

**UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

July 16, 2007

CALL TO ORDER – Comm. Crilly called a meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 7:00 p.m.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE WAS FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Crilly stated if anyone needed to make a comment or a statement that he or she would need to come forward to the podium and speak into the microphone.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

CALL TO ORDER - Commissioner Romaniello called a meeting of the Redevelopment Committee to order at 7:02p.m.

ROLL CALL - Commissioner Romaniello, Chairperson took roll call. Present: Commissioner Stacey Efkwitz. Commissioner Martin arrived at 7:15p.m.

Others: David Dodies, Township Manager, Richard S. Watt, Township Solicitor and John Gibbons of Kise Straw & Kolodner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Romaniello made the following correction to Page 1, second sentence from bottom of page changing the word “Stage 1” to “Phase 1”.

Commissioner Romaniello accepted the minutes of the May 29, 2007of the Redevelopment Committee meeting into the record as amended.

Commissioner Romaniello announced that Congresswoman Allison Schwartz’s office contacted her regarding the Township’s request for funding regarding financial support in building the new Memorial Park Drive. Their office was able to secure \$125,000.00 in one of the appropriation bills for Upper Moreland Township for building the new Park Drive. It’s not finalized and the Senate still has to vote for it.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked what the approximate cost would be to complete the Drive.

Commissioner Romaniello replied that we would not know until the bid documents went out this fall. Included would be the plaza area, the new park drive, and the corrected intersection, changing that into a four way intersection. All those costs will be put out to bid in the fall.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that the Montgomery County Revitalization Board has awarded the Township a grant of \$153,000.00 that would be for the streetscape improvements which will tie in nicely to the park entrance. The streetscape improvements, the new intersection and the new park drive are to be in construction early in 2008.

REDEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Kise Straw & Kolodner Monthly Status Report:

John Gibbons stated they first met with the developer on May 14th, and as a result of that meeting they “scaled” the project. It got them to go back and look at a smaller project which will be less area. Mr. Gibbons also stated that they developed some alternative plans which were sent to the developer beforehand and had some proformas prepared. They found that it was not working in terms of what they expected for their rate of return. They expanded the area and are still looking to see if the project is worth it. There is a meeting scheduled for July 31st.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that the developer is coming back into the Township for the third time at the end of the month and they are going to broaden the site plan a little larger and take in a little larger area to see if those calculations will give them a better return on their investment.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that it is a very good sign and is encouraged and there seems to be some sufficient interest.

Mr. Gibbons stated that if the numbers looked good on July 31st they would be prepared to make some type of statement.

Commissioner Romaniello asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Efkwitz stated that at the original meeting that took place the Township was looking at their idea with our input and it was determined that it was just too “great a nut” to crush for the community, too much of a project for the community to carry the burden so the idea was to go back to split it into

phases. It's my understanding that we, as a Township, and using the consulting firm did a lot of the redrawing of the plans and broke it out. Did they contribute much to that or were they waiting to see what we would bring back to them?

Mr. Gibbons replied that they waited to see what we would bring back to them but that they actually expanded the area because they realized they needed the additional area.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked if the next stage has already been developed and if what they will be developing between now and the 31st is another stage?

Mr. Gibbons said they need the programming on the sites for the balance of residential, retail, etc. so the numbers work for them.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked if they are doing all of the work at this point that Mr. Gibbons would not be doing anymore design on their behalf.

Mr. Gibbons replied they are and that was correct.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked if they are going to see something quite dramatic come out of this developer on the 31st.

Mr. Gibbons replied he did not think so because of the zoning and the expectations of the community.

Commissioner Efkwitz said that one of the things discussed at the July 10th meeting was the financing of the public portion of the project and that was a critical issue.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked how far the discussions have gone with regard to the public portion of this project and what financing will they need from the Township and what is the likelihood that it is something the community might buy into.

Mr. Gibbons replied there was nothing discussed as far as financing for the public portion.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked if Mr. Gibbons' expectation at the close of the meeting on July 31st will be a project.

Mr. Gibbons replied that it is pretty much his assessment.

Commissioner Efkwitz stated the next hurdle after it was established whether or not there actually was a project would be how we would finance the public

portion. We would then have discussions once again about discussing that with the school board and making sure that we have state redevelopment assistance, grants, revenue and participation from the public.

Commissioner Romaniello asked Commissioner Martin if he had any questions since he missed the report.

