

SAUCON VALLEY PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Date: Wednesday, February 9, 2011
Time: 7:02 PM
Location: Lower Saucon Township

- A. **Meeting Called To Order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Priscilla deLeon.
- B. **Roll Call** – Priscilla deLeon, Mayor Fluck, Ed Inghrim, Glenn Kern, Jack Cahalan, Charlie Luthar, Cathy Kichline. Guests: Members of the Joint Recreation Study Committee – John Landis, Dave Spirk, Phil Weber, Joe Hoffman. Other Guests: Mark Palerino from DCNR, Samantha Holbert. Stephanie Brown arrived at 7:11 PM. Tom Harp arrived at 7:20 PM. Tina Krasnansky arrived at 7:25 PM.
- C. **Introduction of Peer Consultant – Mark Palerino, DCNR**
- Priscilla deLeon asked that everyone introduce themselves. Priscilla said she is Chair of the Saucon Valley Partnership (SVP) and an elected official in Lower Saucon Township.
 - Cathy Kichline said she is the incoming Manager of Hellertown Borough. This is her first meeting with the SVP.
 - Phil Weber said he is the Borough Council President. He's sitting in for John Bate.
 - Mayor Richard Fluck said he is an elected official of Hellertown.
 - Ed Inghrim said he is on the Saucon Valley School Board; he's an elected official and is also on the SVP.
 - Glenn Kern said he is President of Lower Saucon Township Council, and he is on the SVP and the Joint Recreation Study Committee.
 - Joe Hoffman said he is from Barry Isett and Associates, who are the Borough Engineers for Hellertown and they helped out Lower Saucon from time to time. His role was that he helped to write the DCNR application and he's going to continue to help the Joint Recreation Study Committee in any way he can.
 - Charlie Luthar said he's retiring at the end of the month as Manager of Hellertown Borough and he's a Lower Saucon Township resident.
 - Jack Cahalan said he is the Lower Saucon Township Manager.
 - Dave Spirk said he is the Chair of the Parks & Recreation Committee in Lower Saucon Township and he is on the Joint Recreation Study Committee.
 - John Landis said he's Chairman of Lower Saucon Township Planning Commission and is also on the Joint Recreation Study Committee.
 - Mark Palerino said he is from DCNR. After tonight, Samantha will be your leader as we go through this process.
 - Josh Popichak – Editor of Hellertown-Lower Saucon PATCH.

Priscilla said welcome everyone. We're going to start with Mark.

Mark said thank you again for the opportunity. He was out here in September of last year. They talked about the interest to come together in a partnership, which is basically already a partnership and drive a peer study of some kind, looking at facilities, looking at some of the sports and a couple of the issues. There were some conversation after that, then there was submission for a grant or the Peer-to-Peer Study and they followed through with that and got some money allocated for the study to occur and through some emails figured out that Samantha might be the one to take you down this path. He handed out an agenda so that everyone would know what the responsibilities were. Samantha will be the Peer Consultant.

Mark said a review of what prompted a need for the study and why we are here – he was going to ask Charlie and Jack to speak on this point. Charlie said the SVP is already in place and been talking about a lot of items and as part of the Multi-Municipal Plan adopted by the two municipalities, there was a desire to look at the recreation end of it. Everyone pretty much thought this was the area that that the two communities were partnering on already. All of the sport teams cooperate and Lower Saucon and Hellertown are under one school district. It's just a natural extension of all of the cooperative efforts. The sports organizations are very well organized and very cooperative already. Jack said the school district approached them and said they are going to be pinched at some point in the future for some athletic field fields and that was one of the reasons we wanted to talk about the joint scheduling of the fields as we have a variety of sports facilities. One of the things we did when we got together was put together an inventory and we were all surprised at the number of facilities across the board that we have. The idea that we've been talking about for the last year or so was how those facilities could be shared; how they could be scheduled; and then moving into some of the other issues like maintenance and different types of uses. The rest of it was thinking that we needed a professional to take us the rest of the way and that's where we got into the application for DCNR. Charlie said the group actually formed in October 2009 for the first time. Samantha said as the Recreation Committee, did you actually make them some kind of committee under the COG or it's not official? Jack said this is sort of a sub-committee of the COG as all of that comes back to the COG for reports and updates. Charlie said each municipality and the school district appointed representatives.

Priscilla said the SVP really can't make any permanent decisions. All we are is a recommending body and we go back to our Councils and they vote on our recommendations. Samantha said do you write grants? Jack said they've done that. They are supported by resolutions from the municipalities. Priscilla said they have to be approved by our governing bodies. Charlie said this particular grant was authored by Hellertown but it's for all three entities.

Mark said he wanted Samantha to hear how they got to this point as it was important for her. As we move forward in the elements of the peer study, there are a few roles here from our end, the DCNR, and the peer role. DCNR would be looking at Hellertown to work the money side for all of this to occur. He will be the contact with the Borough. He'll work with Cathy as they go through this process. One thing they will need to set up is contracting. If you have questions regarding the money side, and don't feel comfortable going to Samantha, he will be that supporting board for you. He thought he'd give Samantha an opportunity to talk.

Samantha said her experience has always been municipal government and once upon a time she wanted to be a Borough Manager. Her first job was working at a municipal pool and then she went to the Borough Office and then got a public administration degree and she's probably one of the only peer consultants for pay. She's not a full-time employee. She has three children who are 4, 9 and 11. She is juggling schedules. Her time availability is when her son is at school and she does a lot of things on the phone when she can. She does a lot of emails and comes out for site visits. What's really helped her as her children have gotten older and she's been working with the school district more. She's been involved with PTA and done things with the school board. It's helped her to better understand how municipalities and school districts can work together as everybody is in a crunch and all the money comes from the same place. We're all here for the same reasons, ultimately. She thinks she came into this career wanting to do public service and wanting to have a family and they work very well together and have enhanced her experience and that's what she wants to bring to you and is hoping to learn from you as well and take that back home to Stroudsburg where she does volunteer work. She learns everywhere she goes. She will take ideas from everyone and will bring ideas to everyone. She's looking forward to this.

Priscilla said she grew up in West Bangor. When we talked about this in October, Samantha's resume was pretty balanced and she had the background for what we wanted to do.

Mark said they will talk about the contract. DCNR and Hellertown Borough will work out a contract through the grant and the second would be the Borough working out a contract with Samantha as the Peer Consultant. She will work out what that contract would be and provide that to you. The contract from DCNR will come out as soon as it goes through the chain of command and all the signatures are taken through. As for the committee, they are looking for a Project Coordinator. Someone who will set up the meetings, take the minutes, try to help guide the process. That can be in cohesion with Samantha to keep working through that. He's not sure how Samantha wants to schedule meetings and she'll talk to you about that. Sometimes it's not every month; sometimes it is every month. It's until she gets information together, it may be a couple of months until she gets back to you. It's how the process will work on the needs, the wants and what the outcomes will be and what she needs to accomplish through the process. That will all be out on the table at some point. You'll have to identify who that individual is and that leads right into the Study Committee itself and he has a pretty good sense of who those individuals are going to be, but he has to make sure what that final list is going to look like. Jack said he will get that to him. Mark said he has one elected official from each municipality and the school district. He also has good attendance. You want to make sure at the end of the day that you've been a participant. If you're not and you get down to the end and you're 9 months along and all of a sudden you come back to the table and you don't understand what's been going on, then there's different perceptions. If the goal at the end is whatever you are looking to accomplish, then he thinks you try to stay engaged from day one. He just wants to stress that because every 8th or 9th peer study they do, there always seems to be that issue where they lost one or two along the way and then they pull away from it. If we can do a good job at that, he thinks the outcomes will be very good.

Jack said the Borough and the Township have elected officials on the Joint Recreation Study Committee. For the school district, it's Bob Frey, the Athletic Director and he's the sole representative. It may be something Ed may want to take back to the school board and they may want to appoint somebody to join the committee as the elected official. Ed said he's willing to do that, but is just wondering why it has to be an elected official. Bob Frey is very active in the school's perspective and he would not have any problem at all having him represent the school on this committee. If you feel strongly enough for Bob to represent, he's fine with that. It's just that he always looks for the elevated position as it's not always that you have that strong person in the community. That's okay. Glenn said Bob is the Athletic Director at the school. Samantha said one of the key things that sometimes can be missing when it's not an elected official is ultimately the purse strings are held by the elected officials. Somebody who is an employee or a Park Board member is not ultimately the one that's going to be able to sign an agreement or designate funding. If there's really good communication and representation and the elected officials feel very comfortable that someone can represent them, and their interest as well, then she usually thinks that's okay. That's why elected officials are helpful. School board members are quite busy, so it may be hard to get an official from the school board. Ed said even the two elected officials from the Borough and Lower Saucon have to get the approval from their two governing bodies. Samantha said absolutely. If it's necessary for him to attend these meetings, he will, but he would really like to keep Bob Frey's feet to the fire. It was the school that was really driving this as there's a lot of pressure to build more facilities and his personal perspective is he doesn't want to spend any more of the taxpayers money unless we absolutely have to and there's lots of fields between the Borough and the Township. We're trying to get more integrated with the Borough and the Township. Mark said at the end of the day if there is an inter-governmental agreement that is put together, making sure everyone is engaged all the way up through, that's where the critical point is going to come. Ed said they will take whatever Bob's recommendation is to the board.

Priscilla said Tom Harp is the representative from Northampton County and Northampton is our associate partnership member.

Mark said he has a municipal profile questionnaire. He put this on the agenda and he wasn't sure if we would work through it or not knowing some of the information may be facilities that we have. Samantha said you could give to the group and then they can email it back to her. He will give a copy to everyone. Jack said it seems like it's something the Managers can complete and get back to Samantha.

Mark said this basically takes the profile of your municipality or school district and tries to understand and put it on a piece of paper so Samantha can compile all the information she needs. Jack said they can get all the information together and get it to Samantha.

Mark said the scope of work; we don't necessarily have to do this as he has captured some of this. There are key issues and goals for the peer study. They want to look at a draft scope of the work so Samantha can come back to the committee and take a look at that and approve, so she moves forward in the right way. Key person interviews – start thinking about who she can contact. The community stakeholders in the school district whether it be soccer clubs, baseball clubs, in your sporting areas, some of the people who make some decisions also around here. There are some goals he identified out of the last meeting looking for strong support for the children; looking for some passive recreation; centralized organization; inside gym space was an issue; find ways to get more inside gym space; field rotation issues; the group does work great together, but are looking for something more formal; looking to save the taxpayer money. Some of the other collaboration already occurring, some fire services, swimming pool, compost center, and rail trail. Is there anything else anyone would like to see coming out of this study? Priscilla said when we were at the school district and all sat around the table, we were all pretty open about what we thought and the phrase “from cradle to grave” kind of stuck with everybody.

Glenn said he would like to echo a pressing issue which is the girl's soccer at the high school level. They used to play in the spring and now are going to be playing in the fall. It would be interesting to see if our current facilities can support the change or whether or not there is indeed a need to create more soccer fields to accommodate that change. That's one immediate pressing issue he's seen. Samantha said have any of the communities either done a regional or individual park and recreation comp plans? She sees Lower Saucon did an open space action plan. Jack said they did a Joint Comp and Rec plan with Upper Saucon, our neighboring municipality, but not with Hellertown. Samantha said the numbers of facilities have not been evaluated in comparison to RPA standards in terms of population to number of facilities? Jack said yes, that was done in the Joint Comp and Recreation plan with Upper Saucon. Priscilla we also annually come up with a plan for setting the recreation fee. Lower Saucon has all the things you are looking for. Samantha will contact Lower Saucon and Hellertown to get their information. Priscilla said the multi-municipal comprehensive plan addressed a little of the recreation in there. Jack said in addition to the active and passive recreation, we were also looking for other programs to utilize the facilities, not just for games, but for other types of activities, which are being provided by community organizations and that's something we'd be interested in seeing if that could be coordinated and possibly grown for the residents to have more opportunities.

Priscilla said she never had a child through the school district to go through the activities, but on the other hand, she likes the passive recreation and using them for community events. She looks forward to the Rails to Trails as a way for community groups to raise money. Since the early 90s when she heard about the Rails to Trails, she was hoping someday we could do this and link our historic sites and open up all kinds of areas for recreation, but people have to eat and drink. That would open up the areas in Hellertown with the restaurants, a domino effect.

Samantha said the soccer issue has to be dealt with this year? Ed said it's statewide, and it's in 2012. Glenn said it coincides with the boys schedule in the fall. It's like that in the western part of the state; it's always in the fall. The eastern part of the state went to the spring for girl's soccer.

Dave said from the Parks and Recreation Board in Lower Saucon, they've been talking about having a person in Lower Saucon who could handle the scheduling. Ed was mentioning Bob Frey who does a lot of their scheduling. He's not sure Hellertown has someone who does it? Charlie said Tom Henshaw. Dave said having one person might be better and more cost effective. That's a big concern for everyone who sits around this table. We need a cohesive plan and some ideas on how to move forward and ultimately doing the simple scheduling. Out of that hopefully we get more fields or venues, indoor, outdoor, which benefit all of us. Like you said when you started, our tax money is being spent on everything and its coming from all of us and being put in different coffers, so let's make sure it is well spent. That's what was our driving force behind this. We've been talking about it for years now to see if we could get one person to do it. Ed said he couldn't agree more. Right now we have an engineering firm who is looking at our facilities and we've got \$3 million in the in the bank that some people who are sitting on the board just want to spend as it's there. From his perspective, he would first like to see them using our existing fields as an alternative. If that's not available, then the school should be willing to sit down with the Borough and the Township and say aren't there other properties that we have access to that make more sense to convert into a field than us moving several hundred thousand tons of dirt as the school was built on a hill. That would serve the taxpayers much better as we'd be able to spend less money and get the same facilities, and it's just a matter of scheduling transportation. Samantha said right now you have an engineering firm currently working on evaluating that situation? Ed said they are beyond the evaluation stage and they have preliminary plans which include converting some of the fields on the school property to add additional soccer fields. The sooner we can come up with an alternative plan, the better, as he's not anxious to spend that money. It's capital money and if we spend that money and suddenly the roof on the school needs to be replaced, we don't have any money. Jack said that is a pressing issue, but we did discuss that our work with the Peer Consultant will not be done in a timeline that you are looking for. Ed said he'd certainly like to press the issue whether or not we could use that. He knows we had some push back as they said they don't have any lockers up there, well, you don't need lockers to play soccer. It's not like you are moving a lot of equipment when you are playing soccer. You need to haul some balls and a couple of nets. Years ago the kids used to walk down to Dimmick Park to play baseball and these fields are only across the street. He'd really like to get this done. Samantha said what she typically does in terms of putting together a scope of work, she has a section that she calls "immediate needs for action" because every group she works for has a hot topic or hot issue that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later and it may not directly be correlated with the whole peer study concept, but something that she learns what the needs are as she becomes part of working on them. That's the kind of issue that would be moved up to the top of the pile and finding answers to help move the rest of the project along. That type of issue can be included in the scope and we work on it now instead of later. Jack said they are working on it now and we are running it through the Parks & Recreation and sports organization and getting feedback that we intend to give to Bob Frey in April so he can go back to the school board and tell them here's the impact if the school were to use those fields across the street.

Dave asked Samantha if she was helping them set up a system to solve these problems as we are always going to have problems or are you helping us to solve our current problems or kind of both? We are going to try to set up a system, is that the number one goal? Samantha said she would say yes. In her mind, there is not a one size fits all. Every community she's worked with has been different, has different issues, and has an economic situation, different school district relationship. The peer studies she's involved with go on longer because she works on the things as you need them. She helped the Slate Belt area, and once she helped them getting the agreement passed, there is still money in the contract. She still comes to meetings and helps them operate. Sometimes groups get set up and they get an agreement and they struggle along

and she participates in that. In her mind, she learns more about what your needs are and what's going to work for your group if she is immersed in some of these problems or situations. It will help to develop long-term solutions if she becomes part of the individual problems. That's kind of the way she works. She tries to move in and help you the way she would be doing in her own community. Priscilla said everyone has good intentions and why reinvent the wheel if it works and you heard it and you like it, then copy it.

Glenn said another issue you are going to encounter is winter indoor facilities. A couple of years ago they were playing in places you won't believe and he doesn't think it has gotten any better. Samantha said that's a problem that every group has. There's never enough. Dave said they have a community that is involved and everyone wants to participate more every year and there are more participants from the smallest to the biggest in school as well in the community plus the adults. Everyone wants to do more. How do we keep just ahead of that curve, what system we are going to put together. Samantha said she was intrigued on one of the things she read on the Lower Saucon website that you have more leisure time. It said that was one of the issues to provide for parks and recreation and things like that as people have more leisure time.

Mark said he likes to take the problems and turn them into challenges and opportunities. It's just the right way to move forward and present. He wants to make sure Samantha has everything she needs to keep moving the group forward. There will have to be another meeting. Samantha said she will work with the group to get a study committee. Jack said they can pull that together as they know the dates that are open. They will keep Bob Frey in the loop. They will try to come up with something that will work for all of them and will be communicating with Samantha. They will supply her with all the documents she needs. They will be the points of contact and will go from there. Samantha said she can start working with Hellertown Borough. What is this group thinking in terms of the timeline? She sees you are hoping to try to hire someone by spring of 2012? Jack said that's something that the elected officials are going to have to make a decision on. Hopefully, they are going to come up with a recommendation for someone like a Recreation Director. That's an idea the Joint Recreation Study Committee has been kicking around. Samantha said quite often the peer study grant with the state is for three years. The money is good for three years. Typically, she does a two year contract which can be extended with just a letter saying its okay to extend it. It can be in less time. Her experience has been it can take that long and it could be that you get an inter-governmental agreement in a year and then she continues to come and facilitate and work with training your person who comes in. She's just suggesting she would do two years so you know you have it and it can be easily extended to the three years if you need it and if you don't, that's fine. Jack said he thinks 21 months was thrown out in the beginning, so two years is great, and three years is even better. Once she knows and meets once and figures out what the group needs to meet for, then they can figure out a meeting schedule. She is not looking to have meetings that aren't productive or necessary. Dave said monthly sometimes seems wasteful. Samantha said it depends how much information you are gathering and the way things are moving. Sometimes you need it once a month if there's a lot of information coming in. Dave said it's his understanding that it's kind of like Ed was talking about an engineering company doing an analysis and they do charge by the hour. Your time is going to eat up the grant money? Samantha said yes, that is what the grant is for. It pays for time. Dave said the more time you spend quickly, means you have less time with them in overall years and months. The only way it could go three years is if they had fewer meetings and you put less time in every month or quarter, is that a fair conclusion? Samantha said sometimes it's you have an inter-governmental agreement drafted and you come up with the language on it and we can't get the municipal officials to act on it or worse yet, we can't get the lawyers to do anything with it with legal language. That's what can end up taking a long time or just when representatives don't come to meetings or she can't get a hold of them on the phone, they don't participate. The three parties that are here, you all want this, so it's not that we have to twist your arm to participate. Some of these projects you don't end up with everyone participating in the end that you started with. That's how it can take a lot of time. Priscilla said the good thing we have here is we have good managers.

They keep the process going. When you are on a volunteer and working on a volunteer committee, if you don't have a staff person that's there on a day-to-day basis, it takes forever. They have made this a good thing.

D. Council of Governments

1. **Minutes of the January Meeting** – Motion by Mayor Fluck, second by Ed. All in favor.
2. **Treasurer's Report** – Jack said the checking account balance as of January 31, 2011 is \$3,870.42. There were no receipts or expenses. The Wachovia service charge is still on there. Priscilla said are they going to be removing it? Tina said the Borough has switched all their accounts from Wachovia to KNBT because they were getting services charges quite a bit. That would be something you might want to consider. Jack said that's what they will also do. The Treasurer's account balance is \$14,295.26 as of January 31, 2011. That account reflects that the dues were paid by Hellertown Borough and Lower Saucon Township. We put the ad in the Valley Voice about the meeting schedule and that was \$225.00. Priscilla said we do not have a meeting in July? Jack said that is correct. Ed asked Jack is he sent Dave a bill for the \$1,000.00? Jack said he usually just emails Dave and Dave asks if he can just pay in July. Motion by Ed, second by Glenn for approval of the Treasurer's report. All in favor.
3. **Approval to pay bills (if any)** – Jack said the annual dues for the PA COG are \$200.00. Motion by Ed, second Glenn. All in favor.

E. Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

1. **Application for Gaming Funds for Zoning Audits – update** – Jack said they still have that application before the Gaming Authority. He doesn't know where it is or what happened to it. They will find out in the course of time. That is for the zoning audit for the Borough and the Township. That appears to be the only game in town as far as funding at this point, so we'll wait and see what happens. If we're not successful we'll have to keep looking for funding.
2. **Joint Meeting of Planning Commissions** – Jack said they are planning on having another joint meeting of the Planning Commissions on April 12th and it will be at Hellertown Borough. Normally, we put together an agenda and the Managers will provide an update on what they've been working on and the Planning Commission discusses mutual issues that are impacting the Saucon Valley. This will be our third or fourth joint meeting of the Planning Commission since the comp plan was adopted.

F. Brief Reports and Discussion Items

1. **Casino Impacts Funding/County Gaming Authority- update** – Priscilla said on the Northampton County website, you can find the annual report. It tells you what's left in the accounts. The ending balance in uncommitted funds as of 12/31/2010 is \$790,279.86. Out of that, the 2011 budget is going to have some administrative monies out of that and she's not sure exactly what the number will be for availability for the uncommitted funds grants. Under restricted funds, the ending balance for 12/31/2010 is \$227,658.65. Jack said the Township and the Borough were scheduled to make appearances at the meeting on the 28th and that has been postponed. Priscilla said the Board was notified the February presentations were cancelled and she will find out more at the next meeting. There were so many grants submitted.

2. **Joint COG Projects (Saucon Rail Trail; Joint Recreation Study Committee) – update**

Saucon Rail Trail – Jack said the Township portion is moving along. They are still hoping for a spring 2011 opening of the Township’s section. They have the fencing up on the bridges and the contract has been awarded to put up gates and bollards at the road crossings. The last thing is the surface material, and Charlie has some information about the using of slag. He’s been talking to the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC). They got a call from Holly Edinger and they are doing a chemical analysis of the slag, and it looks favorable. They are checking for impurities. They’ve done two tests and they have one more left to do. If that passes, hopefully, they’ll be able to use the slag and crush it and use it as a sub-base and put gravel on the top. That will cut down on the cost significantly. The other thing they are moving ahead on is the flashing light on Water Street. They had a meeting with the person from Signal Service and they are trying to get the cost of that down and let the two Public Works Departments do some of the work. They are getting another estimate for the Silver Creek fencing. We don’t have a date in mind for an opening ceremony. We understand Upper Saucon is ready to cut ribbon on May 7th, which is the Annual History Day in Lower Saucon and Hellertown. They have not officially notified Lower Saucon or Hellertown. If they open and we’re not open, we are going to have to block access. Upper Saucon’s first phase is from our township line down to Preston Lane where their Community Park is. The second phase is from Preston Road to Passer Road. He just learned there is a third phase from Passer Road to the Living Memorial Park. That connection has to be made as Coopersburg is landlocked. Their section of the trail is in between two parts of Upper Saucon Township. In order for them to be connected, Upper Saucon has to have their part open. The other problem is Coopersburg doesn’t have any parking. Their parking is at the Living Memorial Park. We don’t have any trailhead access or parking either. We have to depend on Hellertown or Upper Saucon. That’s why it’s critical we are working with Hellertown. If we can’t have access to the Grist Mill trail head or the Water Street trail head, we have no where for people to park and get on the trail in Lower Saucon. Priscilla said she knows the Heller Homestead if across from the Water Street Park, and there’s lots of places to park on Water Street. Could that be an overflow? Jack said that’s accessible. Glenn asked if UST has figured out the Lutron issue? Jack said they have not heard anything about that since the leases were signed.

Joint Recreation Study Committee – Priscilla said we already talked about the Joint Recreation Study Committee.

3. **Road & Traffic (Route 78 Median Barriers; Polk Valley Road/412 Intersection HOP application - update:**

Route 78 Median Barriers – Priscilla said after the tragedy on I-78, she sent an email to John Bate and they decided they would request a letter from our municipalities to PennDOT to address our concerns. She said literally the next day, all these articles kept popping up about how PennDOT had this in their plans. Priscilla said she didn’t recall PennDOT ever saying that, so it was good they were addressing it. It was on the Lower Saucon Council agenda last week and on Hellertown Council on Monday. The emergency responders, Tom Barndt and John Bate, were here and showed us pictures of the cable barriers. They agreed to send letters to the appropriate legislatures. Jack said one of the questions from a Council member was they know the cable barriers are successful for cars, but what about a semi-truck, will it stop them? They pulled out photos that showed it not only stops them, but prevents them from bouncing back into the highway. The concrete barriers are worse as they bounce them back in and creates more havoc. Jack said one of the things the emergency responders also mentioned to them was not only are the motorists in

danger, but also the emergency responders are in danger when they are up on I-78 responding to an accident.

