

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORKSHOP MEETING
OCTOBER 10, 2024

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Workshop Meeting on Monday, October 10, 2024, in the Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., followed by a pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

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

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS:

Chairperson Garzillo said there was an Executive Meeting prior to this meeting to discuss personnel matters.

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP LIBRARY REMEDIATION: Approval of Contract award to S.J. Thomas Company, Inc. of Lansdowne, Pennsylvania (KPN JOC Contract No. 2021jocc-46) In the amount of \$26,086.10 as recommended by the Director of Public Works.

Mr. Hamaday asked the Board to approve the above-mentioned contract tonight so the Contractor can secure the materials needed to repair the leaking around the Library windows before the colder weather sets in. He said most of the work will be done through the outside where they will be removing some bricks to place flashing around the windows then move inside to complete the touchup work.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Kenney asked if anything else was included with the remediation, like mold cleanup if any if was found. Mr. Hamaday responded no saying if anything else is found while replacing the flashing they will have to discuss that later. Supervisor Philips asked if we can get a grant for this and Mr. Hamaday said he already spoke to Congresswoman Cappelletti and she's looking into it.

Board Action:

It was moved by Supervisor Philips, seconded by Supervisor Kenney, all voting "Aye" to approve the remediation contract with S.J. Thomas Co., Inc. to fix the water damage to the Library windows. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0.

DISCUSSIONS:

A. VALLEY FORGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: Conversion of Daycare Building to 20 Residential Units in the Garden Apartment Zoning District.

Mr. Jarrett Lash welcomed the applicants back for a second meeting to discuss some particular questions the Board had about the development. The Architect Mr. Michael Sebright from EvolveBuild said they took into consideration the Boards' feedback about what type of people they were able to reach with this project, the number of units with two and one bedrooms and the tax liability the Church would take on. There was also questions regarding the type of tenants that would be living in this facility and who the management company would be to handle the day to day operations.

Mr. Sebright mentioned they remitted to the Planning Committee a waiver for land development which was approved. In addition, he said they had a conversation with Upper Merion School District to get a feel about the type of people or families that may be engaged at this property. Mr. Sebright talked with Mr. John Moody, Director of Student Services & Homeless Liaison and Mrs. Gail Ward, Special Education Teacher & Director of Transition Program for Students ages 18 to 22 years old with either a learning disability or is Autistic.

Mr. Sebright said if the Township allows the waiver they can add two more ADA parking spaces, so there would be two spaces for the two ADA apartments and two spaces for the Church's congregation. Also, they would be able to change three of the one-bedroom apartments into two-bedroom apartments to be able to accommodate a family if needed. So, altogether there will be 2 ADA apartments, 3 Studio apartments, 12 one-bedroom apartments and 3 two-bedroom apartments, which can hold up to forty people including children depending on who applies.

Next, there was a discussion on who can apply and Ms. Alley Moorhead from Stone Sherick Consulting Group said the building management would legally have to advertise in the local papers. The applicants have to meet the requirements and it usually is on a first come first serve basis once approved. She mentioned since Pastor Tim Dooner lives in this community he knows who needs help through the Community Cupboard and also through the school district, so they would have first knowledge to complete the applications. Then, the remaining apartments would be available to any applicant from Montgomery County that meets the requirements.

Vice-chair Jenaway asked if background checks are done on the applicants and if so once they move in is there a disqualification process in case something happens. He mentioned that things happen and some people lie on their application and once they move in it takes about six

months to evict them and he wants to make sure that it's safe for the other tenants that live there as well as the surrounding community.

Supervisor Garzillo state her concerns and reiterated what was already discussed then asked if something would happen will there be a manager or liaison on site. Next, there was a long discussion and scenarios on who would handle what. Pastor Tim Dooner said the Upper Merion Housing Authority establish by the Church to takeover the program will be in charge and will work with Regional Housing Legal Services. The UM Housing Authority has a contract with Presbyterian Church to lease the apartments for 30 years in which it can then be extended after, this is based on the loan agreement.

Finally, they discussed redoing the parking lot, stormwater issues, plan development requirements and supplying the covenant agreement for the Township Solicitor to review. Mr. Walko said as part of the waiver the applicant has to meet certain conditions, this would give the Township the security it needs while giving the builder the ability it needs to continue with the project.

