

The Planning Commission Workshop on the Issues Report convened at approximately 7:03 p.m. on Tuesday, July 19, 2011. Recommendations pertaining to the proposed Community Facilities Element were the focus of the workshop. Present were Commission Members Charlie Howland and Marc Vitale, and also present from the Board of Commissioners was Commissioner Elizabeth Rogan (Ward 7). Township staff present included Chris Leswing, Assistant Director of Building and Planning and Colleen Hall, Planner/GIS Technician.

Planning Commission Public Workshop

Mr. Howland called the meeting to order and explained that the focus of this meeting was to discuss Community Facilities. He deferred any action on approval of the minutes from the May 23rd meeting to next Planning Commission meeting or next Issues Report workshop. There was a robust discussion at the last meeting and wanted to make sure all of the minutes are correct. Our topic, Community Facilities would seem to have less conflict than the topics of previous meetings of institutions and commercial development.

Mr. Leswing started the presentation. He explained that staff is looking for input and feedback from the public regarding the community facilities in Lower Merion. Mr. Howland stated that in some respects Community Facilities are like “apple pie”. Mr. Leswing stated that Lower Merion has a different way we would approach our Community Facilities as a built-out community as compared to more rural areas. We would be looking to new and technological changes to infrastructure improvements and upgrades to police radios due to new technology, we are looking at different things that are coming in. Alison Graham noted that we are still looking at new facilities and upgrading our existing facilities, for example we are in the process of upgrading two of the Township libraries. Mr. Leswing stated we want to look to see how the Lower Merion Community Facilities that we currently have make Lower Merion Township as it is.

Mr. Leswing reviewed that the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Requirements of Section 301. (a) *states the municipal, multi-municipal or county comprehensive plan, consisting of maps, charts and textual matter, shall include, but need not be limited to, the following related basic elements: A plan for community facilities and utilities, which may include public and private education, recreation, municipal buildings, fire and police stations, libraries, hospitals, water supply and distribution, sewerage and waste treatment, solid waste management, storm drainage, and flood plain management, utility corridors and associated facilities, and other similar facilities or uses.*

Mr. Leswing explained that the Comprehensive Plan is not only about redoing or modifying the zoning ordinance. It is also about capital spending and how the Township can take care of what they already have. Mr. Leswing offered an example as it related to the library facilities. There was a question regarding to have one or six libraries. A policy decision was made to determine if one large library or multiple neighborhood libraries would be more appropriate. If you look at it as it relates to traffic; multiple community libraries may be better since it would reduce traffic since less people would be driving farther to reach one main library. It is a policy decision that you make in this discussion. The group then named out the six Township libraries since there was a discussion whether there was five or six libraries.

Carl Watson, as resident of Wynnewood, also pointed out that the same process and policy decision applies to fire companies, as it relates to their fire houses and equipment.

Mr. Leswing agreed and then discussed that it comes down to the budget situation, and the fact that everything needed to look at Community facilities for the now and also for the long term. There is an inter-relationship of facilities, and if one facility can serve a multi-purpose it is a positive situation. For example, if the Ludington Library could have been more meeting space, it could act as a beneficial asset to the surrounding community. Can the library act as a place for that, and if the facility also has the ability to act as a downtown gathering spot, it has multiple positive assets. Mr. Leswing states that as a whole all Community Facilities are good assets.

Mr. Leswing moved along with the presentation to explain that also within the MPC the Community Facility Element also include *a statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components, which may include an estimate of the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality.*

There are numerous departments with the Township organization and this creates a hierarchy. Some departments have master plans which includes the goals and vision for that department. The Fire, Parks & Recreation, and Public Works departments have a set of goals for the repair and replacement of the equipment fleet. The Comprehensive Plan provides staff with an opportunity to show all of those plans together in one plan. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a budgetary document and used as a guide. The format may not show a good picture to see down the road what may be coming in the future. Staff would like to use the Comprehensive Plan as an opportunity to see all of the information together. Mr. Leswing stated if we have the whole picture, we may not act on one item at a time like a fire sale.

Carol Strickland, a resident of Wynnewood asked if this is what we have from the 1979 plan. So when things would be coming up, we would have had an idea of what is what within the Township.

Mr. Leswing answered not exactly. Some Comprehensive Plans just inventory what you have within your Community Facilities, staff would like to take a next step and link this information

to the Capital Improvement Plan. Carol Strickland said this seemed to make logical sense and to be a good idea to link these two items.

Alison Graham, a resident of Ardmore, stated that if you can lay out a framework, then you can see if things make sense. She then spoke of the DRVPC Long Range study from 2000, and since things were not followed in this plan the 2010 Long range plan from DVRPC was modified to reflect the changes. Since these studies are advisory, the governing body may not look at it for guidance. The Comprehensive Plan is also an advisory document and may not be followed. There is still a need to set the framework. Mr. Leswing commented that staff would set all of the information out there to be used and staff will not make judgment on which is better.

Alison Graham stated that the library plan stated if we needed six versus fewer facilities. The Township officials said they wanted the six libraries and made the decision to fund the projects.

Mr. Leswing stated that is the policy decision that is made by the Commissioners. The Township's community survey also stated the desire to have the libraries.

Mr. Howland stated that there are Community Facilities and there are Township resources.

Mr. Leswing stated that this Element will have Community Facilities and Infrastructure together. The MPC is geared more towards developing communities and since the Township is essentially "built out" it is a different type of element and we are planning in a different way. In the development of the 1979 Comprehensive Plan it was different, and Lower Merion was a different community. Staff is now attempting to determine how can we take the MPC framework and get the best product for the Township. The challenge of this element is to make as an effective tool as possible to provide for orderly and efficient preservation, infill and redevelopment to implement the goals, principles and vision of the community.

Mr. Leswing stated that comprehensive plan shall include a plan for community facilities and utilities, which may include: Public & Private Education, Libraries, Recreation, Hospitals, Municipal Buildings & Facilities, Water supply & distribution, Fire Stations, Sewerage & waste management, Police Stations, and Green infrastructure.

Mr. Leswing then examined how this might affect the community facility of the Parks and Recreation's Playing fields. There is a debate whether artificial turf fields are better than natural grass fields. The number one priority in the Open Space and Preservation plan was to acquire more playing fields. If you have all grass fields there is no time to rest and repair these fields and they are used very heavily. This limits the use of the fields and limits the use for the residents. With an artificial turf field, the rest time is less, but the cost to install a turf field is greater and has an impact. It is an issue and a policy decision whether grass is a better option than artificial turf. Students do need the best facilities to play on.

Mr. Leswing stated that the Community Facility of Hospitals will be discussed in the institutional chapter of the Land Use Element. The community facility for the libraries is covered in the Library Master Plan.

Mr. Leswing stated that the Waste Management component of the 1979 Comprehensive Plan did not have recycling or composting, so now it is a different way of thinking about waste management.

Leigh Anne Smith, a resident of Bryn Mawr, stated that with the new financial reality of the state and federal funding, how is the Township going to going to handle this and deal with this new reality of reduced funding.

Mr. Leswing responded that he was not sure how to handle this climate and that he did not know. Mr. Leswing showed the concept of showing a matrix which would show all of the Capital Improvements and Maintenance for each of the items over the course of thirty years. With the idea of showing everything together, you would be able to get a fuller picture of the long term effects. When each line item is filled, there will have to be choices made, and I am not sure what they will be.

Mr. Howland stated that each department has their input for what they need; this matrix would have their input. In this economic climate there are more things competing for the same dollars.

Mr. Leswing stated that the Township has to make decisions on what the community needs and what we can actually fund.

Mr. Howland commented that there will be long term effects to waste management. In five years, we know that the regulations will be tougher and there will be higher costs for waste and the municipal facility.

Mr. Leswing stated all of these items have a life cycle. For example, how long does a particular Fire or Trash equipment last?

Chad Graham, a resident of Ardmore, stated that Don Cannon already knows all that information, just ask him.

Mr. Howland stated the facility of waste will look the same, but the costs for its maintenance and overall operation will go up. There is the question of upgrades to existing facilities. If we decide to upgrade, we make the decision.

Mr. Leswing stated that the grid needed to be filled out not to make choices, but to see it all in one place. Mr. Leswing provided the example of baseball fields. The Private schools have artificial turf fields, but in some cases there is no outside use of these fields. These fields could be a shared resource within the Township. If we limit the use of the fields, it creates an outside

issue with the lack of fields for the general public. So this is something the community needs to think about it.

Mr. Howland stated it is the big picture and discussion items which it will be helpful to make the long term decision.

Mr. Leswing stated that the 1937 Comprehensive Plan was a great plan. The Plan looked to create big green areas, which is a fundamental goal of the founding members of Landscape Architecture to create natural areas and improve health with these open areas and natural areas. The plan stated the greatest natural resource was the Schuylkill River. They had a plan which showed how the river could be developed. This major development was at the end of Waverly Road. All future Comprehensive Plans have included comments and plans for river development. Every time this development has been contemplated, it has failed. Mr. Leswing showed an editorial from 1965, which made comments about the new development of the Flat Rock Park Comfort station. The comments were stating that the project should never happen due to the negative externalities it would bring to the area. This is no different from the editorials we see today in the Main Line newspapers discussing current projects.

Ms. Smith pointed out that we have to consider that in 1965, the money they were considering spending was a lot of money. There may have been more to that story than we are not seeing today. Costs were an issue at that time. The same situation occurs today with the issues with cost and spending.

Mr. Leswing stated that the Comprehensive Plan will not solve this issue, but it will lay out all of the items to make informed decisions.

Ms. Smith looked to the meeting last night regarding the City Avenue rezoning. At this meeting, there was a discussion about the taxes and how the western portion of the Township was affected by the development as much as the eastern portion of the Township. She stated it is not a situation of the west versus the east. It is not just about the money and about the taxes. It is about the project as a whole.

Mr. Howland stated it would be beneficial to have all the same information in one document.

Mr. Leswing stated that some examples of what the Comprehensive Plan of 1954 focused in on were the investments to playfields and the development of the Shortridge neighborhood plan. The 1963 Comprehensive plan was a simple plan which mapped and outlined the facilities, but also showed the interactions between green spaces in the Township and the Mill Creek Conservation agreement. The Mill Creek Conservation agreement was completed in 1941, and this plan is why the Mill Creek Valley looks like it does today. In the plan, it showed the importance of tree lined streets. Subdivision trees and the overall canopy is getting older, and dying off, then replacement trees are not happening. When we lose this canopy, does the

community like how it looks? The community should want trees back for the benefits that they provide. The Township Arborist acts more like an Urban Forester now in built out community. The Shade Tree Commission states where the trees go back, but with no budget they are not able to pay for the street trees. There is more replanting on private property due to maintenance issues and State regulated roadways. Mr. Leswing stated the role of the Shade Tree Commission may change in a built out community. The question is how to address the Township's aging infrastructure. The street trees get into the Township's green infrastructure.

Mr. Vitale was asked about his experiences on the Shade Tree Commission. He explained that the Shade Tree Commission has a fall planting procedure, where it actively looks for places for new trees. The desire of individual property owners to want ornamental trees rather than shade trees is one of the big issues that the Shade Tree Commission deals with.

Commissioner Liz Rogan stated that there are funds in the CIP for replanting street trees. The Shade Tree Commission does not have a budget.