Polk Valley Road/412 Intersection HOP application – Jack said at their last meeting, they had Jim McIntyre and Rocky Iaratola here and they expressed concerns about the traffic signal at Polk Valley Road and Route 412 and the impact it would have on their businesses. Jim Milot was at the meeting and met with Rocky prior to the meeting and Jim just advised that after our meeting he went and met with the people of PennDOT and expressed some of their concerns and he asked them about the question about moving the stop line back so they wouldn't be blocking the entrance or exits of McDonalds. He heard a "no way" from everyone at PennDOT about this suggestion. That is something they would not approve. What they did suggest was moving the crosswalk. Moving the crosswalk gives more room for the cars to get closer to the intersection. The way he has it designed, the crosswalk was on the stop bar side of the mast. If he moves it to the other side of the mast, that allows the stop bar to be moved further forward. That would allow the two cars that Jim McIntyre was concerned about to move up further and not block his entrance/exit. That's something he is working on. He's also going to put on the plan a sign on 412 that says "Do Not Block Entrances and Exits". It's a courtesy type of thing. He also worked on the plan to get Rocky about five more feet on the corner and he's also working so he can get his vehicle into the fenced area. There is a meeting on Friday at the Borough and they'll go over that with everybody and see if they are okay with it, then it will be revised and sent to PennDOT. Ed said none of that is going to solve making a left-hand turn out of McDonalds. Jack said as far as their plan is concerned, they are not doing anything that changes what's already there. They are not changing any of the exits or entrances in the McDonald's. The only thing they are doing is working on his concerns about the traffic stopped in front of his entrance and exit. Ed said McDonald's is very concerned about a left-hand turn out of his establishment at the busy times. Priscilla asked about the warrants for the light. Jack said they met the warrants for the signal when they submitted the application. Priscilla said they need to get their final approval which would be the permit. Until the permit is given, then most of the members would question its eligibility for a Gaming Authority grant. Jack said Bethlehem Township's were based on permit applications. Priscilla said they were withdrawn. It has to be approved. In her opinion, it's not fair to the other adjacent communities. Jack said the problem that you would have is the municipality would have an approved HOP for a traffic signal and the elected officials would say this is something we want to move ahead on. If they move ahead and spend money on it, then it's too late to go back to the Gaming Authority as they don't do reimbursement grants. Effectively, this excludes traffic signals from Gaming Authority grants. Priscilla said it's a catch 22. Glenn said after their McDonald's meeting, he was out at this intersection on Polk Valley Road trying to turn left. It was 4:30 PM, well after the school hours and there was a LST policeman in front of him trying to make a left onto Route 412. He got his watch out and timed it and they were literally there six minutes. In frustration, the police car turned right, went into the McDonald's parking lot, traveled around the building and then right out the parking lot to go south on 412.

4. **Joint Enterprise Zone with City of Bethlehem – update** – Charlie said he didn't get a chance to talk to Becca, but he thinks they are still working on revolving credit. They haven't heard anything.
5. **Saucon Valley Compost Center – update** – Charlie said it's closed for the season, but will open on February and March 26th and the formal re-opening for 2011 will be April 29th. It was a great season and this one coming up will even be better. They are going to mulch the material very shortly, within the next week or two.

6. **Act 32 EIT Tax Collection Districts – update** – Ed said they are in the process of putting together the organization that’s actually going to be collecting the taxes. The one thing he found very surprising was some of the communities have already gone over to Keystone. Apparently, Keystone is giving a lower price to those communities than Berkheimer is. He suggests maybe Lower Saucon Township and Hellertown may want to talk to Keystone about that. It may be too late, but maybe for next year you may want to think about it. Jack said he thinks it’s something being looked into. They are talking to Dave about that. They might be able to save some money.

7. **Fire Services – update** – Jack said the Fire Chiefs continue to meet and have monthly meetings about the merger consolidation. They have the administrative staff meetings also which Cathy Gorman and Tina Krasnansky also attend. They are trying to work through some financial issues, the by-laws, the charters, things that were getting the Fire Chiefs bogged down. That’s moving along. They are trying to come up with a draft “Plan” which some of the Chiefs asked for that they can take back to their memberships sometime this summer as they want to take a vote to see if they want to proceed with the discussions on the merger consolidation. The goal is that at the end of this year they come up with a plan that has all the bells and whistles in it that can come back to the Borough and Township Councils so they can both look at it and if you are comfortable with what the Chiefs are proposing, they can move ahead. One thing that did happen was the Township Council was advised that Leithsville Fire Company, due to a lack of members to handle their administrative duties, asked that the Se-Wy-Co Fire Company take over the administrative end of their department. So they are forming a partnership which will lead to a merger of the two companies within the next few months. The partnership will basically be on paper. Leithsville will still be Leithsville Fire Company. The trucks are going to be kept at the fire house. The firemen are going to be responding out of that fire house. The only thing that is going to change is some communication codes and some other minor things. They did say they intended to make it a full merger, but don’t have any details yet. Phil Weber said the five companies need a lot of positive reinforcement because it’s starting to not be so positive anymore. Glenn said if this merger between Leithsville and Se-Wy-Co is successful, how would it affect the rest of the companies? Phil said it won’t affect the five of them. That’s a separate issue. Ed said from a revenue perspective, if you could reduce the infrastructure, wouldn’t it make more sense? Phil said absolutely. Ed said they went through this exercise a few years ago with the merger of the Police Departments and it sort of fell apart. Is there any reason why we might want to think about doing it again or is it a dead issue? Phil said there is still talk about it. Over the last couple of months, he’s seen more talking about it from their end. He doesn’t know about the Township end. Ed said you read in the paper where all these communities are looking at regionalization. Phil at some point, they may be able to get back to that. They did it twice already and fell through twice. In the last three months, he heard it from Hellertown Council members and some police officers. The whole thing that is going on is the members are saying “don’t close my station down”. Priscilla said the thing is these are all volunteer firemen and they have to want to do it to be successful. If they don’t want to it, and they are forced into it, they are not going to succeed and they aren’t going to be volunteers. Then it’s going to cost a lot of money to pay professionals. They want to be able to do it so they are proud of it. Phil said when there’s an emergency, they work great together. There are no issues about any of that. It’s just when it comes to the political part of it. Glenn said from what Tom Barndt was saying the other night at the Council meeting; they are not planning on shutting down the Leithsville station. He can’t picture the station shutting down regionally either. You need one in Steel City. You need one out at Southeastern. It’s just a matter of operationally coming together. You’re not going to lose identity. Priscilla said depending where the fire is or where the need is, these are situated in key places. Ed said the same thing would be true of the police forces. He couldn’t see shutting down the Hellertown police station, why bother, it’s there. Mayor Fluck said a question that came up in the last two studies was which one would be the

central station? It doesn't mean that Hellertown wouldn't still be a sub-station. Last time they never gave Lower Saucon the opportunity to look at the study and most of the officers in Lower Saucon and Hellertown are in favor of it. Maybe when we get the fire company issue resolved, we can then go back to the police study. Phil said if you take it to Hellertown Council, you're probably close to have enough yes votes to get it going. There are still some no votes. Is the state going to want to go back and do another study after it was turned down twice? Priscilla said it has to come from Hellertown and to bring back to this board. Phil said he needs the Council to be positive. We have an election coming up and it's not the time to do it, so you want to wait until after the election.

8. **Library Task Force – update** – Jack said speaking what the Mayor said about doing a study and people think you are merging, and it's the same with the Library Task Force: they are doing a study and that's all they are doing. There are representatives from the Borough, the Township, and Hellertown Library. Tomorrow night will be their second meeting. After tomorrow night, they will put an announcement out about the schedule and will want the public to attend so they can ask questions and hear what's going on. They are breaking off into various committees – financial, building, and demographics committee. They are going to start working on those areas and will bring information back to the group; and hopefully, in a year or so, they will have some information and be ready to make a report to the two Councils and to the library about the feasibility of the Township and Borough consolidating library services at the Hellertown Area Library. Phil said he's heard real positive things about that. Jack said they do have some residents in the Township who feel very strongly about the services at the Bethlehem Area Public Library. Glenn said the residents like the bookmobile. It has scheduled stops and goes to various places in the Township. Charlie said the one thing that strikes him about the study before anything has even come out of it is that the Bethlehem Library has realized something is going on and they looked at the way they are operating and if their spending is correct. That in itself has already accomplished something.
9. **Leithsville Act 537 Plan – update** – Jack said they haven't heard anything. They are still working on the alternate plan. They did the test borings down by the Grist Mill and athletic fields in town and that didn't work because of water issues. They are back at the drawing board and they haven't seen what they have come up with, but they said they would come to the Borough and Township Council when they have a new plan to present. As far as he understands, it's going to be another system on another route, and it may not be gravity. There may be some pumping stations and force mains and that type of thing. We have to wait and see what they come up with.
10. **Other Issues** –
 - Priscilla distributed handouts from Mark Palerino.
 - Charlie said one issue on the cable barriers, he thought the Partnership was going to go and write a letter. Phil said John Bate said everyone is going to write a separate letter.
 - Priscilla passed around information on the data storage center that's going in off of Applebutter Road. Ed said it's going to bring money into the school district. Regarding the issue of tax payments by this facility since it straddles two municipalities, Jack said they are going to work out a written agreement that the City is going to produce two tax bills and send them to Majestic who will pay one to the City and one to the Township.
 - Priscilla said Phoebe is on the Planning Commission agenda for February 17th. She looked on the website today and saw their latest Power Point presentation was posted. What is the by-right thing they talk about? Jack said they are claiming they have the by-right to build houses. This plan is bigger in size than Heritage as there are additional properties.

Heritage had plans for 53 homes and they are claiming they can get 80 homes if they can develop it and get the approval of the Township. Glenn said by-right means based on the existing ordinances,

G. County Report – Tom Harp

- Tom said the Gracedale saga continues. You might have heard that there was a ruling by Judge Baratta based on the hearing last Friday and the Gracedale referendum is valid. Round one was for the opponents of the Gracedale sale which was won by them. There is a hearing this Friday involving Mr. Stoffa who is contesting the validity of the referendum based upon the home rule charter. Its two separate issues. They may appeal Baratta's ruling today regarding the validity of the signatures on the petitions.
- Tom said at the Council meeting last week, you may have read that Mr. Stoffa and the committee that were reviewing the proposals from the four perspective buyers, did recommend a buyer, a group called TL Management who owns like fourteen nursing homes, eleven in Pennsylvania. They offered a \$35 million bid and also they met some other contingencies that we wanted in there regarding the Medicare patients that they had to accept and offering jobs to existing workers and some other things there. It's going to take several weeks to work it out and present it to Council. Meanwhile, there are all these other things going on, legally. The County's budget this year, they only subsidized Gracedale money through the end of June. If this doesn't work out, they are going to have to do some type of budget amendment and who knows what will happen with this. You have to give the opponents credit for putting together a petition and going out there and getting 20,000 signatures, most of which were valid to meet the criteria. We just have to deal with it and move on. The County Administration is still committed to the sale of Gracedale. Glenn asked what's the percentage of Medicare patients accepted at Gracedale now? Tom said he doesn't know what it is, but he thinks they are looking at like 85% under the agreement they have. There are not a lot of private pays in there. Glenn said what would it be if someone bought it? Tom said he didn't know. He doesn't know what it is now. It could even be a little higher now. There's more opportunity for the private company to market it and get other populations in there. His understanding is they would be eligible for a higher Medicare or Medicaid payment because of the fact they are not a government-owned nursing home. From their perspective, they see it as a facility that can earn money and still provide the high level of care that we want to see there. There was a bid higher, but there were some concerns that the facility only had one nursing home. They went and talked to the facilities and went through the applicants with a fine tooth comb. They wanted to talk to the patients and the employees and wanted to see what the culture was like there. They've done a lot of due diligence, but it may end up on the ballot and have the voters decide. The voters have to be given all the facts though. By that time, this all should be cleared up and there still will be legal challenges. There are a lot of emotions, particularly on the one side. There are some people who do see the benefit of it.
- Tom said we are going to be having our first quarterly joint meeting of the Northampton County COGs on March 8th at Forks Township. He will get the details and agenda out to everyone.
- Tom said he mentioned earlier about the E-cycling and hazardous household events this year. He doesn't know if Tom Dittmar has forwarded any brochures to LST. Jack said we have the dates on our website and in our newsletter. Priscilla asked Jack to forward the dates to Laura Ray for the EAC website. Tom said he will make sure they email you a brochure.
- Tom said he doesn't know if your Police Chiefs have been notified, but there is going to be some FBI training. It's Thursday, July 17th at 1:00 PM at the 911 center in Nazareth. It's going to be an FBI agent, Colin Durner, who will be doing a presentation. Chief Strong from Pen Argyl is going to be getting invitations out to the Chiefs. It's being initiated by the Slate Belt COG. The FBI agent used to be an intern at the Slate Belt police department, so they managed to get him to come up here.

