

RHD Frequently Asked Questions

While the list below endeavors to answer the most common questions, please do not hesitate to call the Township if you wish to get more information on this matter: 610-539-8020.

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Overview

Who is RHD?

Resources for Human Development (RHD) is a national social services organization that provides programs that specialize in helping individuals and families with complex needs. RHD works with more than 35,000 individuals annually across 13 states, providing services covering veterans transitioning back to civilian life, career counseling, addiction counseling, housing, health care, education, community development, job training, social services, and creative arts therapies. For more information, please visit their website, www.rhd.org.

What does RHD seek to do in Lower Providence?

RHD seeks to build a short-term supportive housing facility on the Eagleville Hospital property, located on Eagleville Road. While the RHD facility would be located on the same tract as Eagleville Hospital, RHD is a separate entity, and their facility would be operated completely independently from Eagleville Hospital. The facility would serve adults 18 years of age or older.

What is short-term supportive housing?

Short-term supportive housing offers temporary housing to qualified and screened individuals, enabling them to create a personalized plan for securing permanent housing. RHD's program mandates that applicants meet strict eligibility criteria and actively engage in the program, involving comprehensive case management. The primary objective is to transition individuals out of the facility within 60 to 90 days. The RHD facility features efficiency-style apartments and only extends invitations to residents who meet eligibility criteria. This facility will house only planned residents admitted to the RHD program; there is no capacity for unplanned residents to be housed temporarily to avoid cold or inclement weather.

How did RHD's proposal come to Lower Providence Township?

Like any other private or public entity, RHD is able to pursue building on privately-owned land or land to which they have property rights. RHD previously identified other sites within the Township which were not permitted under the Township's regulations.

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What does RHD need from the Township?

Lower Providence's zoning does not currently allow for this use on the Eagleville Hospital property. RHD is requesting that the Board of Supervisors amend the zoning ordinance, which serves as local law, to permit this use on the property and provide specific regulations for its operation.

Why would the Township consider amending the ordinance for RHD?

The text amendment process allows the Township to carefully consider the impact of the proposed use and its appropriateness within the proposed zoning district. In considering a text amendment specific to the use, the Township is able to attach appropriate regulations to the use, such as size, density, and operational considerations.

Why does RHD want to build this facility on the Eagleville Hospital Property?

The Eagleville Hospital property sits adjacent to County land housing the Coroner's Office, Archives Building, and County correctional facility. This convergence of essential services makes it an attractive site for RHD. Additionally, RHD will be able to operate its programs initially from an existing Eagleville Hospital building that is separate, disconnected from, and unrelated to the Hospital's core operational facilities. The availability of this vacant building will provide RHD the ability to begin operating quickly while constructing a new permanent facility on another portion of the property. Moreover, the Township's current zoning regulations more closely align with the intended use of the facility at this site compared to alternative locations within Lower Providence.

Process

What is the process to change the zoning ordinance to allow for RHD's facility?

To change a zoning ordinance, the Board of Supervisors must vote on a "text amendment" outlining the specific modifications to the ordinance. Prior to voting on this amendment, the Board is required to advertise the proposed changes, allowing the public to review, ask questions, and provide input. The public is invited to share their input in writing, by phone, or during scheduled Board Meetings.

The process for the proposed text amendment is as follows:

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January 18, 2024: Board of Supervisors Meeting

- RHD publicly presents its supportive housing proposal.
- Board of Supervisors consider a vote to advertise the proposed text amendment and schedule a public hearing pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

If the vote passes, the text amendment is advertised for a minimum period of 30 days, during which it undergoes review by the Township Planning Commission and the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

February 28, 2024: Township Planning Commission Meeting

- A public meeting will be held by the Lower Providence Township Planning Commission to review the proposed text amendment and provide comments. This commission acts solely in an advisory capacity. Any suggested alterations to the proposed text amendment may be accepted or rejected at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors.

April 4, 2024: Board of Supervisors Meeting

- A public hearing will be held on the proposed text amendment.
- Either at the conclusion of the public hearing on April 4, or at its next scheduled meeting on April 18, the Board of Supervisors will vote on the text amendment.

If the text amendment *passes*, RHD will proceed through applicable permitting and land development processes, necessitating their own reviews and approvals.

However, should the text amendment *fail to pass*, RHD will not be permitted to construct and operate their facility at this site.

If the text amendment is not enacted by the Board of Supervisors, can RHD pursue any other means by which to build their facility?

Yes. If the text amendment is not enacted by the Board of Supervisors, RHD can go to the Zoning Hearing Board and appeal the Zoning Officer's original ruling that this use is not allowed at this site. If an appeal to the Zoning Hearing Board is granted, the decision could limit the Township's ability to consider concerns and develop appropriate regulations for the use on the proposed site.

Proposed RHD Program

How many people would RHD's facility accommodate at any one time?

The proposed text amendment would allow for no more than 60 beds in the facility.

Will the Township be able to restrict or impose eligibility requirements on residents at RHD's facility?

Through the text amendment process, the Board of Supervisors has the authority to establish the conditions under which RHD may construct their facility and operate their program. This includes defining the eligibility criteria for the program.

What are the eligibility criteria for RHD's short-term supportive housing program?

RHD will **prohibit admission** of an individual who is currently engaging in, or, during a reasonable time before the admission decision, has engaged in:

- Significant violent criminal activity,
- Subject to a registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program or other sexual offenses,
- Other criminal activity that would threaten the health or safety of other residents, staff, or community members.

Upon screening, individuals must agree to the following rules and regulations:

- No drugs, alcohol, or weapons will be permitted at the program or on the program campus.
- No violence or threats of violence will be tolerated.
- Individuals must agree to the ability and willingness to live peacefully with neighbors, respecting their rights to a safe and secure living environment and quiet enjoyment of the premises.

Is RHD required to follow fair housing rules and regulations?

Yes. Fair housing rules come from a series of state and federal regulations that are designed to prevent discrimination in housing practices. RHD's programs adhere to fair housing rules and

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regulations but put in place eligibility criteria to ensure potential residents are the right fit for the program.

How long would the residents stay at the facility?

The target duration of stay for residents is 60 to 90 days. Although there is no maximum time limit, extended stays are usually a result of complex cases, such as individuals seeking admission to a nursing home.

Would this program admit men, women, and families?

This program will only admit single adults over the age of 18 that fulfill the admission criteria. Men and women's sleeping quarters will be separate from one another.

How many residents will each room accommodate?

There will be no more than two residents per room.

Will RHD have onsite security?

RHD will have 2-3 staff available on-site 24/7 trained to handle complex crises, and an on-call system for additional supports. In the event staff require extra support, Eagleville Hospital will provide security. RHD also has access to consultation resources for any complex situation, including clinical supports, and a health hub with medical resources. Due to the program's criteria for admission and the organization's past experience running similar programs, RHD does not anticipate security issues requiring police assistance.

How will this program benefit Lower Providence residents?

RHD will give priority status to Lower Providence residents in need of short-term housing. They have also committed to being a good community partner and to support local businesses.