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**For immediate release – June 8, 2023**

**PENN TOWNSHIP RESPONDS TO MULTIPLE LAWSUITS FILED BY AVON GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**PENN TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY, PA** – Since the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, a large number of school children have been walking across PA Route 796 (S. Jennersville Road), to and from the Avon Grove High School to the Shoppes of Jenners Village, and other businesses where the school children are parking their cars.

The responsibility of the Township is to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The Penn Supervisors feared that school children crossing Route 796 will ultimately result in the injury, or worse, to one or more of those school children, residents or visitors to Penn Township. Therefore, the Penn Supervisors enacted a motion which activated a provision, in the school's approved and recorded land development plan, to require the school district to construct ninety-six additional parking spaces when the Penn Supervisors deemed it necessary.

The Supervisors' first effort to enact that provision was on May 3, 2023, at their regularly scheduled public meeting. In response, the Avon Grove School District issued a letter from their Solicitor accusing Penn Township of violating the Sunshine Act. While Penn Supervisors do not believe their action violated that Act, in an abundance of caution, the Supervisors advertised and held a second public meeting on May 17, 2023, to "cure" any perception of violation and took the same action again. The Avon Grove School District responded to this effort to ensure the safety of school children in the Avon Grove School District by filing two lawsuits totaling over 360 pages seeking Preliminary Injunction relief from building that 96-space lot.

From the inception of the school building process, Penn Township Supervisors, professionals, and staff have endeavored to protect the health and safety of the school children and all in the community. Penn Supervisors' actions to activate more parking lot space was a simple effort to protect the safety of the school children who have been crossing a busy road. In the letter accusing the Township of violating the Sunshine Act, the Avon Grove School District Solicitor revealed that more parking spaces may now be available. Although the number is not as high as the Township required in the May 3 and 17 motions, those additional parking spaces should, to some extent, alleviate the parking/walking issue.

While the Penn Supervisors are aware of and take seriously their responsibility to defend against lawsuits, it is also their responsibility to be prudent with Penn taxpayer dollars. The taxpaying residents and businesses of Penn Township would be uniquely and disproportionately affected as their funds will be used by both the Avon Grove School District and Penn Township to pay attorneys' fees in this action.

Considering that strongly, the Penn Supervisors determined at their June 7, 2023, regular public meeting to rescind the motions made on May 3, 2023, and May 17, 2023, requiring that the Avon Grove School District construct the 96-space lot. The potential indicated by the school district that they can produce additional spaces in its current configuration was certainly a factor in that decision.

The Penn Township Supervisors started this process with the safety of school children first and foremost in their minds. As always, the Penn Township Supervisors strive to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all.

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