

The first meeting of the Operations Task Force of Upper Dublin Township was held on Tuesday, June 18, 2002, in the Township Building; Jules Mermelstein presiding.

In attendance were Commissioners Mermelstein and Tackel. Also present were Paul Leonard, Township Manager; and Jonathan Bleemer, Finance Director; Chuck Oyler, Public Works Director; and citizens Derek Hopper, Elaine Lukas, Alan Lander and Helene Shearer.

Mr. Mermelstein opened the meeting by asking everyone present to pledge allegiance to the flag.

#### REVIEW OF MISSION STATEMENT AND DISCUSSION ON BUDGET REVIEWS AND INTERVIEW:

The Mission Statement of the Township of Upper Dublin reads as follows:

**Mission:**

To work with each other and the community to make Upper Dublin Township the best place to live, work and play.

**Values:**

We value . . .

**People** – We appreciate the talents of each person and encourage responsible decision-making at the most appropriate level. We recognize the importance of personal and professional development.

**Creativity** – We encourage imaginative problem-solving, innovation, resourcefulness and responsible risk-taking.

**Quality** – We strive to provide superior services and are committed to continuous improvement. We are attentive to the changing needs of the people and community we serve.

**Integrity** – We seek honesty, accountability and trustworthiness. We admit – to ourselves, our supervisors, our elected officials, and our residents – when we've made a mistake and seek to correct it as best we can.

**Openness** – We wish to be accessible and work as a team by sharing information, ideas, resources and responsibility. We encourage contact from our residents to better explain the services we provide, and to listen to their suggestions.

**Respect** – We welcome individual and professional differences and treat everyone – co-workers, supervisors, elected officials, and residents – with dignity, courtesy and sensitivity.

The following statements were made:

- Mr. Hopper:
- Had discussions with Helene Shearer, Paul Leonard and Jonathan Bleemer.
  - Discussed the definition of the Township administration's core competency.
  - Asked about the budget preparation process and the degree to which Department Heads benchmark the prior year as part of the negotiation process.
  - Asked about addressing economic development to make sure that the business community remains strong.
  - Encouraged proper use of facilities in the Township.
- Mr. Lander:
- Had discussions with Paul Leonard and Jonathan Bleemer.
  - Discussed challenges and where the Township stands in relation to the challenges/obstacles and creative thinking to overcome them.
- Ms. Lukas:
- Met with Paul Leonard and Jonathan Bleemer.
  - They brought up ideas regarding changes in the Township personnel.
- Ms. Shearer:
- Met with Paul Leonard and Jonathan Bleemer.
  - She presented the case that the current operation of the Township may not meet the expectations of residents with higher education and income in terms of the Township staff's level of professionalism.
- Mr. Leonard:
- The Township staff looked at the analysis as an opportunity to do better.
  - Township staff is increasingly responding to the growth that occurred in the mid-1980
  - They have performed well in most cases.
  - They are also aware where they are not doing well in some areas.
  - Plan B was accomplished three years ago during which the staff took a look at the eroding tax base, i.e., EIT.
  - The budget figures are not unique when compared with other municipalities.
  - The largest part of the payroll component is for the Police Department.
  - Increasing productivity would mean a significant impact on the quality of service.
  - The level of service while doing in-house trash collection is important to the quality of life.
  - The Township is in the second year of a three/four year step toward automated trash pick-up.
  - The Township employees 140 persons.
  - Approximately 20 of those employees have the skill sets to serve in management positions.
  - The organization does not bring to the Task Force the ability to do much consulting.
  - The Township provides baseline services very well.
  - Residents like to see competency.
  - The Township just went through a fairly contested election.
  - When candidates went door-to-door, they heard that the public is generally satisfied with the level of services provided by the Township.
  - Residents praised the number of programs offered by the Township.

- Complaints received were generally easily remedied.
- While Township personnel is very responsive, they can do better.
- Answers are provided to the citizenry promptly.

Mr. Bleemer:

- He appreciates having outside people coming in to make suggestions to the Township staff.

Mr. Oyler:

- The challenge for him was to make the Public Works Department more efficient.
- He wants to apply his experience gained in the public sector to make the employees work better.
- The procedures in place are very well done.

#### DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULE AND REPORT "DELIVERABLES:"

Mr. Mermelstein:

- He would like to have a report from the Task Force by the end of August.
- He envisions that the Task Force will take the Mission Statement and apply it to the Township as well as developing recommendations within its requirements.

Mr. Hopper:

- The Task Force needs to define the expectations of the staff within the next 60 days.
- How much research do we expect them to do?
- How much detail should the Task Force get into?

Mr. Leonard:

- He believes the staff had anticipated the cost containment approach.
- Even though there are some things that can be done about payroll, the Township carefully scrutinizes its compliment of workers.
- It was thought that the Task Force might look hard at trash disposal and how costs can be contained.
- He asked if the staff should look at human resources operations. He noted that in every interview, he had suggested that perhaps the Township staff should move in that direction.

Mr. Lander:

- He questioned if the Township is putting enough money into technology.
- He suggested perhaps sharing resources across departments, utilizing more technological solutions, and a centralized database to eliminate duplication.

Mr. Tackel:

- A Task Force dealing with Media and Technology has recently been formed. Mr. Tackel is the chair of that group.
- The Media and Technology Task Force is charged with improvements via cable, use of available technology, and list servers.
- The Operations Task Force should take a cue from the Media and Technology Task Force as well.

Mr. Leonard:

- In reviewing capital investments, there were questions about major capital purchases.
- A lease-back arrangement program has been in place since the 1970s.
- Many municipalities do not have a lease-back program.
- Dan Supplee, Fleets and Motor Pool Director, deserves a lot of credit for coming up

with an amortization program. Upper Dublin's fleet is simply the best.

- He suggested drawing up a list of technical equipment and how long the equipment is estimated to last.
- The staff would appreciate not having to use antiquated equipment.
- The technology plan should include regular investments in equipment.

Ms. Shearer:

- Everyone on the Task Force is interested in keeping costs within reason, but sometimes doing that is not as important as strategic investments.
- When benchmarking with the private sector, people understand what the replacement cycle is.

Mr. Leonard:

- Municipalities invest an average of 21% of their budget in technology.
- In the private sector, that investment averages 20%.
- In 1997, a technology plan was created. It went from three components to 54 and caused significant organizational changes.

Mr. Lander:

- He thinks it is not so much "cost containment, as "getting something out of the costs incurred."
- Part of the problem is that the citizens do not think in those terms.

Mr. Tackel:

- In his experience in office, residents do not know how a township is run.
- The Board of Commissioners should be more informative with their constituents.
- An educational process needs to be put into place.

Mr. Leonard:

- He has heard from long-term police personnel and sanitation employees as well as others that the residents take the level of service for granted.
- The mission statement says that Upper Dublin Township wants to be the best, but how do we take it to the next level?
- Upper Dublin is fortunate to have many employees with long service records.
- He favors going to a management approach.
- Municipal employees know they are doing a good job while looking for ways to do better.
- The Township would like to see what the mission statement of the private and public sector. It could result in a radical increase in their performance.
- The staff would like to see the Task Force articulate what their vision is.
- He is confident that the team he is working with can do just about anything.
- A municipal survey has never been done in Upper Dublin Township.
- He is excited that the staff will become more efficient as they move into their new quarters, i.e., the Police Department will have 3-4 times the amount of space.
- The staff does not have the time to think about new ideas while they are busy dealing with present problems.

Mr. Tackel:

- The Township is doing its best if it is meeting or exceeding everyone's needs.

Mr. Leonard:

- Municipalities have found it to be valuable to assist residents to deal with problems themselves.

- At one point, the Township outsourced its payroll, but found the system to be unsatisfactory and brought it back.
- The Township could eliminate its health operation because Montgomery County has its own health services.
- The Health Department has not been studied to determine if it needs streamlining.
- The Township's health officer currently inspects every rental unit every two years to determine the quality of rental units and if they are safe.
- Many municipalities, particularly in the Commonwealth of Virginia, use significant offsite management resources.

Ms. Shearer:

- Being "best" is not a statistical thing. It will evolve and change.
- What is it that the Township can stop doing so that it can direct its resources to do something more useful?

Mr. Mermelstein:

- Suggested asking Department Heads for suggestions about areas where changes could be made.

Mr. Tackel:

- It is not the Board of Commissioners' job to micro manage the Township.
- The Department Heads are micro managing every day. Wasted time that they know about is being dealt with.

Mr. Leonard:

- Felt the Task Force should identify threats so that the Department Heads can attack the problems.
- It is most important to see that property values do not drop.
- An analysis of property values in Upper Dublin showed a 40% increase in three years.
- How do we maintain property values for the next ten years?
- Property values are being maintained because of the school system and public facilities offered.
- If the Task Force can identify risks, then the Township's excellent Department Heads will use their expertise to remedy the situation.

Mr. Hopper:

- Economic viability is important. There are probably things that the Task Force should look into rather quickly.
- An early warning system of economic indicators includes an aging population.
- He asked what percent of the tax base does the business community pay (now vs. 10 years ago and in the future).
- He agrees that the economic and business issues are the "wars" for which the Task Force must prepare.

Mr. Mermelstein

- He agreed that the business issue is very important.
- The Fort Washington Business Owners Association is a big help to the Township. If they have a problem, the Township is made aware of it.

Mr. Tackel:

- He asked about the occupancy rate in the Fort Washington Office Park (FWOP).

Mr. Leonard:

- Mr. Leonard said that no one really tracks the occupancy rate in the FWOP, but he believes it is down somewhat.

- Flooding has resulted in vacancies in the FWOP.
- The Township does not have an economic development staff person.
- The Township relies on anecdotal comments about the FWOP.
- The leasing rate in the FWOP has risen from as little as \$12.00 per square foot to a high of \$22.00 per square foot.

Mr. Lander:

- The FWOP was formerly an industrial park that became an office park when the economy changed to one dealing in services.

Mr. Leonard:

- When the slip ramps opened on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, they caused a rise in rent of \$4.00 per square foot.
- There may be strategic moves that could be identified to put the Township in a better position.
- The reconstruction of Route 309 within the next five years is a major concern for Upper Dublin.
- The Township must communicate with FWOP employees as to traffic conditions, emergency issues and improvements.
- There has been an increasing rise in tenant-occupied housing.
- The Township is 98% built out.

Ms. Shearer:

- The Task Force should be looking at risks, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- She was fearful that this could not be accomplished by August.

Mr. Leonard:

- He assured that the staff can develop indicators. They will determine what other municipalities have done in various situations and adapt them to Upper Dublin's needs.

Before adjourning the meeting, Mr. Mermelstein suggested that the members of the Task Force exchange e-mails on their thoughts/suggestions.

Another meeting of the Operations Task Force was scheduled for Wednesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

The Township Manager and Department Heads will come up with a list of potential threats.

The public was urged to e-mail the Task Force with their comments/suggestions at *upperdublin.net*.

ADJOURNMENT:

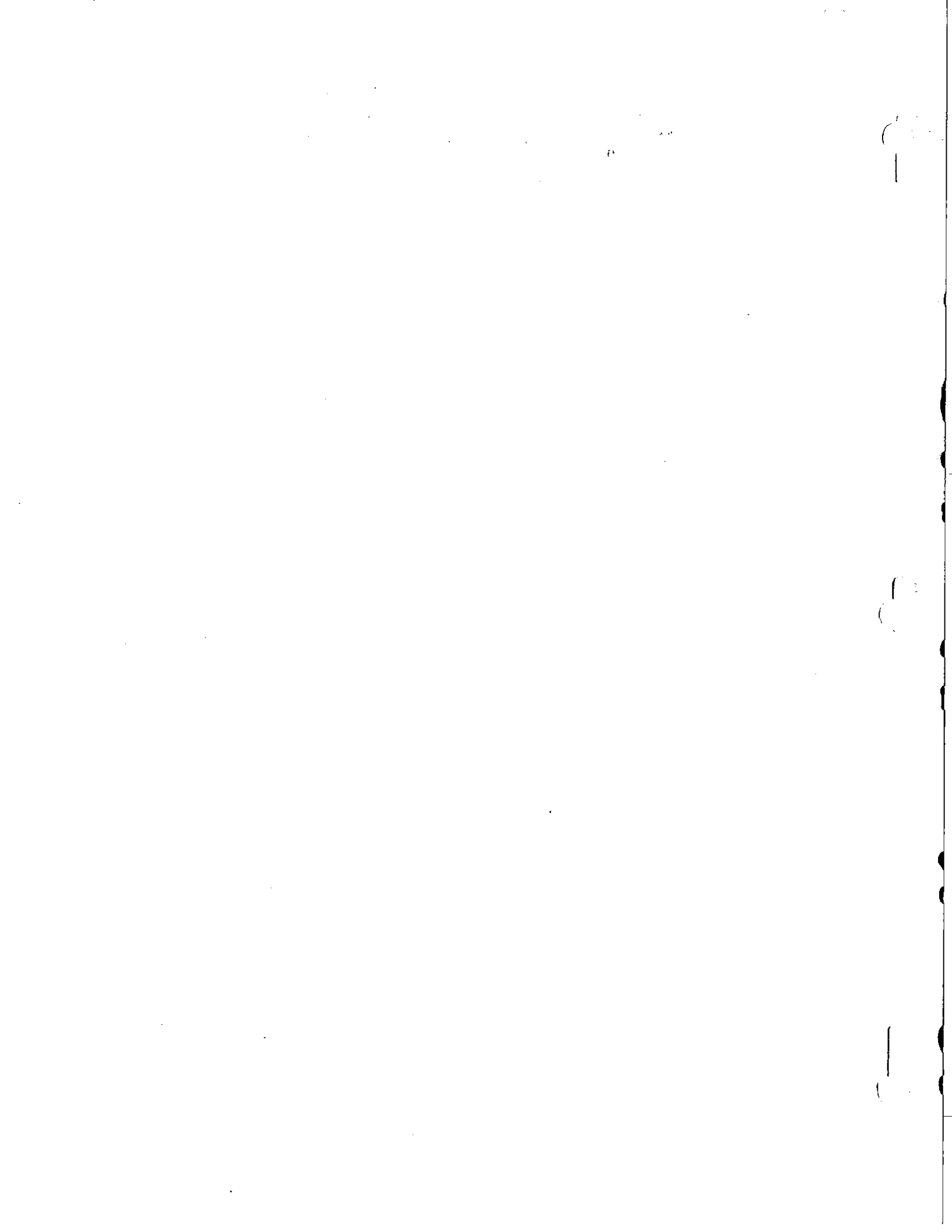
Mr. Tackel motioned, with Mr. Mermelstein seconding, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Louise S. Birett, Recording Secretary

