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2 **SAUCON VALLEY PARTNERSHIP MEETING**
3

4 Date: March 12, 2008
5 Time: 7:02 PM
6 Location: Saucon Valley School District
7

8 A. **Call to Order:** Ed Inghrim
9

10 B. **Roll Call:** Present: Ed Inghrim, Priscilla deLeon, Jane Balum, Mayor Fluck, Glenn Kern, Jack Cahalan,
11 Charlie Luthar. Guests: Tom Harp, Northampton County; Margie Segaline, Jennie McKenna, George
12 Howey
13

14 C. **Council of Governments:**
15

- 16 1. The minutes of the January 9, 2008 were approved following a motion by Priscilla seconded by Glenn.
- 17 2. Treasurer's Report - Jack said there are two Treasurers reports. The balance for January 31, 2008 was
18 \$33,868.81 in the Checking Account. There were no receipts in January and they paid one check out to
19 Environmental Planning and Design for \$2,529.58. In the Treasurer's Report for January, the balance
20 was \$7,589.55 and they received a check from Hellertown Borough for their dues of 2008 of \$1,000
21 and there were no expenses. On a motion by Glenn, seconded by Priscilla, the Partnership voted to
22 approve the Treasurers Reports.
- 23 3. For February the Checking Account balance remained at \$33,868.81. There are no receipts and no
24 expenses. The Treasurer's Report balance was \$8,990.55 at the end of February. Receipts were from
25 Hellertown Borough - \$1,000, Lower Saucon Township - \$1,000 and the Saucon Valley School District
26 - \$1,000 for 2008 dues. Checks were issued to the Valley Voice; we paid our PACOG dues of \$200 and
27 we reimbursed the Township for advertising costs for meetings. On a motion by Priscilla, seconded by
28 Jane, the Partnership voted to approve the Treasurers Reports.
- 29 4. Priscilla said the February minutes were reviewed and no action was taken as there was no quorum.
- 30 5. Jack said he has a bill for \$1,310.59 from EPD for services from January 1 to 31, 2008 to prepare and
31 attend the meeting on January 9th. He reviewed it and it's in order and he recommends it be paid. On a
32 motion by Glenn seconded by Priscilla, the Partnership voted to approve payment of the bill.
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34 D. **Citizen On Agenda Items:** None
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36 E. **Citizen On Non -Agenda Items:**
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38 Margie Segaline said last evening Vanessa Segaline and Matt Chernasky presented a proposal to the Team
39 Works program and their proposal was requesting funding for art supplies that are no longer budgeted in
40 the school district's budget. The supplies are for framing and matting for art work and the students are
41 planning on using the art work in the gallery at the Heller Homestead, so it's a joint effort between the
42 school district and the Saucon Valley Conservancy. Priscilla said that the school district's Art Department
43 is working with the Saucon Valley Conservancy and the art students are going to submit paintings and there
44 will be a student exhibit April 5th through May 11th and on Saturday's their art work will be on display.
45 They needed money for this, and Margie found out about the grant, and the students applied for it. We are
46 starting a fund at the Conservancy if anyone wants to donate money to offset this activity, checks should be
47 made out to the Saucon Valley Conservancy. It's going to be an annual event. Margie said Ira Hiberman
48 came up with the idea to develop a new class for the next school year where the students will actually do
49 interning at the gallery and learn how to run the gallery, not just how to present art work, but to work at the
50 gallery, and they will have to present that to the school board.
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1 F. Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan
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3 Jack handed out copies of the email and attachments that Carolyn Yagle sent us to work on. There are 23
4 priority items listed and she wants us to pick 10 “truly high priorities” from the list. Ed asked if anybody
5 had any ideas how to you’d like to approach this? Priscilla said she has one to eliminate. A regular
6 comprehensive plan for municipalities is required to be updated every 10 years, but she doesn’t know about
7 the multi-municipal ones? Susan said you can eliminate 45 as we are going to continue to cooperate with
8 the school district anyway. Glenn said B12 is going to be done anyway too. The Mayor asked about C15
9 and the parking study the Council just authorized? Jennie said that it would be a component of the overall
10 parking strategy and would be a priority. Priscilla asked what happened to the medium priorities, are they
11 gone? Charlie said they are still listed as medium and are not off the table. Ed said we can go through the
12 list and cross some of these things off as they are already committed. The next big step would be maybe to
13 have the group take the top ten, number your choices, and see what the tally looks like. Glenn said 44 does
14 not have to be on the high priority list. Glenn asked if the Thomas Iron Site has to be in this high priority
15 list? Priscilla said it is an important site in theory but not in a plan yet. Priscilla said 28 and 29; Thomas
16 Iron Works should be part of a regional greenway. Glenn said how about knocking off F32? Ed said you
17 might find that was one of the most important as that was the one regarding emergency services. Ed said
18 the concern is they are losing volunteers and do not have enough members to cover the Borough and the
19 Township. Priscilla said she looked at 6, 7 and 8, and looked at them as infrastructure. If you drew a circle
20 around Hellertown, where are you going to come to, you’re going to come to Wassergass, Lower Saucon
21 Road. Glenn said B7 and B8 are important to include as the buzz he’s hearing around town is that we need
22 to enhance our commercial districts. He thinks Leithsville/Rt 378 is more important than the Wassergass -
23 Lower Saucon Rd. Ed said A4 really overlaps on some of the other items such as B13 which is really is
24 trying to develop employment opportunities. Glenn said B13 is just a specific category. A4 is a result of
25 B7 and B8. Jack said we should say that we are not throwing any of these out of the plan; we are just
26 lowering them on the priority list.
27

