



**UPPER PROVIDENCE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
WORKSHOP MEETING  
Wednesday, July 29, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

The Board of Supervisors workshop meeting on Wednesday, July 29, 2020 was held in a hybrid/virtual format. The Board of Supervisors, Staff, Consultants, and Library System Services representatives were present at the Administration Building while the public attended virtually. Instructions to join the meeting were posted on the Township's website. Township Manager, Timothy J. Tieperman was the meeting moderator.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board of Supervisors:** Helene Calci, Chair; Albert Vagnozzi, Vice-Chair; Laurie Higgins, Supervisor; John Pearson, Supervisor; and Bill Starling, Supervisor.

**Staff Present:** Timothy J. Tieperman, Township Manager; and Bryan Bortnichak, Assistant Township Manager.

**Staff Attending Virtually:** Arielle Simmons, Communications Officer; and Nathan Vargas, Systems Network Administrator.

**Consultants Present:** Joseph Bresnan, Esquire, Township Solicitor

**Consultants Attending Virtually:** Geoffrey Grace, Planning and Zoning Director; Kent Baird, Park Planning Consultant; and David Rambo and Armand Tecco of IFP.

**1. Introduction**

Supervisor Calci began the meeting promptly at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the special Board workshop on the final presentation of the library needs analysis report. She introduced everyone and then deferred the program over to representatives from Library System Services, Debbie Joy, Director of Marketing, and CEO, Todd Frager.

**2. General recap on Library Needs Analysis Project**

Ms. Joy walked the Board through the analysis timeline which started with the project kickoff in September 2019, culminating in the submission of the draft report of March 6, 2020, right when the pandemic hit, and concluding with July's final presentation (Attachment A). This included holding various focus groups with specialty stakeholders throughout the Township to obtain their specific feedback on what they thought a library program should entail in Upper Providence Township. She indicated that the preliminary information was gleaned from the Community Needs Study that was conducted in February 2019, the results of which showed a strong community desire for a new library component in the Township. She stated that the purpose of the needs analysis component was to drill down and determine some of the specific programmatic needs that UPT residents were seeking.

### 3. Review report findings and recommendations

Ms. Joy summarized the major findings:

- UPT residents want more than a traditional library
- Modern libraries are centers for learning, enrichment and connection
- Community learning center might be a more accurate name than library
- Residents want:
  - Community center for services beyond library
  - Senior center
  - Meeting space for study groups for home schoolers and local organizations
  - Co-working space
  - Maker space
  - Demonstration kitchen
  - Performance space

Ms. Joy shared how other municipalities in the United States approached their library designs, citing examples from Osceola County, Florida tech central space, the Techmobile in Palm Dale, California, Fix-it and Mind and Meditation programs in Germantown, Tennessee, and a hybrid of shops and reading venues in Escondido, California.

She discussed collaboration possibilities with the county library system, the local school districts and with the parks and recreation department. She carved out a few minutes to speak specifically on library innovations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and identified how other library systems have become creative in providing contactless library services.

Ms. Joy then transitioned to discuss three potential sites for the sighting of a new library, noting that each site posed its positives and negatives. These sites included Providence Town Center, Anderson Farm Park and the Black Rock Campus. Ms. Joy reviewed the opportunities and challenges for each alternative (Attachment B). At this point, the Board participated in the discussion.

Supervisor Vagnozzi inquired whether the Montgomery County Library Consortium had been involved in the preliminary discussions. Ms. Joy stated they have been consulted and have offered their assistance as the Township moves forward. He also inquired about the standard one square foot of library space per resident for a library relative to UPT's population in addition fundraising mechanisms to raise revenue. Ms. Joy said most library communities have some type of friends foundation model with which they would assist Township officials in organizing. Supervisor Vagnozzi also opined that he would not support the Anderson Farm Park (AFP) model, given the existence of the deed restriction. He strongly recommended the 23 acre across the street adjacent to the new emergency services facility.