Attest:

  
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Jules Mermelstein, Chairperson





The second meeting of the Operations Task Force of Upper Dublin Township was held on Wednesday, July 10, 2002, in the Township Building; Jules Mermelstein presiding.

In attendance were Commissioners Mermelstein and Tackel. Also present were Paul Leonard, Township Manager; Jonathan Bleemer, Finance Director; Chuck Oyler, Public Works Director; Dan Supplee, Fleets and Facilities Director; and citizens Derek Hopper, Elaine Lukas, Alan Lander and Helene Scherer.

Mr. Mermelstein opened the meeting by asking everyone present to pledge allegiance to the flag.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 18, 2002 MINUTES:

Mr. Lander motioned, with Ms. Lukas seconding, to approve the Minutes of June 18, 2002 without reading.

VOTE ON MOTION

ALL YES

MOTION CARRIED

REVIEW OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENTS:

Mr. Mermelstein distributed a packet of written and e-mail comments received from the various Committee members since the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. The following comments were made this evening pertaining thereto:

- Ms. Lukas
- The Committee should determine what it is going to “zero in” on.
- Mr. Lander
- The Committee members should narrow their focus somewhat because Mr. Mermelstein would like recommendations made to staff by the end of August after which time will be devoted to tying up loose ends.
- Mr. Leonard
- Thanked the Committee members for their written contributions. There was one in particular which seems to have the longest lasting value – leading indicators or early warning system.
  - All recommendations are valuable.
  - The Committee should concentrate on how the Commissioners and staff would take an “eyes wide open” approach so that every facet would be covered.
  - When he met with the School Superintendent, it was amazing to find out how similar the needs for understanding were between the two entities.
  - Lack of data is disturbing.
- Mr. Hopper
- Data is available, but it has to be located.
- Mr. Mermelstein
- The main goal is to have an impact on how the budget is developed.
  - Staff should be prepared to show if there is a problem, where things are going very well, and what it is doing best.
- Ms. Scherer
- There is a wealth of data that could be used as a basis for a “State of the Township” report.
  - There are things that are more perceived through service and interviews and less grounded in fact. These are levels of information that could come together to provide the Committee with a picture of how the Township should be operated.

- Mr. Leonard
- Barometers and other types of community analysis have been done elsewhere, but he warned that it will take time.
  - He likened the Township and School District to a small business without a business plan.
  - It is fair for this group to say it does not know what will be recommended on overall operations, but we do know what "needs to be known."
- Mr. Hopper
- The Township may need a year or two or more to react to what is being seen. Do we have enough information today to make clear and concise decisions?
  - What will the Township do if it is found that rental rates in the Fort Washington Office Park are declining?
- Mr. Leonard
- Must consider internal finance ratio between real estate and EIT taxes, the growth of payroll, actual time worked by Township employees, external finances, Office Park issues, etc.
- Mr. Hopper
- Would like the Committee members to add or subtract the need for new and different things.
- Mr. Mermelstein
- The Committee needs a list of indicators and what they mean.
  - At what level do we become concerned?
- Ms. Scherer
- On balance, if you have a list of 20 indicators, they will probably go in one direction but there are also those that are different. How does that impact on what we are currently doing?
  - Every organization has activity patterns. Over time, the Township might be getting further and further away from what is actually needed. That is the kind of information that must to be identified.
  - The decision-making process determines how to go forward.
- Mr. Mermelstein
- Looking at what other municipalities are doing is a good way to determine how to deal with a situation.
- Mr. Leonard
- Data requires analysis and should be combined with the concerns of constituents.
  - The Board of Commissioners must decide what particular issues should be focused upon in a particular year. Such a decision would be valuable to the staff.
  - What level of investment should be made in developing barometers?
  - Last year, the Board of Commissioners was surprisingly generous in allotting funding for long-term planning by the Fire Company and comprehensive planning by the Parks and Recreation Department.
  - The Public Activities Committee recently asked the Library Director to do long-range planning.
  - The Board of Commissioners does have a process for selection of consultants (planners

architects, engineers, attorneys) and allotting funding therefor.

- He advocated "Planning to Plan."

Mr. Hopper

- Would an alternative be to chose some of the data elements that the Township has accumulated and has already been tracking? He suggested trying it for a year to determine how it goes.

Mr. Leonard

- External auditors have been tracking trends for 15 years.

Mr. Hopper

- Perhaps the Board of Commissioners and staff have a list of things in mind that they are concerned about that they would like to consider more as a way to plan for next year. He cautioned in favor of "walking" before "running."

Mr. Leonard

- The Township has made a concerted effort in the past to collect data and study it.
- He described some of the organizational hindrances at the last meeting.
- Raising the idea of outside consulting was in an effort to get the job done.

#### DISCUSSION OF FORMAT FOR FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mr. Mermelstein

- The goal for August will be to recommend or not recommend what kind of investment is needed to gather data.

Mr. Tackel

- Look at the barometers.
- It should be fairly easy to obtain data.
- Do some benchmarking with internal data.
- What will be done with the information gathered?

Mr. Mermelstein

- If the data is not just a "snapshot" of a trend, the Board of Commissioners should set priorities.
- Business vacancy is souring. Is it happening everywhere or just locally?

Mr. Hopper

- As an example, he related that there is quite a bit of Class A office space available in Conshohocken that is vacant.
- Upper Dublin needs to recognize that its neighboring communities have commercial real estate available.
- Without improvements, businesses that we want to attract to this area will go to other municipalities such as Conshohocken or they will relocate elsewhere.
- The Township could have revenue problems, which, in turn, would impact the citizens.