- Tom said he passed out the latest edition of the Northampton County Government Directory. The only big changes are the leadership with County Council, new President and VP. The other thing that they did take out of the directory was Vector Control. This year's budget, they eliminated the Vector Control Division of our Public Works Department. Instead, what they did was on page 27, they added DEP because they are doing mosquito, black fly and West Nile for the County. In the past, they said if you have an issue with mosquito infestation and concerns about West Nile, you can just call Vector Control at the County, but you can't do that anymore. You can call the DEP office and they are prepared. The money basically came from the state to fund their operation, so they are responsible for doing it. That's the only organizational change of note. This is available on line on the County website.
- Tom said he did talk to you about the Miracle League in Northampton County that is being formed. He passed out pamphlets. They just got approval from the IRS and they are an approved non-profit charitable organization. The field will be built on the grounds of the Chrin Center in Palmer Township. They have a Board of Directors. They have Brien Schneider who is the back-up catcher for the Philadelphia Phillies who is their Honorary Chairperson on the board. Their capital campaign will start shortly. If you know any families with kids with special needs and want to get involved, let him know or pass the information around. They do have a website which is pretty good. They are hoping to have this built by spring of next year. They are pretty confident they can get it done.

H. Citizens Commenting on Non-Agenda Items

- Stephanie Brown asked what ever happened with the grant that the Township applied for for the Old Mill Bridge? Jack said they didn't get it. Hellertown got money. PennDOT had transportation enhancement grant funding. They applied along with a lot of other communities and Hellertown was lucky to get some funding for Main Street enhancements. They did not get any money nor did the City of Bethlehem get funding for the High Street Bridge. It was very competitive and they didn't make the cut. Stephanie said where does that leave the Township with integrating the Old Mill Bridge with the rail trail? Jack said it leaves them with an engineering plan to rehab and repair the bridge. They have the ATLSS center at Lehigh University also do a report on it this past year. They went out and inspected it and made recommendations for its repair and rehabilitation. They have all that and they have a budget with some funding. They will see what they can do with the funding they have. If the decking is replaced on the bridge, it can be used. Stephanie said she doesn't understand how that bridge works. It has public access as it's a national historic site. In terms of handicapped accessibility is it handicap accessible? Does it have to be? Jack said it has ramps on both sides. The handicapped person would have to be on Reading Road and they would be able to get across the bridge. They will make sure it's accessible. On the other side of the road, there really isn't parking. Priscilla said Barb Ryan sent something about the ADA accessibility, you are looking into it? Jack said yes.
- Stephanie Brown said back in August when the County met at the Meadows Road Bridge site, she was looking for more information on what was going on with the bridge and the county keeping the Township up to date with the repairs. The last thing was she thought the County was supposed to be putting drainage holes in the bridge. Any ideas? Jack said there was a discussion. They met out at the bridge and what they discussed was the county's maintenance of the bridge. They indicated it's being inspected and they are doing the maintenance that is required even though their budget is limited. They are keeping up with that. There was some discussion about the types of things Stephanie is talking about in the future and he indicated to Stephanie he hasn't gotten an email from Tom Koehler saying they are going to be doing this to the bridge, which may mean there isn't any plan to do it in the next few months. Stephanie says it's been a rough winter for that bridge and things are thawing now. The water sits on the bridge and she's wondering what the County is going to do? Tom said he'll check with Public Works Director and see what the status

Saucon Valley Partnership Meeting
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is. Priscilla said there's probably not another bridge in the County like it and we are fortunate to have it.

I. Events Calendar

<http://sauconvalleycalendar.blogspot.com>

- Priscilla said Friday, April 8th at the Se-Wy-Co is a banquet to honor Charlie Luthar at 6:00 PM sponsored by the Hellertown-Lower Saucon Chamber of Commerce.
- Priscilla said on Saturday, May 7th the three historical organizations will hold their 4th Annual History day and there will be events at the three organizations. Details will follow soon.
- Mayor Fluck said the sixth year Farmer's Market opens up on May 1st.
- Jack said the Chamber breakfast on February 23rd is at the Township at 7:30 AM and the Police Chiefs from the Borough and the Township will be giving a presentation.

J. Adjournment – Motion by Mayor Fluck to adjourn, second by Glenn. All in favor. The time was 9:01 PM.

K. Next meeting: March 9th Saucon Valley School District, April 13th @ Hellertown Borough; May 11th at Lower Saucon Township