

Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, January 4, 2005

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 4, 2005, at 10:30 A.M. in the thirteenth floor Board Room of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Judith L. Schwank called the meeting to order with Commissioner Thomas Gajewski and Commissioner Mark L. Scott in attendance. Also present were County Administrator, William E. Dennis, Solicitor, Alan Miller Esq., and Chief Clerk Terry Styer.

Commissioner Schwank opened the meeting with a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES/PRESENTATIONS:

Commissioner Schwank announced that she would present a Proclamation on behalf of the Commissioners to the Rotary International Club #88 of Reading celebrating their 100th anniversary.

Commissioner Schwank then presented Certificates of Recognition to the Berks County Communications Center team members responsible for assisting and helping rescuers to the scene of a seriously injured accident victim. Those receiving the Certificates include: Harry E. (Skip) Braun, III; Todd M. Deets, Cynthia L. Geiger, Colin D. Hackman, Larry J. Kerper, Robert J. Mountz, Sr.; Kim L. Pollock, Kurt A. Reinert; Michael C. Smith; Carol A. Wadsworth and Michael W. Wertz.

III. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Schwank

- A. Adopt Resolution designating Dr. Robert C. Ziegenfus as Chair of the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board for the term of January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005.

Commissioner Gajewski

Commissioner Scott

- A. Commissioner Scott presented to the board a recent zoning amendment that was approved by Longswamp Township Supervisors which will pave the way for a developer to proceed with a planned series of developments potentially building 742 homes. He informed the board that this municipality recently adopted a joint comprehensive plan with several adjacent municipalities that was funded by a grant from the County. At some point following the adoption of this comprehensive plan, a petition to amend the zoning was filed by a developer.

Commissioner Scott felt that the zoning change from Industrial to High Density Residential was not in compliance with the recently adopted joint comprehensive plan which proposed this property as an industrial growth area because of its location near public rail lines and existing, adjacent industrial tracts. He then asked Glen Knoblauch, Director of the Berks County Planning Commissioner to discuss the County's involvement in the joint planning and the rezoning application process. Glenn stated that this plan as presented, appears to conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan, the Joint Municipal Comprehensive Plan and the County's Economic Development Plan. Commissioner Scott then asked Economic Development Director, Tom McKeon to discuss this project's impact on the County's Economic Development plan. Tom indicated that East Penn Manufacturing, which is currently the largest employer in Berks County, has eyed this tract, as it was previous zoned for a future growth area. He said that East Penn Manufacturing testified in opposition to this petition to rezone the area as it may negatively impact their property's ability for future expansion as well as create land use conflicts by locating a high density residential neighborhood within an existing industrial area. He also stated that the owner of the adjacent rail line expressed opposition to this zoning change as well. He offered that the County does not have many industrial tracts located next to rail lines and this area was cited in the Planning Commissioners map of sites for industrial development. He suggested to the board that to protect the tax base and provide for job growth the county has to encourage land use planning and zoning for industrial, agricultural and commercial land use in the municipalities. He stated further that under the current real estate tax structure, residential growth tends to have a negative fiscal impact to municipalities especially the school districts.

Several Brandywine School District property owners expressed concern for the impact this rezoning issue will cause the Brandywine School District. In attendance were Joan Falcone, Bob Tersha, Elaine Falcone, Floyd Falcone and Mike Sachs (Brandywine School Board Director). The issues presented by these taxpayers were the resulting tax burden this increase of residential growth would place on the taxpayers in what they described as an already an over-burdened school district. They also expressed concern for the potential impact this development may have on the groundwater recharge area that provides the main water supply to the area farms as well as the storm water run-off impact to Toad Creek.

Commissioner Scott then presented a proposal to the board to retain Joselle Cleary, Esq. as special counsel to represent the County. It was decided to have the County Solicitor review the proposal and provide a recommendation to the board at Thursday's Commissioners' meeting.

IV. OTHER REQUESTS:

Contract Coordinator:

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per listing dated December 30, 2004.

Budget Director:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$39,472 and Appropriations in the amount \$832,731 per listing dated January 6, 2005.

Human Resource Director:

Human Resource Recommendations as per list dated January 4, 2005

Purchasing Director

- A. Adopt Resolution awarding a one year contract, as a result of Invitation to Bid #04-13-KL, for the supply and repair and/or installation of street light poles on an as-needed basis along specified sections of the West Shore Bypass and the Warren Street Bypass. The award shall be made to TELCO, Inc. with an office at 1224 Cross Keys Road, Reading, PA, 19605 at their bid price of:

Pole	\$545.00 ea.
Lamp Arm	\$500.00 ea.
Base	\$332.00 ea.
Labor per pole	\$1,136.00

As per the Invitation to Bid, the County may extend the contract for up to two additional one-year terms provided that TELCO agrees to hold the bid pricing fixed and firm. Estimated annual expenditure is \$50,260.00

V. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Commissioner Gajewski read a prepared statement regarding the 2005 budget that is attached to these minutes.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Pete Archey, Resident of Reading and member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Counsel spoke on the 2005 county budget and the 34% tax increase. He stated his objections to any blame placed on state funded programs such as the Office of Aging. He added that the CCAP's Blue Print for Tax Fairness which is proposed as a method of Tax Reform for Pennsylvania municipalities, be "costed out" prior to enactment.

He emphasized the importance of keeping the public informed and encouraged this board to continue the kind of good dialogue he experienced at this meeting.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:24 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk