



TOWNSHIP OF ABINGTON

Office of the Township Manager

MEETING NOTES

March 6, 2018 7:30 a.m.

TO: Richard J. Manfredi, Township Manager

DATE: MARCH 6, 2018

SUBJECT: EDC MEETING OF MARCH 6, 2018

REFERENCE: EDC MEETING

ATTENDEES: DOUG CALLANTINE, CHAIRMAN, CHRISTOPHER LIONETTI, MICHAEL MARKMAN, MIKE MCPAUL, WENDY KLINGHOFFER, JIM MARSHALL, DAVE MULVEY, ERIN VIZZA, KEVIN BARRON, FINANCE DIRECTOR, TERRY QUINN, CHARLES KAHN, JR., BRUCE GOODMAN, MICHAEL COHEN, COMMISSIONER VAHEY, MARIA WYRSTA

SUMMARY: AS FOLLOWS

General Discussion:

Status update on Old York Road/Susquehanna road project will be provided by Commissioner Spiegelman at next month's meeting.

Regarding Vacant Property Review Board to initiate a pilot program to determine how the VPRB can best work together with Economic Development Committee to develop vacant properties in the Township; members of the EDC met with Chairman of the VPRB Bob Greaves and reviewed the list that will be prioritized for the top five. Members of the EDC and VPRB will reach out to those top five property owners to schedule a meeting to gain an understanding of what their plans are for their properties and then begin networking and marketing.

There was discussion about requesting that a Township staff member be assigned as an EDC Officer as the EDC are all volunteers and may not know about all of the resources the Township could offer.

Review of revised version of Revitalization Grants to be offered to the community included removal of the concept of 3,000 sq. ft. and the grant can be applied for at any time during the year, and a clean copy of all revisions made were provided to the EDC. Also, the EDC would like to request that the Board of Commissioners include info about this grant in their newsletters as well as an EDC Officer could reach out to property owners promoting the grant.

New meeting schedule; beginning in May the EDC will meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Presentation of Current Real Estate Marketing Update – Michael Cohen of Situs Properties, Inc., and Terry Quinn of Quinn & Wilson, Inc.

Sales in the county from the year 2007 as compared to 2017 showed a 20% decline in values in the years of 2007, 2008 and 2009 and the median price is a 28% increase over that period of time. In evaluating individual townships between 2007 and 2017; Abington had fewer sales in 2017 than in 2007 and average sale price was \$297,000.

Jenkintown Borough had more units sold in 2017 than in 2007, but the price decreased to an average of \$266,000. School taxes increased and the commercial and retail sector has “left town.” Also, Jenkintown Borough has an ordinance in which homeowners must camera their sewer line before selling their house for an estimated cost of \$500.

Upper Moreland Township is essentially a stable community with prices the same as ten years ago and the average sale price came down by approximately 28%.

Upper Dublin Township is one of the most aggressive townships with a median price of \$456,000, which includes about 60 more houses sold in that timeframe.

Lower Moreland Township’s median price is \$533,000 v. \$495,000 showing a slight decrease.

Cheltenham Township from a residential real estate standpoint is a difficult place to sell houses due to taxes and Cheltenham Township officials are not the least bit interested in commercial or industrial development.

There are stable market conditions and the market for first-time home buyers is extremely robust; homes listed for sale under \$350,000 are selling at and above asking price. School system is excellent in every town and there is reasonably affordable housing and a highly competitive tax structure, but there is a shortage in affordable rental properties.

Regarding business/office space, retail and residential in which residential leads commercial; office market expands from Abington to Jenkintown and then another sliver of Abington and then into Cheltenham, which is approximately 1.5 million sq. ft. Abington Township is 430,000 sq. ft., Jenkintown is 590,000 sq. ft. and Cheltenham Township is about 480,000 sq. ft. Previously, a number of properties were constructed as department stores, and today, occupancy is approximately 83% of that total 1.5 million sq. ft.

New market activity is approximately 60,000 sq. ft. a year including other miscellaneous activity for a total of 63,000 sq. ft. This not an absorption report as that report would provide indication that space is being absorbed. Market trends from a tenant standpoint are that tenants are seeing more building amenities including cafeterias, meeting space and fitness centers. Landlords are requiring longer lease terms and raising rents in response to increasing ownership costs in which a summary of those costs was presented. Also, statistics from other municipalities surrounding Abington Township were presented.

In summary; there has been changes in work environment and shopping habits due to advanced technology; land prices and redevelopment is an extremely difficult environment, and it is recommended to review zoning code to address current and future trends, which is warranted and needed as well as to identify specific parcels and sections of the commercial corridor for redevelopment.

Action Items and Responsibility:

Members of the EDC and VPRB to reach out to top five vacant property owners to schedule a meeting.

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