Mr. Philips stated US 202 is a heavily traveled four-lane highway with a lot of stops and starts and asked if it would make sense for ingress and egress at the main entrance (across from Acme) which is serving not only the hotel currently but all of the 251 DeKalb buildings in the back. Response: it is still a detail to be worked out and they recognize the egress/ingress off of US 202 is a significant issue.

Mr. Philips asked for more information about the type of restaurant being considered. Response: they do not have a specific restaurant in mind but conceptually have been looking at higher end restaurants.

A discussion followed about possible options for a restaurant use.

Mr. Waks commented in order for the Board of Supervisors to provide feedback it will be necessary to see more in terms of what the applicant has in mind.

Mr. Connor said the watershed issue is these kinds of uses are not permitted currently and if the Board of Supervisors gave an indication they were open to these uses they would move forward. If the Board would indicate they do not want to do anything with that frontage it would be a clear message not to spend any more time on it.

Mrs. Kenney asked if a sidewalk is proposed the entire length of the property. A response was provided in the affirmative.

In response to Mrs. Kenney question, it was indicated the owners of the DoubleTree Hotel are the owners of this development. As far as the operation more than likely it would be a lease with third party management.

Mr. Loeper commented the current zoning is High Rise Residential which permits multi-family dwelling, municipal, certain retail, business and professional offices and medical clinic. He said hotel, motel and restaurant uses are not permitted. Mr. Loeper provided background on the old High Rise district which encompassed High Rise 1 and High Rise 2. One district allowed hotels and the other did not. It was noted the current Double Tree Hotel is a non-conforming use which is in a High Rise district which does not permit a hotel.

Mr. Jenaway stated since the district in question has not been rezoned as yet, it provides the Board of Supervisors with the option to review this as part of the overall zoning update. He emphasized there are concerns about ingress and egress along US 202 as well as setbacks, buffering and stormwater.

Mr. Jenaway asked the Township Planner to put this on the list of items to review for the High Rise District.

WOODSPRING SUITES PHILADELPHIA KING OF PRUSSIA, LLC, 651 PARK AVENUE, CONSTRUCT A NEW 4-STORY HOTEL BUILDING, APPROXIMATELY 49,880 SQUARE FEET 2.046 ACRES, KPMU ZONING DISTRICT

Hercules W. Grigos, Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell and Hippel, zoning counsel for the project, stated following the last meeting before the Board of Supervisors (October 13, 2016 workshop meeting) there are three issues to discuss regarding conditions as follows:

- That this would not become an apartment complex
- Applicant would abide by architectural standards in SALDO and work out a condition
- Mitigate landscape buffer along Park Avenue for the variance applicant is seeking

Rhett Chiliberti, P.E. indicated at the previous workshop meeting there were concerns regarding the architecture and landscaping. He said Woodspring Suites has engaged Glackin Thomas Panzek, a well-known landscape architect in this area and Matt Caucci will speak in more detail about the plan which includes adding some street or flowering trees along Park Avenue as well as “sprucing up” the common area.

Mr. Caucci discussed the landscape plan along Park Avenue and pointed out the various features on the aerial.

Mr. Caucci stated there are significant utility and drainage easements along the perimeter of the property (Park Avenue, First Avenue and along the rear property line). For purposes of maintaining the infrastructure in those easements the wall was not feasible.

Mr. Waks expressed concern that the building is too big for the parcel. Mr. Grigos responded there is a maximum 75 foot setback in the front and the idea is to have more of an urban setting.

Mr. Loeper commented the Business Improvement District (BID) has a linear park plan for First Avenue that includes the common use area in order to provide a meandering walk experience and some activity space.

Mr. Jenaway stated when the applicant was here last the BID submitted a letter and raised some architectural concerns and asked if the applicant had any issues with the BID’s concerns. Mr. Grigos responded they looked at the SALDO recommendations and have no issues. Mr. Bixler commented there were no major issues and the applicant is certainly willing to work to get architectural elements to align with the requirements. It was noted as far as materials they

have stone and also cementitious siding.

Mr. Philips asked if the applicant is still asking for zoning relief for the setbacks. Mr. Grigos responded it is down to two variances for loading and setback on Park Avenue.

Mr. Philips asked if a hotel room study was done to find out whether this is in a saturated market or if there is availability for the applicant. Response off microphone, "we did."

Mr. Philips asked for clarification about the cementitious siding and the discussion about the use of hardie board siding. Mr. Bixler responded he referred to cementitious hardie board.

