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Upper Providence breaks ground for $4.5M police headquarters

By Leslie Lighton-Humphreys, 21st Century Media

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UPPER PROVIDENCE — Township officials, staff and invited guests celebrated the start of construction Wednesday for the township's new $4.5 million police administration building.

Between rain showers, Police Chief Mark Toomey, supervisors' Chairwoman Lisa Mossie and Supervisor Phil Barker ceremonially broke ground alongside Project Architect Richard Stamper, Township Manager George Waterman, and state Rep. Warren Kampf, R-157th Dist. After the November election, Kampf will begin to represent some township citizens currently within the 150th District of state Rep. Mike Vereb, as part of recent political boundary redistricting.

Also in attendance for the ceremony were seven police officers, Public Works Director Tom Broadbelt and many of his staff, Recreation Director Susan Barker, and guests associated with the construction project.

Michael Nugent of Bensalem's ABC Construction attended with his wife Kimberly and daughter Brittany. Township resident Chris Caggiano, A&E Construction vice president of business development, will serve as the project's owner representative. John Munera, a district representative, took photographs for his boss, State Sen. John C. Rafferty, Jr.

Chief Toomey has said he is very excited to having a facility where township and county task force meetings can be held, training can be conducted, and residents can be greeted in a public lobby.

Toomey's 28-person staff looks forward to relocating from its current cramped quarters with a public access doorbell within the 24-year-old township administration building across the existing portico to a new 12,000-square-foot police facility, designed by Telford's Richard Kapusta and Co.

Kapusta, who attended the event with his employee Stamper, planned a similar police complex constructed within Franconia Township.

Mossie said, "our new building will take us onward into the future, will put us in the position to support continued township growth, and will allow for the accreditation of our police department, which is a goal of the current board of supervisors."

Longtime Supervisor Phil Barker admitted he had never been inside the police facility until Chief Toomey gave a tour of the cramped space after Toomey joined the township force last fall.

A 37-year township resident and 7-year township employee, Susan Barker said she is "very excited for the police department," and the new building is "a great addition to the township."

Patrol Sgt. Rob Solorio said, "Chief Toomey is awesome," before calling his boss a "forward thinker."

The new facility is expected to be in full operation by next summer to replace the outdated facility at the township's Black Rock Road complex.

Chief Toomey, 24 officers, and three non-uniformed staff currently work in the 24-year old building designed to accommodate half that many employees. Changes in technology and regulations combined with plans to add five additional officers to the police force prompted the development effort to connect a new police administrative building on the other side of the existing portico.

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