

**UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

May 29, 2007

CALL TO ORDER – Comm. Crilly called a meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 7:05 p.m.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE WAS FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Comm. Crilly announced that the Board will hold an Executive Session to discuss legal and acquisition matters after tonight's committee meetings.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

CALL TO ORDER – Comm. Romaniello called a meeting of the Redevelopment Committee to order at 7:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL - Comm. Romaniello, Chairperson took roll call. Present: Commissioner James Martin.

Others: David Dodies, Township Manager, Robert Kerns, Township Solicitor and John Gibbons of Kise Straw & Kolodner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Comm. Romaniello made the following correction to Page 2, Paragraph 5 as follows: In attendance will be our Solicitor, Township Manager, Jody Holton of KSK, Joe DeSantis, Traffic Engineer and Econsult, who will represent our economic *interest* for economic development.

Comm. Romaniello accepted the minutes of the April 16, 2007 Redevelopment Committee meeting into the record as amended.

Comm. Romaniello announced the Township had a meeting on May 14th with a developer and we can confirm that Upper Moreland Township has a developer who is interested in becoming the Master Developer for downtown Willow Grove. They are willing to work with the Township to define an area within our entire conceptual site plan as a place to start and that is considered phasing. After a location is defined as Phase 1, the developer and the Township will reevaluate the information to see if it is viable.

REDEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Kise Straw & Kolodner Monthly Status Report:

John Gibbons said at the meeting with that developer, we discussed the preliminary development pro forma and possible phasing of development. Based on that meeting, Econsult will explore tax impacts of outline pro forma. KSK will prepare a revised first phase concept plan to reflect the discussion and the developer will prepare a revised pro forma. A second meeting is anticipated within 30-40 days.

Comm. Romaniello asked what type of uses was discussed or whether or not our zoning was reflected.

Mr. Gibbons replied mixed retail and there will be increased density in some areas to make the projects more financially viable.

Comm. Romaniello asked were any of the traffic studies that were done last year considered?

Mr. Gibbons replied yes, some of the traffic studies have been used.

Comm. Booth said in reviewing KSK's reports for the last six months, it appears that KSK has met with only one developer. Does this mean there is only one active developer that we are dealing with at this time?

Mr. Gibbons replied we met with several developers when we first started. There is only one developer who has showed interest in working with us.

Comm. Booth asked does that mean the other developers have fallen by the way side?

Mr. Gibbons replied they have not. We approached them and have not come back to us so we assume they are waiting in the wings.

Comm. Booth asked is six months a normal amount of time to not hear from an interested developer?

Mr. Gibbons replied yes.

Comm. Booth said at the meeting on May 14th with the developer, there was a lot of discussion and the result was that KSK will prepare a revised Phase I Concept Plan that would include the developer's property and other parcels. Why isn't the developer preparing the plans? It is their job to develop plans.

Mr. Gibbons replied the developer is preparing a concept plan and KSK will refine it.

Comm. Booth said the minutes of that meeting stated that KSK was preparing the concept plan.

Mr. Gibbons agreed, but we had subsequent telephone conversations and he told the developer that we want to have a first pass on it.

Comm. Booth said that Econsult was working on the impact study that was presented to us, but after reading the minutes, it appears we will be doing a new study and narrow the scope and that is spending taxpayers' dollars on another study.

Mr. Gibbons replied that Econsult is taking a look at what the tax impacts are and potential public acquisition costs.

Comm. Booth said the current developer wants to be the master developer for the downtown area. If we allow that developer to be the master developer, will we have control over commercial properties and stores that come into our area? Would the developer shut out stores that might compete with the stores that he wants brought into the area?

Mr. Gibbons replied the developer would want a mix of uses and retail stores for the whole development. The developer has experience in retail development or leasing and he would try to maximize the best use of retail space.

Public Comments:

Jonathan de Jonge, resident, said he is disappointed in the committee about the secrecy of who the developers are and now the master developer does not want his name revealed. This is like what the previous committee was accused of – backdoor deals. How many Commissioners know who the developers are?

Comm. Romaniello replied every one of them.

Mr. deJonge said so far no public input has been made in this whole process.

Comm. Romaniello said the Township did not pick the developer. They picked us. Over the course of last year, KSK built the list of developers and they added another developer. There are only a certain number of developers who understand “building place” and that is doing a mixed use development. There is no secrecy. The developers have their own stakeholders and investors that they need to report to. She has been asked not to reveal who the developer is at this time.

Mr. de Jonge said he is concerned that we had a developer who came before the public and made a presentation and the door was slammed in his face. Is that going to happen again?

Comm. Romaniello replied the difference today is that we have a developer working with the professional consultants to negotiate where they can start.

Mr. deJonge said the previous committee had consultants.

Comm. Romaniello replied we have an economic consultant who is representing the financial interests of the Township and we have KSK making sure the community's interests are represented.

Mr. de Jonge said this is being dragged out and there is a lot of secrecy.