28 Jennie said she was thinking the same thing. Some of the categories are starting to blend and we are
29 actually grouping these together to make categories and maybe we’ll have to go in the category itself and
30 say what are we going to focus on. She took it the same way, the growth and the Champion as one big goal
31 we have, and accomplish the employment goal and employment opportunities and developing a specific
32 plan for Champion. Priscilla said that’s the most difficult site to develop. By putting it in as a sub
33 category, it takes the focus as the other sub categories could be the other commercial areas in both places.
34 Jennie said perhaps it’s wording, but the way B13 is worded, it’s specifically talking about taking that
35 property for business, which to her, she’s assuming taking employment out of that. On the other sheet at
36 40, undetermined priorities, it may be why we are stumbling, how we are interpreting these things. Maybe
37 Jane was thinking of Champion differently, and why she wants it to stand alone. Jane said it’s the best
38 chance of development and kind of a gateway coming in. They suggested the idea of a water park there.
39

40 Priscilla said she’d like to ask a question about that concept. With a water park, don’t you have to dig
41 down? You can at certain spots there; it’s just limited to certain areas. The Mayor said there’s a lot of
42 market for that property. He said there’s one section you can’t park tractor trailers or something on it, the
43 rest is useful.
44

45 Ed said moving along, we’ve eliminated B9, B11, B12, F44, F45 and F48. Are there any he missed? Jack
46 said he was looking for the one about the Champion Spark Plug Factory. The reason they sound similar is
47 that they are prioritized as separate, stand-alone goals. Champion has always been a separate stand alone
48 by itself, but the other areas were all under economic developments and Champion was a stand alone.
49

50 Glenn said what about B1? Priscilla said its land use and housing. The Mayor said it surprised him that it
51 came up in the survey as one of the priorities. Ed said so we are going to eliminate B1 then.
52

53 Glenn said what about B3? Ed said that’s the type of development where the garages would be in the back,
54 and they’d be more traditional houses with neighborhood stores. It would be like the Sears homes in

1 Hellertown. Priscilla said it's hard to picture that in the existing areas that we have vacant. If this was
2 fresh and we were going to create a new town, that's the way you should do it, but in the real world...the
3 little stores like that don't survive, it's great on paper, but do we have areas where a little store like that
4 could survive? Jack said that EPD will suggest on the plan areas where that may work and you could
5 consider adopting an ordinance which would promote that type of future development instead of the cookie
6 cutter stuff that's coming in. Ed said doesn't that overlap with 37? Jack said the joint zoning ordinance
7 and the zoning map is one of the things this group is going to have to consider once the comp plan is
8 adopted. One of the things with the developments, some of these things are not short term like the need for
9 joint zoning or the joint zoning map. Ed asked about B6, Bergey's, what does that mean? Glenn said it
10 would be part of a traditional neighborhood. Bergey's is an existing store that you can build a community
11 around. Jack showed on the color map the Old Philadelphia Pike area and the village concept at the end of
12 Wassergass Road, and that's one of the other concepts EPD is going to suggest to promote pedestrian and
13 biking linkages where people could ride or walk into the town center from Wassergass or the Old
14 Philadelphia Pike area. Jack said he thinks Wassergass would be a lower priority and we could combine
15 B7 and B8 and say specific plans for Leithsville, Route 378 and Old Philadelphia Pike. Glenn said the
16 priority is to create specific plans for commercial districts and that happens to be Leithsville and Route 378
17 and the Old Philadelphia Pike corridor. So maybe it should be to create a specific plan for potential
18 commercial areas within the township. Priscilla said we need to identify the two areas. Ed said okay; create
19 a specific plan for commercial districts including the Route 378, Old Philadelphia Pike Corridor and
20 Leithsville areas. So now we don't have a B8. Priscilla said now B6 is a medium.

21
22 Ed said now we have 13 items. We're almost done. We're not eliminating any; we're just moving them
23 down on the priority list. A4 is truly high, B1 is high. B2, B3 and B5 are truly high. B6 is high. B7 is
24 high but combined with B8. B9, B11 and B12 are high. B13 is truly high. C14, C15, C17 are truly high.
25 E28 is now high. E29 is truly high, F32, F37 and F39 are truly high and the remaining three are high.
26 Priscilla said F37 should be a medium like Jane said. ED said C15 and C17 are redundant. Jack said they
27 were listed as separate goals. Charlie said they are talking about the parking and the access on Main Street.
28 We have two more to go. Priscilla said we are erasing F37? ED said let's make B3 a high priority.

29
30 Glenn said what do we do with the second sheet? Ed said his inclination is to say they are all high. Jennie
31 said B16 seems to be a medium priority to her. Jennie said F33 is important; it's about the comprehensive
32 parks plan. Priscilla said that goes back to what she was saying about Thomas Iron Works, its recreation.
33 Margie said that F33 should be a sub-unit to the first one that already discusses these recreation spaces and
34 so forth. Jack said E28 is strictly a Hellertown recreational resource. E29 is for regional open space.

35
36 Mayor Fluck asked what was the Saucon Valley's dark skies? Ed said that has to do with Route 78 and if
37 you drive down Route 78, it's kind of dark and they wanted to make sure we maintain that kind of
38 demographics so we don't become a Las Vegas skylight with a water park. Charlie said there's a Saturday
39 coming up where everyone is supposed to shut their lights off.

40
41 Charlie asked do you want to consolidate some of these and make sub-categories? Ed said that if you look
42 at Carolyn's email, there is some uncertainty on what to do with this second list and you might want to
43 have some kind of organization or natural groupings. Jennie said some of these are goals and some are
44 tasks. We should start to see what our goals are. Jack said you need to think what are your real high
45 priorities? The Mayor said we could eliminate B16 as we're never going to see retail on Water or Saucon
46 Street. Jennie said that B19 is a real high priority. She learned something at the meeting about the service
47 utilities and maybe we could get to do a line around Hellertown and go out a little bit further. We're going
48 to service this area. Ed said when you look at the issue of infrastructure, you've already identified certain
49 areas such as Old Philadelphia Pike and Leithsville and you want to focus on them. Once again, there
50 needs to be some organization here; bullet items in specific tasks.

51
52 Jennie said why don't we just write down what we think of each of them? When we have our overall
53 philosophy of where we're going, the next step to clearly delineate how we are getting there. We say
54 protecting open space and the infrastructure, 378 and Leithsville, that's how we get there, and if we

1 accomplish, this, then bingo, we're doing the infrastructure and were doing dark skies in some way and
2 we're doing all that other stuff. Priscilla said how intense are the regulations on the dark skies? Charlie
3 said in the observatories in the southwest, they have strict regulations for lighting. Priscilla wants to know
4 how severe it will be. She's all for seeing the stars, but if there are strict regulations for residents, it's
5 another regulation that people have to follow. Charlie said that zoning would take care of that. Jack said it
6 would be working with the development community to minimize light pollution.
7

8 Ed asked is there anything on this second list that anyone would move to top priority? The answer was no.
9

10 The Mayor asked about the goal of creating an overlay district in the northern end of Hellertown?
11 Regarding the Champion Spark Plug place, there was talk about developing the northern end of Hellertown
12 - from High Street down would be in the overlay ordinance. Could we reword it and say create a
13 commercial overlay north of Hellertown to promote coordinated growth including the Champion Spark
14 Plug factory? Jack said that the rest of that category said redevelopment and optimize opportunities with
15 Bethlehem for expansion.
16

17 Glenn said we agree that the Champion Spark Plug should be separate. What about B5 being combined
18 with F40. They are basically saying the same thing. Jennie said she thinks that F40 is a task. That's how
19 we get there. Glenn said it says encourage compatibility of land use patterns along the communities
20 northern neighboring redevelopment areas including creating a commercial overlay north of Hellertown.
21 Jane said replace B5 with F40 wording. Ed said that works for him. Priscilla said F40 says create a
22 commercial overlay in northern Hellertown to promote coordinated development/redevelopment and
23 optimize opportunities with the Bethlehem enterprises zone expansion area. Ed said that F51 can be
24 included in F40.
25

26 **G. Brief Reports and Discussion Items**

- 27
28 1. **Casino Update**: Jack handed out copies of a recent editorial in the Express-Times that called for an equal
29 distribution of the casino impacts funds to the priority municipalities. Jack said Hellertown Borough,
30 Freemansburg and Lower Saucon Township have submitted a proposal asking the County to provide a
31 substantial portion of the County host fees that will be received from the casino and designated for the
32 municipalities to the priority municipalities. Mr. Stoffa and the County Casino Gambling Impact
33 Committee gave us a task of coming up with a process and we did work on that and did provide them with
34 a grants distribution procedure calling for 60% to be distributed to the priority municipalities, and they
35 asked us to come back with the sign off of all five (5) of the contiguous municipalities. Charlie, Jack and
36 Debra Ross from Freemansburg met with the Bethlehem Township and Hanover Township managers and
37 laid out the proposal and asked them to join with us in supporting the proposal which divides the money
38 into five equal shares. Hanover Township agreed with the proposal. Bethlehem Township did not agree
39 with us and they said the distribution should be based on population. Following that they drafted a
40 resolution which four (4) of the municipalities have adopted. Jack said we have before you a draft of a
41 letter to Mr. Stoffa and Bob Pfenning who is the Chair or the County Gambling Impact Committee
42 submitting the resolutions to them and asking that our proposal go forward and be adopted. Glenn said
43 maybe there's something we can do by talking to Bethlehem Township. Glenn said the thought process
44 from whoever is not agreeing with us in Bethlehem Township, is that they won't be affected by the casino
45 except through their population? Jack stated that he believes that Bethlehem Township's position is that
46 they are the biggest in terms of population and they should be given the biggest share of the funds. Glenn
47 stated, but the County Gambling Impact Committee made it clear that the five of us had to agree in order
48 for this money to be distributed. Bethlehem Township, if they don't agree, will be on their own, we'll all
49 be on our own, and then it will be a matter of justifying impacts. What is Bethlehem Township's impact?
50 It's not based on population. Priscilla said in the infrastructure studies that were presented to the PCGB,
51 the casino said the traffic wasn't going to be coming that way and the majority of the traffic would be in
52 our area. Jack said the County Gambling Impact Committee will be making recommendations to Mr.
53 Stoffa in May and they were looking to get an answer back to us by September. We haven't spoken
54 officially to anyone in Bethlehem Township. Priscilla asked when is the next County Gambling Impact

1 Committee meeting? Jack said it's in April. Priscilla said is there anyway we can change the letter and say
2 to date, the following communities have adopted this concept? We are letting them know that four of us
3 are in the game. Put it in the wording that as an update for their April meeting, these are the following
4 municipalities. We should say in the letter, to date, the four municipalities have taken action and don't
5 even mention them. Maybe phone calls can be made to Bethlehem Township commissioners. We could
6 tell the committee what we know and be updating them. We are complying with the request, but are not
7 really there yet. We have a little bit of time as the meeting is the second week of April; maybe Bethlehem
8 Township will join with us by then. Jack said he's hearing two things: Hold off on the letter and revise it
9 and be providing an update to the Gaming Commission for the April meeting, saying to date, the four
10 municipalities are on board. There is a COG meeting on April 9, and you may want to wait until then.
11 Mayor Fluck said if we wait, it may be too late. Priscilla said she'd rather have something in their hand
12 that night so they kind of know. Glenn asked for the names of the commissioners in Bethlehem Township
13 so they could contact them. Priscilla said we're holding this letter and wait a week before, redraft it and
14 change the tone, and not mention Bethlehem Township, and then submit it and that way they have
15 something in writing that they can go by.
16

- 17 2. **Joint COG Projects:** Jack said the first one is the rebate for the pool. Currently, for the Hellertown
18 Community Pool there are different season pool pass rates for Borough and Township residents. It's \$120
19 per family for residents and \$180 for non-residents, a \$60 dollar difference. The township for several years
20 has had a process in place where we reimbursed our residents this difference. They came in and had to
21 submit documents and had to fill out a lot of paper work. In the budget adopted this year by the township,
22 the Council approved a change that will eliminate the resident, non-resident fee structure at the pool.
23 Beginning this season, Township and Borough residents will pay the same fee. Jack said we've increased
24 the amount of money going towards these refunds by \$3,000 and will give that up front to the Borough
25 based on last year's participation figures, and in doing that we eliminated all the administrative paper work
26 the Township, Borough and the pool ticket office had to do previously. Charlie said the pool will keep track
27 of the residency of the Lower Saucon Township and Hellertown residents. Charlie said the pool's annual
28 expenses are approximately \$85,000 and then there's the snack stand, and that takes in over \$100,000. Last
29 year the borough made some money on the pool, but that was based primarily on the fact that the
30 Bethlehem Fields development made a commitment of \$17,000 to buy tickets for their residents, so the
31 pool will be getting that rate for five years, and then another five years after. That actually brought the
32 revenue up. The snack stand was also renovated. Jack said the Township and Borough Public Works
33 Departments will be cooperating on several paving projects this year and we've had meetings with the
34 school district and we've offered to pave streets and parking areas on the school district campus. Charlie
35 said we have also been cooperating on the NIMS training.
36
- 37 3. **Polk Valley Road/Walnut Street Intersection Enhancements:** No update
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- 39 4. **Joint Enterprise Zone for the City of Bethlehem:** Charlie said we are waiting for Bethlehem to get back
40 to them.
41
- 42 5. **Hellertown – Lower Saucon Compost Center:** Charlie said it's ready to re-open on April 18th. The
43 Borough Council is going to arrange curbside collection for Borough residents. Charlie said we are
44 working together on a budget for the Compost Center, and there is a Compost Center Committee that has to
45 be formulated, and that's yet to come. We will be coming back to the councils and asking for approval on
46 appointments to that committee. We will be a meeting with Joe Hoffman, our grant writer, and we'll start
47 talking about grant opportunities for the Compost Center. We need a pay loader and a pole building up
48 there. Jack said one of the things that came up at the last SVP meeting was the lack of a County Recycling
49 Coordinator in Northampton County. There was a short discussion about what a County Recycling
50 Coordinator could do for us and we agreed to come back with a draft of a letter to John Stoffa urging him
51 to fill this position. Jack handed out copies of the draft letter and said we can take a vote tonight to approve
52 this and take it to the Borough/Township Councils and School Board for their approvals to send it. Tom
53 Harp said there have been interviews, and most likely next week, the County will select a Coordinator. Ed
54 asked if we still need to send the letter? Jack said that the letter recommends that the County own the

