



# UPPER DARBY TOWNSHIP

## DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES & INSPECTIONS

100 Garrett Road. Upper Darby, PA 19082 Phone: (610)734-7613

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August 14, 2023

### UPPER DARBY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

#### Attendance

Planning Commission Members Present:

- Debbie Nifong
- Cassandra Hayes (Virtual)
- James Mullen
- Jeffrey Roken
- Steve Bertil

Planning Commission Members Absent:

- None

Township Staff Present:

- Asst. Director of L&I for Planning & Zoning-Joshua Chast
- Mike Galante, Township Engineer
- Courtney Mullan, Asst. Planner

#### Minutes

A motion was made by Jeffrey Roken to approve the June Planning Commission Minutes. The motion was seconded by Steve Bertil. All members voted in favor. \*It should be noted that the July Planning Commission was postponed due to lack of in-person Quorum.

#### Reviews

1. No reviews were presented during this Planning Commission.

#### Old Business

1. Upper Darby's Controller Box Art Contest
  - i. On July 11, 2023 the Planning Commission members judged the controller box art submissions and decided on the winners of the contest.
  - ii. The Chair announced following winners:
    1. 69<sup>th</sup> & Market- Isabella Hijuitl-Grande
    2. 69<sup>th</sup> & Ludlow- April McAleer
    3. 69<sup>th</sup> & Chestnut- Emily Nammavong
    4. 69<sup>th</sup> & Sansom- Maria Aguilera



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5. 69<sup>th</sup> & Walnut- Robbin Atwell

6. 69<sup>th</sup> & Marshall- Erica Harney

iii. Special thank you to Boluwatife, who is an intern for Upper Darby Township and put together the art box program.

### 2. Garrett Road Modernization-Presented By Township Engineer Mike Galante

a. This agenda item was not ready to be presented at the October Meeting.

### 3. SEPTA's 69th Street Transportation Master Plan

- a. SEPTA is currently in the process of writing a Master Plan for the 69<sup>th</sup> Street Transportation Center. Primary needs for the plan include upgrading their rail and trolley fleet, improving their existing repair facilities, improving ridership experience and a general reconfiguration/reworking of the 69<sup>th</sup> Street Transportation Center.
- b. SEPTA has engaged in an internal existing conditions/analysis and internal interviews.
- c. SEPTA has been working with Upper Darby Township to identify external Stakeholders that SEPTA should interview as part of their planning process. The Township and SEPTA has compiled a list of stakeholders that include Upper Darby Township employees, elected officials, non-profit community groups and local businesses.
- d. SEPTA has conducted an interview with Mike Galante, Upper Darby Township's engineer and Debbie Nifong, who as Chair represents the interests of the Planning Commission.
- e. During their interviews both Mike Galante and Debbie Nifong brought up issues with pedestrian infrastructure connecting to the 69<sup>th</sup> Transportation Center.

### 4. Trail Planning Updates

- a. Upper Darby Township under the leadership of Bill Kaplan, the Director of Leisure Services and Mike Galante has been working on several trail plans under various grants. The township has been coordinating with the Pennsylvania Environmental Coalition (PEC) and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to facilitate the completion of these trail programs.
- b. The trails program is being brought to the attention of the Planning Commission because the commission should be thinking about how future development can connect to potential trails and how trail planning can connect future developments. This is important because the Planning Commission, through the land development review process has an opportunity to support trails and trail planning within and along Upper Darby's future developments.
- c. Mike Galante reviewed the trail projects that are in the works.
  - i. Darby Creek Trail:
    - 1. The Darby Creek Trail runs along the Darby Creek starting at Kent park going north through Gillespie Park, extending through the new Drexeline Development eventually connecting to Haverford Township.
    - 2. Not all parts of this trail have been completed.
    - 3. Recent improvements include:
      - a. New completed trail in Gillespie Park. Starting on Bloomfield Avenue going through Gillespie Park over to Creekside. Asphalt and stormwater was installed first. The second phase is the construction of the bridges. The first bridge has been installed connecting Gillespie Park to Kent Park. The second bridge will



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connect Gillespie Park to Bloomfield Avenue. The second bridge still needs funding and planning.

- b. Drexeline is also completeing a section of trail that runs from the Drexeline's Trolley Stop, through the new Development, eventually terminating at State Road.

### ii. Naylor's Run Trail

1. Follows the old Cardington-Newtown Branch Railroad Line. The trail starts at Baltimore Avenue and moves north along the spur until it reaches the township boundary at Township Line Road.

- a. Completed work: Asphalt has been completed for a piece of the Cardington trail.

### iii. Circuit Trail Network.

1. The previously mentioned trails are part of DVRPC's Circuit Trails Program. These are trails that meet specific requirements and can connect to each other through the greater Philadelphia area.

### iv. Funding

1. We have planning and trail extension grants. Typically built in sections. Funding typically comes one section at time. No corporate sponsorship plan so far.

## 5. Public Comment

- a. Kyle McIntyre wanted to know why the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Drexeline-Plan Revision that was heard at the June Planning Commission meeting. Kyle McIntyre raised concerns regarding the removal of apartments from the original plan. His concerns were that there is a deficit of new apartments in Upper Darby and the condition of the existing apartments are deteriorating.
  - i. The planning Commission responded with the following points:
    1. The Chair was also disappointed in the loss of the apartments for reasons of Transit Oriented Develop, multifamily housing supply and affordability.
    2. Concerns were then raised to the applicant about the viability of office space in a post-COVID economy. The applicant made the case that the proposed tenant was strong and the office will not be empty. The Planning Commission voiced concerns about how the overall site will be used without the presence of a built in residential population. The applicant again assured the Planning Commission that there would be adequate use of the site with the Medical Office Building and other tenants.
    3. Several members of the commission found the revision from apartments to a medical office building to be a positive change.
    4. Based on the answers from the applicant, a strong tenant and the need to complete this project, the change in use from apartments to medical office building was deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission.
- b. Mural Arts Program has been approved by council and funded by an ARPA Grant. They are looking for places around Upper Darby to paint Murals. Looking at two possible wall locations. They are also looking at painting some utility boxes as well. They are looking for community input as part of the process. More information can found at [udtj.org/muralarts](http://udtj.org/muralarts).

## Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Jeffrey Roken. The motion was seconded by Steve Bertil.