

SAUCON VALLEY PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Date: Wednesday, October 13, 2010
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Hellertown Borough

A. **Call to Order:** The Saucon Valley Partnership meeting was called to order by Chair John Bate on October 13, 2010 at 7:03 PM at Hellertown Borough.

B. **Roll Call: Present:** John Bate, Mayor Fluck, Lanita Lum, Priscilla deLeon, Jack Cahalan, and Charlie Luthar. Guest: Tom Harp arrived at 7:06 p.m.

C. **Council of Governments**

1. **Minutes of the September meeting** – Motion by Priscilla, second by Mayor Fluck to accept the September minutes. All in favor.

2. **Treasurer's Report** – Jack said the checking account balance as of September 30, 2010 was \$3,870.42. There were no payments or receipts out of that account. The Treasurer's account balance as of September 30, 2010 was \$12,520.26. There were no receipts or expenses out of that account. Priscilla had a comment on the \$2.00. She asked if it was out of Wachovia? Jack said yes. Priscilla said KNBT is doing the same thing. The \$2.00 is new? Jack said that's from last month. Charlie said Wachovia started in July for checking. Priscilla said they are no longer going to be issuing paper statements? Charlie said they get a paper statement here, but he's not sure what the fee is. Jack said he will get the actual statement from Cathy and find out what that charge is for. Motion by Priscilla, second by Lanita for approval of the Treasurer's report. All in favor.

3. **Approval to pay bills (if any):** Jack said there were no bills to pay.

Jack handed out information to the group that was on the Township website. There is some information about the SVP and some documents like the Multi-Municipal Plan, and press releases. He said there are also the representatives from LST, Hellertown Borough, Northampton County, and the school district. The meeting schedule and agenda is on, and the minutes go on after they are approved. It's on the opening page of the Township website. He also was looking at the school district website and it looks very nice. There's a separate page for the SVP and they need to update it. Charlie said Hellertown has a website, and they are still building it. Lanita said she wonders if the school district should just have the basic things on their page and a link to Hellertown and Lower Saucon Township. She will check it out. Jack said feel free to use this as we keep it up-to-date. If Tom Harp was here, he'd mention there was a County COG website. We also put the agenda and the minutes on there. Priscilla said the SVSD art students held a contest and developed the SVP logo.

D. **Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan**

1. **Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistant Grant Application** – Update - Charlie said the DCNR Peer-to-Peer application that Joe Hoffman submitted is on line and it actually bounced back because there were a couple of things that he didn't have filled out. He made some corrections and sent it back in. The Borough is the grantee in this because of the way the form is set up. The Borough will probably end up running the checks.

2. **DCED LUPTAP Grant Application** – Update – Jack said no update. Charlie said we were turned down for the grant. We did receive an estimate for the zoning audit and it's one of their applications for the casino monies.

E. Brief Reports and Discussion Items

- 1. Casino Impacts Funding/County Gaming Authority – Update** – Priscilla said the Gaming Authority is reviewing seventeen (17) applications. They all know the that group of applicants were split into two meeting nights, one in August and one in September. Now the Authority was given a form to fill out as far as rating the applications and that was supposed to be submitted last week. Hopefully, we'll have the compilation of who ranked the highest. It's not necessarily the one that is going to be given the top priority, but it will give us some place to start at the meeting. There was also discussion on the minutes regarding the lack of information in the minutes. The Solicitor is reviewing the Sunshine Law to see what pertinent facts are supposed to be in the minutes. There was a question raised by an audience member. The County approved a resolution forming the Authority and it stated it had to give out grants based on impacts. When they came up with the criteria for the uncommitted funds, they said they didn't have to show impacts. They are looking into the legality of that, so they will have a report from the solicitor. Jack said the applications submitted by Lower Saucon and Hellertown show impacts for both the committed and uncommitted rounds. We're following the County ordinance. John said he wasn't impressed in the second meeting except for Freemansburg. They were very well prepared. Priscilla said she's very disappointed in the process. It's not the way she likes to see government work. Someone should invite Lisa Boscola to come to the next meeting. It's October 25th. Charlie said that's the meeting you are probably going to start making decisions. Priscilla said what she'd like to put out there is if anyone has any recommendations or advice, please let her know.

