

**NORTH FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP  
PUBLIC HEARING**

**December 12, 2023**

**5:15 pm**

**CALL TO ORDER** - Present were Mr. Sabot, Mr. Quinn, Mr. Johnson, Solicitor Gary Sweat, Secretary/Treasurer Jackie Kotchman and Director of Planning & Development, Erin Dinch.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

- 1. CONSIDER AN AMENDMENT TO THE TOWNSHIP CODE OF ORDINANCES, SECTION 460 ZONING, TO AUTHORIZE PRIVATE SCHOOLS AS A PERMITTED USE IN THE MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (R-3) AND THE HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (C-3).**

**Mr. Sweat explained that the Township does not have any definition or identification of the uses of private schools in our Ordinances. He said a private Christian school was interested in purchasing property in North Franklin to build a new school. He said the plan/proposal was reviewed by the Washington County Planning Commission and by the Township's Planning Commission and neither party objected to the text amendment.**

**Mr. Sweat identified the following exhibits:**

**Exhibit A – The October 3, 2023 letter from Attorney Don Graham requesting the text amendment for private school use.**

**Exhibit B – The formal review by the Washington County Planning Commission dated November 3, 2023**

**Exhibit C – Minutes of the North Franklin Township Planning Commission for review and recommendation.**

**Exhibit D – The proof of the advertising of this Public Hearing that ran in the Observer-Reporter on November 26 and December 3, 2023.**

**Exhibit E – A draft of the proposed text amendment Ordinance.**

**Mr. Sweat asked Erin Dinch, who is a member of the North Franklin Planning Commission, to confirm that they recommended the text amendment and she agreed that they did.**

**Attorney Don Graham advised that he represents Halls of Gratitude, LLC, a for profit organization, that has an agreement of sale to buy the Ramada Inn site. He said the purpose of the purchase is to convert the hotel into a school building to operate Penn Woods Classical Academy, a Christian School. He said since Halls of Gratitude is a for**

profit entity and will own the property, the school would be fully taxable for real estate tax purposes. He also said the property surrounding the Ramada Inn would be developed for school uses.

Dr. Eric Stennet, Head of School for Penn Woods Classical Academy, reported that they just received their membership to Hillsdale College member school. He said they are not a charter school, but are a classical Christian school that does not take State or Federal funding. He said there are 691 such schools nationwide. He said they will be very involved in the Community. He said initially they will have Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

He said they will offer athletics, fine arts, etc. The cost of the school would be approximately \$9,000 - \$13,000 per year. He said it would be co-educational.

John Ketteren, Attorney for the Ramada Inn owners (Washington Holiday Motor Lodge), expressed that the current owners were in full support of the amendment and the proposed school.

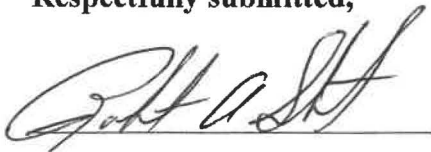
Mr. Sweat concluded that private schools are a Land Use and the Township needs to provide for every Land Use so its not to be exclusionary. He said Public Schools are permitted in any of the Townships Zoning Districts but private schools will be limited to R-3 and C-3 if its approved.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

#### ADJOURNMENT

**\*\*MOTION to adjourn the Public Hearing meeting at 5:16 pm** was made by Mr. Sabot; seconded by Mr. Johnson. Unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Sabot, Chairman



Jacqueline M. Kotchman, Secretary/Treasurer