Mr. Leswing states there appears to be a hole in the tree canopy along the streets. The sidewalks in Lower Merion are similar to those in Collingsworth, but their tree canopy is better and it creates a more pedestrian friendly environment; the trees are more lively.

Mr. Vitale noted that that the planting that Collingsworth has done is fairly new and done quickly in the last five years.

Mr. Vitale stated that the Shade Tree Commission may not have any statistics on homeowners, who do not desire street trees on their property. The Shade Tree Commission works hard to get places to put the new trees and is constantly looking for places to fill in the gaps. Karla Moras, a resident of Merion, asked if there are statistics on homeowners not wanting trees. The Shade Tree Commission is not asking a homeowner to spend money on a tree, although no homeowner likes to be told what to do.

Kate Galer, as resident of Ardmore, spoke of a new approach and might be a good/better approach is to have homeowners come together and build/plant the trees on their own. For example, certain neighborhoods would benefit as a whole from the planting of the trees. It would be more to working with neighborhoods and homeowners to provide assistance to plant trees, and not come in any tell them where they go.

Ms. Graham asked and spoke of the 10,000 trees program and other grant programs that the Township has been a part of in the past. Are these trees still being planted?

Mr. Leswing spoke of how there is different ways to get this type of work completed. There are extra-government agencies which can help to proactively get these types of projects done. There is a difference between a non-profit groups or a civic association versus a governmental agency.

Ms. Strickland stated that there needs to have coordination between Township departments, so that planting of these trees do not create long term site visual obstructions and sight distance problems. A green town is great, but we need to work with the potential hazards with street trees to make it work.

Mr. Leswing stated there are always conflicts between planting trees and all of the other things in the right of way, utilities and sight distances. An allee of canopy trees is a great asset.

Ms. Moras asked if there were incentives for planting trees on your property.

Mr. Leswing stated no not right now. Mr. Vitale further clarified that no there were not incentives for residential properties. Although, for commercial areas the Shade Tree Commission is trying to work with commercial property owners to get trees planted. For example on Lancaster Avenue from the Wynnewood Square Shopping center down to Wynnewood Road there is a lot concrete and they are trying to plant street trees and provide incentives to do so with the Shade Tree Commission.

Mr. Leswing stated we need to maintain what we have. There may be options regarding impervious surface or stormwater incentives that could be explored. It may be possible to link best management practices for stormwater with the planting of canopy trees.

Mr. Howland explained the potential benefits of groups buying trees and providing an educational session regarding the benefits of those shade trees. Mr. Graham asked if we could move on to a different topic, due to that fact that everyone agrees that we like trees.

Ms. Galer agreed that we all like trees, but there is another side to consider when planting the additional trees that certain homeowners may feel that are important to them. There are cost associates with planting trees and maintenance cost to upkeep these trees. In her neighborhood, it might be an issue with the limited space to plant in the front yards in such a close area and the cost of maintenance and trimming, and the clean up from the trees. It is just good to recognize that there might be a certain percentage of the population that may not feel like trees.

Mr. Leswing moved on to the discussion of public schools since they are community facilities, which the Comprehensive plan encompasses. The policy of the 1979 plan was to sell off existing school buildings and then other private schools or facilities took over the space. For example the Narberth Elementary became the Montgomery Early Learning Center; Bala Elementary became the French International School of Philadelphia; Wynnewood Elementary became the Torah Academy; Bryn Mawr Elementary became a part of the Bryn Mawr Hospital campus; and Ardmore Junior High was converted to the Lower Merion High School

Mr. Leswing stated that there are consequences to these decisions to close more localized smaller schools, families drive to the current facilities that are farther from homes. There are shifting issues and changing consequences, the Township has to weigh all of the options.

Ms. Strickland stated is this not an issue for the Lower Merion School District? The school district will provide the Township with the information they have and hopefully their long term goals for what they need.

Mr. Leswing stated that the Lower Merion School District will have all of it together. The goal is to show it all together as a complete community plan.

Mr. Howland spoke of the big picture with schools and do you think that there will be many changes considering the recent improvements?

Mr. Leswing stated they may be done with big picture items, but they may need to address increasing enrollment and changing technologies. There are more students coming to the schools.

Mr. Vitale asked can they go up in building growth and not expand out.

Ms. Galer stated that Penn Valley is at capacity with their students. The discussion continues to point out that the two new high schools were built for long term capacity.

Mr. Vitale asked about the relationship with the Polo field. Mr. Leswing explained the relationship and ownership of the field.

Mr. Vitale stated he never realized the Township was so short on fields. With the Lower Merion School District High School renovations fields were lost, even with redevelopment.

Ms. Moras asked where the data was about the shortage of fields in Township. Mr. Leswing stated it will be in the Park and Recreation Plan which is due out this fall, and if you were looking for some data now, it is provided at a broader level in the Open Space and Preservation Plan.

Mr. Howland stated there is no question that there is a shortage of fields. Ms. Galer stated that daughter's lacrosse games would just get cancelled for no reason. Mr. Vitale asked if there was a solution.

Hugh Gordon, a resident of Ardmore, stated there is no consideration given to capacity in this Issues Report plan or in the Lower Merion School District plans. When you build more and have more there is a fundamental question of how do you house all of it? It comes down the question of capacity.

Mr. Leswing stated to Mr. Gordon that this was a good point and comment. The Comprehensive Plan will look at everything and put it all together.

Ms. Moras stated there were no long range plans for the City Avenue District to look at the details.

Ms. Smith spoke of all of the pending and proposed dwelling units from the approved developments and the projected projects. The question was who is going to inhabit all of these units? The projections seem to point that they are designed for singles or young couples or older people. She questioned whether this was a valid analysis. She commented that at some point there has to be point where you just have to determine that there is too much.

Mr. Leswing stated that capacity is a big issue and the harsh reality with a built out community.

Mr. Gordon asked how the Issues Report is dealing with the issue of capacity. Mr. Leswing stated that staff would review Lower Merion School District plans and see what they have for projected populations, and then determine where students are going and changes may need to occur. We would look at “what if” situations with more families and what that does to the existing facilities that we currently have.

Ms. Moras was confused about the value judgment statements that were being stated or the contradictions. On the one hand, it was stated that we need more playing fields since there is not enough, but then we move to speak about capacity of the Township. She stated that the Comprehensive Plan needs to get a handle on which direction it is going. She stated that Mr. Leswing said he believes that we are a built out community, where is that information?

Mr. Leswing clarified that when you look at a map of Lower Merion there are not many large tracts of land available for future development, there may be smaller or simple subdivisions. The group felt that this interpretation did not account for the ability to go up with development.

Ms. Smith asked how do all of the projected new units and the approved units fit into this statement.

Ms. Moras spoke of the Rock Hill Road development and the discussion of amount of units for that area.

Mr. Howland asked where the development is.

Commissioner Liz Rogan stated for Lower Merion Township it is considered infill development. Lower Merion is one of the oldest communities in Montgomery County and Pennsylvania and it is a built out community, the changes to the community are different in an aging community like Lower Merion. The future development like in Rock Hill Road or the Georgia Pacific site on Righters Ferry Road will increase in population due to the availability of smaller units if people are moving from their larger homes then those housing units will then be open to new families. It is a goal to have a variety of housing units which includes more affordable units, not just only very expensive units. Single Family is a large percentage of the housing in Lower Merion. It is a

dynamic with maintaining what the community has, while also allowing for a mix of development.

Mr. Howland asked have we looked at the capacity of school and the current demographics.

Mr. Leswing responded that staff will be looking at the current data and the projected data and pulling it all together to see what is there for an analysis. Ms. Galer stated that Lower Merion School District has the projected population for school age children.