- 2. Joint COG Projects (Rail-to-Trail; Joint Recreation Study Committee) – Update**

Saucon Rail Trail – Jack said the Township awarded the bid for the fencing to a company from Reading. They were the low bidder and they are going to install the fencing on the bridges. There are two bridges and a little culvert south of Reading Road. They are working on getting the gates and the bollards put up at Meadows Road and Old Mill Road. They can also put stop signs up at the Meadows Road crossing which saves them a considerable amount of money. They are moving ahead with that. It's really subject now to when the contractor can get in and get started on the fencing and get the gates and bollards up. For the surface we are waiting for the analysis of the slag to see if we could use the free pre-historic slag as a sub-base and then we agreed to put gravel on top of it. That's still to be completed sometime by the end of the month. Charlie said Hellertown doesn't have that kind of funding, so they are going for a County Open Space grant for the two crossings – one at Water Street and one at Walnut Street. They will also need to have the bollards and gates installed. They have to make a presentation tomorrow before the County Open Space Committee at 4:00 PM. They are also looking at a pool feature for part of that grant money the Borough has been allocated. They are jointly submitting an application for the Rail Trail development costs for the two municipalities for the uncommitted round of the casino funds. They should be able to pay for the surface material needed with the Open Space funding money. Priscilla asked what happened to the pedestrian crossing on Water Street? Charlie said there was an issue with PennDOT as they wanted the westbound flashing light moved. Hellertown did get an estimate from Signal Service, our traffic service provider, and it was \$35,000.00 to do that. The fellow's been very hard to get a hold of. We are supposed to meet him out in the field to determine if there's something that Tom Henshaw can do like trenching or putting some of the simple wires up. We asked them that in the first place, and they didn't give us an estimate right away. Now we have to get him out to the field and actually say we are going to do this, what does that do to the \$35,000.00 estimate? He understands there is a Mylar that PennDOT is asking us to sign that was supposed to come here today. We've got a good chance for this Open Space grant and if we get that, we can actually go with the contractor and have him install everything. Priscilla said nothing is happening to the crossing by the Homestead? Charlie said the flashing light at the top of the hill isn't being touched. There would be push buttons installed, which would have to be connected to the push buttons at the Heller Homestead crossing to go to the Rail Trail. Priscilla said when we

had all that rain, she went down to see what was happening at the Homestead and she wanted to cross the street to take pictures. She stood there for a good five minutes pushing the buttons and cars just kept coming and going just like she was invisible. There are some positives that are happening. Priscilla said most people are looking forward to this and are excited. Charlie said the Rail Trail Committee is doing well. They've been trying to get a little bit further ahead on some issues. Jack said Upper Saucon announced they awarded a bid for their section of the rail trail that goes from Lower Saucon all the way down to Preston Road where Upper Saucon's community park is. The amount of the contract was \$360,000.00 for their two miles of trail. They are paying the contractor a lot of money. A lot of this same kind of work we are doing in-house. Charlie said the disappointment is we didn't get this group formed yet. Coopersburg is stranded without Upper Saucon's participation.

