

Saucon Valley Partnership Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 14, 2012

- A. Call to Order – Leslie Huhn – 7:00 p.m.
- B. Present – Glenn Kern, Priscilla deLeon, Tom Rieger, John Bate, Richard Fluck, Cathy Kichline, Lanita Lum, and Leslie Huhn. Guests included Tom Ditmar and Kim Schaffer.
- C. Council of Governments
1. Adoption of Council of Governments Minutes

Motion made by Glenn Kern seconded by Leslie Huhn, to approve the February 8, 2012, meeting minutes as written. Motion unanimously carried.
 2. Treasurer’s Report

Ms. Huhn – The checking account balance as of February 29, 2012 is \$3,970.46. The \$2.00 bank fees were returned. Cathy Gorman has requested that we close the smaller account since it is incurring fees and combine it with the fund account. The fund balance as of February 29, 2012, is \$16,952.96.

Motion made by Priscilla deLeon, seconded by John Bate, to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Motion unanimously carried.

Motion made by Priscilla deLeon, seconded to Lanita Lum, to close the checking account and combine with the fund account. Motion unanimously carried.
 3. Approval to Pay Bills

There were no bills to be paid.
- D. Northampton County Five-Year Housing & Community Development Plan
- A chart was handed out comparing poverty levels between 2005 and 2009 by municipality.
- The poverty level in Hellertown was 5% and 4.5% in Lower Saucon.
- Ms. Schaffer – Housing affordability is a large problem. What are the most pressing housing issue facing the community?
- Ms. Lum – The real estate and school taxes are a large problem for low income families. The state needs to be held responsible instead of hiding behind the municipalities. The state needs to change the way they support education so we don’t have to increase taxes to pay for programs.
- Mr. Inghrim – The study doesn’t tell you that 40 percent of Hellertown residents are living on Social Security with an income less than \$24,000.00 per year. Lower Saucon Township has 30 percent. We are driving people out of their home and putting them into county subsidized housing. School taxes should be based on income.
- Ms. Kichline – I feel that affordable housing is available. The people in the market cannot maintain the homes or afford the down payment to purchase the home.

Mr. Inghrim – I would like to see less public housing.

Ms. Lum – Perhaps Lower Saucon Township should not collect an extra .25 percent for open space preservation and purchase land that no developer would want anyway and put the money back in the hands of the resident.

Ms. deLeon – There is no place in Lower Saucon Township to go if you are homeless. You need to go to the City of Bethlehem. Lower Saucon Township does donate to the shelters but the City doesn't really want them because they aren't residents.

Ms. Kichline – No homeless situations have been brought to my attention.

Hellertown does have the lower income housing. They need assistance purchasing the home, home ownership education, and help moving in. We do have low income rental units available.

Ms. Schaffer – What would help to build a livable community?

Ms. Kichline – We have benefited from the sidewalks in the past. Hopefully, it will continue. Also, the removal of blight for other potential uses would help.

Ms. deLeon – I would like to see businesses use the areas already designated for commercial use.

Ms. Schaffer encouraged emails or phone calls with additional comments.

E. Brief Reports and Discussion Items

1. Casino Impacts Funding/County Gaming Authority – Update

Ms. Kichline – Hellertown has applied for the continuation of employment for two police officers. We have been invited to a question and answer session in April.

Ms. Huhn – Lower Saucon Township is applying for battery packs.

2. Joint COG Projects (Saucon Rail Trail; Peer Recreation Study Committee) – Update

Ms. Kichline – The Saucon Rail Trail is doing a trail cleanup on March 24, 2012, beginning at 8:00 a.m. The Memorial Bench Program is moving along nicely. Hellertown has 4 benches.

Ms. Huhn – Lower Saucon has ordered all the benches and 6 have been purchased with the last one being spoke for by Council member Dave Willard.

Mr. Rieger – The Peer Recreation Agreement will be coming before Council in Hellertown on March 19, 2012. Lower Saucon Township has already approved the agreement. There were some minor changes to the language. The survey has been completed and is out for committee review. It will probably go out May-June.

Ms. Huhn – Lower Saucon will be appointing 2 members and 2 alternates to the committee.

Mr. Inghram – I have notice increased activity on the trail.

Ms. deLeon expressed her displeasure with the pedestrian crossing indicator by Society Hill.

Ms. Kichline – The Water Street crossing is being used as an example throughout Pennsylvania because of the signage and crossing.

3. Roads & Traffic (Polk Valley Road/412 Intersection HOP Application) – Update

There was nothing to report.

4. Saucon Valley Compost Center – Update

Mr. Inghrim – You will now need a Compost Center ID.

Ms. Kichline – The IDs are to better time management. You will not need to sign in and the volunteers can count the cars that come since the cards are color coded.

Ms. deLeon – How often are the e-cycling events scheduled?

Mr. Ditmar – We start posting in December for the following year. We are handing out brochures to municipalities. This year, there will be no charge to collect electronics. AERC collected over 10,000 pounds at the last event.

Ms. deLeon – Could the County send out a brochure in the County tax bills? It would save money on advertising.

Mr. Ditmar – I will make that suggestion. Beginning next year, it will be illegal for residents to dispose of electronics in the garbage and it will be illegal for haulers to take them.

There are four events set up for e-cycling. The first event is May 19, 2012, at Easton Area High School.

Ms. deLeon – Is there a place that someone can go anytime to drop them off?

Mr. Ditmar – The County doesn't have a site yet. We would like to put one in. AERC will take electronics on Fridays. They are located on Mitchell Street in Allentown.

5. Fire Services – Update

There was nothing to report

6. Library Task Force – Update

Mr. Rieger – The Library Task Force survey has been completed and the data is being compiled. There will be a public meeting on April 12, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

7. Regional Police Study – Update

Ms. Huhn – A meeting is going to be set up with all of the parties.

Ms. Kichline – Our councils have requested a copy of the study prior to any public hearing.

8. Other Issues

1. Emergency Management

There was nothing to report.

2. Allentown NIZ

Ms. Lum – I would like to have Ellen Kern come and speak with us about the NIZ (Ms. Kern represents Senator Pat Browne who introduced the NIZ).

Mr. Inghrim – there has been a proposal for the communities to sue to overturn the legislation. There is a meeting tomorrow to see if the communities are interested. It would be done on a prorated basis by a formula on economic impact.

Ms. deLeon – I don't want to spend more on attorney fees than we could potentially get back.

Mr. Inghrim – Most communities don't want to make a move until they know how much money they stand to lose.

F. County Report

1. County Update

Mr. Harp was not present.

Mr. Ditmar noted that the DEP is opening the 902 grants for recycling.

2. County Bridge #15 (Meadows Road Bridge)

There was nothing to report.

G. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items – None

H. Calendar of Events

Ms. deLeon – The annual barn tour will be held on September 15, 2012.

The 5th Annual History Day will be held April 28, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Also on April 28, 2012, the Hellertown-Lower Saucon Chamber will be holding the Pathway to Progress at Water Street Park.

A Breakfast Connection will be held at the Hellertown Diner from 7:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m.

March 24, 2012, is Trail Clean-Up Day.

The Saucon Valley Farmers' Market opens on May 6, 2012.

The Fishing Contest at the Gristmill will be held on April 28-29, 2012.

I. Adjournment

Motion made by John Bate, seconded by Priscilla deLeon, to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.