

Mt. Holly Springs Community Meeting
The Future of Mt. Holly Springs Elementary School Building

July 12, 2026

Members Present- Deb Halpin-Brophy, Tom Day, Jason Bonawitz, Gay Bowman, Lois Stoner, Pam Still, Gus Ginter, and Andrew Tate. Sherry Boyles and Cathy Neff were not present.

Opening- The Mt. Holly Springs Community Meeting started at 2:05pm and Mrs. Halpin-Brophy welcomed all in attendance to this special Community outreach regarding the future of the Mt. Holly Elementary School. Mrs. Halpin-Brophy said a special thanks to Borough Manager/Chief, Tom Day, for his vision for the future for this building and for his many meetings that took place with the School Board for their decision to keep this as the center of our community. Mrs. Halpin-Brophy also stated that this endeavor will open up so many possibilities for our community, it's citizens, businesses, and to the dreamers who look to their future. She also thanked Rick Coplen for helping to organize this public meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance- Mr. Coplen had a slide show presentation, which included the American Flag for when the Pledge of Allegiance was stated, followed by discussion.

Introductions- Mr. Coplen had attending council members introduce themselves, along with Cindy Thompson- with Amelia Givin Library, Chuck Crone- member of the Zoning and Hearing Board, and Heather Tidwell- a developer interested in purchasing the property.

Discussion-

-- Mr. Day stated that he did a walk through this past Thanksgiving regarding the condition of the building, heating, air conditioner, etc. Mr. Day explained everything was in mint condition, minus some cosmetic issues that would need to be addressed.

-- Mr. Coplen spoke about moving the Borough Offices and Police Department into part of the Mt. Holly Elementary School Building. Mr. Day explained that the current borough building was built 35 to 40 years ago and the need for more storage. He also explained how more storage area would make organization easier, which would help finding documents for "Right to Know" requests. Mr. Day also stated how the Borough has outgrown the current office building.

-- Mr. Crone spoke about how he measured the school rooms and stated that there were 14 rooms measuring 36' x 32'. They all have a sink in each room and 6 of the rooms have restrooms. Mr. Crone also stated there are 2 small classrooms measuring 26' x 32'. He explained that there is room for opportunities for business usage. There are 3 baseball field that the Baseball Association wants to keep.

-- Cindy Johnson asked "if the building is in such good shape, then why is it closing?" It was stated that the reason for the school closure is based on the School Boards decision. Mr. Coplen

explained that there were 9 votes for the school closure. Then the room erupted with closing concerns regarding where the students are going and bus safety. Principal Molly answered a lot of these questions, such as the students will be going to North Dickinson. Principal Molly stated that the grade "k" at Mt. Holly and North Dickinson have gone on exchange visits to each other's schools. She also explained that by the time the grade "k" students start, they will be in 3rd grade, as the school is not closing until the summer of 2028.

-- There was a question asked if the sale of the building to the Borough was a done deal, which was answered as a work in progress. Following with another question in regards to what the current Borough building will be used for. Mr. Day explained that that is still being discussed.

-- Housing on the 11 acres was discussed and how homes will bring in new revenue. Mr. Day stated that there are 886 homes which bring in \$374,00.00 in revenue. Mr. Day also explained that if you bring in more homes, costs will increase, such as the police, etc. However, if small businesses come in, there will be revenue.

-- Jody Fritz wanted to know where all these funds for the school purchase and repairs are coming from. Mr. Day explained from no match grants and explained how this was not a money pit issue. Mr. Day also explained how the school was built in 1954 and is about bringing the building up to today's standards for education technology. Someone stated that we do not need anymore empty buildings and no alternative schools. Mr. Coplen added that a part of these grants is to provide support letters for keeping the building.

-- Someone stated how the kids have nothing to do when school is off for the summer, which led into the discussion of what the school could be utilized for.

-- *Ideas Included:* Children education, basketball, volleyball, and art for children, which are ideas supported by the Mt. Holly Springs Elementary Art Teacher. Adult crafts, like crocheting, knitting, sewing, art. It was discussed how there is a kiln in the school and if maybe the district will allow the Borough to keep it. Other ideas such as daycare, summer camp, Co-Op for homeschooled students, and a recreation center were discussed.

--Jody Gibbson asked how we know that we will have first dibs on the school. Mr. Day explained that the school district is a government entity and would rather have the school go to another government entity versus a private entity on its own. Mr. Day also explained that council has sought and received over 5 million dollars in grants.

-- Mr. Coplen stated that lots of volunteers would be needed for such projects and classes. It was also discussed that this is not just a 1-year project. The end date for all surveys to be completed by is August 31, 2026.

-- Discussion also included an all-inclusive playground for sensory, disabled, and autistic children. As well as use of the fenced in areas and a need to make accessibility ADA compliant. Following, was more discussion of what the school could be used for.

-- *Ideas Included:* Open gym Saturday's, parties to be held indoors, cooking classes, theater, senior center, senior walking clubs- so seniors are no longer isolated, farmers market, senior GED, employment skill center- at no cost to the community. Agriculture, like community gardens or green houses, which included discussion for the Secretary of Agriculture to pay for it, or to even partner with Penn State. Business incubator was discussed, with more to come.

Mrs. Still stated to consider the extra traffic that will come though Mt. Holly Springs and the limits on the sewer plant. More ideas included a radio station ran by children, guest speakers, and no more housing. Mr. Day stated having a resident versus non resident fee for rental of the rooms. Mr. Day also stated that Dickinson Township would like to partner in these developments.

Mr. Coplen explained that all the suggestions posted on the walls and using the from the QR code log ins will be reported to the Borough.

The Mt. Holly Springs Community Meeting ended at 4:30pm.

Deb Halpin-Brophy
Mt. Holly Springs Mayor
Transcribed by Madeline Pierce