THE FUTURE OF THE SCHWENKSVILLE FIRE HOUSE

OPEN HOUSE
& PUBLIC MEETING

WELCOME

Joe Giunta

Mayor of Schwenksville

INTRODUCTION

Brian J. Olszak, Senior Planner

Montgomery County Planning Commission

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

- **Greg Pocius**, Borough Council
- **Sarah Knickerbocker**, Borough Council
- **Joseph Giunta**, Mayor
- **Anne Klepfer,** Manager
- **Gail Philips**, Secretary-Treasurer

BACKGROUND

- Fire house sits on ground owned by the borough and was leased to the Schwenksville Fire company.

- Fire company vacated property December 1, 2017 and property reverted to the borough.

- Currently used as a Municipal Annex for meetings, storage and special events.

DECISIONS TO BE MADE RE: 300 MAIN STREET

- **Sell** the property or **keep** the property

- If keeping the property, decide **what to do** with the property - mixed use is possible

- Decide **how to finance** what is done to the property

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION-MAKING

- Work within our **current means – No Tax Increase to Finance It**
- **Address current Borough Hall operational deficiencies** such as:
  - Accessibility and ADA bathrooms
  - Committee and staff meeting space
  - Safety and security
  - Storage for Borough Archives and display space for Albright Houses.
- Continue providing **space for community use** & activities, and special events
- Increase **operational efficiencies**
- **Anchor** Main Street District

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Building has served as a center for community activity and **geographic** center of town
- Fire House is the designated **Emergency Operations Center**
- Existing facilities complement and integrate Meadow Park facilities, Perkiomen Trail, and new Main Street Plaza, **leveraging recent and future public investment**
- Borough should invest in a property that can **satisfy current and future needs**
- Existing Fire House already contains much of what existing Borough Hall lacks:
  - Sufficient space for administrative operations
  - Sufficient meeting room space
  - Community bathrooms
  - Community space
  - Sufficient public parking
  - Strategically located adjacent to both Meadow Park and Borough Authority
- **Borough cannot afford to improve/maintain two buildings.**

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO CENTRALIZE SERVICES

Municipal Operations

- Borough Admin Operations
- Emergency Operations Center
- Meadow Park & Park Activities
- Municipal Authority Water & Sewer
- Main Street Plaza for activities and special events
- Community Activities & Events
- Public/Trail Parking
- Pocket Museums

PLANNING CONTEXT IN THE BOROUGH

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Plan, 2010

- Rehabilitate/repurpose an old building to improve the streetscaping
- Leverage existing civic functions and recent public investment
- Increase entertainment and recreational opportunities offered
- Anchor the Main Street Community, promote Schwenksville and assist in marketing the Borough to potential businesses.
- Enhances Community Character.
- Redevelops an existing older building **AND** retains a vital community asset

PLANNING CONTEXT IN THE BOROUGH

*Main Street Streetscape Plan*, 2017

- Creates spaces that bring people together
- Supports civic activity
- Allow and create better accessibility for all people
- Supports walkable destinations and pedestrian-friendly spaces
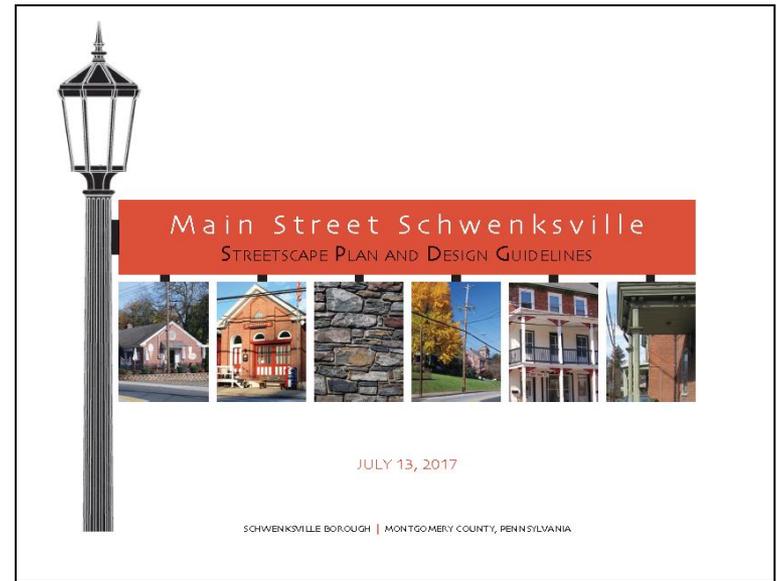
PLANNING CONTEXT IN THE BOROUGH

Montco 2040: A Shared Vision, 2015

- Support strong downtowns and community destinations

- Enhance community character and protect neighborhoods

- Encourage adaptive reuse of older institutional buildings

- Encourage development and transformative investment where infrastructure and assets already exist
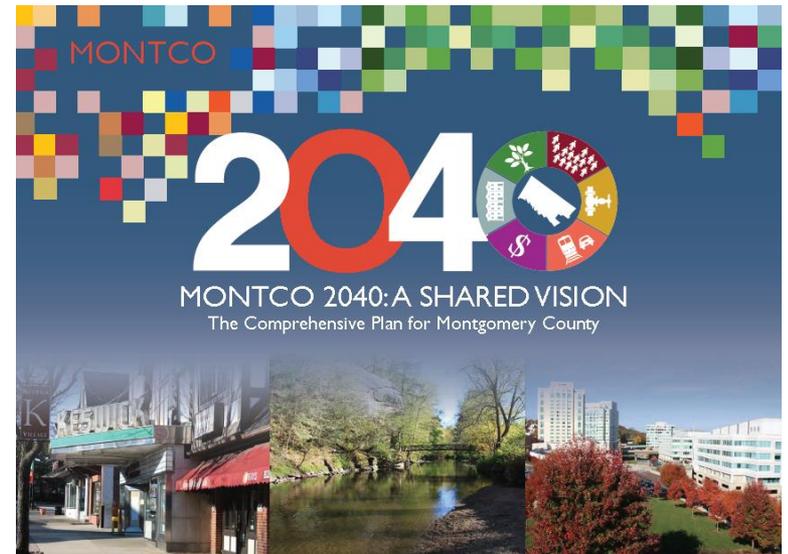
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania 2015
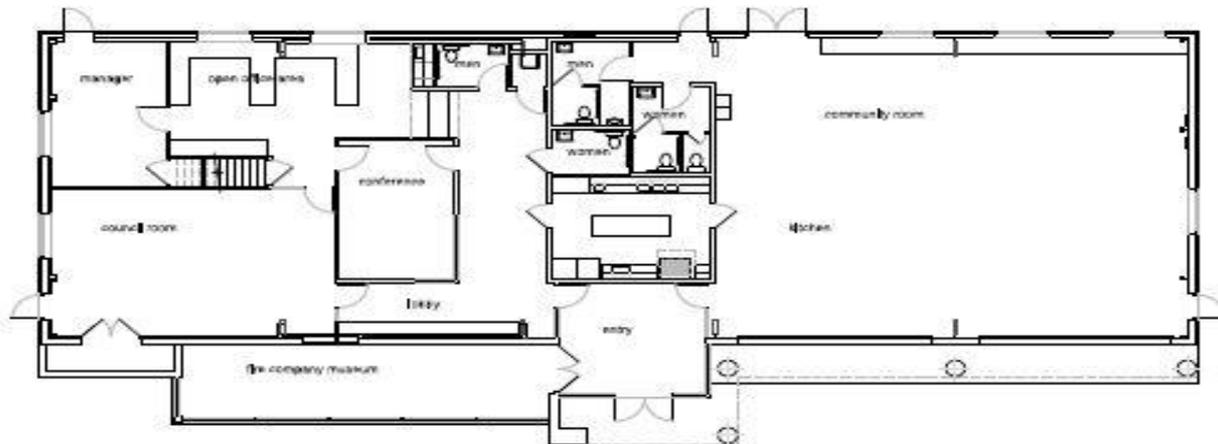
ACTIONS TAKEN SO FAR

- The Property Committee recommended **retaining ownership of the former fire house building & property for public use**.

- Borough Council hired architect Richard Kapusta to prepare a **feasibility plan** for converting the fire house into a municipal building with community space with phasing options.

- **Funding opportunities** have been identified and some applications have been made
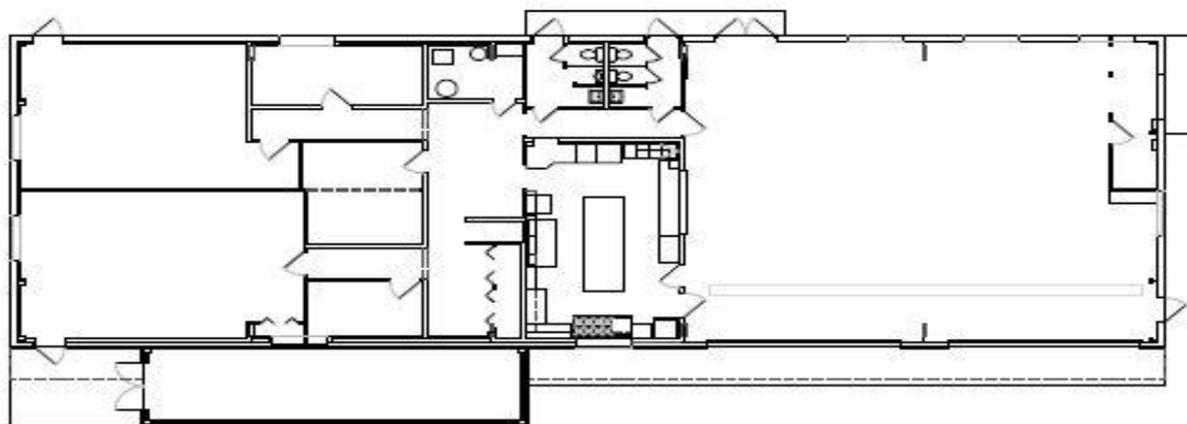
DISCUSSION- Led by Greg Pocius

- The property committee is recommending that Borough Hall relocate to the north side of the former fire house.

- Working on a phasing plan and a financing plan that would allow Borough operations to relocate **without** raising taxes

- Looking into financing options that <u>may</u> include a low interest loan, grants and **the sale** of 140 Main Street;

- Maintain South Side of the building (Garage) as a multi-functional Community space

- The Property Committee feels that continuing the Community Focused use of this space would be beneficial to Borough residents and could continue to be used for fundraisers, workshops, clubs & organizations, park programming, public and private celebrations as well as providing a space for staging of supplies and personnel during emergencies.

- <u>Before</u> the Property Committee completes its report and recommendations for repurposing the Fire House, it wants to receive and consider comments and suggestions from residents and invites you to comment now.   A comment box is also available for written comments or emails can be sent to <u>info@schwenksville-pa.org</u>.

FRONT ELEVATION

manager

open offices

man

men

women

community room

women

conference

kitchen

council room

lobby

entry

fire company museum

PLAN

EXISTING