The time was 8:30, and Mr. Leswing moved on to the next steps and discussion of the next meeting topic.

Mr. Leswing stated that in the 1979 Comprehensive Plan, the Community Facilities plan included an inventory of 75 historic and cultural resources that were recommended to be preserved for the posterity of the Township. The plan recommended that each individual property be designated as historical to prevent future demolition. Staff would like to discuss the Historic Resource in separate meeting since we feel it is such an important topic. The MPC states that the Historic Preservation Element is an optional component to a Comprehensive Plan; staff feels that it needs to be a separate element and not linked into the Community Facility Element. Staff feels that historic resources in Lower Merion are too important and feel that a separate element is warranted.

Mr. Leswing stated that the Historic Preservation element will have some cost associated with its completion. Ms. Smith stated like the situation with trees that we discussed earlier, there needs to be better and further education to the township residents in order to see the value of Historic Resources in the community.

Mr. Leswing stated that the completion of this Element will utilize the knowledge of the Historical Commission and HARB members. Mr. Leswing went through a series of slides showing the locations of some of the Township's community facilities, including public schools, libraries, fire departments, public parks and municipal lands, and finally pumping stations. Pumping stations are a good infrastructure element to have and they are important for the interworking of the Township's infrastructure.

Mr. Leswing introduced some non-bricks and mortar infrastructure items such as telecommunications, the Township website, LMTV7, compost for residents, Waste management, Parking meters, and Fleet vehicles. The changes telecommunications and upgrading of these facilities will be a topic in the future. The police radios for example will be a big topic this fall.

Mr. Vitale asked if the Township has been approached by new carriers for telecommunication companies or do we have them come in to the Township. Mr. Leswing responded that he was not sure. There is the Township's Telecommunication committee which discusses these types of

topics. Mr. Vitale stated it would be a good idea and beneficial for the Township to get more from the private companies if they are requesting to come into the Township.

Mr. Leswing stated that the Community Facility Element will have a large component which will deal with the issue of keeping up with technologic advances.

Ms. Galer expressed that the Township website could become more important and a more useful tool since the community continues to get a lot of information from their computers. It would be more helpful to have all of the information in one place. The volunteer fire department is a big asset to the Township, and the difference between having paid employees versus a volunteer force. The Township volunteers are all big assets, but it does take time and effort to coordinate the efforts for volunteers to gain a positive outcome.

Mr. Leswing echoed the statement that volunteer efforts still take some time to coordinate, and they need to be coordinated in order to save money. Ms. Graham spoke of the efforts of the Environmental Advisory Committee, which took the charge to address issues with properties with Preservation Areas and offer assistance and education to property owners regarding their preservation areas and the benefits of this open space. The volunteers still try to help the property owners by conducting site visits and offering suggestions for maintenance.

Ms. Galer stated that a small population of residents know and understand what the EAC is and what their role can be. It would be beneficial to explain and possible to expand their role as a community resource.

Mr. Watson stated that we also have the valuable resource of the Narberth ambulance and the Lower Merion community watch group which are both different types of individuals; one highly skilled and the other just homeowners assisting the police, but nevertheless both valued assets to the community.

Ms. Strickland stated that we still need the valuable resource of the newspaper. This media resource should be acknowledged along with the other media resources, such as the TV station and radio. Mr. Leswing agreed and thought it should be added into this community facility discussion.

Mr. Leswing noted 20 years ago, we did not see that the community would have the TV resource that we currently have and it is a valuable asset to engage the public in this discussion. It is good to show it all together, and then make policy decisions.

Mr. Leswing moved on to the last slide of the presentation and believed we covered all of the recommendations in the discussion. A recommendation of the report was to evaluate the cost and benefits of conducting a community survey in order to determine community desires regarding levels of service and the nature of community facilities.

Mr. Leswing discussed that we completed a survey about seven years ago. The question is would we benefit from another survey? What did the completed survey show?

