

UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP
Community Development Committee
April 9, 2018 - Meeting Minutes

Community Development Committee Members - Commissioner and Chair Joseph A. Lavalley; Commissioners Kip McFatridge and Kevin Spearing; Paul E. Purtell, Director of Code Enforcement; David Elsler, Director of Public Works

I. Moment of Silent Meditation

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Call to Order - The Community Development Committee Meeting was called to order by Commissioner and Chair Joseph A. Lavalley at 7:00 p.m.

IV. Presentations/Announcements:

A. Steve Semen, a resident of Ward 1 living on the 100 block of Everett Avenue, stated that a large cellular tower was built on the next block over from his neighborhood. He stated he attended the May 26, 2016 Zoning Hearing Board Meeting and brought photos as evidence that a public notice was not properly posted at the property before the meeting. He believed that the meeting was only a discussion and was not aware that the Board decided on an approval. He requests that the tower be removed, because it devalues neighborhood property and, if it remains, the Township should compensate the residents.

- Commissioner McFatridge asked Mr. Purtell to confirm a Zoning Hearing Board Meeting on May 26, 2016 and if there are photos to prove signs were posted. Mr. Purtell confirmed the meeting date and that the sign was posted.
- Mr. Semen rebutted and stated that the Township is responsible to ensure that signs stay in place at least 10 days prior to the Zoning Hearing Board Meeting. Commissioner McFatridge stated that vandalism cannot be avoided and Mr. Semen answered that there is no language on the sign regarding vandalism.
- Mr. Semen asked if someone checks daily that signs remain properly posted prior to the meeting, and Commissioner McFatridge stated that "properly posted" means placing a stake in the ground with the sign. Mr. Purtell reiterated that he posted the sign and Mr. Semen clarified his statement that the zoning applicant be responsible for their sign.
- Commissioner Lavalley confirmed with Mr. Purtell the zoning notification process to residents that live in the immediate vicinity of any proposed work. Mr. Purtell stated that there is no Code requirement to notify residents within a certain proximity of the proposed work, however, the Zoning Hearing Board requires that adjacent residents be notified.
- Mr. Semen stated that the process was not followed, the community has been harmed, the tower is a blight and requests that the Board of Commissioners and the Township Solicitor take action to reverse the decision on the tower.
- Commissioner McFatridge commented that it is a Pennsylvania Utilities Commission issue because 911, PA Turnpike, EMS, Fire and County agencies utilize the tower and therefore, the matter would need to be reviewed by the State.
- Commissioner Lavalley asked Mr. Semen on the proximity of his property from the tower. Mr. Semen stated that it is 1-1/2 blocks away.
- Commissioner Lavalley stated that the Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor would need to determine whether the Zoning Hearing Board Meeting of May 26, 2016 was legal. The next Zoning Hearing Board meeting is Thursday, April 12, 2018.

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- Commissioner McFatridge stated that the Board of Commissioners cannot overturn the Zoning Hearing Board's decision and therefore, it would become a Court matter.
- Mr. Semen asked how he can take further action. Commissioner McFatridge stated that he would first need to obtain an approval by vote from the Zoning Hearing Board.
- Mr. Purtell stated that Mr. Semen had 30 days from the decision date to challenge the Zoning Hearing Board decision.
- Commissioner McFatridge stated that the Zoning Hearing Board has 45 days to provide a decision from the date of the Hearing. Mr. Seaman stated that he was not aware of any Zoning Hearing Board decision and considers the first day from the decision to be Tuesday, April 3, 2018, when he noticed the tower.
- Ms. Prior, Township Solicitor, stated that an attorney needs to make a formal appeal on the Zoning Board's decision in a Court of Common Pleas for Montgomery County.
- Commissioner Lavalley stated, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, that Mr. Semen's issues on the tower will be considered seriously.

V. **Roll Call:** Commissioners Lavalley, Spearing and McFatridge. Members: Messieurs. Elsier and Purtell. Also present: Erik Garton, Township Engineer; David A. Dodies, Township Manager; Jennifer Prior, Township Solicitor.

VI. **Approval of Minutes** – March 12, 2018 meeting minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

VII. **Acceptance and Approval of the following reports:**

A. Code Enforcement Department Reports - Nothing to report.

B. Public Works Department Report:

- Mr. Elsier stated that an underground spring is apparent on Warminster and Byberry Roads and will install a French drain in the right-of-way between the sidewalk and street that will connect to the inlet on Byberry Road. A PA-1 call was made and work is estimated to start in one month.
- Mr. Elsier stated that there is a stormwater issue on the 500 block of Evans Circle where sinkholes are apparent and joints in the concrete pipe require regrouting. Maintenance crews will grout and compact the soil, and repairs will be monitored for further issues.

C. Public Works Recycling Report:

- Mr. Elsier stated that Single Stream Recycling started in March 2018 with no issues reported. Recycling requirements are listed on the Township website.

D. Engineer's Report - Erik Garton, Gilmore & Associates, provided the following updates:

- The grant application for watershed improvements to Boileau Park was coordinated with Richard Nalbandian, MRNenvironmental, Inc., on behalf of the Township to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation to obtain funding from the William Penn Foundation Delaware River Watershed Initiative.
- JERC Partners XXXVIII and J.G. Petrucci Co., Inc. groundbreaking ceremony for Station At Willow Grove will be held Thursday, April 19, 2018 at 3 p.m.
 - Commissioner McFatridge asked Mr. Garton to follow up on drainage at the Middle School rain garden.

E. Landscape Architect's Report - Commissioner Lavalley read the list of updates.

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- F. Traffic Engineer's Report: Joseph DeSantis, McMahon Associates, Inc., provided the following updates:
- Station At Willow Grove sidewalk closure was approved by PennDOT.
 - Requested the Committee agree to the Willow Grove Train Station's potential improvement concept at the intersection of York Road and Mineral Avenue, to allow southbound left turns from York Road. The Committee agreed that McMahon will coordinate with SEPTA to include the concept into their project study and evaluate the benefits.
 - Commissioner Lavelle commented concerns on drop-off, bottle neck, ingress and egress, bus and van access, traffic circulation, stacking, and compromise of park area and visibility. Mr. DeSantis stated that SEPTA is to provide a schematic design for evaluation.
 - Commissioner Lavelle commented that he would like to have enhancements to Memorial Park Drive and Mineral Avenue that continue down the thoroughfares.
 - Green Light Go grant application was submitted for traffic signal improvements at the intersection of Byberry Road and Davisville Road.
 - An update will be provided at a future Community Development Committee Meeting on the request submitted to PennDOT for a left turn arrow on southbound York Road (Mill Road).
 - An update will be provided at a future Community Development Committee Meeting on the request submitted to PennDOT to prohibit large trucks from a right turn from northbound Easton Road onto Mill Road.
 - 2018 Grant opportunities and suggestions for focus include:
 - Transportation & Community Development Initiative program (TCDI) in April with a match of \$100,000 to use for transportation planning studies;
 - Greenways Trails Recreation Program (GTRP) in May is for feasibility studies and construction with a 15% match;
 - County Transportation Program for the Township is to recoup half of its match if awarded the Green Light Go grant. McMahon Associates will follow up on this opportunity;
 - Delaware Valley Regional Planning - Local Share Count in June is for site work or redevelopment;
 - Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) in June is for upgrading traffic signals;
 - DCED Multi-Modal in July is for engineering a substantial development, i.e. PA Turnpike/Route 611 interchange, the SEPTA parking garage or, if funding does not get awarded for improvements at Byberry and Davisville Road. McMahon Associates will follow-up with recommendations. The Community Development Committee agreed an application should be submitted to DCED Multi-Modal Program for improvements at Davisville and Byberry Roads if the application to PennDOT for multi-modal funding is not successful.
 - The Committee and Mr. DeSantis continued a detailed discussion on project funding priorities, concepts and designs.
 - Commissioner Spearing commented that the grant priority is the SEPTA parking garage and alternative funds can be found for the Turnpike interchange.

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- Commissioner Scull commented that the train station project will encourage more transit-oriented development, but it will take six years to build, which is not a short-term benefit.
 - Green Light Go grant in the Fall is for the crosswalk on Davisville Road on the west side of Route 611;
 - The Bridge Program in the Fall is to rebuild local distressed bridges;
 - PennDOT's Multi-Modal in November/December is in case funding does not get awarded for Byberry and Davisville Road before then.
 - Commissioner Spearing commented that County Line and Blair Mill Roads are PennDOT roads that require many improvements.
 - Commissioner Spearing made comments on PennDOT's paving schedule and failing roadways. Mr. DeSantis asked the Committee to identify areas for replacement so they can be included in packages to PennDOT.
 - Donald Warner, a resident, commented on PennDOT's negligence to rebuild roadways and suggested that the County coordinate with townships to file a class action law suit.
 - Mr. Warner commented on handicap ramps installed in the middle of roadways that do not lead to anywhere and funds used to install these can be applied to road repairs. Commissioner Lavalley stated that the law does not discriminate on types of handicaps and where the ramps are installed.
 - Commissioner Spearing inquired on the installation of a crosswalk in front of the County Building on the north side of the train tracks. Mr. DeSantis stated that issues need to be coordinated with SEPTA. In particular, SEPTA must grant an easement for the area where the crosswalk is proposed.
 - Mr. Dodies commented on engineering work required for improvements at Byberry and Davisville Roads. Mr. DeSantis stated that affected right-of-way areas need to be identified and notification given to property owners for easements in order to submit the grant application. Mr. DeSantis recommended the Township move forward soon and authorize McMahon Associates to proceed with the design of both traffic signal and roadway widening and improvements at Davisville and Byberry Roads. The Committee asked Mr. DeSantis to submit proposals to perform this work.
- G. Upper Moreland School District – Construction/Other Items:
- Commissioner Spearing stated that the "Safe Schools Forum" held on Tuesday, March 13, 2018, in the Upper Moreland Middle School auditorium was a brainstorming session of concepts and ideas and a follow up will be scheduled.
- H. Horsham Land Redevelopment Authority {HLRA} – to monitor status of redevelopment of former Willow Grove Naval Air Station property - Nothing to report.
- I. Environmental Advisory Council (EAC): Lynette Saunders provided the following updates:
- Environmental Education Center is hosting "The Science of Stormwater", on Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 7 pm, and "Learning Stations Tour" on Sunday, April 29, 2018 at 1:30 pm.
 - Rain barrel and drainage swale are awaiting delivery of signs.
 - Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust will have a 5K Run on Saturday, April 21, 2018.
 - "Roll-N-Stroll" will be held on Saturday, May 5, 2018 at Masons Mill Park.
 - Storm drain labeling will be on Saturday, May 12, 2018 in the Boileau Park area.

