

PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP BUILDING / FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Report of September 3, 2008

At the direction of the Board of Supervisors, a Building/ Facilities committee was formed in January of 2008. The committee's task was to review and assess the current township facilities with regard to use, condition and appropriateness to current and, to the extent possible, future functions and needs.

Building/Facilities Committee

The committee was comprised of township residents who expressed an interest in the work. Fortunately the members brought various degrees of knowledge of the building, facilities and construction industry as well as a history of the township to the committee. The members are Dan Fichtner, Chairman, Ron Snyder, Vice Chairman, Rick Rankin, Secretary, Paul Hollinger, John Kirk and Greg Collins.

Over the subsequent months the committee reviewed conditions, made observations and commented based on professional opinion and history and experiences as residents. The township staff was surveyed to obtain their input and the Supervisors met with the committee on a regular basis. The committee members traveled individually to a number of area townships of similar size to Providence to interview their staffs and compare buildings, facilities, uses, organizational structure and functions and reported back to the whole. The committee also reviewed building design plans for a new Township office developed at the request of a previous board.

Existing Facilities

The existing buildings and facilities include the current township office and separate maintenance compound located at 200 Mt. Airy Road. The site is comprised of around 8 acres, of which approximately 2 acres are developed for structures, surface parking and material and equipment yard storage. (Attachment – aerial photo) The Township also owns park property located in New Providence and has just recently taken ownership of an 8 mile portion of the Enola Low Grade railroad property that bisects the township roughly east to west. This acquisition adds many additional acres to Township holdings.

The current township building was originally constructed as a school house in the 1800's and has changed little structurally since. The facility is not listed on the historic register. Space within the open plan is provided mainly for two full time staff members, file and record and other storage. A raised dais exists at one end of the rectangular interior space provided for supervisor seating during public township meeting. A ramp was added for aiding physically impaired access.

The existing maintenance building is a compound of structures made up of a main buildings joined to various shed additions to provide shop areas, storage for materials and equipment, office area for the road master and ancillary spaces for the 4 full time and 2 part time township employees. Construction date of the original building and the additions vary.

Committee Findings

The current site needs improvement. Vehicular access from Mt. Airy Road is from a single wide entry without markings or clear delineation of entrance or exit. This lack of delineation and separation of Township trucks and private vehicles were identified as safety concerns. Clear public and staff parking arrangements are also needed for both daily office business and evening public meeting and larger gatherings. Access to and from the maintenance building garage spaces impact the traffic patterns at the current offices by their adjacent location.

The existing township offices are housed in a structure not designed for the current functional use. The open floor plan layout lacks privacy for residents and others while dealing with Township business matters. Meeting events requires public seating to encroach into the work spaces of staff. Files and records are remote from work areas. Heating and cooling are less efficient lacking individual space controls.

The mix of various structures used for the roads and grounds maintenance functions are inefficient in layout and work flow and insufficient for work and storage space. Separation from the Township offices and central utilities and services has also been noted as a possible detriment.

Considerations and Comments

Based on surveys, personal experiences and observations made it is the Committees belief that the Township should seriously consider improving the current Township facilities.

Current conditions hamper efficient, cost effective and safe delivery of service. Additionally the facilities do not provide for possible growth of services in a planned manner which will likely become necessary due to growth of Township responsibilities and property holdings.

It is noted by the Committee that past Boards of Supervisors have had similar desires to address the Township facility needs as displayed by contracting for architectural drawings (plans) of office additions

Recommendations

The recommendations of the committee are now being presented to the Board of Supervisors and the residents of Providence Township with comments for their consideration.

The Committee recommends the Supervisors approve proceeding with more formal plan development of improvements as recommended. In order to do so the Township should obtain proposals from experienced professional design firms to prepare necessary surveys, documents, program and design studies that would address current as well as future Township needs.

The Township should review and discuss anticipated probable costs for any construction that may arise if the Township proceeds with the suggested undertakings. Consideration should be given to life-cycle and energy impacts as well as considering input from the public and Township staff throughout the process.

Programming Example

The following are programming examples which the Township may need to consider:

Primary Offices/Spaces/Uses – Current and Future

Manager

Zoning/Code Enforcement

 Individual positions?

 Township in lieu of contracted services

Zoning Hearing Board – separate space required?

Planning Commission – separate space required?

Water/Sewer Authority

Recycling office

Police/Fire/Emergency services

Maintenance/Road Master Office

Reception/clerical/files

Tax Collection office

Supervisors office or small conference room

Recreational Commission/ Coordinator

Public Meeting Room

Restrooms

Kitchen/Break Room

Secondary Offices/Spaces/Uses

Polling place

Community uses

 Historical/Archival/Museum

- Pavilion – larger meetings or rentals
- Recreation
- Parking
 - Commuter parking
 - School bus parking
- Recycling – yard debris
- District Justice

Programmed Spaces – Questions to consider - Space needs; Intra-Township communication and interaction; Public access and interaction

- Private or open office
 - Private
 - Size
 - Integral conference area
 - Integral files within office or elsewhere
 - Dedicated clerical
 - Shared clerical
 - How does public interact?
 - Semi-Private
 - Size
 - Integral conference area
 - Integral files within office or elsewhere
 - Dedicated clerical
 - Shared clerical
 - Open
 - Size
 - Separate conference area
 - Dedicated clerical
 - Shared clerical

- Police/Fire/Emergency - Special needs/characteristics
 - Secure and separated area
 - Lock-up/holding
 - Evidence
 - Communications
 - Locker Room/Restrooms
 - Kitchen/Break Room
 - shared?

- Maintenance/Roads/Grounds
 - Garage area
 - Secured Tool room
 - Parts room
 - Air Compressor room
 - Vehicular and Equipment garages

- Hydraulic lift for small and large vehicles
- Materials storage
 - Bulk storage
 - Interior/protected
 - Bulk storage
 - Exterior
 - Specialized storage
 - Flammable and hazardous materials – gas/oil/pesticides
- Locker Room/Restrooms
- Kitchen/Break Room – if not shared with offices

Reception/clerical

Tax Collection

Supervisors

Recreation

Probable Cost Example

Creation of a program and development of preliminary cost estimates would help guide the Township on project direction and assist in making funding decisions. As a starting point, the Committee has created the following example of a possible program and related probable costs of construction.

It should be noted by the reader that this example is for the additions and renovations and a “phased construction” which incorporates the existing schoolhouse. An entirely new facility could also be considered in similar terms. The example is not a recommendation of the Committee on one direction over another but as a guide. Attention is also directed to specific spaces indicated as future requirements for offices and areas such as Police/Fire or EMS are not included at this time.

- Office Addition – Single story addition with dedicated offices, ancillary spaces and restrooms. Possibly design to allow for future 2nd floor and/or horizontal expansion.
 - 2,900 sq. foot addition includes connection to Existing Township Office
 - Existing offices becomes dedicated meeting room– seating area 600 sq.ft. = approx. 60 occupants.
 - 2,900 sq. ft. x \$210 sq. ft. = \$609,000.00
- List of areas and their square footage:
 1. Secured Entry - 150 sq. ft.
 2. Restrooms - 150 sq. ft.
 3. Open Office Area - 500 sq. ft.
 - Reception/Workroom
 - Waiting

- 4. Mechanical / Storage - 200 sq. ft.
 - 5. Zoning / Permitting - 400 sq. ft.
 - 6. (4) individual Offices - 700 sq. ft.
 - 7. Connection to existing - 200 sq. ft.
 - 8. Small Meeting / Lunch Room/ Kitchen / Storage - 600 sq. ft.
- New Maintenance Building. Approximate 10,000 sq. ft.
 - New facility to provide interior storage for all trucks and equipment, shop space, restroom / shower (if not part of the Office Addition/Expansion), tool / part storage & compressor rooms. (Not included in the following cost, would be any equipment, lifts etc., along with any bulk material storage).
 - 10,000 sq.ft. x \$125 sq.ft. = \$1,250,000.00
 - List of areas and there sq. footage:
 - 1. (7) Drive Thru Bays = 14 Bays
 - Each bay - 15' Wide x 70' Long - 7,350 sq. ft.
 - 2. Entry - 100 sq. ft.
 - 3. (2) Offices - 300 sq. ft.
 - 4. Mechanical / Storage & Shop Areas - 1,600 sq. ft.
 - 5. Small Meeting / Lunch / Kitchen Restrooms / Showers - 650 sq. ft.

(This Area could become the connection between Office Addition & Maintenance Facility) This could cut back on Sq. Footage.

Sincerely,
 Providence Township Building / Facilities Committee



Image PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources-PAMAP/USGS

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elev 667 ft

Apr 2005

Eye alt 2033 ft

39°54'23.09" N 76°13'50.40" W