Mr. Tackel

- The challenge is taking the existing list and adding to it.
- Must cull information such as the number of available jobs per resident. Would we have a way of impacting that?
- Having information available is better than not having it.

- Ms. Scherer
- It is great to have baseline planning information to evaluate where we are, and from that, decide what ought to be done.
  - There are certainly some baseline functions that must be done.
  - Upper Dublin Township has an outstanding recreation program. Perhaps it should have two or three other programs like that.
  - How do we decide what it should be and where the money comes from to fund it?
- Mr. Supplee
- He explained the operations of the Fleets and Facilities Department:
    - The fleet is set up as a rental agency with its own fund.
    - Several years were needed to pull information together.
    - All vehicles are amortized.
    - A life expectancy is assigned to each vehicle.
    - Costs for each vehicle are kept track of including expenses to run the vehicle, insurance costs, overhead in the garage, how many years the vehicle has been in use, etc.
    - In 1970, a bond issue was floated to purchase equipment.
    - Since 1970, Mr. Supplee has worked diligently to stagger purchases.
    - Each department head needs to justify the cost of equipment needed and how to pay for it.
    - The fleet is maintained well so it can handle a very heavy leaf collection season or large snowstorm with minimal breakdowns.
- Mr. Leonard
- The Fleets and Facilities Department is a success story.
  - If the Township has internal success, that success may be transferred to technology.
  - He believes that the level of professionalism will be improved with better tools.
  - The Township's ability to control investments in technology will improve payroll expenses in the long-term.
  - When we do have a technology plan, the Township will be able to determine what upgrades are needed and when they should be purchased.
  - The Township does not have a plan that is tied in with the "quality of life" issues or an enterprise plan.
  - He stressed the need for an enterprise plan.
- Mrs. Scherer
- The useful life of technology equipment should be determined.
- Mr. Lander
- Inadequate equipment is as bad as "super-adequate" equipment that is not needed.
- Mrs. Scherer
- Perhaps we need a standard database to import information from other sources?
- Mr. Hopper
- He asked about the time frame of the Technology Task Force.
- Mr. Tackel
- Since Mr. Tackel is the Chairperson of the Technology Task Force, he informed that their time frame is similar but has not been formulated as to what direction the Task

Force will take.

- These two task forces have a limited authority.
- One of the values that the Technology Task Force can provide to the Township staff is to help formulate a better plan for standardization and utilization of technology. There will clearly be some overlapping involved.

Mr. Hopper

- It is important to have a technology plan.
- Upper Dublin can be the first Township to talk about economic indicators and the impact they will have.
- He always recommends borrowing money.

Sections that should be included in the report to be issued in August were determined to be:

1. Indicators and information related thereto.
2. Technology plan.
3. Performance standards/personnel.
4. Personnel in general.
5. Cost containment vs. strategic investments.
6. Do the current operations meet the needs and expectations of the residents? If not, can they reasonably be met or are they unreasonable. Do we really know how Upper Dublin residents feel about the services provided by the Township? What does Upper Dublin do that other municipalities do not do? What are the reasonable expectations of the residents on a day-by-day basis?
7. Better communication with residents.

In response to No. 6 above, Mr. Leonard informed of several services provided by Upper Dublin that other municipalities do not provide, i.e., local dispatch for police, trash collection, sewer service (as opposed to a municipal authority), fire department, roadways, highway and transportation-related maintenance of neighborhoods. Although Upper Dublin has no department dealing with human services, Township personnel provides referrals of agencies to contact. Township staff is very proud of services they provide to the community.

Referring to No. 7 above, Mr. Lander suggested a quarterly or annual mailing inserted with tax bills to keep residents informed as to how their taxes are spent.

Mr. Mermelstein said the Township may want to look at residents as shareholder, and perhaps they should be provided with an annual report.

**ESTABLISH NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The third meeting of the Operations Task Force was scheduled for Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

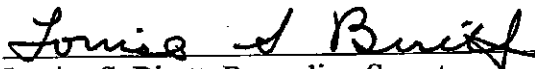
Mr. Tackel motioned, with Mr. Mermelstein seconding, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. and enter into executive session.

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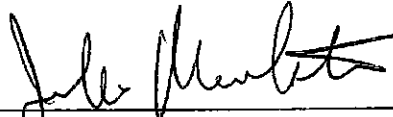
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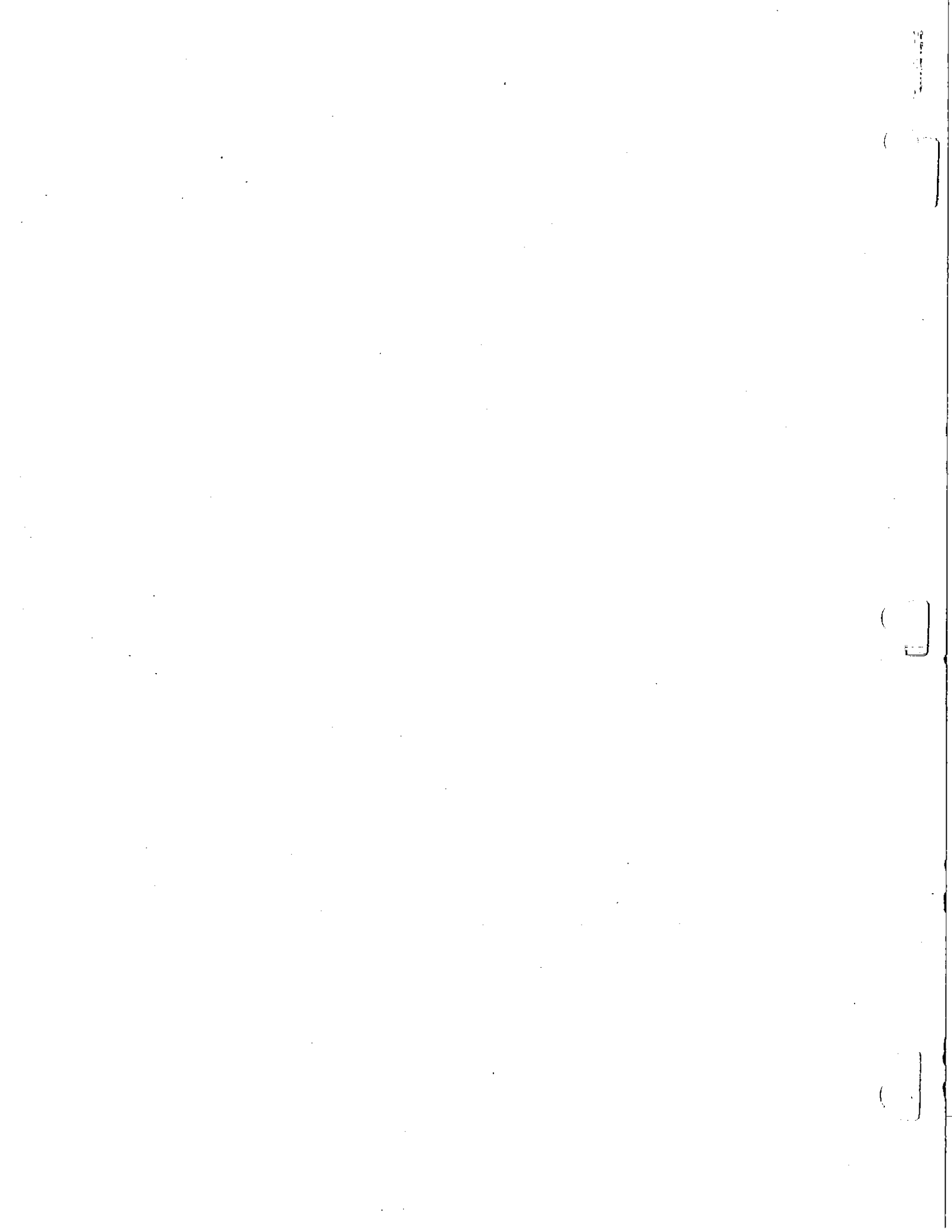
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Respectfully submitted,

  
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Louise S. Birett, Recording Secretary

Attest:

  
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Jules Mermelstein, Chairperson





The third meeting of the Operations Task Force of Upper Dublin Township was held on Wednesday, July 24, 2002, in the Township Building; Jules Mermelstein presiding.

In attendance were Commissioners Mermelstein and Tackel. Also present were Paul Leonard, Township Manager; Jonathan Bleemer, Finance Director; and citizens Derek Hopper, Elaine Lukas, Allen Lander and Helene Scherer.

APPROVAL OF JULY 10, 2002 MINUTES:

Ms. Scherer motioned, with Mr. Tackel seconding, to approve the Minutes of July 10, 2002 without reading.

VOTE ON MOTION

ALL YES

MOTION CARRIED

DISCUSSION::

Mr. Leonard distributed 2000 census data to the Task Force as follows.

- A chart that gives population forecasts for various municipalities.
  - Upper Dublin Township has had a 6% change in population over the past 25 years.
- A regional map showing population forecasts.
- Absolute change for population showing actual number of jobs available.
  - It is good to know this information with respect to planning for transportation, traffic issues and housing.
  - Housing in Upper Dublin Township will remain the same.
  - Jobs and employment in Upper Dublin will increase significantly.
  - Philadelphia has lost 800,000 jobs over the past eight years which the suburban communities will gain.
  - The Montgomery County Planning Commission predicts an increase in the office market.
  - Median income in Upper Dublin is \$80,000+.
  - In most upper end communities, the median wage is \$40,000-\$50,000.
  - Upper Dublin has the fourth largest income per capital in Montgomery County.
- A chart showing units built by municipality by year and housing type in Montgomery County.
- A chart showing median prices for housing in Montgomery County.
- Median sales price for all types of units in Upper Dublin is \$240,000.
- Neighborhoods in Upper Dublin are in transition (i.e., changing from older "empty nesters" to families with children.
- People are moving to Upper Dublin due to the reputation of the School District.
- The Comprehensive Planning Committee will be looking at this data when they meet on July 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Scherer distributed a article from the Journal of the American Planning Association which projects ideas about what happens in communities as they age and what happens in communities which do not go out of their way to service a multi-generational population.

Mr. Mermelstein distributed a summary of assignments given to each Task Force member (i.e., writing certain sections of the report to be submitted to the Board of Commissioners by the end of August). He also circulated written comments/drafts from each Task Force member except for Mr. Tackel whose draft report was misplaced and Ms. Scherer's report which will not be in draft form until July 25<sup>th</sup>. The following comments were made this evening pertaining to the above.

- Mr. Tackel:
- Recommended a consistent style or theme so that the final report will be as cohesive as

possible.

- Mr. Leonard:
- Suggested that the Chairman be responsible for writing an executive summary.
  - The entire Task Force might want to have input on the executive summary with bulleted items that would refer to items in the text of the document.
- Mr. Mermelstein:
- Suggested the items in the report be listed according to priority or alphabetically.
- Mr. Hopper:
- An executive summary should very clearly include the Task Force's recommendation.
  - The executive summary should include what the Task Force's understanding of the next steps should be.
  - The document should be prepared by the end of August.
  - The document should set forth how recommendations therein can be linked to the budget.
  - Things that cost money should be "spelled out" in detail.
- Mr. Leonard:
- The Manager's budget should reflect recommendations and priorities of the Task Force.
  - Costs would have to be balanced out against other budget items.
  - The Board of Commissioners expects the report to be realistic.
- Mr. Hopper:
- The report needs to recognize dissenting opinions.
- Mr. Mermelstein:
- The Task Force members might want to pick and choose the kind of indicators and where the group wants to look.

INDICATORS: Mr. Hopper will draft this section. The section should include:

- The rate of growth of payroll.
  - Time worked by employees.
  - The ratio of various taxes to other taxes.
  - Concentration on indicators for which there is some connection between what the Township does (or does not do) and the indicator.
- Mr. Hopper:
- Recommended engaging an outside source to put the report together or have the Task Force do so.
- Mr. Leonard:
- The Comprehensive Plan is a 2-3 year project for Upper Dublin Township. The Task Force's report will probably precede it.
- Ms. Scherer:
- Suggested creating an extensive list that could possibly be included in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Mr. Leonard:
- It is reasonable for people to question assumptions. Said assumptions should be tested and be quantified.
  - The staff is beginning to see "knock down" properties turned into beautiful homes. He looks at that as progress. If the trend continues into tract housing erected in the 1960s-1970s, it will be significant.
  - The actual value of the structures is 4-5 times the value of what was there before.

- Staff fees that type of information could influence their recommendations to the Manager and the Board of Commissioners.
- Even the ability of Commissioners to characterize their community is a positive thing.

s. Scherer:

- Marketing data is available on the web whereby every zip code in the United States is analyzed as to population. They ascribe cultural or socio-economic attributes to those groups.
- It would be useful to augment what the Task Force knows about Upper Dublin with sources on the internet.

Mr. Leonard:

- The Chief of Police and Paul Leonard met with the CEO of BISYS – a 600 employee company expected to grow to 1,500. They do not know a lot about the community, and discussed transportation issues. They located here because this is the type of place in which their employees want to work and live. They are impressed with the School District which is a plus when recruiting qualified personnel.
- Businesses are interested in their access to the Turnpike.
- The Township actively participates in the Transportation Development Agency which provides advice to new businesses about commuting.
- Moodys has projected a rise in median incomes and job rates.
- Prudential was successful in procuring a SEPTA line to their premises from Willow Grove.
- BISYS is a “drive to” company. They have a significant demand for parking.
- The Fort Washington Office Park is finding that larger lots are being broken down into smaller business properties.
- Focusing on transportation will keep the area viable.

Mr. Mermelstein:

- Welsh Road is an important element in Upper Dublin Township, but widening the roadway to cut down on traffic is like “loosening your belt to fight obesity.”

Mr. Leonard:

- There is a movement going on in Montgomery County to reduce parking and charging for it.
- The cost of free parking is not “free.” It is always subsidized.
- There has been continued success with commuter rail lines to avoid parking problems.

Mr. Mermelstein:

- People must be provided with alternatives.
- A cross-county metro system would be very beneficial (connecting Trenton, New Jersey to Thorndale in Chester County).

COMMUNICATIONS WITH RESIDENTS. Jules Mermelstein will draft this section. It will deal with the following:

- How well do we communicate with our residents?
- Do we do a good job in letting the residents know what services we provide for the money they pay?
- Do we let them know what portion of the taxes they pay are for Township services (as opposed to county and school district)?
- Are there times when we should be communicating with our residents on various issues, even if not legally required to?
- How best can we continue a dialogue (or at least an informative monologue) with the residents?

Mr. Hopper:

- The Township has a cable channel and website.
- He believes if someone has an interest, they can find out everything they need to know on the web.
- When does the Township say "stop?" How the Township responds to an incident is really what matters. In his opinion, the Township communicates with its citizens very well.
- Perhaps the Township should publicize the website and meetings on the cable channel.

Ms. Scherer:

- The Township has an excellent website. Its content is outstanding, it is organized well, and it is easy to use.

Mr. Leonard:

- His goal is to use Adobe Acrobat for down-loading documents.
- He believes the output from the Operating Departments of the Township and the School District could be greatly improved.
- He has stressed a uniform level of quality, with a singular look and features.

Ms. Scherer:

- Suggested establishing a set of templates/standards for the website.

Ms. Lucas:

- Suggested that certain people be selected to be responsible for changes and blocking others from making any changes.

Mr. Hopper:

- Informed that his company broadcasts faxes.
- Asked if technology is available whereby the Township could broadcast to a block of phone numbers?

Mr. Leonard:

- The technology to send messages to a block of phone numbers is available.

Mr. Tackel:

- Using a block of phone numbers can easily be done by using voice mail.
- He worried about unsolicited phone calls and the annoyance factor. The same is true about faxes.
- Using e-mail to augment the Township's excellent website would be less intrusive.
- People tend not to complain when receiving e-mail messages notifying them that a particular service was performed.

- Mr. Leonard:
- An expert in this field is presenting to the Technology Committee on July 25<sup>th</sup>. All Task Force members were invited to attend.
  - The Eastern Montgomery County Management Group is looking for funding for a reverse 911 system.
  - The Township does not have enough staff to develop more interesting and informative programming.

- Mr. Tackel:
- The Technology Task Force wants to expand to two cable channels – 16 and 22.
  - He would like the Township to control the programming on both stations.

- Mr. Leonard:
- He would like to broadcast the following:
    - Employee recognition
    - Resident recognition
    - Information from Police Department in the public's interest
    - Recruiting for the Fire Department
    - Advertising the Upper Dublin Medal Dinner
    - Highlights on community activities

- Ms. Scherer:
- There will be hidden costs involved.
  - Without someone to develop a set of standards might be putting the Township at risk.
  - Cost containment vs. strategic investment must be considered.
  - When you have a community that is so diverse, there are still so many differences in people's opinions about what is important, what should be invested in, and what should not be invested in. What is the process by which those things can be decided?

- Mr. Leonard:
- The Township must allow for mistakes.
  - His process is to try something recognizing that it might fail.

- Mr. Mermelstein:
- Does not want residents "voting" on issues but wants to "hear" from residents.
  - It is up to the Board of Commissioners to make the final decisions.

- **TECHNOLOGY.** Mr. Lander has responsibility for drafting this portion of the report. The main emphasis of this section is two-fold:
  - The need for a plan (such as the value of a common database).
  - The need to view technology expenditures as investments rather than spending.

- Mr. Landers:
- The primary charge of the Task Force is Township Operations.
  - A separate task force has been charged to look specifically at technology.
  - We recognize a certain degree of overlap and the need to consider how technology fits into the overall structure of Township operations.
  - The Technology Task Force will make specific recommendations about the direction the Township should take.
  - We are primarily concerned with the approach to technology and the underlying philosophy toward technology decisions.
  - The Operations Task Force has focused its concern on two main areas:
    - The need for a long-range plan for technology.
    - The need to look at spending for technology as an investment in the future.
  - One of the above cannot be accomplished without the other being a part of it.

- Ms. Scherer:
- Recognizing the fact that things will change, the Township should make sure it has money to spend for new technology.

- Mr. Lander:
- A note should be included in the report emphasizing change and how it will be handled.

- Mr. Tackel:
- Technology is an "enabler" and should be used as such.

- Mr. Leonard:
- The Board of Commissioners should fund a modest investment specifically geared toward stormwater problems.
  - The Township Engineer used a subcontractor to do GIS and is currently participating in a GIS needs assessment.
  - The above will represent the Township's best effort in the past nine months and will be extremely valuable input for staff and the Board of Commissioners as to how to handle stormwater problems.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARDS/PERSONNEL.** Ms. Lucas together with Ms. Scherer and Mr. Lander is responsible to draft this part of the report. This section will review the type of performance standards the Township has and whether they need to be revised or studied in some way. In addition, this section will look at how the demands of the not-too-recent past "personnel departments" compare with the demands of today's "human resources departments" and whether the Township administration has adequately addressed these needs to date. If not, it will recommend what the Commissioners/staff should do to remedy this, if needed.

Mr. Leonard: He is awaiting comments from staff regarding needs and benefits.

Mr. Hopper: Questioned whether the Task Force can get into more detail in this document?

Mr. Leonard: Suggested going further in the Executive Summary. It should be one of the bulleted items.

**ESTABLISH NEXT MEETING DATE:**


The fourth meeting of the Operations Task Force was scheduled for Wednesday, August 14th at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Leonard thanked the members of the Task Force for allowing him to talk and obtain ideas in an open environment.

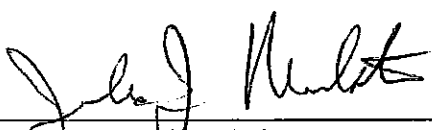
ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Scherer motioned, with Mr. Tackel seconding, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Louise S. Birett, Recording Secretary

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jules Mermelstein, Chairperson

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A meeting of the Operations Task Force and the Board of Commissioners of Upper Dublin Township was held on Tuesday, September 17, 2002, in the Maple Glen Elementary School Cafeteria; Robert Pesavento presiding.

