

Commissioners' Workshop Meeting Tuesday, March 6, 2007

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, March 6, 2007 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 W. Gajewski, Sr., and Commissioner Mark C. 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 the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION:

Commissioner Gajewski presented certificates of recognition to members of Berks County EMA and Berks County 9-1-1 Communications for their efforts during the February ice storm in Berks County.

III. PRESENTATION:

- A. Jeff Weidner, Deputy Coordinator Planning and Administration for the Berks Emergency Management Agency presented and seeks adoption of a Resolution approving the County's Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Mitigation Plan. Representatives from Skelly and Loy, Inc. who assisted in the preparation of the plan were also in attendance. Mr. Weidner explained that FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) requires all municipalities to plan for the mitigation of all known natural hazards in their community such as flood prone areas, sink holes etc. Berks County's EMA has provided for all 73 municipalities in this plan document. Each municipal entity would then need to adopt their individual plan to be in compliance with this regulation and be eligible for FEMA disaster funding should the need in that community ever arise.
- B. A discussion was held following the request for the adoption of an ordinance pursuant to the Pennsylvania Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act (LERTA) which allows for local taxing entities, such as counties, school districts and municipalities, to provide real estate tax abatement in deteriorated areas as defined by the Act. This project involved the development of the blighted area commonly known as 200 Park Road, Borough of Wyomissing and currently known as the Wyomissing Square project. The property consists of 13 acres of land declared blighted and is currently considered a remediated Brownsfield site as well. Chris Hartman of Hartman, Hartman, Howe and Allerton legal counsel representing the developer for the Wyomissing Square

Project presented the request to the Commissioners for what he described as a tax deferment project which will also be presented for approval to the Wyomissing Borough and Wyomissing School District. As part of the project improvements the taxing entities would agree by Resolution and or Ordinance to defer full assessment of the property thus allowing an approved payment scheduled by the developer for a 10 year period as higher assessments are phased in. The proposed payment schedule is proposed to pay the taxing entities real estate taxes in an amount currently higher than the amount that paid for the current assessment of this property and would expect that in with the completion of the 10 year period to provide \$1.5 million more in tax revenue to the taxing entities than the current property condition and its associated assessment would provide. John Connors of Brickstone Development Corporation proposed that the project would ultimately include a Marriot Courtyard hotel, apartments, and 50,000 sq. ft. of retail space to be located next to VIVA restaurant. He also stated that with the exception of the approval of the required LERTA documents from the taxing entities, the project has received all conditioned approvals from the various permitting agencies including the Borough of Wyomissing and DEP (PA Dept. of Environmental Protection.) and when asked if the project could change in its scope Mr. Connors responded by saying not without going back for all the required approvals including the LERTA approvals. When asked by the Commissioners what the current tax revenue generated by this property was for this year, they were told it was a total of \$76,000 for the School District, the County and the Borough. It was also noted that this LERTA program only applies to Real Estate Taxes and that the Hotel Tax levied by the County would be paid in full.

IV. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS / REQUESTS:

Administrator:

- A. Weekly Report – William Dennis (report attached to these minutes)

Budget Department:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2007 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$58,556 and 2007 Appropriations in the amount of \$120,555 per listing dated March 2, 2007. Bob Patrizio presented the report.
- B. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated March 5, 2007. Candace Noll presented the list of contracts.

HR Director:

- A. Human Resource Recommendations per list dated March 6, 2007. Beth Schiepan presented the HR recommendations.

Solicitor

- A. Authorize execution of Amendment "A" Sublease Agreement between Burgoe Wyomissing Partners and the County of Berks for office space located the Reading Regional Airport Industrial Park, Bern Township, which the County leases for the Berks County Library System, renewing the Lease Agreement for two (2) additional years beginning March 1, 2007 and ending February 28, 2009, with an option to renew for a two(2) year term.

Youth Center / Immigration Family Shelter

- A. Discussion regarding a contract modification for ICE (Immigrations Customs Enforcement) Ken Borkey, Executive Director, Berks County Youth Center will be present at the meeting.

V. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:**Commissioner Schwank**

- A. Commissioner Schwank reported on some recent information regarding the potential closing of Graterford State Prison in Skippack Township, Montgomery County and the State's plans to build two new medium security prisons along with one maximum security prison within a 50-mile radius of the existing facility which she noted could include land areas in Berks County. The process involves the sale of the existing facility to a developer who would then seek new sites, obtain the proper land use approvals from the municipalities and construct three new facilities. Concern for the location of one of these facilities on farmland was expressed.

Commissioner Gajewski

- A. Commissioner Gajewski reported that there will be a Community Corrections task force meeting sometime in May and they will be discussion the possibility of a volunteer mentoring program for these inmates to be conducted by the Council of Churches.

Commissioner Scott

- A. Adopt Resolution appointing James M. Conners, Reading PA to fill an unexpired six (6) year term till 6/30/2011 on the Reading Area Community College Board of Trustees replacing Frank Kulp who recently resigned.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Don Reifsnnyder, citizen from Muhlenberg Township and member of the Muhlenberg School Board read a prepared statement supporting the Commissioners' interest in promoting a cancer cluster study, but encouraged that it be performed by the State and Federal Government whether it is the CDC, the DEP or the EPA in place of County public funds paying for the study.

VII. ADJOURN

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L. Styer, Chief Clerk