The Board said they would discuss this in an Executive Meeting later that night and will let the applicant know their decision at the October 17th Business Meeting.

B. MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD: Website Vendor.

Mr. Don Herbert, Director of Communications said after looking into several vendors for the Township's new website the Media Advisory Board would like to recommend Civic Plus. This company has over 25 years of experience with over 10,000 customers and 850 employees which handles Municipal Websites. He mentioned Upper Merion used Civic Plus about 10 years ago but since than they have grown their offerings. Don said there are a lot of Municipalities in our area that use Civic Plus and he spoke to many of them whom all recommended the company saying they haven't had any issues.

Next, Don read some of their credentials stating they are an 11-time honoree of Inc. 5000 Magazine, GovTech 2024 Top 100 Company, and The Stevie Awards for being recognized with multiple Global Awards for sale and customer service excellence.

Mr. Herbert mentioned new features the Media Advisory Board is looking for with a new website. Some of the features are an enhanced menu with dropdowns, easy access and improved search functions. They're also looking into having a chat box for better searching and finding information. Civic Plus uses Google translate for different languages which will be useful. Don said residents can sign up for an account and setup their profile to have their own personal dashboard to help their experience on the website for their particular needs. This site also has Event Maps, so when the Township puts in an event into the calendar it generates a Google map that shows you where the event is taking place.

There is an Alert Center where you can put up road closing or emergency information which you can banner on the front page.

Don said the Media Advisory Board recommends going with the customized layout design instead of using one of Civic Plus templates so the Township won't be restricted. He said currently they're storing their Development Plans on drop boxes but since Civic Plus platform will have unlimited storage place we won't have to go outside the website in order to make those things accessible, which would be more efficient and easier.

Next, Don recommended that the Library and Community Center have separate Department Headers which will allow them to market more strongly, than just providing information. Also, this site has ADA compliance components that they call Audio Eye and Monsido which keeps the Township compliant. Audio Eye stays compliant with current regulations and checks the website on a regular basis fixing or updating whatever it finds. In addition, he recommends going with the highest level of security preventing hacking and the system going down.

Chairperson Garzillo said she noticed a lot of different municipalities using Civic Plus and all the sites she's been on have been easy to navigate. Next, Supervisor Philips asked if a resident customizes their profile page what happens to their profile when the website updates. He also asked what happened to the calendar on the website. Don said this is one of the reason why the Township has to change because the plugin got upgraded without any notice to the Township and there is a component that got a bug in it which took our events on the right off the home page. Then he said he's not sure if an update will affect the resident's dashboard so he will ask Civic Plus.

Next, Supervisor Waks wanted to try the Chat box (which is similar to the Find tab but gives more detail) to find something so he typed in where is the calendar and it came up. Don mentioned that this site can also give them analytics on what and how much people are searching for a particular item. Then he said when the Board gives him the final approval to move forward it will take between 4 to 7 months, depending on how much information has to be converted over. Supervisor Philips asked once the new website is up and running can Don go into it and make changes or update a page himself and Don responded in the affirmative.

Finally, Mr. Hamaday said if the Board moves forward the Township has enough in the budget to cover the first year and about 75% for the second year. Chairperson Garzillo asked Don if he can present a smaller version about the new website at the next Business meeting. Then Supervisor Waks mentioned that the Media Advisory Board wanted to have input in designing the website but Don and Greg feel it would be best just to give them three options to pick from after the Board and Don decide which designs work best.

C. BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA REVIEW:

Mr. Hamaday said he still working on finalizing the agenda but he gave them a cliff note version. He said October is Fire Prevention Month and we'll have all the Public Safety Awards, presentation for Firefighter of the Year Award and for EMS Responder of the Year Award, and a Proclamation for Fire Chief Gallagher. Also, there is a Public Hearing for the BID renewal and about 13 items on the Consent Agenda and a waiver request of Land Development for Valley Forge Presbyterian Church.

Public Comments: None

Supervisor Waks asked to move to Executive Session so meeting was adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT:

Board Action:

It was moved by Vice-chair Jenaway, seconded by Supervisor Waks, all voting "Aye" to adjourn the meeting. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0. Adjournment occurred at 9:37 pm.


ANTHONY HAMADAY
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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Minutes Approved:
Minutes Entered:

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