Supervisor Calci inquired about the cost analysis for each site option in addition to the operating costs. Mr. Frager responded that the costs will vary depending on whether the Township builds new, renovates or performs fit outs in an open retail shell. He stated the next phase will include some working capital and operating number estimates for future planning purposes. Supervisor Calci stated her preference would be not to renovate based on the problems associated with the administration building expansion. She also shares concerns over the AFP restrictions.

Supervisor Higgins commented that she has issues with AFP as well, given its lack of transportation access and its general obscurity from the public. She also shares the concerns with the deed restriction and the additional costs of renovating vs. new construction.

Supervisor Starling inquired how many surrounding library facilities LSS visited. Ms. Joy stated at their last visit they did have time to visit the County's Royersford facility and Phoenixville Library. They were not able to visit Lower Providence's library. Supervisor Starling stated that given UPT's highly educated populace, he believes UPT needs a facility with a robust collection of materials suitable for all age groups. He liked the idea of a two-story facility, borrowing the programmatic model used at the Phoenixville Library. Ms. Joy added that the new library trends have a good mix of both physical and digital collections.

Supervisor Pearson stated he finds the number of options to be overwhelming and asked how the Board would prioritize them. Ms. Joy responded they encounter these reactions in all the communities with which they consult but that they do employ a methodology that will help the Board make the correct priority decisions within budgetary restrictions.

Additional comments were then received from UPT park planning consultant Kent Baird, Monto Libraries Coordinator Karen D'Angelo, Park Board member Lynn Corrigan, and Parks/Recreation Director Susan Hoffman.

#### **4. Discuss next steps**

Supervisor Calci asked Mr. Tieperman what the next steps would be now that the needs analysis is complete. Mr. Tieperman responded that if the Board is satisfied with the alternatives, he recommends moving on to the next phase which will provide more specificity around the design of a new facility in addition to projected operating and capital costs. He stated preliminary steps would need to be done before any major commitment of capital dollars. If the Black Rock campus is the preferred site, then any work on a library-learning center complex cannot occur until the completion of the central emergency fire facility, which is likely two years out. However, there is much planning and preparatory work that will need to be done in the interim. He stated that he will work with LSS to get a phase 2 proposal before the Board in the near future.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further comments, Supervisor Vagnozzi motioned, seconded by Supervisor Pearson to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Timothy J. Tieperman  
Township Manager/Secretary

# ATTACHMENT A

# ANALYSIS APPROACH



# ANALYSIS OVERVIEW



# ATTACHMENT B

# POTENTIAL UPT SITES



**Providence  
Town Center**



**Anderson  
Farm Park**



**Black Rock  
Campus**



# PROVIDENCE TOWN CENTER

## OPPORTUNITIES

- High-traffic area; already a destination
- Opportunity for synergy with Towne Book Center, Wine Bar and Café
- Halo effect spending at Town Center retailers
- Existing space much lower cost than construction
- Convenience for residents
- Space available for makerspace
- On a public transportation route
- Government is a desirable tenant
- Provides a way to offer library quickly and at lower cost

## CHALLENGES

- Potential space limitations
- Communicating to retail tenants that library will be high quality and is not a threat
- Possible non-compete agreements with current tenants
- Fit-out and lease costs

*If space is not available at Town Center, there are other potential retail co-location spaces in UPT.*



# ANDERSON FARM PARK

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Space for senior/community center
- Space for demonstration kitchen
- Synergy with Parks and Recreation programs
- Space available for makerspace
- Opportunity to create modern library and build in technology
- Creates a second UPT campus

## **CHALLENGES**

- Location not as central
- Would require new construction
- Public transportation not available
- Possible deed restriction



# BLACK ROCK CAMPUS

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Central location
- Unified Township campus
- Few site constraints

## **CHALLENGES**

- Public transportation not available
- Requires new construction

