

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORKSHOP MEETING
AUGUST 1, 2024

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Workshop Meeting on Monday, August 1, 2024, in the Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:43 p.m., followed by a pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Bill Jenaway, Greg Philips, Carole Kenney, Greg Waks. Also present were Anthony Hamaday, Township Manager; Amanda Lafty, Assistant Township Manager; Jarrett Lash, Township Planner; John Walko, Township Solicitor's Office and Leanna Colubriale, Township Engineer. Absent was Supervisor Tina Garzillo.

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS:

Vice-chair Jenaway said Chairperson Garzillo will not be attending tonight's meeting due to being on vacation.

DISCUSSIONS:

A. VALLEY FORGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PROPOSED PROJECT:

Mr. Jarrett Lash, Township Planner gave an introduction on the Valley Forge Presbyterian Church Project. He then introduced Mr. Michael Sebright from EvolveBuild and Ms. Kayleigh Silver from MONTCO Housing and Community Development. Ms. Silver said Montgomery County has already invested over 1.6 million dollars towards this project with various loans and also wants to invest further into this project with any gap financing to reach the goal to finish this project by the end of this year. She said that a third of Montgomery County residents are struggling with housing cost burden, which means they're paying more than 30% of their income towards rent or home prices.

Ms. Silver said in 2022 Upper Merion School District had the second highest rate of homeless students in Montgomery County. Housing prices in one year rose 11.6 % making 35% of renters in the Township cost burden. In addition, Upper Merion had the second highest eviction filings in the County as those rents continue to rise. Also, the nation is seeing an affordable housing crisis, so it is imperative that we pay attention and address the housing problems head on with projects like this.

This project will offer housing affordability opportunities to residents in need and to Seniors looking for places to live. This project will also help graduates who need to take the next step out into their community with all the employment opportunities here. Then she turned the floor over to Mike Sebright, developer and builder.

Mr. Sebright mentioned he's been working on this project for about five years starting when he was working on the food cupboard renovation at a West Kensington Presbyterian Church. He talked to Valley Forge Presbyterian Church's Pastor, Tim, about what possibilities that the Church could have since the Congregation was dwindling and facing a lot of expenses to maintain their building. So, with Mike's company's help the congregation formed a Visionary Committee to see what would be the best use for their Church in that location.

With that said, Mr. Sebright is here representing Valley Forge Presbyterian Church on Prince Frederick Street and Town Center Road. After studying the zoning code, he found this property is zoned for Garden Style Apartments and the campus is over 2 acres. The proposed plan would keep the Church as is and the auxiliary building, which used to have a nurse school, will be renovated along with adding a third floor making the building 2.5 stories high, 33.6' from street level. The basement is partially underground between 3' to 5' with large windows making the building only 2.5 stories high. They will be adding a 108 sq. ft. stair tower in the back and a 770 sq. ft. lobby to enter the building and to access the elevator and stair tower. There will be ADA parking spots to be used by church members and the two handicap accessible apartments on the lower level. So, all together there will be an additional 950 sq. ft. of building space and about 3200 sq. ft. of additional parking and driveway.

Mr. Sebright stated there will be 20 apartments, 17 are one bedroom and 3 have two bedrooms ranging from 500 sq. ft. to 610 sq. ft., and the 2 ADA apartments are 660 sq. ft. with one bedroom. He said 8 to 10 of the units will be dedicated to Delta Corp for young adults who aged out of foster care. This is a State/County organization that helps pay housing for students aged 18 to 21 that qualify. Also, on the 2nd floor Delta Corp will have an office to monitor and help these students with any needs they might have. The remaining apartments are for elderly people with financial needs along with the 2 ADA apartments.

Next, there was a long discussion about who monitors and maintain this apartment building, and the Church's role and taxes. It was asked if it is possible to make the apartments bigger to accommodate a family. The builder stated there are certain specifications and standards they have to follow to receive funding. If the Township wants large apartments, they would have to get permission from the County and the Grantors. It was also noted that to receive the funding for this project they would have to break ground before the end of this year or lose the Grant. The Board asked if there was a deed restriction in case the Church dissolved and sold the property and Ms. Silver responded in the

affirmative. The Board also asked if they were going to subdivide the property and Mr. Sebright responded that they have no intent at all to subdivide the property.

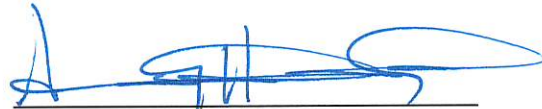
B. BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA REVIEW:

Vice-Chair Jenaway mentioned since Chairperson Garzillo was on vacation they didn't have a Chair meeting to finalize the Agenda. Mr. Hamaday said they are still putting the agenda. He did state that at the Business Meeting they will be appointing the Acting Chief of Public Safety.

ADJOURNMENT:

Board Action:

It was moved by Supervisor Philips, seconded by Supervisor Kenney, all voting "Aye" to adjourn the meeting. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0. Adjournment occurred at 8:56 pm.



ANTHONY HAMADAY
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

lr
Minutes Approved:
Minutes Entered:

