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County of Berks Press Release

Commissioners hold groundbreaking ceremony for new Magisterial District Court facility in Exeter Township

Reading, PA— 5/11/2021 — The Berks County Nonprofit Development Corporation and Berks County Commissioners hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, May 10, to kick off the construction of the new Magisterial District Court (23-2-03) office in Exeter Township. The new facility for Magisterial District Judge Sandra L. Fegley will be located at 6112 Perkiomen Avenue, between the Walmart and The Morgan School along Route 422.

This is the third Magisterial District Court office project from the Berks County Nonprofit Development Corporation, the nonprofit managed by the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks. For several years, County and municipal leaders have worked with the Redevelopment Authority on community and economic development projects that have a positive effect on the lives of residents, businesses, and employers of Berks County.

“They’ve renovated buildings, but this is the first time that the best solution for taxpayers was actually building a new building,” said Commissioners Chair Christian Y. Leinbach during the ceremony. “We’re saving taxpayers’ money... and we’re providing the most efficient MDJ office possible.”

Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt explained that the idea started seven years ago during a discussion to find a more effective and efficient way to run the Magisterial District Court system. He said the goal was to find a cost-saving alternative to leasing properties that could also be a state-of-the-art and energy efficient facility.

The total project will cost \$1 million, with the County paying \$600,000 and the Berks County Nonprofit Development Corporation covering the remaining \$400,000. That agreement

includes a prepaid 20-year lease between the County and BCNDC, saving money by essentially freezing any cost of living increases during the next two decades.

“It’s a win-win for everybody,” Barnhardt said, noting that this project will serve as the prototype for other MDC offices. “As we terminate leases throughout the next number of years, we’d like to see these conceptionally done in other parts of the county as we become more efficient and build this out for generations to come.”

Commissioner Michael S. Rivera and President Judge Thomas G. Parisi echoed the benefits this new project will bring, stressing the ongoing cooperation between the County and the Courts to make the project a reality.

The project team includes: Project Manager Ryan Conrad from DESCCO Design & Construction, Inc., Chris Falencki of McCarthy Engineering, Lee Olsen and Scott Weber with Olsen Design Group Architects, Jason Kramer of Entegra Engineering, Annette Dearolf of Providence Engineering, Steve Weber and Faith Phillips from Berks County’s Court Administration and Ken Pick and Peter Battaglia of the Redevelopment Authority.

Olsen, who served as the emcee for the groundbreaking ceremony, said construction at the site will begin immediately and the goal is to have the new court facility operational by the end of the year.

Photos and a replay of a livestream of the groundbreaking ceremony can be viewed on the Berks County Courthouse and Government Services Center Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/CountyofBerksPA/.

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