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Dear Resident:

September 13, 2016

The Springfield School District has recently filed land development plans with the Township for the construction of a new high school. The Springfield School District and the Board of Commissioners are two independently elected entities responsible for different services. Occasionally the areas of responsibility interact and a land development application for the construction of a new high school is one of those areas. The Board of Commissioners thought it would be helpful to communicate to the residents about the process for this project and any upcoming meetings.

First and foremost, it is important to know that the upcoming discussions, planning commission meetings, and possibly zoning hearing board meetings are not about whether the School District should build a new high school or renovate the current facility. That decision has already been made by the elected School Board. Comments or concerns regarding the cost of the project or its impact on School taxes should be addressed to the School Board because they are the entity that possesses this information.

The Board of Commissioners is mindful that the School District is a taxing authority and the costs and expenses incurred by the district are ultimately borne by the residents of Springfield. The construction of a new high school facility in Springfield will have an impact Township wide and will certainly be of interest to many residents. But like any other land development, the residents and other entities that are closest to the facility will feel the greatest impact of that facility on a day-to-day basis for decades to come and it is the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners and various Township boards to thoroughly review and comment on the proposed plans. The upcoming discussions, meetings, and hearings will seek to mitigate any potential negative impact and balance the rights of the immediate neighbors with the proposed plans that the School District has submitted. Open dialogue and willingness to compromise will be crucial for a successful process. All of the meetings will have a period for the public to provide comments on the proceedings but as mentioned above the township meetings will be focusing on the plans, whether they comply with the township codes and their impact on the immediate neighbors.

The initial phase of the land development process is a review of the submission by township personnel to determine whether the plans filed by the School District comply with Township codes and regulations and whether the plans need any zoning waivers or other accommodations. As with any other land development project, Township personnel will communicate those findings and recommendations to the representatives for the district in preparation for any upcoming meetings. The first planning commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 6th at 7:30 PM.

The Board of Commissioners wishes to assure the residents that the Springfield Township land professional experts, Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, and Board of Commissioners is committed to having an open dialogue and public process for this project.

A healthy and successful school district goes hand in hand with a healthy and successful Township. One cannot exist without the other. We can offer our children access to a quality public education in excellent facilities while preserving the quality of life in the immediate vicinity of the development.

All of the public meetings and notices on this matter will be posted to our website, legally advertised, and posted on the Township Facebook page. We hope you will stay engaged on this topic as the process unfolds.

Sincerely,
Board of Commissioners