Mayor Fluck said the issue came up about horses on the trails. What did they ever decide on? Priscilla said our Parks and Recreation Board supported the idea and so did she. Jack said it goes back to what Charlie said. The trail is made up of four municipalities. We all have different rules. The Township has park rules that prohibit horses in the parks. That's one issue. Charlie said for Hellertown Borough, it really doesn't say anything in their rules. Jack said Donna Bristol, who is on our Parks and Recreation Board, is a horse enthusiast and she brought up the issue of horses using the trail at the Rail Trail Committee meetings. We started discussing horses at the first meeting and have been discussing it ever since. The big problem we have is that we don't have all four municipalities lined up. He doesn't know how Upper Saucon or Coopersburg feel about it. Jack said you couldn't have a situation where horses are allowed on the trail in Lower Saucon Township, but were prohibited in Hellertown or Upper Saucon. The reason for that is that in Lower Saucon, we don't have any access right now for people to get on and off the trail. They are trying to negotiate with a property owner for a trail head access. The only place that people can get on is in Hellertown or Upper Saucon. The other thing about horses is that people need to bring big horse trailers and need a place to park them if they want to get their horse out to ride the trail. He doesn't know if the Coopersburg Borough or Upper Saucon has room for that. Lower Saucon really doesn't have any room right now even to park automobiles. There are a lot of issues. The Township Parks and Recreation Board did make a recommendation to the Township Council. Township Council had some questions and asked what was everyone else doing? We said the trail isn't open yet and we don't know what Hellertown and our other partners are going to do. Council said they wanted to wait and find out more about that. The second thing they asked was that Donna and the Parks and Recreation board come back with more information about how it's handled and regulated on other trails. Parks and Recreation is working on that. Priscilla said other places do allow horses and they have the regs that require you to clean up after your horse and they have bags. Jack said if everyone is not all on board with this, it's going to be an issue. Lanita said she goes to Jacobsburg with her horse which is only 30 minutes from here. She said if the rail trail is just going to be straight walking path, wouldn't you want to go into the country to ride a horse? Why do they really want this when places like Nockamixon and Jacobsburg where you can ride your horse are so close? Charlie said the simplest answer is that it really hasn't been concluded. The first thing he sees is we have to open the trail to humans, and then we worry about opening the trail to anybody else. We haven't even gotten to that point. Priscilla said she thinks it should be accessible to a lot more than pedestrians and bicycles. Charlie said the issue will come back. Jack said we have to see if all four municipalities are on board.

Joint Recreation Study Committee – Lanita said this committee is to do the recreational study? Jack said yes. Lanita said this subject came up again at their school board meeting. They are having discussions at the school right now about the stadium, the grounds and improvements. Some of the school board members thought shouldn't they be looking at the Township and the Borough athletic fields. Last night, the school put out three levels for bid just to see what comes in. She doesn't think this study will be done by the time they are pressed to make a decision because they are under a timeline. If they are going to move forward, you have to watch when you start the project, when it's finished, and make sure they are not interrupting all the different athletics that are

going on. They are looking at a stadium renovation as well as the fields. It's a lot of work, almost \$2 to \$3 million. There is some bond money left over from the original project that was done at the elementary and middle school. That money was sitting there and at one point they wanted to buy that land up the road, but they didn't. The stadium has a lot of disrepair to it. Its 42 years old. Her question is, is there really any space, and if there is space, are there going to be timing conflicts? If you look at the after school activities, a lot of the time when those fields are going to be used by the youth leagues, that's starting before the high school or middle school kids are off of the field. She's looking for a consensus. Is that really a stretch to think there would be that possibility? What's the recommendation from the Borough and the Township? Should they wait or do you think it's a pipe dream? Jack said last year when they began these meetings Bob Frey was there and it sounded like he was looking into the same type of thing you are talking about - can the school use the fields? Jack thought Bob was looking at this fall 2010 that he was going to need fields. Apparently, it's not until 2011 as girls fall soccer is one of the conflicts. The committee talked generally about field use and maintenance, but never really got down to details as far as what was the school's schedule. He understands that the schedule at the school would be primarily during the daytime. The leagues that use Polk Valley Park, their practices usually start at 5:00 PM in the evening and they are there on the weekends. Lanita said most high school sports go until about 5:30 PM. There would be an overlap. Jack said there are a couple of fields up at Polk Valley Park. They'd be willing to talk to Bob Frey about it to see what their needs are and see what can be factored into the other schedules from the teams that are using the fields. Bob did say to us if we did make a commitment that they would basically own the field and they are not sure that anyone else could use the field during that period of time. We have to talk more about that. Charlie said as far as Hellertown's fields, there is a grub issue and they may not be playing on the east end field for awhile because of the hydro-seeding that went on, and we will have to let it grow until probably fall of next year. The rest of the fields are being sprayed. John said Youth Sports has cancelled all sports and events for tomorrow. One of the things with the peer-to-peer was to discuss how the fields are being used and scheduling. That's where this peer-to-peer is going to come in. They could not believe the school, the Township and the Borough were all sitting in one room saying we want to work this out, when it comes to scheduling, use of the fields and even maintenance. Bob brought up about the football fields up on top that could be made into some soccer fields by moving some dirt around and then doing the all-weather track. He's been quite upfront with us and has been looking at ways to work it out. The baseball field up there, when it rains, you can't use it. That's all been brought up with the Recreation Committee and that's where we are with the peer-to-peer, waiting to get approval. The Borough, Township and school district have all jumped on board with all paying \$333.00 each. We're waiting to hear back from the state for a match, and then we'll move forward. We may have to do some of it upfront by ourselves if the school has an issue. Youth Sports was turned off completely from East End Field, which has been a financial burden on the club because they are not selling food and drinks. It actually trickled down to the pool as they sell their food to the Youth Sports. It trickled down to different entities. The school stepped up. He called them up at 7:00 PM and told them the park field was closed. Wally Zimpfer stepped up and made a few phone calls and called John back and said they could use the game field on Saturday for Youth Sports. Once they got further into it, they found the fields were done for the year. The school has worked with the Youth Sports on getting the facility opened up. There is already some communication back and forth. Lanita said the way things are being put out to bid right now, the board would like to probably know as they have to make decisions. If there is no possibility, they need to look at it. If there are other possibilities, she thinks the board members may want to know that before they make decisions on the fields portion itself. The stadium is another story. Jack said Bob should give us specifics at our next meeting and we'll have to see what's possible. The next meeting may be October 28th. Lanita asked if Bob has been coming to these meetings to ask these questions. Jack said in the beginning we worked on the inventory of the fields. We did talk in general about what the school needs. Lanita said these have been heated discussions the last two meetings. John said they did not have a meeting last month. Charlie said they met early in September for the DCNR peer-to-peer people to come and speak to them. Jack said that earlier this year Bob asked them to come to a school board meeting and tell them what the

Recreation Committee was working on and that there's a possibility of us providing some athletic fields. We never got into any specifics about where or when. John said we were talking about the transportation. He talked about bussing kids that couldn't walk from the school to Dimmick Park, and they had to be bused, so we got into some of those things. John said the other issue about using Polk Valley Park was Bob mentioned that they would need to get the trainers and their equipment moved up there. There are some logistics there for the school. Jack said Bob did not say here's the schedule, this is when I need a field. We never got down to talking about that. Jack said Bob can come to the next meeting and explain his needs. The meeting might be changed to early November. The plan is if the candidates for the peer consultant are ready, the group decided to do an interview and it might be before this Partnership meeting in November to select the candidate. Lanita said she's going to send an email to Sandra Fellin and Bob Frey tomorrow and tell them they have to get in touch with Charlie and Jack and get some basis for the board to make some decisions. If the study takes two or three months, she feels they are going to need to vote on it before then. Jack said the study will take longer than that. It could take up to a year. Lanita said then they need to seriously keep talking. John said we are going to have to do this on our own without the peer-to-peer study. Lanita said she'll put it in their hands now. She asked who is on the committee? Jack said John Bate, Gail Nolf, Phil Weber, Glenn Kern, John Landis, Dave Spirk, and Bob Frey. That would be the same thing as another group coming to the Township or the Borough saying we need a field. The school is a priority group in the Township policy, so we'd have to sit down and talk. John said Bob mentioned to him that what he was worried about was if he was to use a field up at Polk Valley Park that would almost have to be designated as their field for that sporting event. It's just something we need to sit down and talk. Jack said the school would be a priority, but we have other teams who have been using the fields. We'd have to sit down and talk about it. John said the worst case scenario would be to go on the road and not have home games.

3. **Roads & Traffic – (Polk Valley Road/412 Intersection HOP Application)** – Jack said he didn't get an update from our Township Engineer on this. They did say that PennDOT is anticipating approving it this fall, so there's still some time for them to do that and get it back to us. He has to get another update. He doesn't know of any problems. We are still waiting for approval from PennDOT. Charlie said this is getting resubmitted for a grant from the casino money.
4. **Joint Enterprise Zone with City of Bethlehem** – Update – Charlie said there is not anything new. The last time he talked to the person over in the Planning Office, he said they are still working out their details in Bethlehem.
5. **Saucon Valley Compost Center** – Update – Charlie said the Compost Center is doing fantastic. The last time he reported the participation rate is up 16% from last year. It's just doing great. Jack said Lehigh County is talking about closing their compost center and that's going to be a real problem for the municipalities, especially Upper Saucon as they used that as a resource to take their yard waste materials to. They also had sub-satellite areas and one was in Upper Saucon. There was equipment there to use for grinding up all the materials, now that's all gone and each of those municipalities has to really scramble. John said does the Union Cemetery use our compost center for their garbage? Charlie said there was an understanding they could call Tom Henshaw and he would go up and unlock the gate. John said they don't have their own key to get in? Charlie said you don't want to do that because of DEP restrictions. John said a couple people have come to him as the residents have been told they have to take their yard waste to the Compost Center. Some people don't have the transportation to move the waste there. They are bringing in someone else to pick up their yard waste. Is there a way we can work on that? John used Bucky's Yard Waste and he came to John's house and picked up his waste and took it up to the Compost Center. He had to take off his signs on the truck so he could take the waste up to the Compost Center. Mayor Fluck said he doesn't have a way either to get rid of his waste. Charlie said Tom Henshaw talks about the stickers on the trucks, but what we really said was that the residents need to have some kind of proof that they are having a commercial guy pick up their yard waste. That's where the problem is.

Mayor Fluck said he was doing it himself with someone else's truck that had stickers on the truck. Jack said as long as there is some identification, it was supposed to be okay. Priscilla said everyone knows her husband has an excavating business, and if he was be hired by John to take away his yard waste, what's the difference, he's a contractor so he's always hired by people to go there, so how do you split his and John's? Charlie said it's supposed to be for residents to drop off yard waste. If it's just a landscaper who happens to be working in the area and they say they are just going to go and dump it at the closest place, they can't do that. Priscilla said if that property owner is not a Lower Saucon Township or Hellertown resident, he can't dump there. Jack said correct. Charlie said he had an incident where the Hellertown Diner owners came in because their landscaper went to the Compost Center as they were pulling bushes out for the diner, and they can't take that up to the Compost Center. Those landscapers generally have a contract with someone to haul the waste. It was made for residents. Jack said we had a gentlemen who had a section of Lower Saucon where he organized the residents to collect their leaves, and he got someone to come in to pick them up and that person contacted the Township and was able to dump the leaves as he was working directly for the homeowners. John said this is an issue that comes up periodically. He's pushing for a curbside pickup for early spring. If you have someone that doesn't have a vehicle and they hire Bucky, he goes up and there's an issue. Charlie said if he has some kind of paper saying he's working for the resident, that's what he needs. John said you need to get that out to the public saying if you hire someone, he has to take a paper with him to the Compost Center. Jack said we need to have a meeting of the Yard Waste Committee and we could talk about that and get it ironed out with the staff that is up there. Mayor Fluck said a lot of seniors can't afford to hire somebody to take their waste away. Priscilla said the flower shop in Hellertown is a Hellertown business and it's in the Borough, why shouldn't they be allowed to go there even if they have a commercial truck? Charlie said it's the guidelines that were set up. Priscilla said it's only for residents. Lanita said that's not right, that's discrimination. That needs to be addressed. They pay taxes here too. Charlie said the commercial people are still doing a commercial business. Lanita said let's change the picture. For example, Ann Hunsicker has her dentist office all nice and she's a business. If she was doing work at her property, that's the business and she needed to get rid of yard waste, she pays taxes here, she should be able to utilize that service. Charlie said if you change the rules that we are operating under, yes she could. The rules are the rules and this is the way we set this up. Jack said we did say places like the cemetery and the golf course, if they had somebody who came and was removing yard waste, could call Tom or Roger and they would go up, unlock the gate and allow them to go in and dump it. We don't want it to be abused and allow every landscaper who is working in Hellertown and Lower Saucon to just go up there and dump their waste. Charlie said that's what needs to be brought up with the Committee. Priscilla said getting back to the dentist, if she had a regular pickup truck with no markings on it, she could take her stuff there and nobody would question her. If she pulls in there with a truck with markings on it, it's a commercial business and they tell her she can't come there. Jack said we're kind of in the middle somewhere. It's not one way or the other. Charlie said he feels bad for the Public Works guys as they face this every day as someone comes in and they want to dump something. They have to set some rules. When they enforce it, everyone says they are doing the wrong thing. We can change the rules; we just need to do it with the Committee.