Mr. Howland discussed that this item was discussed in the previous meeting by Planning Commission member Brian O'Leary. The question and discussion was regarding the cost to complete a statistically valid survey.

Ms. Graham suggested that since we already send out a newsletter to all Township residents with no cost due to the advertisements, that we could place the survey in this publication. It should be considered as a possibility.

Commissioner Rogan spoke that a statistically valid survey would be different, and the newsletter mailing would not give you that type of survey. It is possible that the same individuals that come to these meeting would be the same people that would be likely to complete the survey. With the valid survey, there is a control of the responses to ensure a sampling of data.

Ms. Moras explained the difference between a statistically valid survey and how the details work with a sampling of data.

Commissioner Rogan commended and praised the fact that people are coming out and providing great information to the group. Commissioner Rogan thanked the group of people participating in the discussion.

Ms. Smith commented that people have different ideas of what it is to be sustainable. Some people are never going to be Okay with spending money for libraries. Ms. Galer stated that if any policy decision is presented with the ideas and background that goes into the final decision explained fully the final choices would make more sense with seeing all of the background.

Mr. Leswing stated it is a balancing act and with using matrix, you would be seeing all of the information in the same place.

The question from the group was how does the Capital Improvement Program take into account the reality of reduced capital funds from the state and federal levels? How does that decision get made?

Mr. Howland spoke of a plan several years ago where the Township could have gotten involved in a solar installation plan, but at the time the upfront buy-in was too high of a price, although the end result would have potentially saved money. It is a guideline to make the decision with more information to make a good choice to see what is all out there. Mr. Howland asked to move on to the discussion of the next steps for the Issues Report.

Ms. Galer stated that we needed to look into the roles of the advisory bodies, under Title 13, to see if they could take a more active role.

Mr. Leswing states he would look at the details of the advisory boards. The next meeting is anticipated to be in September and this meeting will discuss the Historic Preservation Element. All agreed that this was an important meeting to complete. Then, we would look to what is next for the Planning commission to make recommendations.

Mr. Howland asked for clarification. Staff is looking forward to feedback regarding what is next and how to complete the tasks in front of us. Mr. Leswing clarified that staff was looking for the Planning Commission to comment on the content and recommendations of each of the proposed element. Also to recommend the order in which the elements would be completed. The discussion could also include how to do and what it will cost to complete each of the Elements.

Mr. Howland stated that we are not talking about consolidation of facilities. With a survey, you would get an idea of how people think.

Mr. Watson asked if it was a priority to spend the money to get the survey.

Mr. Howland explained that 5% of the community gets involved in these discussions. The Comprehensive Plan is an important document for the community; you want to ensure that you get a full picture from the Lower Merion Township survey.

Mr. Watson stated it is hard to justify spending the money. He felt there are individuals in the community that think that this Comprehensive Plan process has already been too long of a process, if the survey was completed it would then be longer.

Ms. Strickland asked if it would have to go to bid.

Mr. Watson commented if you cannot get the full statistically valid survey due to the cost, then the idea regarding the newsletter or another option would be the next best thing.

Ms. Moras stated that it just cannot be considered as a valid picture of what the public thinks. Ms. Moras summarized the earlier discussion regarding the value of trees and historical resources and their importance. Are there facts about the built out community? For example, the Lower Merion School District what is the full capacity of the high schools.

Mr. Howland stated as a part of the Comprehensive Plan will be to look at the build out, as it relates to different elements.

Mr. Leswing thought this was a great idea. The discussion should be had which explains how much can each community facility can handle. The pump stations are a great example and where all of the waste will go in the future.

Mr. Watson and Mr. Gordon stated the same should be shown for all of the utilities: water, sewer, electric and gas.

Commissioner Rogan stated that gas will be a big picture item, and how communities deal with this issue in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10.

Meeting notes recorded by Colleen Hall, Planner/GIS Technician.