

**UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 26, 2007

CALL TO ORDER: Comm. Crilly, President of the Board of Commissioners called a meeting to order at 7:09 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 on a legal matter following the committee meetings this evening.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

CALL TO ORDER: Comm. Romaniello called a meeting of the Redevelopment Committee of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 7:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Comm. Romaniello, Chairperson took roll call. Present: Commissioner James Martin. Absent: Commissioner Stacey Efkowitz

Others: David Dodies, Township Manager, Robert Kerns, Township Solicitor and John Chambers, Township Engineer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Comm. Romaniello made corrections to the minutes of the October 15, 2007 Redevelopment Committee meeting as follows: The meeting began at 11:10 p.m. and ended at 11:50 p.m. The minutes were accepted into the record as amended.

REDEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Kise, Straw, & Kolodner Monthly Status Report:

Comm. Romaniello noted that Jodi Holton of KSK could not be here this evening so she will review their report.

Over the past month, there have been several discussions with various lawmakers and funding agencies to discuss how much support and Federal assistance would be available to help the Township fund the public portion of a large scale redevelopment project.

On October 22, 2007, we met with DCED (Department of Community and Economic Development) about a proposal from Developer #2 that was given to the Township on October 10th. They assigned a Community Action Team, which is made up of two Strategic Investment Officers to assist the Township in developing the plans for Commonwealth assistance.

On October 24th, they classified the project as a CAT Engaged Project, which boosts its rating for a State grant application. CAT projects must be community-changing revitalization projects and they must show support from all levels of government.

Earlier this month, we also met with State Representative Tom Murt and Josh Shapiro who support the redevelopment efforts in Willow Grove.

In January, 2008, we will meet with the Montgomery County Commissioners and a preliminary meeting will be held this week with Steve Nelson. When the School Board reorganizes, we will meet with them to establish a tax incremental finance plan and guidelines. Congresswoman Allison Schwartz's office has also expressed interest in supporting our redevelopment efforts.

The Township has an excellent rating to borrow money and both developers have requested TIFF (Tax Incremental Financing). Further analysis of the Township's total economic capacity will be conducted by professionals, which will not happen until the newly elected Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township get sworn in.

Other discussions have taken place over the past month with Developer #2 and Developer #6. Developer #2 presented our consultant team with an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), which is a non-binding agreement between the Township and the developer. Developer #6 met with KSK in October, and they were asked to submit a site plan and pro forma.

Last month, we asked our economic consultant to come up with development criteria (worksheet) so that every developer who works with our Township is treated fairly.

KSK would like to apply for grants through the Montgomery County Revitalization Board and preliminary applications are due in January.

Comm. Romaniello asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Comm. Booth said when we hired Econsult, they were to be used exclusively for Developer #2, and the agreement was that Econsult would not do any work except with Developer #2 without first going through the Township Manager's office.

Comm. Romaniello replied that the developer should have gone through the Township Manager's office and that should not have happened. The developer criteria worksheet is to eliminate Econsult's role in answering the phone and speaking at length with any developer.

Comm. Booth said after two years, we do not have a written procedure on how developers are to be handled.

Comm. Romaniello said we have a land development review process and any developer has to follow that process. The difference with Town Center zoning is that we give developers opportunity to share their concepts before the 90-day review process begins. If a developer does not want to get involved with a private/public partnership; he can go through the land development process.

Comm. Booth asked what is the procedure for developers?

Solicitor Kerns replied the difference for redevelopment is that the developer asks the Township to partner with them and to provide financial assistance and potential use of their condemnation powers.

Comm. Romaniello said if the developer does not need anything from the Township, but wants to build in the redevelopment area under the current Town Center zoning; he can move forward with his plans under that zoning without a preliminary review.

Comm. Booth said if a developer is looking for a public/private partnership then the process is to submit a sketch plan to the Township Manager's office.

Comm. Romaniello said it is stated on Page 3 of the Town Center zoning.

Comm. Booth said Developer # 2 never sent in a sketch plan even though he was asked to.

Comm. Romaniello said in November 2006, that developer initiated the project with the Township. When a concept plan comes in, our economic consultant, traffic engineer, Township Manager, David Dodies, and Solicitor Kerns reviews it.

Comm. Booth said if a new developer wants public assistance and goes through the proper procedures; would KSK then do a detailed plan for that developer?

Comm. Romaniello replied they were hired to assist the Township in moving those negotiations along, but the idea is get the developer to take the first step and initiate the development project.

Comm. Booth asked if a worksheet is being created for developers.

Comm. Romaniello replied that the purpose of a criteria worksheet is a check list for the developer and it should be posted on the Township website.

NEW BUSINESS:

Status of Bids for Demolition of 135 & 139 York Road:

Mr. Chambers said the demolition bid was opened on November 19th and the low bidder is Holley Enterprises Inc. of Wilmington, DE. in the amount of \$26,499. He called their references and only received one out of three references due to the holiday last week. The one reference said they did an excellent job with no problems. We are waiting confirmation on the other two references.

Comm. Romaniello said the demolition is for 139 York Road, which is the building at Rt. 263 and Rt. 611 in order to make way for the new road that will be installed in 2008. We have grant money in which we asked for an extension from Montgomery County and our deadline is 12/31/07. Holley Enterprises Inc. would be the demolition company that will take down that building. If we move this for action at our next Regular meeting; when will they be able to start?