Commissioner Martin stated that what the developer and the Township is looking at is a Real Estate Investment Trust and they have to be careful about announcing publicly that they are working on a project. They need to have their financials in order first and have to be cautious until they figure out all the estimates. He believes that July 31st will show the next step.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Booth asked John Gibbons if the developer we are working with is our main chance for development at this point in time unless someone else happens to “step-up.”

Mr. Gibbons replied that it was true.

Commissioner Booth asked that according to the minutes of the meeting from June/July in the monthly status report it was stated that based on the developer’s input KSK will prepare revised site plans and Econsult will explore tax impacts of proforma.

Mr. Gibbons replied that it was quite correct.

Commissioner Booth stated that to a large degree the burden is on them to do the site plans and the development, etc.

Mr. Gibbons replied that they are taking the lead at this point.

Commissioner Romaniello said that it is important for the community to understand that we hired KSK as our planning firm to be the community’s eyes and ears at the table. The community representative is KSK. They are in tune with the zoning that is acceptable to the residents who live here, to the vision and ideas of what the community expressed, and how they would like to have a sense of place brought back into the town. Our solicitor is at the table to represent our legal interests, the economic consultant is at the table to make sure that the Township’s financial interests are represented and that we understand what risks are in play or what revenues are to be generated from any development project.

Public Comments:

Mr. Charles Kremp of 220 Davisville Road, Willow Grove asked a question regarding the philosophy that didn't seem to go along with the statements made about how we want to have, for the first time, full intention of implementation of the community's vision when the community really doesn't seem to have a representative involved in these discussions. He would like for the Commissioners to be more involved in the development because it is critically important.

Commissioner Romaniello commented that when they come into the public forum that is when the Commissioners will be more involved. The public is going to be more involved but this is their chance to say if you come in and something is really off to the right or left and needs to pull in because you have gone down a road that may be completely unacceptable to catch it early before it comes into the public setting and before a lot of money is spent and wasted as far as their dollars, developing plans that may not represent an idea that reflects even the zoning that is in place.

Commissioner Efkwitz said it was completely contradictory to what is happening when you talk about spending a lot of money.

Commissioner Efkwitz stated that she would prefer that none of the Commissioners be involved in the discussions with the real estate deal. It leaves politics out of it and allows our professional staff to crunch the numbers and work on the plans with the property owners according to the planned division that all of us accepted. With regard to the town center development, this particular redevelopment plan, I almost prefer that we leave it to the planners and let them come to us with their plan and then have that opportunity to comment.

Commissioner Efkwitz stated that her concern is we have completely failed to engage our existing businesses and our existing property owners. What I see, my personal opinion is simply an area that is just waiting for somebody to come in and buy them up or waiting for someone to drop out of the sky and redevelop the area and relocate them and then move them back into their spot. I believe it is very unfair to our existing business community and the property owners but while I can see one real estate business deal in the works being done with our staff I recognize that and encourage that to continue but bring me good information. I am anxious to see what happens on July 31st.

Mr. Kremp said we failed to engage our elected officials and can understand why they prefer not to be involved in this. It is a very difficult decision but it is their decision.

Commissioner Romaniello responded that she does want to be there but she has to trust the professionals at this early stage. We need to allow this process that is set up by the professionals unfold.

Commissioner Romaniello asked Mr. Gibbons to go through the rest of the Status Report.

Mr. Gibbons stated the other meeting was in regard to reconstruction of the culvert on York Road.

Commissioner Efkwitz said that the only things on task for the coming months are the streetscape and the public improvements to the park area and then depending on whether or not we have a favorable reply from the developer we will have other things. After July 31st we could be looking at nothing more than streetscape and public improvements and then back to the drawing board.

Commissioner Romaniello asked John Gibbons to come up with a strategy and backup plan if all else fails, which is being looked at right now.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Romaniello stated that up for review is a proposal from McMahon Associates for design services related to repairs to the culvert at Old York and Easton Roads.

Commissioner Romaniello introduced Joe DeSantis from McMahon Associates.

Mr. DeSantis stated that McMahon Associates is in the process of doing design work for the improvements of the intersection at 611 and Memorial Park Drive. There is a culvert under 611 in the vicinity of Memorial Park Drive which they were aware of but that the design of the culvert is not uniform through its entire length. The culvert is made up of three different types of materials which were installed at different times. What they uncovered was a slab where the plaza would be and that slab is deteriorating considerably.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked what is on the slab area now.

Mr. DeSantis replied that there are mostly shrubs and a tree. They want to replace the slab because they feel it is unsafe to build anything on it. They estimate that to replace the slab it will be approximately \$45,000.00 and replace it with reinforced concrete beams built to PennDot's standards and would be structurally sound to withstand any type of loading. They are in the process of doing the design for the widening and if timing works well they would like to continue to mold the design of the slab into the PennDot permit that they are

pursuing so they can stay on track with the overall schedule for bidding and construction.

Commissioner Romaniello asked if it would be an amendment to the Highway Occupancy Permit that is already inside or would it be an addition?

Mr. DeSantis replied that if they could continue it would be folded in and be part of the approved HOP that we would get for the Memorial Park work. It would be one permit. If we would have to wait then they would have to submit an amendment at a later date which could delay the project.

Commissioner Romaniello asked if that would mean another review cycle.

Mr. DeSantis replied absolutely.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that she wanted the public to know that there is a Special Meeting this evening for the purpose of taking action on this because it is an urgent matter.

Commissioner Romaniello asked Mr. DeSantis if construction had started would they have found this problem.

Mr. DeSantis replied yes and that it was found because the architect went out to the site to see how they could tie some of the amenities on the plaza into the head wall and they saw it right away. If they had missed it then at some point it would have been uncovered. The fact that it was uncovered now allows us to put that information in the bid which means we will get a good price for it because it is part of the bid as opposed to uncovering it during construction and then you would have to get a change order.

Commissioner Romaniello asked who should pay for this.

Commissioner Romaniello wanted to know if they had not disturbed it would we have had to replace the steel beams.

Mr. DeSantis replied that PennDot would not replace it. Right now the slab is not supporting anything. The arch culvert supporting the roadway and the "T" beams are supporting the sidewalk so for PennDot's purposes the culvert is fine. If PennDot would put something on that slab they would replace it but because the Township wants to put something on that slab PennDot is going to look to the Township to replace it.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked if they would be replacing the culvert underneath the road.

Mr. DeSantis replied no that it is all in good shape and they intend to use the "T" beams that support the sidewalk in the design and continue it so it is consistent all the way around.

Commissioner Romaniello commented that the Township would not be liable obviously if they were to build this and not replace the beams.

Mr. DeSantis replied very much so.

Commissioner Romaniello asked Mr. DeSantis if he felt that PennDot would give the Township some type of financial support because of the expected life of the beam.

Mr. DeSantis answered that with PennDot's funding situation today there is really no source that would even come up for this.

VISITOR COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Efkwitz stated that the structural design for this culvert issue will be about \$14,800.00 and then the construction cost for the work is estimated at \$45,000.00 depending on where the bids go. We are basically adding \$59,000.00 to this project.

Commissioner Martin replied that this was an unforeseen structural safety problem that just came to our attention and because we have been put on notice in a public way we definitely need to do something to repair it. We did receive grant money over the last few years from the county to address things like this.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked Mr. Dodies what the estimated figure is for the roadway construction, design and plaza.

Mr. Dodies replied that it is difficult to tell at this point and believes that a broad range was given in the past. He believes that it could be anywhere from three quarters of a million to a million and a quarter. Unfortunately these things come up and there will probably be more things that will come up and will need to be taken care of especially working adjacent to the creek. But until the bids come in we will not know for sure. The county has given us approximately one point two million dollars over the past several years to see the project through but the Township will be responsible for the balance.

Commissioner Romaniello stated the money that is available to the Township needs to be used and that there is one grant expiring in January of 2008.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that the Montgomery County Revitalization Board said there is no more money for this project that they gave us everything from acquisition to demolition to road construction.

Commissioner Booth asked Mr. DeSantis if this culvert should be PennDot's responsibility.

Mr. DeSantis replied that it is the standard process of PennDot that if someone is going to do something with their facilities that PennDot requires that applicant to do the work so PennDot will not do anything.

Commissioner Booth stated that it seems that PennDot is pushing more costs back to the Townships especially in the area of drainage. He feels that they need to talk about that and send a letter to Senator Greenleaf and Representative Tom Murt to try and get PennDot back to doing what they are supposed to do.

Commissioner Booth also stated that there is a \$60,000.00 cost mentioned that isn't all inclusive because in addition we have meetings and correspondence and between \$4,000.00 to \$8,000.00 in engineering services.

Mr. DeSantis replied that unforeseen things may come up and is trying to give the Township an idea of the cost.

Commissioner Booth said that they would be looking at another \$10,000.00 over the \$60,000.00 by the time they were done.