In attendance were Commissioners Tackel, Mermelstein, Derr, Pesavento, Herold, Bryers, and Thornburg-Weiss; Paul Leonard, Township Manager; Jonathan Bleemer, Finance Director; Susan Lohoefer; Parks and Recreation Director; and citizens Derek Hopper, Elaine Lukas, Alan Lander and Helene Scherer.

Mr. Mermelstein opened the meeting by asking everyone present to pledge allegiance to the flag.

**PRESENTATION BY OPERATIONS TASK FORCE CITIZEN MEMBERS:**

Commissioners Mermelstein and Tackel expressed the Board of Commissioners' appreciation to the resident members of the Operations Task Force.

As Chairperson, Mr. Mermelstein thanked the Board of Commissioners; the members of the Operations Task Force Committee; Paul Leonard, Jonathan Bleemer, Chuck Oyler, Dan Supplee and Fran Amey, Township staff members for their participation and support in this undertaking.

He made the following suggestions:

- Formation of a new Board Committee on Township Operations to meet only when needed.
  - Membership of this Committee should be made up of the three commissioners who were appointed to this task force (Commissioners Mermelstein, Tackel and Herold).
- Formation of a new Residents' Advisory Committee of Township Operations to meet on a quarterly basis unless otherwise deemed necessary.
  - Membership to consist of seven residents including the four who served on the task force if they are willing (Mr. Hopper, Mr. Lander, Ms. Scherer, and Ms. Lucas).

Ms. Scherer reviewed the Mission Statement of the Township of Upper Dublin which was used as a guide to draw up this report as follows:

**Values:**

We value . . .

**People** - We appreciate the talents of each person and encourage responsible decision-making at the most appropriate level. We recognize the importance of personal and professional development.

**Creativity** - We encourage imaginative problem-solving, innovation, resourcefulness and responsible risk-taking.

**Quality** - We strive to provide superior services and are committed to continuous improvement. We are attentive to the changing needs of the people and community we serve.

**Integrity** - We seek honesty, accountability and trustworthiness. We admit - to ourselves, our supervisors, our elected officials, and our residents - when we've made a mistake and seek to correct it as best we can.

**Openness** – We wish to be accessible and work as a team by sharing information, ideas, resources and responsibility. We encourage contact from our residents to better explain the services we provide, and to listen to their suggestions.

**Respect** – We welcome individual and professional differences and treat everyone – co-workers, supervisors, elected officials and residents – with dignity, courtesy and sensitivity.

Ms. Scherer discussed the Executive Summary, and said that with few exceptions, Upper Dublin Township appears to be run efficiently and effectively.

The Township Operations Task Force did find a few areas of policy/philosophy and administration upon which it chose to make recommendations as summarized below:

**1. Recommendation that Upper Dublin strive to improve communications with residents to determine what the various needs and wants of the residents are, how well they are being met by the Township, and how reasonable or unreasonable those needs and wants are.**

How the Township is governed – This includes the existence of the Board of Commissioners and the School Board, their relative responsibilities and authority, and how the members of each are chosen. Each resident should know who their Commissioner is and how to contact him/her.

How the Township is operated – This includes the existence of the Township Manager and the various departments within the Township structure. It also includes what percent of the residents' taxes go to Township services and exactly what those services are. Residents should know who to contact if they have a question, concern, or compliment about any of those services.

The Township's Mission Statement and efforts of the Township to try to achieve its admirable goals.

Ms. Scherer said the following key questions should be improved upon:

- What is the Township's mission?
- What services and programs are required and those that are not provided?
- How to sustain ability – change/improvement?
- How to prudently manage public resources?
- How should funds be allocated?
- Cost containment vs. strategic investment.
- Develop methodology.
- Developing a pro-active as well as re-active planning process.
- Need for a balanced scorecard.
- Benefit of a balanced scorecard.
- Increase employee and management communication.
- Facility performance improvements.
- Learning progress.
- Data for benchmarking.
- Improve communication to all stakeholders.
- Comprehensive approach.
- Metrics to address leading indicators.

- Possibility of an “opt-in e-mail list” for residents to sign on requesting e-mailed newsletters.

With this information, the Township must balance the needs of new residents along with the needs of long-standing residents, consider the needs of residents with small children, along with those whose children are older or have left the house, evaluate the needs of our older citizens, and cross all boundaries of ethnicity, gender, and economic means.

2. **Recommendation that the Township investigate the use of a balanced scorecard approach as an effective method of balancing competing priorities of multiple stakeholder groups who have varying opinions on whether particular expenditures are costs to be contained, or investments to be made strategically.**

Derek Hopper set forth the following recommendations of the Committee:

- Cost containment vs. strategic investment.
- Balancing the competing priorities of multiple stakeholder groups requires a proactive as well as reactive planning process.
- A balanced scorecard approach should be investigated as an effective methodology for addressing needs (a management and measurement system that enables organizations clarify their vision and strategy, and then translate them into action).
  - It provides feedback around both internal processes and external outcomes in order to continuously improve strategic performance and results.
  - It enables consideration of multiple perspectives, cause-effect frameworks, strategic mapping and feedback measurements.
  - Used as a tool by local governments.
  - Offers four perspectives which encompass all issues involved in improving Township operations:
    - Financial
    - Customer responsiveness
    - Internal business process quality
    - Learning/growth
- The Township should regularly identify a set of economic and demographic indicators.
- Research shows that indicators can be applied to the business of government.

3. **Recommendation that Upper Dublin, during its short and long term planning activities, monitor and utilize a set of demographic, economic, and environmental indicators.**

Mr. Hopper said the benefits of key indicators include:

- Trends will be identified early, allowing sufficient time to react.
- Current and future department activities will be benchmarked against the current and future complexion and needs of the Township.
- Cost-justification at department levels will be facilitated.
- The data set will serve as a common base of information for all users and stakeholders allowing for improved decision making and the design of “what-if” scenarios.
- The Township will be able to compare its performance to that of its neighbors.

Examples of how key indicators might be useful to Township officials:

A. Aging population:

- Average age of Township residents has increased.
- Housing could turn over at a higher rate than in the past.
- Demand for services and activities specifically geared to an older population could increase.
- There could be pressure by a larger segment of the population to reduce property taxes.
- The Township could face the departure of senior residents if the cost of living in Upper Dublin increases significantly.

Responses:

- Take steps to ensure that the tax base is further diversified and composed of a strong commercial base to take pressure off of residents, particularly seniors.
- Offer new recreational activities aimed at seniors.
- Examine the availability of housing choices for seniors within Upper Dublin.
- Determine the impact of a higher than average influx of young families attracted by the availability of single family homes in a good school district.

B. Commercial Real Estate – Findings.

- Vacancy rates are trending higher and rental prices are trending lower at select office parks.
- Commercial property tax and EIT revenues could decline.
- Residential tax rates could increase.
- There could be a reduction of spending at local establishments which cater to businesses and their employees.

Responses:

- Reduce Township spending.
- Work with commercial real estate firms to identify problems and solutions.
- Streamline the regulatory process in order to attract new businesses to the Township.

The Committee recommends relying on Township staff to identify a data set, accumulate information and forward it to an economic development consultant for review and finalization. The consultant would be accountable for verifying the value, validity and objectivity of the information and identifying and researching additional information.

**4. Recommendation that Upper Dublin create a technology plan which provides for strategic investment of resources to keep the Township working as efficiently and effectively as possible.**

Mr. Lander said the Operation Task Force has focused its concern on two main areas:

- The need for a long-range plan for technology.
- The need to look at spending for technology as an investment in the future.

All spending decisions can be looked at in two directly divergent ways:

- Consider spending decisions in terms of how to control costs. The overriding tendency is to focus on sunk costs (a cost that has already been incurred and that cannot be avoided regardless of what other decisions are made).
- How to make the most effective and efficient use of committed funds. Future costs that do differ between alternatives are relevant. Consequently, the overriding philosophy should be to concentrate on what to do in the future, not what has happened in the past.

The Committee recommends long-range technical planning. Planning of purchases over a definite period of time and committing funds through appropriations.

Recommendation for an independent review of the current performance standards to determine the need for a centralized Human Resources Department along with a Human Resources Director to fully accomplish successful results now and for the future of Upper Dublin Township.

Ms. Lukas said that given the number of staff employed in Upper Dublin and the complexity of personnel issues today, thoughtful consideration should be placed on whether the present personnel administration can adequately and effectively serve staff and management not only today, but also in the future.

A centralized Human Resources Department could develop an organizational culture and provide effective communication while creating a productive workplace through management coaching, conflict resolution, and maintaining standards of performance. In addition, the importance of an HR professional in understanding and interpreting personnel issues, legal decisions and legislation in today's demanding work environment with the ability to balance the demands of several different roles (business partner, internal consultant and administrative expert).

This interrelationship needs to be consistent for successful results to be obtained. The Committee believes it can be accomplished through centralizing this department with an HR expert to meet the needs of today's challenges and provide one standard qualitative resource to staff and management.

#### DISCUSSION (OPEN FORUM):

- Mr. Bryers:
- Asked Ms. Scherer what local governments are presently using the scorecard approach.
- Mrs. Scherer:
- There are ample samples and backgrounds available of government entities that use the scorecard approach.
  - The approach is being increasingly used in the public sector, particularly in Charlotte, NC.
- Mr. Bryers:
- Is there anything that staff can look at that is on a smaller scale such as Upper Dublin?
- Mrs. Scherer:
- A list of websites is available where that information is documented. It was distributed to the Task Force members and she will distribute same to the Board of Commissioners.
- Mr. Bryers:
- This scorecard is something that Messrs. Bleemer and Leonard should evaluate before the Board of Commissioners concerns itself therewith. Mr. Leonard was asked to present their findings to the Board of Commissioners.
  - Did the Committee analyze how Messrs. Bleemer's and Leonard's handle their operations?
- Ms. Scherer:
- While the Committee wanted to avoid looking over their shoulders (micro-managing), they did spend a considerable amount of time with each of the gentlemen.

- Mr. Bryers:
- He believes key indicators are pertinent.
  - Does the Committee have other things that Mr. Bleemer can use regarding economic development tracking?
- Mr. Hopper:
- The Committee identified a number of organizations that could be contacted.
- Mr. Bryers:
- How do we decide what is important?
  - How do we judge its value?
- Mr. Leonard:
- The staff's approach to the Operations Task Force was to actually come in expressing concerns as to the changes in the community that staff was not aware of.
  - Many of the economic indicators and quality of life indicators are anecdotal.
- Mr. Mermelstein:
- The Committee decided it did not want to identify which indicators should be looked at. That is the job of administration.
- Ms. Lukas:
- Regarding the personnel and human resources components, the Committee looked at it by rule of thumb in the private sector (100 employees).
- Ms. Weiss:
- Recommended commencing a professional review by a consultant.
- Mr. Leonard
- He wants to see "leg work" by the Township staff before engaging a consultant.
  - No decision has yet been made about a Human Resources Director.
  - A lot is being done within department levels.
  - The use of a consultant was meant to get an idea about what is happening in other communities.
- Mr. Bryers:
- Asked the Resident Committee Members to identify their backgrounds.
- Mr. Hopper:
- Masters Degree in Finance.
  - Works for an insurance company.
  - Has an economics background.
- Ms. Lucas:
- Has business administration and management background.
  - Worked in human relations for six years.

- Ms. Scherer:
- Masters Degree in City Planning.
  - Private and technical consultant.
- Mr. Lander:
- Forty-five years experience as an educator.
  - Professor of Accounting Management at Montgomery County Community College.
- Mr. Derr:
- How does the Committee plan to generate funds for technology?
- Mr. Lander:
- Suggested budget allocation for technology each year.
  - Develop a plan for keeping up with ever increasing technology changes.
- Mr. Mermelstein:
- The Fleet and Facilities Department is a model for how to set up a plan.
- Mr. Bleemer:
- All hardware and software costs are in the capital budget.
- Mr. Leonard:
- The Fleet and Facilities Department model does include a rent-back provision.
- Mr. Pesavento:
- Feels the above model will help in the planning process.
- Mr. Leonard:
- The definition of technology should be broad enough to reduce manual labor.
- Mr. Pesavento:
- Staff should work with these suggestions and include them in their budget considerations.
  - The Board of Commissioners should digest all of this information before making any recommendations.
- Mr. Mermelstein:
- The Board of Commissioners should meet twice a year to continue discussions and look at issues.
- Mr. Tackel:
- It is difficult to condense a report such as this which is the product of a great deal of time and effort.
  - Asked the Board of Commissioners to read the report and study the contents.
  - The resident committee members did a "yeoman's" job and he thanked them on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.
- Ms. Weiss:
- Thanked the Committee members as well.
  - Asked for a copy of the PowerPoint presentation used this evening.
- Mr. Leonard:
- Expressed his thanks to all Task Force members for their efforts.
  - He was pleased to have had an opportunity to meet with each member of the Committee and be able to have an open conversation.
  - The report is objective and non-biased.
  - He found the recommendations to be challenging.
  - Department heads have not had an opportunity to review the report as yet.

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Mr. Bryers:

- The Township is operating very well.
- The Committee is making suggestions but not making any major recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Derr motioned, with Mrs. Herold seconding, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Louise S. Birett, Recording Secretary

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Pesavento, President

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