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# News for Immediate Release

**Upper Providence Township, Montgomery Co., PA**

*April 21, 2021*

## ***Township Releases Parkhouse Fact Sheet***

In response to several residential inquiries fielded by Township Staff regarding the Parkhouse property, the Township administration has released an official frequently asked questions (FAQ) factsheet to answer the most common questions received about this parcel:

### **1. What is the Parkhouse property?**

- This is a reference to a ~ 176-acre tract of land that was owned for many years by Montgomery County. The geriatric center on the site was renamed to honor then county commissioner Russell Parkhouse. The land was sold by the county in 2014 to close a gap in the county budget. It continues to be referred to as the Parkhouse property although it is no longer owned by the county and it was never owned by anyone named Parkhouse. It is owned by Dr. Scott Rifkin of the Baltimore area.

### **2. What is zoning?**

- Zoning laws and ordinances tell you how you can use your land: residential, commercial, industrial, etc. Every township and borough adopt an official map showing its zoning districts. In addition to the map, most municipalities also have some number of additional “overlay” districts. These are secondary or additional zoning classifications that are in addition to the district on the map. It is sometimes said that they “float” above the map and touch down wherever a property satisfies the additional criteria of the overlay.

3. How is the Parkhouse property zoned?

- On the zoning map, Parkhouse shows as being “open space”. This is a carryover from when it was land owned by the county. Open space is not a zoning type that applies to private land. The zoning was not changed when the land was sold by the county because there was already an overlay that applied to the land. That overlay is the IN-Institutional Overlay District.

4. What does the current zoning of Parkhouse allow to be built there?

- IN District uses are what would be thought of uses that are typically run by non-profit or quasi-governmental organizations, but there is no regulation requiring non-profit status. Specific uses named in the district include schools (colleges, day cares, and universities), libraries, nursing homes (convalescent homes, residential care facilities, personal care homes, and assisted living facilities), camps and recreational facilities, cemeteries, and medical facilities (clinic, hospital, and sanitariums).

5. Is there a pending change to the zoning at Parkhouse?

- Dr. Rifkin approached the Township about changing some of the criteria in the IN-zoning district. Based on strong negative public reaction, Dr. Rifkin did not proceed with the submission of an actual development plan. Two supervisors saw an overview and description of a proposal and felt it was necessary to bring it in front of the full board, as well as the residents of the Township, for their perspective. However, the Supervisors never voted on anything because Dr. Rifkin halted any further discussion, stating that he might return at some later date after doing additional research. Nothing is pending at the present time.

6. Is Parkhouse protected open space?

- No. The land can be developed under the IN Overlay District

Residents may view the Parkhouse aerial overview on page 2 of this release and are encouraged to contact the Township at (610) 933-9179 if they have additional questions not answered in this FAQ. Residents may also review the full context of Dr. Rifkin’s letter at [www.uprov-montco.org](http://www.uprov-montco.org) under *Township News*.