Mr. Philips commented hardie board is prefabricated and almost like wood. He said he is sure they have a panelized system. Mr. Philips observed the renderings appear to be stucco and not cementitious siding. Response: The rendering might make it difficult to delineate but the plan calls for hardie plank siding.

Mr. Philips asked for clarification about the drainage easements on the plan and if it is piped draining or swales. Mr. Chileberti responded it is below ground and said there is a large culvert underneath with fiber optics, electric, telephone, and cable.

Mr. Philips asked for more details about the ground cover for the easements. Mr. Caucci responded the proposed multi-stemmed tree would be a flowering tree that would suit Park Avenue such as a dogwood or flowering crab apple. It was noted the plantings would be low and the root structure of a small crab apple or small dogwood is far less likely to create any disturbance with the underground utility.

Mr. Philips restated his question about the ground cover being considered. Mr. Caucci responded the ground cover would get more specific as the landscape plan is developed, but in an area like this the ground cover could be used in areas for seasonal interest such as perennials and hardy junipers but primarily along Park Avenue there will be shrubs.

Mr. Philips asked for more information about the shrubs. Mr. Caucci responded there could be skip laurel, viburnum (depending on height desired), cherry laurel, a mix of evergreen and deciduous, but mostly evergreen providing buffer screening and four season interest.

Mr. Waks asked if there is a way to send this plan to the planning commission before zoning.

Mr. McGrory provided a background summary and indicated the applicant initially asked for three variances one involving loading docks, another one for setback off of Park Avenue (because they are a corner lot and have two front yards) and the third one was for parking. They eliminated the parking variance with a shared parking arrangement that was satisfactory to the Board at the last meeting and have already decided not to oppose the loading dock variance. What remains is the 10 foot setback off of Park Avenue. It was noted the zoning hearing is scheduled for November 16th. He said it is purely discretionary on the Board's part whether they want to oppose or not, but the applicant should be provided with guidance.

After the supervisors expressed their point of view, Mr. Waks pointed out Mrs. Spott was unable to attend this meeting and provide feedback and it would be helpful to have her comments.

REALEN: VR 5 HANOVER DEVELOPMENT: SOMERSET & S. GODDARD BLVD., 6-STORY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING (339 UNITS), 6 LEVEL PARKING GARAGE

Mr. Dennis Maloomian, President of Realen discussed the second phase of the Hanover project which he described as a twin to the phase that is currently under construction in terms of configuration, size and unit mix. He said the second phase would be turned up a notch architecturally and from an amenity perspective and will be located at the corner Somerset and South Goddard on what is referred to as Block A.

Mr. Maloomian mentioned people are living in the first project now and demographically the response is fulfilling expectations absorbing some of the 60,000 people driving into Upper Merion each morning.

Mr. Waks asked if this is the last apartment building. Mr. Maloomian responded this is not the last one. The age restricted 55 and older development is coming out of the ground now and they are working on a true senior project with some additional services.

Mr. Maloomian stated they will be going to the planning commission on Wednesday and will be back to the Board of Supervisors in about a month with more detailed information as the elevations are developed.

Mr. Philips asked how many units have been constructed so far. Mr. Maloomian responded the first phase was 363 (the Indigo project) and people are moving in now with about 20% leased. The project Hanover is constructing now is 339 units, the first phase of the townhomes is 132 units, and the senior building is 236 units.

Mrs. Kenney asked if the commuters moving in work in King of Prussia.

Mr. Maloomian responded they are tracking the demographics and the people moving in are living for the most part within a 15-minute commute which suggests these are people who are traveling into the Town Center from elsewhere.

Mrs. Kenney asked approximately how many people are moving in per unit. Mr. Maloomian responded he could obtain that information but he did not have it readily available.

Mrs. Kenney stated that number would be a helpful demographic from a planning point of view for the school district, fire and rescue services and many other reasons. Mr. Maloomian responded they are tracking it closely. An assumption from the beginning was there is an unfulfilled demand and many of these people commute an hour or more and would live here if they had more viable options and it is working.

Mr. McGrory was asked to draft a resolution for the December 1st business meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved by Mr. Philips, seconded by Mrs. Kenney, all voting "Aye" to adjourn the meeting. None opposed. Motion approved 5-0. Adjournment occurred at 9:43 p.m.

DAVID G. KRAYNIK
SECRETARY-TREASURER/
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

rap
Minutes Approved:
Minutes Entered: