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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Proposed Spring Garden Township Municipal Campus To Be Developed At 1799 Mt. Rose Avenue**

#### **Why are Minutes of the Board of Commissioners meetings not posted on the Township website within a few days after the monthly Board meeting?**

- The Minutes of the monthly Board meeting are “draft” Minutes until officially approved by the Board of Commissioners at the next public Board meeting. Once approved by the Board, they are posted to the Township website.

#### **Why hasn't this proposed project been communicated to the property owners of Spring Garden Township? The public has never heard of this proposed Municipal Campus?**

- Consideration to acquire property to consolidate Township municipal services and to provide expanded recreational opportunities for the residents of Spring Garden Township dates back to 1999 with formal Board action to acquire the former United Dye Works property located at 1799 Mt. Rose Avenue. A Chronological History of Board discussion and formal actions taken by the Board of Commissioners has been compiled by year and is posted on the Township website under “Municipal Campus”. Two feasibility studies have been prepared. The first was prepared in 2002 and the most recent in 2012 to evaluate programming of the site and developing a conceptual Master Plan for development. In addition, four public meetings were publically advertised to provide an opportunity for public input to the proposed development of the property. The first public meeting was held in 2001 followed by three additional public meetings starting in 2012 and extending into 2013. The Public Meeting Minutes are posted on the Township website under “Municipal Campus”.

**The formal decision on whether to proceed with the proposed Municipal Campus project should be decided by referendum on an election ballot to be voted upon by the residents of Spring Garden Township**

- The Pennsylvania legislature has not enacted general initiative and referendum provisions that would allow local governments to place referenda on the ballots for any area of law to be changed, created or repealed. Unless the specific area of law expressly authorizes local referenda on the ballot, municipal referenda are not allowed. There are 24 areas of law in Pennsylvania that authorizes referenda on the ballot. A legal opinion has been provided by the Township Solicitor that concludes that the decision to design and build a proposed Municipal Campus is not an issue that qualifies for a referendum.

**Why are the Commissioners for the Township taking formal action on this proposed project and shouldn't the residents be voting on the proposed Municipal Campus project?**

- In accordance with Pennsylvania legislation, Spring Garden Township is organized as a First Class Township. Under the provisions of the First Class Township Code, the Township is divided into 5 Wards and each Ward is represented by a Commissioner elected by the registered voters of each Ward. The elected Commissioner for their respective Ward serves as the "point of contact" for residents to communicate issues of concern, ideas and suggestions concerning Township affairs. The Commissioner of the Ward serves on the Board of Commissioners and makes formal decision's setting policy, adopting Ordinances and approving Resolutions, adopting budgets and levying taxes for the residents of the Township.

**What are the benefits of the project for the residents of Spring Garden Township?**

- Since Spring Garden Township acquired the Mount Rose property in 1999. The development of the property was intended to consolidate Township municipal services and provide a central point of service for residents. There was also an interest in providing expanded recreation opportunities that residents could not have in their own back yards. These two goals have been carried forward and remain the goals for development of the Township owned property at 1799 Mt. Rose Avenue.

**There are concerns that the site has limited access from Mt. Rose Avenue and I-83 and is located at a remote location for Township residents?**

- The improvements which are under construction for the I-83, Mt. Rose Avenue Interchange will provide an improved access to the property, including a fully signalized intersection at Greenhill Rd. and Mt. Rose Avenue, as well as road widening from I-83 to Greenhill Rd with sidewalk and a dedicated turn lane to gain access to the Township property. These traffic signalization and road improvements are included in the cost of the I-83 Upgrade and Improvement Project and are not funded by Spring Garden Township tax dollars.
- The site of the proposed Municipal Campus is 0.5 miles from, and in close proximity to the location of the current Township Administration Office located at 558 S. Ogontz Street.

**The site of the proposed Municipal Campus was the former location of the United Dye Works and the site is burdened with environmental issues and is toxic.**

- The 1799 Mt. Rose Avenue property was used for fabric dying from 1941 to 1971. Since 1980, hundreds of soil, sediment, surface water, and groundwater samples have been collected at the property by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and consultants contracted by Spring Garden Township. The studies all showed a few sporadic locations of soil and stream sediment with elevated levels of metals, primarily arsenic, antimony, cobalt, lead and vanadium and groundwater with elevated concentrations of dissolved iron and manganese.
- In 2016, DEP Approved Spring Garden Township's final report showing that the concentrations of constituents of concern at the property do not pose any unacceptable risk for those who may occupy it for the planned uses. As part of the process, an environmental covenant was placed on the property limiting future uses of specific areas to the planned recreational (residential) and municipal police and administration (non-residential) uses, and prohibiting the use of groundwater beneath the property. With the approval of the report, the DEP acknowledged that the Site Specific Standard for cleanup had been attained for site soils, pond and stream sediments, surface water, and groundwater, and it provided cleanup liability protection to current and future property owners, developers, and property occupants.

**What will happen to the existing parks which the Township currently owns with the planned recreation improvements to be constructed at the Mt. Rose Avenue site?**

- The parks currently owned by the Township at Elmwood, Mt. Rose Avenue, Grantley, Tri-Hill, Windsor and Custis Field will continue to operate and the recreation facilities at the Municipal Campus will further expand recreation opportunities for residents and families of the Township.

**What are the equipment costs and operational costs for the Gymnasium?**

- Projected costs to equip the planned gymnasium, including operational costs, staffing costs and planned programming for Township use and 3<sup>rd</sup> party rentals will be finalized along with the on-going completion of final design. It is the intent of the Township to offer program opportunities with the actual programs to be run by others. Additional Township staffing costs to coordinate scheduling and management of the gymnasium would be accounted for in the fee structure of programs offered and rental fees for gymnasium use by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties with the goal of having added staffing costs be self-supporting.

**What are the operational costs for the planned Municipal Building?**

- Estimated costs to furnish and equip the new Municipal Building, including operational costs, will be finalized along with the on-going completion of final design. It is expected that there will be increased operational costs because of increased square footage in the consolidation of municipal services to a larger facility. The cost per square foot for maintaining the new building should be less due to cost efficiencies in new and energy efficient mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems as compared to the square footage operational costs for the aged and inefficient Municipal Building which is over 60 years old.

**What expanded recreation opportunities would be available at the Mt. Rose Avenue site and why are they needed?**

- Along with completion of the most recent 2012 Feasibility Study, the Board of Commissioners decided to have the Township Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan updated. Completed as a separate professional services assignment by YSM Landscape Architects the Plan Update identified a significant acreage deficit when looking at a population based analysis of recreational acreage needs and the Mt. Rose Avenue property is the best location to provide expanded recreation opportunities for residents. The site design for the property includes additional fields, basketball courts, walking trails, picnic areas and a gymnasium which is designed as an “Alternate” and can be part of the initial construction or can be added at a later point in time.

**Does Spring Garden Township own the Tri-Hill property located at 340 Tri-Hill Road?**

- Spring Garden Township holds title to the property with a deed covenant requiring the Township to use the property for a public use. Any change in use which violates the deed covenant would result in the property reverting back to the York Suburban School District. Spring Garden Township does not have the right to sell 340 Tri-Hill Road and utilize the proceeds of the sale for Township purposes.

**Why is a new access road connecting 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the entrance road to the Campus included as part of the planned development?**

- The approved Spring Garden Township Comprehensive Plan includes this planned transportation improvement to provide a direct route for the Elmwood area to Mt. Rose Avenue. This transportation connector will be for emergency response vehicles. The final project design will incorporate measures to gate this connector for emergency use only. No thru traffic will be authorized.

**Will the proposed Municipal Campus be developed at one time or would some of the planned development be done over an extended period of time?**

- The Campus is being designed to allow flexibility with the construction of the gymnasium. The gymnasium is being designed as an Alternate which means the gymnasium can be built at the same time as construction of the municipal building and recreation facilities, or the gymnasium could be constructed at a separate time. With the exception of the gymnasium, the planned construction of the municipal building, site work and new recreation areas would be constructed at the same time.

**How will the proposed Municipal Campus be funded?**

- While the Township continues to look for grants which can reduce the cost impact to Township residents, the reality is that most of the project will need to be funded through Township tax dollars. The level of borrowing required to cover the cost of construction, would most likely be provided through a 30-year tax exempt bond issue. The final details for project financing would be the subject of a formal action of the Board of Commissioners along with the Board's decision to proceed with construction after the receipt of public bids and formal action is taken to award the construction contracts and proceed with construction.

**Will the Township be in a position to provide adequate pay and benefits for police and fire personnel going forward?**

- Preparation of the annual Township budget involves a detailed analysis of personnel and associated benefit costs as well as projected capital equipment and vehicle upgrades plus capital improvement projects. Fire, police and public works employees are all covered under collective bargaining and each service group has a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the Township. Contract negotiations are approached by the Township with the goal of reaching a new contract which mutually benefits the Township and employees. Past history shows that the cost of wages and benefits for Township employees will continue to increase for employees covered under collective bargaining, whether the next agreement is mutually agreed upon or whether the next CBA is decided through an arbitration award.

**Increased taxes to fund the proposed Municipal Campus will have an impact on residents with fixed incomes and young families moving into the Township.**

- Development of the Mt. Rose site will have a tax impact on all classes of property owners within the Township. Based on the construction estimates provided as part of the December 14, 2016 preliminary design presentation, the calculated millage to fund the full development of the Municipal Campus is 1.132 mills or 0.880 mills if the gymnasium is not part of the initial construction and deferred to a later time. Based on November 2016 Township assessment data from York County, the yearly increase in tax dollars for the average residential homeowner with an assessed home value of \$ 171,700 would be an additional \$ 194 per year or 53 cents per day for full development of the Municipal Campus as proposed. Deferring the gymnasium to a later time would change the yearly increase in tax dollars to the average residential homeowner to \$ 151 per year or 41 cents per day.

**What impact, if any, would the existence of the sports complex have on the neighborhood Summer Parks Program throughout the Township? Would additional Summer Program staffing be added to the Mr. Rose site?**

- If expanded recreational facilities are built at the Mt. Rose site, there would be opportunities to expand the Summer Parks Program and provide other programs. If the Summer Parks program is expanded and additional staffing is needed to support the expanded programs offered, the added staffing cost would be reflected in the fees established for the Summer Parks Program. The goal is to not increase the Township subsidy paid towards programs that are not self-sufficient.

**Sports complexes sit idle for a high percentage of time during the year. How can this expense be justified when compared to other needs in the Township?**

- If the gymnasium were built, it is expected that the facility would be used on most days and week-end's year round. For programs which are not Township sponsored, and for those times when the gymnasium is not needed for municipal use, opportunities would be made available for 3<sup>rd</sup> party rentals. The rental fees would be established to cover the associated operational costs for the gymnasium including Township staffing for scheduling and any added maintenance costs.
- Additional fields which may built at the Mt. Rose site would be managed and maintained consistent with what is currently done with other park fields located throughout the Township. Field use is managed and field use is made available for both Township sponsored programs and 3<sup>rd</sup> party use based on favorable weather conditions.

**What is the anticipated yearly maintenance for the sports complex (projected out several years)?**

- Similar to maintenance of other currently owned Township facilities, cleaning services are provided by 3<sup>rd</sup> party resources. The Public Works Department has 2 staff assigned to handle Township buildings and grounds responsibilities. This would include maintenance of additional fields. Maintenance responsibilities provided by 3<sup>rd</sup> party resources. Estimated operational and maintenance costs for the new Municipal Building, including maintenance responsibilities provided by 3<sup>rd</sup> party resources, will be finalized along with the on-going completion of final design. It is expected that there will be increased operational and maintenance costs because of increased square footage in the consolidation of municipal services to a larger facility.

**What are the anticipated added costs for insurance and other financial factors for the complex?**

- Added costs for Township insurance coverage of Township owned facilities is reviewed on an annual basis as part of the renewal for Township insurance coverage. The additional costs for insurance and other operational costs for the new Municipal Building will be finalized along with the on-going completion of final design.

**Has any evaluation been made as to updating / expanding the Township Building on S. Ogontz St.? If yes, what was considered and what was the anticipated costs?**

- A conceptual overview of the Township Administration Building located at 558 S. Ogontz St. and the Township Municipal Building located at 340 Tri-Hill Road was made by Township staff in 2012. The “Evaluation of Upgrading & Improving Township Owned Facilities” was provided to the Board of Commissioners at the July 11, 2012 Board of Commissioners meeting and is posted on the Township web-site under “Municipal Campus”. The overview was to serve as a starting point to establish a scope of facility upgrade and expansion considerations if the Township owned property were not developed. Both sites are severely restricted with available area to undertake any expansion to existing building footprints without impacting existing parking and recreation facilities. Changes in a number of regulatory requirements, particularly stormwater management and control have changed significantly since 2012. The conceptual evaluation made at that time would need to be updated in its entirety by a professional architectural/engineering firm to determine what would be required under current code requirements and zoning considerations to renovate and upgrade the Township’s aged facilities.

**Has any consideration been made to sell the S. Ogontz facility?**

- Any consideration to Township owned property according to the requirements of the Township First Class Township Code must be handled through public bidding. There are certain exclusions from public bidding if the Township were to sell Township owned property and the property transfer was to a not-for-profit entity. Even if the Mr. Rose site is developed, there are no immediate plans to relocate the Public Works Department and the Department would continue to operate from 558 S. Ogontz St. for the short-term.

**Are there any legal considerations that need to be made to move forward on this project? Are there any codes or Ordinances that need to be revised or updated?**

- There are no legal considerations or revision/updates to existing codes or Township Ordinances needed for the planned project to move forward.

**What needs to be approved by the Township residents to provide funding for the project?**

- There are no approvals from Township residents to provide funding for any type of planned Municipal Campus construction. Any decision for project borrowing and terms and conditions of financing for construction of planned improvements would be a formal consideration of the Board of Commissioners who are elected to represent the residents of the Township’s 5 Wards.

**Will there be any State or Federal Funds that can be utilized to help offset the costs?**

- There may be opportunities to acquire State funding to assist with certain planned improvements to be built. There are no known Federal funding programs that would offer immediate support to the planned build-out of the Mt. Rose Avenue site. There are grant programs with the Pennsylvania State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources(DCNR) which are available for recreation related projects. DCNR funding assistance is potentially available for existing Township parks as well as new recreation fields to be developed at the Mt. Rose site. The grant programs are highly competitive and are usually matching grant programs committing the local municipality to funding a portion of the planned improvements with local tax dollars. The Township has submitted grant applications to seek funding from DCNR to assist with upgrades and improvements to be made within the Township's existing parks. While the Township has not been approved to receive any funding from DCNR, Township staff continue to prepare and file applications to DCNR for consideration in upcoming rounds of funding.

**The State is looking to reduce property taxes. How does the Township feel, in relation to the State efforts, by proposing a large tax increase?**

- Legislative change which involves tax reform and how property taxes are currently assessed and collected is a long-term issue which is not being considered in the decisions to be made for the development of the Mt. Rose site.

**What large expenses are anticipated for the Township over the next 5, 10 or 15 years?**

- Capital expenses are reviewed in detail each year as part of preparing the Township budget for the next year. Township staff have prepared capital equipment projections which identifies the "tentative" target year for upgrade and replacement of major equipment. Capital improvement projects for street reconstruction and utility upgrades are scheduled in advance. The Public Works Department has a 3 Year Street Improvement Program which schedules Township streets for upgrade and reconstruction. As part of the 3 Year Plan, utility upgrades, both Township owned and underground utilities owned by private utility companies are included in planning with the goal of having utility line upgrades handled at the same time as street improvements are completed.

**Is there any consideration to cap Township personnel levels or is it anticipated that staffing will grow?**

- Staffing levels have not changed for many years and the actual number of full time staff is less than 5 years ago. There is no established cap on personnel levels for Township staff. If staffing needs grow, the goal is to cover the added staff and associated expense under the program which requires the additional support and to establish adjusted program fees to minimize any further tax impact to Township residents.

**Have the plans for the structure(s) included any anticipation of growth in personnel over the coming years? If yes, why?**

- **There is no significant personnel growth anticipated at this time.**