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September 19, 2023

Michelle L. Reddick  
Township Manager/Treasurer  
c/o: Board of Commissioners  
Upper Pottsgrove Township  
1409 Farmington Avenue  
Pottstown, PA 19464

RE: Municipal Complex studies

Mrs. Reddick:

This letter shall serve as a summary to the Municipal Complex Site Suitability Study, dated June 16, 2023, and prepared by CMC Engineering. The site suitability study was conducted after the Board of Commissioners had selected a property for the new municipal complex in early summer of 2020 and approved in August of 2022. The study was embarked upon to validate that all viable properties for the new municipal complex had been considered. The site suitability study analyzed eight properties that had been presented to CMC Engineering, all of which are located within the boundaries of the Township. Six of the eight properties are privately held land while two of the properties are owned by the Township. The suitability study detailed possible sites for a new municipal complex while this letter provides a recommendation for which a municipal complex is best suited.

It is our recommendation that any privately held properties be eliminated from consideration to focus money on the construction of a new municipal complex rather than land acquisition. If a property needs to be purchased, a portion of the money that is earmarked for the development of a new municipal complex is lost due to land acquisition fees, appraisals, title searches, attorneys fees, etc. To maximize the project value, Township residents are better served if the Board focuses money wholly toward the construction of a new complex.

Two properties, included in the Municipal Complex Site Suitability Study, are owned by the Township. 1420 Heather Place and 370 Evans Road are municipally owned properties. 1420 Heather Place contains Heather Place Park, the municipal Police station, the Public Works offices/storage facilities, and a cellular transmission tower. 370 Evans Road contains leased agricultural fields and a cellular transmission tower. Both properties are appropriate to develop from a site suitability perspective, and both present their own list of opportunities and constraints when considering development.

1420 Heather Place contains just shy of 6-acres of land. Approximately 3.5-acres of land is utilized for Heather Place Park, 1-acre is home to the municipal services listed above, 1-acre is open lawn located behind the municipal service buildings and the remaining 0.5 acres of land exists as road rights-of-way's and utility easements. Since a design of the municipal complex at Heather Place Park has not been undertaken, the following design criteria was utilized in the development of the opportunities and constraints for the property:

- The Police, Administration and associated parking areas would be constructed in the area of the existing pavilion, playground, basketball court, veterans memorial and associated parking lot. This location is preferential because of the relatively flat terrain, distance to the adjoining neighbors is maximized, parking facilities can be shared with the public works building and the municipal services uses would be consolidated to the southern portion of the site.
- The public works facility would be constructed in the area of the existing salt storage shed.
- Parking would be located between the police/administration building and the public works building, surrounding the existing cellular tower.

The following **opportunities** apply when considering the development of the Heather Place property for the new municipal complex, according to the criteria above:

- Easy access to the highway system for emergency services vehicles.
- Relatively open/flat terrain surrounding the existing municipal buildings.
- Access to all necessary utilities.
- Easily found by visitors, highly visible property from State Route 100.
- No concerns with underlying geology or flooding issues (according to the USGS Soils Surveys).
- The existing park amenities would be improved through the purchase of new equipment or reconstruction of new athletic courts.
- Residents located within the Heather Place community would have immediate access to municipal services and an improved park facility. All residents would have access to a newly renovated park facility and municipal complex.

The following **constraints** apply when considering the development of the Heather Place property for the new municipal complex, according to the criteria above:

- The existing municipal services buildings would remain throughout the construction of the new complex to ensure no lapse in services to the community. Retaining/working around existing facilities while building new facilities adds cost and time to the construction contract.
- Portions of the new municipal building would be located where existing park amenities are present, necessitating the purchase of new equipment (added

cost) and the installation of the play equipment close to the northern park property line (potential concern with adjoining residential neighbors).

- The demolition/reconstruction of existing park amenities that were built through private donations (pavilion/veterans memorial) may cause some concern for residents.
- A new park parking lot and associated stormwater management facility will be needed for the newly relocated/constructed park amenities. The new parking lot and management facilities would add cost to the project.
- The terrain of the park is steeper sloping within the northern portion of the park site which is not as conducive to recreation as the central/southern portion of the property. Additional money will be needed to develop flat/level areas that are more conducive to recreation.
- The proximity of the existing and the expanded/proposed complex would be very close to surrounding neighbors, just over 100 feet to the front façade of some homes in the adjoining neighborhood.
- No land is available for expansion (if needed) without impacting the remaining park property. 2 acres of land would be utilized for the municipal complex (due to retaining existing facilities during construction that would be converted to green space between buildings, post construction). Approximately 0.5 acres of land is occupied by road rights-of-way's and cellular easements. 3.5 acres of land would be retained for relocated/newly constructed play amenities. The above figures total 6-acres or the total amount of land that comprises the Heather Place Park property.
- Vehicular transportation is the only means of access to/from the site. No sidewalks exist within the Heather Place Development and no Municipal or County trails are proposed within the area to allow neighbors to walk to the complex.
- Residents located within the Heather Place Community may be in favor of the park/complex remaining as-is with no further municipal development.

370 Evans Road contains just over 34-acres of land and is primarily leased by the Township for agricultural farming. A portion of the property adjoins Sprogol's Run and a wetland/drainage corridor is present on the site. The following **opportunities** apply when considering the development of the Evans Road property for the new municipal complex:

- Easy access to the highway system for emergency services vehicles
- Relatively open/flat terrain
- No concerns with underlying geology or flooding issues due to existing environmental studies
- Minimal to no visual impact to the adjoining neighbors. The closest home is located over 250 feet away.

- Minimal site impact with only 1.2 acres of impervious surface area being proposed or 3% of the total property.
- The ability to easily expand the complex (if needed) with minimal to no impact to the neighbors or the environment.
- Eliminate an intensive leased agricultural use while encouraging natural landscapes to re-establish themselves on the property. Allow large portions of the property to be restored to woodlands and open meadows. Allow the municipal parking lots to service the newly created nature park.
- Encourage the development of a municipal park for passive recreation purposes such as nature trails, bird watching, environmental studies, etc. Encourage the development of meandering trails through what could become successional forests, wildflower meadows and enhanced wetlands/drainage corridors.
- Eliminate the leasing of the land for leased agricultural use which discourages public access to public property.
- Eliminate the use of fertilizers/pesticides on the property by eliminating the leased agricultural use and allowing the natural restoration of the land to occur.
- Eliminate the erosion of the soil into the surrounding watersheds due to the leased agricultural practices, should a more natural landscape be encouraged on the property.
- Eliminate the depletion of soil nutrients due to the leased agricultural practices, should a more natural landscape be encouraged on the property.
- Create a healthier watershed within the community by implementing the above three opportunities. Local streams would be less polluted with chemicals and silt, increasing fish populations.
- Allowing the remainder of the land to restore itself naturally reduces pollution (new plant life absorbs carbon dioxide), encourages wildlife diversity (more diverse plant species encourage wildlife habitat), encourages rainwater infiltration/ reduces flooding (trees and wildflowers encourage water infiltration/absorption) and is overall healthier for municipal residents (more oxygen is produced, reduces pollution in streams, encourages walking/hiking, etc.).
- The ability to develop the municipal complex parking areas as trailheads for the future Tri-County Upper West Trail segment and Sprogol's Run Trail.
- The police, administration and public works office/facilities could continue to function unimpeded at their current location while construction of a new facility occurs at the Evans Road property.
- A municipal complex would be accessible to all residents and would be located within a natural park setting creating a rural/natural identity for the community.

The following **constraints** apply when considering the development of the Evans Road property for the new municipal complex:

- Lack of easy access to utilities. The need for a water well and the use of propane for heating
- A lawsuit has been filed against the use of open space for a new municipal complex.
- Traffic will increase along Evans Road due to administrative/police vehicle use and monthly governmental meetings.
- A farm field would be eliminated in favor of a natural habitat. Some residents may perceive a farm field more aesthetically pleasing than a natural/wild landscape.
- Residents adjoining the property may favor the continued leased agricultural use over a municipal complex/natural park that includes public trails.

After evaluating both publicly owned properties and notwithstanding the outcome of pending lawsuits, it is our opinion that 370 Evans Road is best suited for the new municipal complex. The development of a municipal complex while encouraging the natural development of the remaining 32.8 acres of land for passive recreation is a benefit to the community and the environment. Encouraging the natural succession of woodlands, wildflowers, and wildlife habitat all the while opening access to what is now an intensively managed agricultural property that discourages public access would be an asset to an already extensive list of municipally owned parcels of land.

Please call our office with any questions.

Sincerely,



Aloysius Gryga, RLA

Senior Landscape Architect  
Chester Valley Engineers