6. **Act 32 EIT Tax Collection Districts** – Update – Jack said there isn't any update. They appointed the collector, Keystone. Keystone is located out in Westmoreland. Tom said Keystone also has Lehigh County. Jack said that Ed had pointed out that Berkheimer is still going to be collecting real estate taxes. Keystone is just doing EIT taxes.
7. **Fire Services** - Update – Jack said the fire services continues to meet. The Fire Chiefs are still meeting and working together on operational type issues. They put out the press release recently to update everyone on what they were able to accomplish in a year. They are training together. They are operating together. They to go the nearest station to respond to calls. They are able to operate each other's apparatus. The other part of it is the administrative staff people and the treasurers of the five fire companies. They started to meet with Jack, Charlie, Cathy Gorman and Tina

Krasnansky. They put together the first draft of a combined budget shows what everybody is getting in and paying out. They are still tweaking that. They want to finalize it so that the elected officials and the public can see what everybody is spending and where the money is coming from. That may surprise people and it's a good item for further discussion. The next thing they are working on is putting together what the budget will look like if they do consolidate into one fire company, but remain in all the fire stations. That would be the first step. Down the road, they are going to have to make decisions about closing stations, merging, etc. The first step would be to consolidate on paper and then we want a budget that shows what the revenues and expenses would be for that merged fire company. We are working on getting some draft by-laws and charters put together and all kinds of other documents to move this process along, and hopefully, in a year or so, we'll have something to come up with. When they are ready to make a decision, they'll have all the information. Lanita said when you move through this, if you could keep in mind, check and see if there were to be a consolidation, how would that impact the residents and their homeowners insurance? Jack said the ISO puts out the fire service ratings and it's based on the level of fire services. He thinks there wouldn't be any change, but he'll get back with answers on that. It's based on the availability of fire hydrants and things like that, so he doesn't think that will change. This is not to decrease anyone's fire service. If anything, it's going to be more efficient. Lanita said she doesn't disagree there, but someone said to her that with the underwriting of homeowners policies, they specifically ask how far away are you from a fire department. She realizes logistically it's a smart move, but don't surprise the residents. Let them know this may happen. Jack said that's a legitimate point. Charlie said we need to get together about the insurance each of the fire companies has. For instance, three of the companies are with Selective Insurance and we need to find out if we can reduce premium costs. In the process of doing that, we're going to cover just what you are talking about. Mayor Fluck said we are just at consolidation and not a merger yet? Jack said the first step would be for them to merge/consolidate on paper and they would remain at their fire stations. In order for them to move to the next step, which is to handle the social halls, we are going to need more help with that end of it. It's going to be a little difficult and you can't do that right off the bat. They are focusing on working together. The next step is to move to that one consolidated fire company that would be called the Saucon Valley Fire Department and that would be on paper and there would be a charter that binds them together, but they'd still be at their own stations. The savings wouldn't kick in as they'd still have to maintain their stations and pay for their own heat and lights, and things like that. We want to show them if we can get through some of the issues we are trying to deal with and lay out a path that they can move further down the road. The big part of that is they are talking about a new fire station. How does that get paid for? How does new fire equipment get paid for? Those are all things that need to be laid out. Priscilla said where would they put the new fire station? Jack said they have no idea. They are just talking now. Mayor Fluck said if they get to that point. it would have to be okayed by the Borough and the Township, just like when we tried to merge with the Police Department and it failed? Jack said yes, the Borough and Township would have to approve it. John said ISO looks at the number and type of apparatus, the number of volunteers, the fire hydrants. John said there are no hydrants in the Wassergass area, and one homeowner was concerned about that but they pointed out to her that next to her house was a pond which had more water than Hellertown has and she was happy with that. The fire companies are doing it right. Dewey Ambulance is going to participate and give their support. Their trucks are getting painted in the same paint scheme and they will support them and move forward. It's a big step. You need to salute your Fire Chiefs as they are saying we need this.

