

Delco OKs Yeadon community health center lease

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Delaware County Council approved an agreement for a location in Yeadon to serve as a community health center that will eventually be a site to distribute a COVID-19 vaccine and to serve as the county's health department once that's established.

Council unanimously approved entering into a five-year lease agreement with Yeadon Shopping Center, L.P. for a 1,235 square-foot former community shopping center at 125 Chester Ave. The agreement puts the cost at \$185,4000 a year so that the space can be used to provide flu vaccines and COVID-19 tests - and eventually COVID-19 vaccines, when they become available.

Lori Devlin, director of the county's Intercommu-

nity Health Department, said her department, the Emergency Services Department and the Citizens Corps volunteers have been providing COVID-19 testing at outdoor locations throughout the county for the past 10 weeks, as well as the first flu vaccine clinic in Millbourne.

"We plan on continuing these services over the next several weeks," she said. "Looking at till the end of October we plan on being outdoor throughout the county. By November, we really need to have some sort of a plan in place where we move our operations indoors. It's just not going to be feasible for us to work outdoors any longer."

She said the Yeadon location would be currently used for giving flu vaccines and COVID-19 test sites. She added that it will a site for administering vaccines for the virus, when that be-

comes available.

County Solicitor William Martin said the search for a location centered on the eastern end of the county, where the needs were the greatest, and he said locations in Springfield and in Aldan were also considered.

The one in Springfield, he said, had a higher cost and the location was more central to the county than near the eastern end. The Aldan location was too small and also cost more. The Yeadon facility costs \$16 a square foot, according to Martin.

Martin said the Yeadon location is vacant and is available for immediate occupancy.

"The supermarket use is a plus for us because that means it has the electricity appropriate for a high level of refrigeration capacity, which is likely to be necessary in connection with the eventual COVID vaccine," he said.

Martin said they negotiated with the owners to have a one-time right to terminate the lease in 18 months should the county's process for a county health department would not go forward for unforeseeable reasons.

County Councilwoman Elaine Paul Schaefer warned of the need for security.

"Since our meeting yesterday, it was brought to my attention that we should be addressing security concerns for this location," she

said, particularly if it was going to be housing large quantities of a COVID vaccine.

Devlin agreed.

"The property really does have a lot of advantages because it was a supermarket and it has a loading dock, obviously the room that we would need," she said. "But we would need to consider what type of security we would put in place because we will be storing vaccine there."

Even right now, Devlin said the county is in desper-

ate need for space to store the flu vaccine.

Martin said upgraded entry doors and rear doors and more intense security components for the space would be addressed through the use of CARES Act funds. However, he explained that after the first two months, the cost of the site would no longer be covered by this federal allocation.

The Yeadon community health center is anticipated to be occupied in November.

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