Public Comments:

Mr. Len Spearing of 51 St. Dunstons Road commented that the cost seems extreme when you are not going to relocate the mouth of the culvert and if that is true you are not going to redesign you are going to implement new equipment which will replace what is there. He stated he would like to see the plans.

Commissioner Romaniello asked Mr. DeSantis if they were going to replace the existing materials with different materials.

Mr. DeSantis answered yes.

Commissioner Efkwitz stated to Mr. Spearing that the Township has licensed, registered engineers working on the plans. The Township put their trust in them

to provide them with appropriate construction documents and properly engineered plans. She is confident that McMahon Associates will do their job with regard to the traffic engineering and making sure the permit process is complete and correct and that John Chambers and his engineering firm and their portion of the construction documents will also be well thought out and professionally engineered.

Mr. Spearing stated that he was a trained engineer, has a plumber's license and was a plan engineer for twelve years.

Commissioner Romaniello reiterated that the construction plans are \$14,800.00. The estimated portion of the actual construction is estimated that it could be anywhere between \$35,000 or \$45,000 and that is why the number \$60,000 keeps being thrown out. The price we get today could be different six months from now if we were to bid this job tomorrow. There are two pieces of this the construction and the actual construction costs, design plans, engineering plans and construction costs.

Commissioner Martin stated that he believes Mr. Spearing has the background to evaluate an estimate that is printed up and he would like for him to look at some of the estimates. He comes to the meetings regularly and he is a taxpayer of this community and he would like to hear what he has to say.

Commissioner Romaniello asked if it needed to be moved for action.

Mr. Dodies replied that the Commissioners should move it for action at the Special Meeting scheduled for this evening.

Commissioner Romaniello moved for action the proposal from McMahon Associates and was seconded by Commissioner Efkowitz.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that there was one other item on the agenda, a proposal from KSK to improve public relations. One way to combat information or misinformation is to improve communications coming from the Township regarding redevelopment efforts. One way is a creation of a mini website and also a newsletter. It would act as a marketing piece to attract new business and also bring more economic development into our redevelopment area. It would be used as an information tool. You could go onto the website and download documents or review the information that is available. Attracting new tenants into lease space the website would be accessed by residents or anyone twenty four hours a day. It would also serve as a depository for anything that has been completed or anything we are working on.

Commissioner Efkwitz replied that doing a newsletter would not be beneficial since we report on redevelopment updates and efforts with our general Upper Moreland Township Newsletter. A link on our existing Township website might be nice, something that is easily updated and current. In fact, we already have redevelopment on our Upper Moreland Township website so why are we recreating the wheel.

Commissioner Romaniello replied we aren't doing it well enough. If we want redevelopment to happen we need to get behind it in a positive way.

Commissioner Efkwitz said that redevelopment is going to happen by having business owners, property owners and the community excited about what is coming to Willow Grove and we have not done anything all year other than have one developer come to Willow Grove. Two years ago we talked about going back to the drawing board and establishing the town center's zoning and putting all of our ducks in a row, we have done all of that and we are still right there.

Commissioner Romaniello answered that having a website is having a platform for the residents who live here and when there is a plan to review they will be able to tap in and voice their opinion.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked why it could not be done on our website. What would the cost be to put it on our website instead of having to go somewhere else and throwing more money at redevelopment to create a whole new website. Before we entertain this idea I would like to see if it can be done on our website where it belongs.

Commissioner Martin said that the proposal from KSK should be moved for action and let the Board decide whether a newsletter and website will be a good idea.

Commissioner Martin stated that Charles Kremp brought up a good point stating that the community's vision is being forgotten.

Commissioner Romaniello asked what the turn around time would be in re-purposing the content that we have.

Mr. Gibbons replied thirty days.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that the website's design and hosting is a project that will cost \$4,152.00. It would be hosted for two years and there is an anticipated amount of monthly updates.

Commissioner Efkwitz stated if the Township didn't go ahead with the website and someone wanted to see a document that anyone could ask the Township Manager to see those copies.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that during the month in advance of hosting the website, during month 1, they are approximating a half hour to four hours a month at \$60.00 an hour; approximately \$240.00 a month if there is any new progress, if there is no progress there will be no time used.

Commissioner Efkwitz replied that the newsletter number is not firm. To prepare the newsletter it is \$4,390.00 each time. They are talking about printing and folding 8,000.00 copies and I believe we need more like 11,000.00. So these numbers are not good. She also stated that according to the weight of the document each mailing could be as much as \$2,000.00 give or take.