1 equipment needed to grind up the yard waste and rotate its use among the municipalities like Lehigh
2 County does. On a motion by Priscilla, seconded by Jane, the Partnership voted to approve the draft letter
3 and send it to the respective bodies for their approval to send it out.
4

5 6. **Tax Reassessment:** Ed said that the Lehigh Valley Association of Realtors made a presentation to the
6 Saucon Valley School Board last night and they are asking us to pass a resolution to send to the county
7 supporting county wide reassessment for Northampton County. The resolution has to be discussed by the
8 Board, which they will do at the next meeting. The Realtors Association continues to insist they don't like
9 our proposal to do point-of-sale challenges to assessments. Ed said his own personal feeling is that he likes
10 the point-of-sale reassessment as it affects only the people who move into the community instead of
11 everyone who lives in the community which could be a hardship for some. Glenn asked when was the last
12 reassessment? Ed said it was according to the state in 1995, but it was actually done in 1991. As a result,
13 within Northampton County, you can see tax variations on the same assessment and it's getting way out of
14 line. The Allentown School District has adopted a resolution to send to Lehigh County calling for a
15 reassessment. We are working jointly with the Association of Realtors to try to push for something and
16 they are going to try to set up a meeting with the Northampton County Council. The Council is probably
17 not going to support it. As a school district they are going to push for the point-of-sale. There are some
18 board members who don't necessarily support this. The concern with the point-of-sale is that it will affect
19 the marketability of existing homes. If you have a low assessment on a home, it isn't doing anything, but
20 from a school district, we have the highest millage rate in Northampton County and it's primarily because
21 the disparity we have in our real estate. The only way it gets fixed is if the Court comes in and rules it's
22 gotten way out of hand. Mayor Fluck said how does that affect senior citizens? Are they going to be
23 reassessed? Susan said yes, they would be reassessed, and that's the reason she supports the point of sale.
24 People that are now downsizing, those people will have to go out and pay a higher rate. Mayor Fluck said
25 that doesn't seem that is fair with a person who is 80 years old. They can hardly make ends meet now, and
26 then you are going to reassess them. There are an awful lot of seniors in Hellertown - 25% of the
27 population. They can barely pay their taxes. Ed said he'd agree; that's why he supports the point-of-sale
28 assessment. It would be paid by the new people who come into the community, not the people who have
29 been here. If the County did a reassessment every year we would not have this problem. The problem is
30 the County waits ten or fifteen years until the system gets out of whack, then it hits everybody. Jack said
31 there is legislation coming out where some of the counties up north are fighting the point of sale
32 assessments, and there are two bills from Bob Freeman's Local Government Committee that would prohibit
33 the point-of-sale assessments. Ed said someone mentioned that last night at the meeting, and his response
34 was Harrisburg has been working on legislation to eliminate property taxes and they've been working on
35 that for the last 25 years, so he's not worried about it.
36

37 7. **Fire Services Update:** Jack said there's no update on this. The four Township Fire Companies and Dewey
38 Fire Company have all joined in on supporting the concept of the Fire Services Task Force that DCED
39 promoted to us last year and he sent a letter to DCED asking them to get back in touch with us and take us
40 through the next steps. He hasn't heard back from them.
41

42 8. **Leithsville Act 537 Update:** Jack said from the township end, the Lower Saucon Authority is still working
43 on a response to the letter that came from Hellertown Borough Solicitor with the concerns that the Borough
44 had with the proposed route for the sewer line.
45

46 H. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM, following a motion by Glenn, seconded by Susan, and
47 unanimously approved.
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50 **Next meeting at Hellertown on April 9, 2008**
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