

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORKSHOP MEETING
NOVEMBER 07, 2024

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Workshop Meeting on Monday, November 7, 2024, in the Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:38 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 Chief Blaine Leis.

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS:

Chairperson Garzillo said there will be an Executive Meeting following this meeting to discuss personnel and real estate matters.

APPROVE ACT 93 FIRE ESCROW RELEASE – 634 Crossfield Road.

Mr. Hamaday said the law was changed to allow Municipalities to ensure that fire damaged properties get repaired by requiring insurance companies to set aside a certain amount of money in escrow to the Township ensuring those repairs get completed. Therefore, when the owners of 634 Crossfield Road had all the structural repairs done to their house and after all fire inspections were completed by our Codes Department, they approved the release of the money in escrow to the owners of 634 Crossfield Road.

Board Discussion: None

Board Action:

It was moved by Supervisor Philips, seconded by Supervisor Waks, all voting "Aye" to approve the Escrow Release for 634 Crossfield Road. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PAVING PROJECT 2025: Authorization to sign the Project Initiation Form for PennDOT to incorporate casting adjustments within District 6's 2025 resurfacing project.

Mr. Hamaday explained that every two (2) years the Township enters into a Master Casting Agreement with PennDOT. This agreement covers the cost associated with lowering or elevating manholes, riser etc. In those cases, the Township will reimburse PennDOT. However, on certain State Roads the Sewer Authority also owns some facilities (manholes) so the Township has to add a signature authorizing the Authority to be added to the Master Casting Agreement. Then he mentioned that PennDOT doesn't necessarily want the Authorities signature, it's just a formality. Mr. Hamaday stated that Vice Chair Jenaway, who was Chairperson at the time the original agreement was signed is the preferred person to sign future agreements. Therefore, that's why the Township is asking the Board to authorize Mr. Bill Jenaway to sign the agreement so PennDOT doesn't delay anything.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Kenney asked why Bill was the original signer since he's not on the Sewer Authority, also is that legal. Mr. Hamaday reiterated that PennDOT prefers Bill's signature since he was the original signer.

Board Action:

It was moved by Supervisor Kenney, seconded by Supervisor Philips, all voting "Aye" to approve the authorization to sign the Master Casing Agreement. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0.

DISCUSSIONS:

A. EAC – Paper Bag Fee.

Chairperson Garzillo said there has been some residents complaining that certain establishments are still charging the ten-cent fee even when residents bring their own bags.

Supervisor Philips feels that the Board should have not set a price, if the vendor wants to charge 5 cents, 50 cents per bag or give it for free is their business. Supervisor Waks said they set a price to incentivize people to bring their own bags, then Supervisor Philips reiterated what he said previously.

Vice-chair Jenaway said after receiving several complaints from residents he went into the three main stores that he received the most complaints about and those employees are saying that the Township is making them do this for the money. He explained to them that the Township does not get any of the money, this was established as an

incentive for people to bring their reusable bags and for the business to recoup some money for the extra expense of paper bags.

Supervisor Waks said they should not change the ordinance, people who complain about 10 cent are the ones that complain about everything. Supervisor Kenney said the Township will have to promote it again and explain that the Township is not receiving any money from the bags, it was set to encourage people to bring their own reusable bag.

Chairperson Garzillo said her issue is with the vendors at some fast food restaurants not allowing you to use your own bag. Mr. Walko said the main problem is the inconsistency that other fast food places don't charge for bags, so how can the Township enforce them to do it and does the Township have enough employees to enforce the ordinance.

Then the conversation turned to revising the signs stating why there is a charge and that the 10 cent is kept by the establishment so they can recoup the extra cost of paper bags over plastic bags.

Next, they discussed the plasticware and how most restaurant are still using the non-recyclable plastic fork, spoons and knives instead of the biodegradable type. Mr. Zach Davis said he is willing to have another community meeting to explain the ordinance with regards to the biodegradable tableware and brown bag charge.

B. Fire Fighter Property Tax Rebate.

Vice-chair Jenaway explained this Tax rebate is a State law which was adopted by Montgomery County. So far eight municipalities have already put in this rebate in place for their Volunteer Firefighter and EMS personnel. He mentioned that Chief Blaine Leis was one of the leaders moving this forward to the County level. Mr. Jenaway said some municipalities have done just property tax and some did property and earned Income. Also, some chose a variation of property tax, like 20, 40, 60 percent etc. An inventory was done to see how many firefighters and EMS personnel would be able to apply for this rebate.

Vice-chair Jenaway said the volunteer has to own a piece of property in the municipality and would have to volunteer in that municipality meeting a certain criteria to be eligible. The goal from the State level is to get more people to respond to fire calls and to reduce infrastructure cost for paid staffing and related cost. Then he said he got samples from Lower Merion, Whitpain, Lower Pottsgrove and Upper Dublin and our Solicitor looked them over and developed an Ordinance and Resolution for Upper Merion.

Next, Vice-chair Jenaway explained what was in each, who can qualify and what they would have to do to qualify. Besides being a resident and volunteer they would have to list details on what they do similar to the uniform employee's Pension system which is point structured. Then, Mr. Hamaday said they have a conservative estimate which includes Fire

Police and Auxiliary Services which would be about \$15,000.00 if they all qualify. Mr. Jenaway said not all will qualify and the rebate is only for one house, so if someone owns several homes only one will qualify. Also, the volunteer must own, not rent and volunteer in Upper Merion Township.

Then Mr. Walko, read the Ordinance explaining everything and said this rebate will only be for the Township portion of the Real Estate Tax, the volunteer can also apply for the County portion and if the School District ever adopts it they would be able to apply for that through the School District. Next, there was a discussion if the Board wanted to follow the same sliding scale as the County to keep everything uniformed. Therefore, if you meet the Township requirement you will also meet the County's which makes it easier for everyone involved. After a long discussion the Board decided to follow the County's sliding scale.

C. BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA REVIEW:

Mr. Hamaday said he's still working on the agenda for the Business Meeting. He mentioned that at the meeting a presentation of the 2025 Budget will take place. Ms. Lafty, Assistant Township Manager stated that she has some refunds for grants that will be in the Consent Agenda.

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 Philips, all voting "Aye" to adjourn the meeting. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0. Adjournment occurred at 9:07 pm.



ANTHONY HAMADAY
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

lr
Minutes Approved:
Minutes Entered: