

Dear Lambertville community,

Last spring, the Lambertville Community Advisory Team (CAT) was tasked by the City Council with conducting community outreach. Our work began with gathering input and making recommendations to the Council on meeting the City's affordable housing needs per the Court mandated settlement agreement. In the last month, we have begun examining the prospect of the City's purchase and preservation of the historic Closson/Holcombe farm as well as exploring other potential options for relocation of the police station. In the coming year, we will also engage the community in discussions about City facilities more broadly.

As we have conducted our work, we have focused on transparency and facts. It is important to us that you know who we are as a diverse group of individuals with varying views and experiences (our biographies are posted on lambertvillenj.org/cat) and the sources of our information (all also included on our webpage). Through the CAT, we have consistently shared information with the community and shared the community's input with City government.

As we've worked hard to engage with the community, we have seen a steady stream of misinformation and obstructionism, both online and during public meetings, that undercuts our hard work and undermines our efforts to engage with the community. The CAT's goals, and the environment we have created in our outreach, aim to be inclusive and build constructive dialogue. Part of doing this is encouraging discourse among people with differing opinions. It is integral to this work to ensure that we are operating based on facts and a commitment to working together. When individuals and groups spread misinformation, our efforts are redirected to dispel that misinformation rather than productively engaging with the community to truly understand and advocate for its values. As we've seen at both the federal and local level, misinformation and obstructionism stir divisiveness, sow distrust, and undermine the effectiveness of government institutions that protect our health and wellbeing.

We are very grateful to the community for engaging with us through surveys, office hours, and impromptu chats and are proud of the work we have done so far. We have heard from hundreds of diverse Lambertville residents and look forward to hearing from and working with many more. As chairs of this committee, we have been so impressed by the dedication of the CAT members who, along with us, have spent thousands of hours working on these issues. We are also grateful to the many community residents who have reached out to provide their pro bono expertise and local knowledge.

Like you, we treasure the unique characteristics that make us proud to call Lambertville our home and encourage and invite all Lambertville residents to engage productively and civilly in the civic process both directly with the CAT and with the government at large. As always, we welcome your input, feedback, and questions. Please visit our webpage at lambertvillenj.org/cat, reach out at CATchairs@lambertvillenj.org, and stay tuned for the CAT's public engagement in the months to come.

Thank you,
Sarah Gold and Paul Kuhl
CAT Co-Chairs