

## **Commissioners' Workshop Meeting Tuesday, February 10, 2009**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 10, 2009 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 Mark C. Scott, Esq. called the meeting to order with Commissioner Christian Leinbach, and Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt in attendance. Also present were County Administrator William E. Dennis, Solicitor Alan Miller Esq., and Chief Clerk Terry Styer.

Commissioner Scott opened the meeting with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Commissioner Scott also noted that an Executive Session was held on February 9<sup>th</sup> for personnel purposes.

### **II. PRESENTATION**

- A. Kim Murphy, President of The Berks County Conservancy provided comments regarding the proposed Berks County Association of Environmental Advisory Councils (EACs). She stated that the Conservancy believes this association would duplicate the work of the Conservancy whom she said has provided funding, conducted educational programs and encouraged municipal EACs to be formed as far back as 2005 and due to the Conservancy's involvement, the County has 16 functioning municipal EACs with several more in the process of getting organized. She said having the County Conservation District now take over this function seems "redundant and competitive" and she hoped that the Commissioners would consider allowing the Conservancy's proactive approach with Municipal EAC's to continue in place of the Conservation District's coordination effort.
  
- B. Hon. Timothy Rowley, Berks County Judge and a member of Walk Bike Berks, made a presentation on National Bike to Work Events. Walk Bike Berks is an organization dedicated to making walking and bicycling practical, convenient, and safe in Berks County. Commissioner Barnhardt presented a proclamation on behalf of the board, declaring May as National Bike Month and May 15<sup>th</sup> as Bike to Work Day. Judge Rowley is asking the County to encourage employees to bike to work on that day.

**III. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS/REQUESTS:****Agricultural Coordinator**

- A. Sheila Miller, Berks County Agricultural Coordinator, presented David Wolfskill, the National winner of the Corn Growers Contest who discussed his award, how his farm's test plots are measured, and how their farm management compares to other fields of corn motorists see being grown. Mr. Wolfskill explained that his farm is a 100% no till rotation. He said that he harvested 297 bushels of corn in his test plot. Mrs. Miller noted that the County average is 130 bushels. Mr. Wolfskill said that the Berks County agricultural community is special and unique in that this area is one of only three in the world where non-irrigated soil can produce such a large variety of crops.

**Budget Department:**

- A. Adopt a resolution authorizing 2008 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$7,428 and 2008 Appropriations in the amount \$914,544 and Oracle related transactions per listing dated February 6, 2009. Budget Director Bob Patrizio presented the list.
- B. Motion authorizing Mark C. Scott as Chairman of the Board, to execute Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated February 9, 2009.

**Community Development**

- A. Motion to approve payments set forth on disbursement voucher lists # 1355 and 2338 dated February 10, 2009, for the Community Development Block Grant Program, and the Property Rehabilitation Program as administered by the Berks County Community Development Office.

**Court Administration:**

Commissioner Leinbach made a motion to adopt the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt, and all voted yes to approve the following:

- 26.09 A. Resolution authorizing the Berks County Family Court Administrator to apply for a continuation grant with respect to "Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program" In the amount of \$350,000 for the period September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2012. No County funding match required.

Lisa Siciliano, Family Court Administrator, discussed this grant. With her was President Judge Jeffrey Schmehl, who introduced Denny Lorah of the Parrothead Club. Mr. Lorah announced that their January fundraiser held to benefit the Safe Havens Program, netted approximately \$13,000 for the program. He credited Ms. Siciliano for her hard work to make the fundraiser the success that it was.

Parks:

- A. Adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of a grant amendment between the County of Berks and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for a Keystone Historic Preservation Grant which has been reduced from \$90,000 to \$77,063 for the restoration of the Gruber Wagon Works.

**III. REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

County Administrator Bill Dennis presented his weekly report (attached.)

**IV. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS**

- A. Resolution authorizing the Berks County Conservation District to oversee and coordinate the County's **Municipal Environmental Advisory Councils** and further, to rescind any prior resolutions inconsistent with this newly granted authority. Commissioner Barnhardt said the two existing members of the Berks County Environmental Advisory Council will be invited to participate in these meetings. On or before March 21, 2010, the County will look back to measure the results and the participation from municipal EACs in order to determine if this collaborative effort should continue. Commissioner Leinbach said he wanted to be sure the County was not duplicating the efforts of other agencies and admitted that he was not aware of the Conservancy's efforts to develop the current 16 municipal EACs. He then said that he was not convinced that the Conservancy's efforts have not been effective. Commissioner Scott supported the measure indicating that the Conservation District will connect the EAC Association with all County's professional talent and resources such as the Planning Commission, GIS and other useful departments that could provide more assistance and to "cross fertilize" the efforts of all municipal EACs. He said he would support this worthwhile experiment and encouraged the Conservancy to be an active participant in the Association.

**Commissioner Leinbach**

- A. Commissioner Leinbach reported on a meeting set up by Senator O'Pake's office between the Berks Delegation and PennDot Secretary Biehler and the BEP (Berks Economic Partnership) regarding Rte. 222 North corridor. Commissioner Leinbach said that he felt that it was a good meeting and that the Secretary was willing to revisit studying the entire corridor. Commissioner Scott said that as a member of the Reading Area Transportation Study Committee he learned that Berks County was "still on the books" for intersection improvements, but couldn't understand where the money is coming from due to the state of the economy and the diminished liquid fuels funds, which is the result of the higher gasoline prices.

Commissioner Scott stated his concern that the funds currently allocated for intersection improvements at Rte.662 and Rte.73 on the Rte. 222 Corridor along would be stalled if these plans for the whole corridor were to begin again. Commissioner Leinbach responded by saying that those attending the meeting felt that the intersection improvements will have little to no affect on the traffic congestion. He said that area businesses have reported a negative environmental impact from this congestion as truck traffic is being forced to re-route through the farmland as a method to circumvent the problem area. He said his concern is that PennDot will walk away from the project after completing the intersection improvements without providing any long term solution to the traffic congestion issue.

**Commissioner Barnhardt**

- A. Adopt a resolution re-appointing Stanley H. Kita, Jr., Hamburg, PA, to the Council on Chemical Abuse Board for a three year term ending 2/1/2012.

**Commissioner Scott**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:49 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk