

LAMBERTVILLE COMMUNITY ADVISORY TEAM
MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
July 2, 2020

Andrew Nowick and Sandra Harris were announced as Community Advisory Team (the CAT) co-secretaries.

The meeting schedule was established. The CAT will meet on the 1st Thursday of every month and the 4th Monday of every month between now and the end of the year. Additional meeting dates will be scheduled if necessary. All meetings will be on the Zoom platform due to the ongoing need to practice social distancing.

Review and Finalization of the CAT's Charge:

The Lambertville CAT is comprised of a group of individuals with diverse backgrounds and views on redevelopment in the City. The team is committed to engaging in productive, civil discussions to:

- (1) understand the community's values as they pertain to the character of the City and development,
- (2) understand the City's challenges and communicate obligations to the community, and
- (3) after understanding these situations and values, advocate to the City Council for plans that address these challenges and align with the community's values.

Budget Overview

As part of the CAT's education, Alex Torpey (Lambertville's Business Administrator) presented on municipal finances particularly the use of bonds to fund capital projects and the importance of timing associated with the funding streams. By utilizing this timing and through capital management, the city has the opportunity to control the budget impact of debt servicing. Mayor Julia Fahl was present in the first half of the meeting to answer the CAT's questions about the budget including the current economic environment due to COVID-19, the year over year increase in future taxes if we do nothing, and whether there is an opportunity to take advantage of the low current interest rates to ease our debt service burden now.

While a long-term view of development and finance is important, due to court-imposed deadlines on affordable housing, the CAT's primary focus through the fall will be the City's affordable housing obligations.

Community Engagement

The CAT discussed multiple strategies for communicating with and getting feedback from the broader community including social media, mailings, small and large meetings with the community, and a webpage.

The Public Engagement/Communication Sub-committee will be working to develop a communications strategy that is mindful of communication differences – language, access to technology, impairments. Community input is critical to this process and – for the police station site, due to court-imposed deadlines – will need to occur in a very compressed time frame.

CAT members were encouraged to attend Planning Board and City Council meetings to learn and share.

Plan for Future Meetings

The CAT discussed plans for future CAT meetings that would allow timely CAT input in line with a timetable of City decision points dictated by the schedule required in our Fair Housing judgement from the court. (CAT co-chairs will work to develop this timeline.) Over the next several months, the CAT will continue to gather information from experts (e.g., environmental, design, finance) and, beginning in the next few weeks, from the broader community.