Mr. Chambers replied after acquisition of the property.

Solicitor Kerns said the Township has already condemned this property, so in order to take possession; we need to post an estimated just compensation, which we are in the process of doing. We intend to use grant money to do that and made arrangements with the County to settle that money by putting it into the Prothonortary's Office to hold until it is taken down by the owners of the property.

Comm. Martin said we are limited by our eminent domain powers.

Solicitor Kerns added the piece of property that was condemned was one building and a portion of a parking lot and a portion of the parking lot to the rear of it. The Township intends to put in a road and also additional access into the parking area to the rear.

Comm. Romaniello said we will move this for action at our next Regular Board meeting.

Construction of Memorial Park Drive and Plaza, bids opened on November 26, 2007:

Comm. Romaniello said this is for construction of the new road, which includes the intersection and the plaza.

Mr. Chambers said at 10:00 a.m. this morning, we opened bids for the construction of the road and parking lot in War Memorial Park, which includes the road improvements in front of the Ehrenphort building, lighting of the entrance road, the parking lot, landscaping and a fountain at the intersection. This bid is complicated in that there are two different road design alternatives for Easton and Old York Roads, and there are four different alternatives for the reconstruction or improvement of a culvert that runs underneath the intersection. We have one low bidder in all eight categories, which is K.C. Construction Company. We have a range of bids depending on which alternative and which culvert will be used is \$1,500,000 to \$1,700,000, which includes site work, landscaping, lighting and all roadwork. He will have a written recommendation to the committee next week.

Comm. Romaniello asked does it include traffic signals?

Mr. Chambers replied he does not know at this time.

Comm. Martin asked for funding sources and what the estimated cost would be for the taxpayers' on this project.

Mr. Dodies replied for the acquisition of the properties; there is slightly over \$400,000 available from grant funds. For the construction aspect; roadway, gateway plaza and miscellaneous lighting, we have a little over \$300,000 available in grant funds. The deadline for those grants is the end of 2008 or early 2009.

Comm. Martin asked is the source of funds from the county?

Mr. Dodies replied yes.

Comm. Martin asked do we have any source of funds from the state or federal level?

Mr. Dodies replied no.

Comm. Martin asked are we actively applying for grants?

Comm. Romaniello replied we are not allowed to apply for any more funds for this project.

Comm. Martin said this process began in 2003, and we had two Boards work on it. We should move forward on it and we will try to make the downtown core more pedestrian friendly with this project. We have a new website that will educate the public on our efforts on this project, which is www.downtownwillowgrove.com.

In the last two years since he and Commissioners Romaniello and Efkwowitz have taken over redevelopment, we have accomplished bringing a redevelopment meeting to the public where our discussions and deliberations have been out in the open.

The committee consisting of some of the Board of Commissioners has attracted 13 developers to come to our town in the last 24 months. We have acquired \$453,000 in grant funding. Also, our Township has become eligible for \$5 million from the State, which there are strings attached to it in that we need detailed construction plans in order to reapply for it. That money has been set aside to be used for our redevelopment efforts, which is House Bill 2317, which was approved last year. We have a New Town Center zoning, which encourages mixed use zoning, and we adopted a 66 acre Redevelopment District.

Comm. Romaniello said we will move for action to award the contract to K.C Construction Company for the construction project of War Memorial Park drive at our next Regular Board meeting.

OTHER ITEMS:

There were none.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

VISITOR COMMENTS:

Kevin Spearing asked about the traffic light standard.

Comm. Romaniello replied PennDOT asked this committee to look at installing traffic signals that have a countdown timer and an audible sound for those hearing-impaired and those line items were placed in the overall bid.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Comm. Martin commented that appreciation should go not to just this Board, but to prior Boards and it took the persistence of two Boards to get where we are today.

Comm. Romaniello remarked that there is a solid foundation under redevelopment and we have adopted the policies and begun the public improvement project, but we had to respond to problems that have occurred along the way. For the most part, we have been efficient in the amount of work that has been done through Mr. Chambers' office and Solicitor Kerns' office as well. However, she is concerned that there has not been a significant dollar amount that the Township or Board of Commissioners has been willing to say that they would fund for redevelopment. Redevelopment is not free.

The Township has a lot of infrastructure improvements ahead of us that would include a parking garage, rerouting of streets or other traffic improvements. In order for us to create that safe pedestrian environment and bring back a sense of place; the Township would have to be a partner to see those things reversed. Most of the improvements have come from the Operating Budget and the new Board will have to make decisions whether to fund redevelopment and, if they will, how much are they willing to place on that effort and continue that effort. She encouraged the future Board to move forward with redevelopment. For the rest of 2007, she does not see any reason to spend anymore of taxpayers' money in planning redevelopment. All of the new members of the Board have been informed with the statistics of the economic data to decide whether to take on negotiations with the developers.

Next year, we know that our school taxes will increase, the Township trash fee will increase and, in her opinion, the only way the Township will ever keep up with rising expenditures, is to offset those expenditures with economic development and bring jobs and opportunities to our town. She is committed to redevelopment efforts and she will look for funding from different levels of government.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Elizabeth Vile