Mr. Gibbons said there were extensive minutes of the meetings, which were distributed to all of the Commissioners.

Another resident said he feels the process is appropriate, but he is disappointed with the geographic area that is delineated is the best part of our town. The area that is blighted is not included and the emphasis needs to be on the whole part of the town especially where there are vacant stores.

Denis Hurley said the developer has property. Is it within the concept development or is it being added to it?

Comm. Romaniello replied it is in the current redevelopment area that was adopted by the Board of Commissioners last year.

Mr. Gibbons referred to his status report, and said on May 1st we made a presentation to Montgomery County Revitalization Board for grant funds for York Road Streetscape Improvements between Davisville Road and Memorial Drive. Regarding grants, we made the decision not to apply for RCAP (Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program) at this time for infrastructure improvements associated with redevelopment as the project must be ready to proceed for construction for the application to be successful.

For the streetscape and site plan concept, we initiated preparation of the revised Willow Grove Center Phase I Site Plan.

For Memorial Park Drive, McMahon Associates submitted a PennDOT Occupancy Permit Application to Montgomery County Permits Office, May 4, 2007. The Township Solicitor is in the process of negotiations with Mr. Wei regarding the value of the property for acquisition of Avis, HR Block and a portion of the Three Stars parking area. The Township Engineer is preparing subdivision plans for the county-owned parcel. McCloskey & Faber identified conflicts between the new York Road curb location submitted to PennDOT and the gateway plaza design. McCloskey & Faber also identified issues with the condition of the culvert that may impact the gateway plaza design. Also Bally's property overlaps with the plaza.

A meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 1st to resolve the issues. These issues will result in delaying completion of the gateway landscaping plan, but will not impact the construction schedule for Memorial Park Drive as the landscaping and road construction will be bid separately.

Comm. Romaniello said the only piece we are missing is to finalize the acquisition and put the Highway Occupancy permit out. She asked for any public comments. There were none.

OLD BUSINESS:

Draft Ordinance No. 1543 – related to condemnation needed for Memorial Park Drive project:

Comm. Romaniello said we should direct our Solicitor to advertise the ordinance. When will we vote on it?

Mr. Dodies replied July 2nd.

Solicitor Kerns said he would like to discuss this matter in Executive Session before advertising the ordinance. He would like to have the discretion to advertise the ordinance as soon as he concludes the negotiations that are necessary, and he would like the Board to adopt an amendment to the plan relative to War Memorial Park and that will be Mr. Chamber's outline of the road plan.

NEW BUSINESS:

Revised timeline for Memorial Park Drive design and construction

Comm. Romaniello said we have an updated chart that indicates the timeline for construction of the new Memorial Park Drive. It looks like this road will not be built until next year.

Kevin Spearing asked why not bid now for the construction job?

Comm. Romaniello replied because of the price changes.

Mr. Spearing asked is it ready to go out for bid now?

Comm. Romaniello replied yes, we approved the drawings. The HOP Phase I are out and it takes 60 days to come back.

Mr. Gibbons said we will bid the project when we have title of the land.

Mr. Spearing said the only piece of construction that cannot be done in cold weather is blacktop and sometimes concrete so for the excavation construction involved, you might be able to get a better bid for October and November for construction to begin in January or February.

Comm. Romaniello said she does not understand why we cannot begin construction this year.

Mr. Gibbons replied we have to finish condemnation and demolition and, if we try to speed it up, we would still begin construction in January.

VISITOR COMMENTS:

Kevin Spearing said regarding SEPTA parking that will be lost during construction of War Memorial Drive, was there any discussion about their intentions for more parking somewhere else?

Comm. Romaniello replied we will only be out four spaces.

Solicitor Kerns said there will be disruption during construction and we are working with the County and SEPTA to negotiate a swap there.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Comm. Martin said he wants to ask John Crawford about the recent financial analysis that was done involving the redevelopment because it is incomplete and it only shows the expenditure side for a 6 ½ period relating to our redevelopment and revitalization costs. As an accountant, he knows Commissioner Booth would agree that a complete financial analysis would involve the expense side as well as the revenue side. He asked for an analysis for the \$1.5 million dollars in grants that were received, which were sent by the County, State and private donors. We have \$650,000 in expenditures and there is a net gain to the Township in the amount of \$800,000.

Mr. Dodies said we will provide a list of grants received. The grants that have been approved are not the same as the grants that have been received. The Township is expending from the general fund for a matching portion of this project. The funds from the County go towards this project.

Commissioner Booth said he requested the cost to the taxpayers.

Comm. Romaniello said this only dates back to 2000 and it is only a 6 ½ year study. This is the right process that is in place. We have the key people at the table representing the community's interest and representing our financial interest. All the safeguards are in place and redevelopment is an investment. It will bring jobs into our community and bring revenue into our Township. Downtown is blight and we will build a sense of place back into our community

ADJOURNMENT: 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Elizabeth Vile