Commissioner Efkwitz stated that she would like to see different numbers presented next month at the Redevelopment Committee, different numbers, website design and hosting to accomplish those tasks that were brought forward. She also stated that she would like to see what the cost would be to "piggyback" it onto uppermoreland.org and have revised numbers for the newsletter, the frequency of the mailings and the mailing costs for the next general board meeting.

Commissioner Romaniello replied that she will move the idea that we produce one newsletter, the newsletter will advertise the website address, it will be a brief newsletter and they will use a light weight sheet which would not run overweight. The newsletter would actually occur one time primarily to catch the public up with the plaza and to advertise the new website address.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Hotchkiss stated that we already have a very well organized and managed newsletter and a very good website. I do not see the need to create something new and at some point they will disagree and the timing will be different depending upon when they were updated. It makes zero sense to invest that money in something like that.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked who would determine the contents of the newsletter and the website, is it all being determined by KSK or does the Redevelopment Committee determine what's there.

Commissioner Hotchkiss stated that it is in the newspaper before it even is put in our newsletter or on the website. All it will be is another piece of mail. Keep it in

our newsletter and keep it in our current website. At some point something will be lost.

Commissioner Booth agreed with Commissioner Hotchkiss.

Commissioner Booth replied that we are in the process of spending \$175,000.00 to televise our meetings. We are going to be on television several times, we have our website which can be updated and we have our newsletter; therefore, I do not think additional expenditures are warranted.

Commissioner Hotchkiss asked Mr. Dodies if the Township is in a position to get on board with Verizon.

Mr. Dodies replied that the Township has executed a contract with Verizon so we have a contract in place. The issue is when Verizon will have it hooked up in the neighborhoods. It is between Verizon and the subscriber. We have an agreement in place with Verizon as we do with Comcast. Their franchise agreement provides for two access channels to the Township which is where we are trying to go with the renewal with Comcast.

Public Comments:

Alan Klawann, 1113 Division Avenue, Willow Grove, commented that he would be adamantly against the newsletter since we already have township facilities to get this information. We are very privileged to get emails from Commissioner Romaniello which are very concise and keep the residents informed. We do not need another group of media to disseminate what little information we have.

Jonathan de Jonge stated that there is already a website.

Commissioner Efkowitz stated that the website Mr. de Jonge mentioned is not hosted by this Township whatsoever but it's an independent site.

Charles Kremp stated that there is a group of business leaders and residents forming the Willow Grove Chamber of Commerce. This group is being formed because they feel they need to restore a sense of community. He asked to table this idea for a month to six weeks and see what is going to develop from the private sector. This is going to be an organizational effort and one thing that is going to make this different is that to have successful businesses work you need customers and residents. The residents are just as important to this Chamber of Commerce as the government and the business people are.

Commissioner Efkowitz replied that we can partner that it is an outstanding idea.

Another resident stated that she cannot see where it is warranted that the Township spend the extra money.

Len Spearing commented that we should use the means that we have to contact the people and not listen to people who tell us to wait two or three months.

Commissioner Efkwitz commented that Mr. Kremp brought up a very valid point to partner with a Chamber that is 19090. That it is a fantastic opportunity for us.

Charles Acker, 492 Grant Avenue, commented that he did not know what would be put on the website and after years of coming to meetings that as of tonight he has learned absolutely nothing.

Dennis Hurley commented that a website is a great idea but does not see a need for a new one. Keeping a website updated is very important and if the information is not available or updated continually then no one goes back to it.

Commissioner Martin replied he would like to move it to the Board for a vote.

Commissioner Efkwitz asked if Commissioner Martin rather not wait until it can be discussed further in August.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that in reference to the website, the worse that can happen is that it gets sent back to Committee or it doesn't happen. It will go to the full Board and see what the other Commissioners' input is like and go from there.

Commissioner Romaniello asked the Township Engineer where we were with the subdivision plans and if the committee will have to vote on the plans.

Mr. Gibbons replied yes.

Commissioner Romaniello asked Mr. Dodies to make a note of that.

Mr. Dodies replied that it would be driven by the review process and that it will appear on the Agendas as soon as we are ready to go with it.

Visitor Comments:

Alan Klawann, 1113 Division Avenue, Willow Grove, questioned why the developer had completed plans and had to redo the plans.

Commissioner Romaniello answered that it was due to costs. Originally, the costs were too high.

Commissioner Martin commented that the Developer wants to be at a 10% rate of return.

Commissioner Romaniello said until we see the finished product we won't know whether it will be acceptable or not acceptable or whether it is affordable or not affordable.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:34P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene M. Nolan