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- A rain garden program, in the neighborhood of Boileau Park and Intermediate School, will be coordinated with Richard Nalbandian, MRNenvironmental, Inc., and Derron LaBrake, Wetlands & Ecology, Inc.
 - "Ready For 100" program is being reviewed, which encourages renewable energy sources and conservation practices within neighborhoods.
 - Concerns that the SEPTA train station will reduce surrounding parkland and suggested the installation of a trail, ecological signage and native landscaping.
 - The next "Going Green in 2018" presentation will be on April 28, 2018 at 10:30 a.m. on the topic of Pennsylvania Native Bees.
- J. Pennsylvania Review Advisory Council - Commissioner Lavalley provided the following updates:
- An Advisory Board report is due on May 1, 2018 to Governor Wolf's office regarding the 2015 Statewide Building Code.
 - Commissioner Lavalley announced that the next meeting is on Tuesday, April 17, 2018, in Harrisburg, PA.
- K. Upper Moreland Historical Commission - Susan Worth La Manna's, Member, provided the following updates:
- An annual educational event will include trolley tours of the Township starting from Boileau Park, with the date to be determined.
 - Concern on the removal of the keystone from the old firehouse. Mr. Purtell stated that it will be safely removed and given to the Fire Company.
 - Concern on historical trees, and trees in general, that have been removed from the downtown area and surrounding roadways and suggests a Shade Tree Committee be organized to help protect and replant trees.

VIII. **Land Development/Subdivision** - Nothing to report.

IX. **Old Business:**

- A. James Faber, McCloskey & Faber, P.C. - Update on draft ordinance of Native Plant Species – Mr. Faber will submit new information and present at a future Community Development Committee Meeting.
- B. James Faber, McCloskey & Faber, P.C. - Update on recommendations for Veteran's Memorial Park Fountain - Mr. Faber will submit new information and present at a future Community Development Committee Meeting.

X. **New Business:**

- A. Site Improvements to the Municipal Complex Parking Lot:
- Commissioner Lavalley read four options with estimated costs.
 - Mr. Dodies asked the Committee to consider the purchase of 118 Center Avenue to pursue a larger scale project.
 - Mr. Warner, a resident, suggested that the two vacant properties be demolished which will make the third property a better opportunity for the Township.
 - Commissioner Scull inquired on the need for additional parking. Mr. Dodies stated that the parking lot is tight and needs reconfiguration for the traffic flow around the police station; there are occasions where additional parking is needed.

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- Commissioner Spearing commented that he favors demolishing the two vacant buildings and waiting on the purchase of 118 Center Avenue.
- Commissioner Lavalley commented that he favors making an offer to purchase 118 Center Avenue and prefers Sketch Plan 3 rather than Sketch Plan 4.
- The Committee directed Erik Garton, Gilmore & Associates, to finalize bid specifications for demolition of #114 and #116 Center Avenue and decided not to recommend any additional acquisition of property at this time.

XI. Other Items:

A. Project to Repair Huntington Road:

- The Committee approved a proposal from Gilmore & Associates, that Huntington Road be closed for five (5) days in order to complete bank stabilization and roadway repairs.
 - Sue Worth LaManna, a resident, commented that the road is compromised, lacks lighting, severely floods, and has remaining weather damage.
 - Ms. LaManna inquired on specifics of the road closure. Mr. Elsier confirmed that a left turn will be restricted onto Huntingdon Road from Edge Hill Road and the road closure will extend from the church down to Masons Mill Road.

XII. Redevelopment - Commissioner Lavalley provided the follow updates:

- The next Redevelopment Task Force Meeting will be on April 25, 2018, 7:00 p.m. in the Council Room. The Comprehensive Plan and other issues will be discussed.
- "Taste Of Willow Grove" is on Sunday, April 15, 2018, 5-8 p.m., at Kremp Florist.
- "Boileau Festival" is on Saturday, May 5, 2018, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

XIII. Visitor Comments - Nothing to report.

XIV. Commissioner Comments - Nothing to report.

XV. Adjournment - There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Kristire.