8. **Library Services** – Update – Jack said the library consolidation discussion is now formalized. The Township Library Committee got a proposal from the Hellertown Area Library and they brought that to the Township Council and recommended that further study be done on it. The idea was put forth to form a task force made up of representatives from the Township, the Borough, and the Hellertown Area Library. The two Councils and Library Board have approved that and the next step is for Jack, Charlie and Robin to come up with representatives for this task force. They will bring the names back to the Councils for approval and they are hoping they can get the group

started by the first of next year. The task force will start looking at the feasibility of consolidating library services at Hellertown and the impact on the Borough and the Township. The Township Council wants a report back by this time next year before budget. Mayor Fluck said it was in the Express Times last week. Jack said for the Bethlehem Area Public Library, we approve an agreement with them on a year to year basis and there are plans to renew with them for another year which will be voted on shortly. People were upset that they were going to lose their library services, and that's not the intent of this. It's just a study.

9. **Leithsville Act 537 Plan** – Update – Jack said he spoke to Gar Davidson. They reported they were doing some test borings on the proposed route that went down past the Grist Mill and up through some of the edges of the athletic fields on its way north through the Thomas Iron site and connected to the City of Bethlehem. It looks like what they found out is that the soils along the creek are all alluvial. They are wet once you go down a couple of feet and the water table is very high. The net result of that is that they are concluding, but not officially yet, that they can't do a gravity system underground. They are going to have to look at some other options, which would be to go to pump stations and force mains. The one thing that will do is probably move the proposed line out of the creek area and it could be moved up to higher elevations. John said could that be moved into our rails trail? Jack said we have nothing to say about the sub-surface of the trail. That still belongs to SEPTA. Even in the 30' right-of-way, they'd have to get approval from SEPTA. John said there's only one other way and that's down Front Street. Jack said he thinks they may be looking at an area further west. The Lower Saucon Authority is waiting for an engineering report. Gar did tell Jack that he will update everyone on where they are. John said there was a question that came up that possibly the pipe was a dead issue and the borings were no good and that was the end of it. Jack said they might have to step back and see if they have to reroute it.

10. **Other Issues**

- Priscilla said there's been a request for a zoning change in the Township from Phoebe Ministries. They have been before Township Council in June and September wanting to rezone the property on Skibo and Meadows Road and put in a facility there. There are going to be about 350 units. She wanted to let everyone know there was a request. It's mixed, independent, assisted, skilled, and continuing care. It's before the Planning Commission on October 21st at the Saucon Valley High School in the Audion room, door no. 19 at 7:00 PM. At our Township meeting last week, residents came and spoke under non-agenda items. There were 80 people that came. They didn't want it because the changes they are proposing have issues and hurdles. Heritage developers wanted to put 52 homes in there, but couldn't because they didn't have enough sewer capacity. The EDUs for that site is only like 48 and Phoebe is proposing about 350. The buildings are going to be 80' in height. That's just some of the issues. She's not really thrilled with the proposals. Mayor Fluck said most of the people who opposed it were from Four Seasons and Society Hill. Priscilla said the plan is not before us yet. John said he's interested in it because of the impact it may have on him.
- Lanita said she'd just like to commend the Mayor on his speech a couple of weeks ago at the Mayor's Dinner. Sitting there listening to the speech, our two communities have come a long, long way. It has a lot to do with the leadership on Borough Council and Township Council as well as this COG. She's only been sitting here a short time, but it really made her proud to hear all of the things we have done jointly. When she first moved here, she can remember writing a column about the Hatfield's and the McCoy's. She wants to commend all of you. It's been a beautiful journey, and she's proud to be a resident here. Lanita said it's just been amazing in the last six years. Looking at even what the COG has accomplished is amazing. She doesn't know of many other joint municipalities that are doing what we are doing. Charlie said the LVPC has made complimentary comments also on what the two communities are accomplishing.

- Priscilla said the three Historical Societies actually held a joint lecture last Tuesday and the Tuesday before.
- Priscilla said as a result of the Friday rain events, the Narrows was closed. John said at about 3:00 to 4:00 AM they took a ride down in that area and the fire companies were notified as there was a mud slide. There was a washout on the Narrows. It was mud and rocks that came down on the tracks. Priscilla said supposedly PennDOT is working on it.

F. County Report – Tom Harp

- He said greetings from County Executive John Stoffa who has been on the news lately. You may have noticed this morning Mr. Stoffa presented his budget address to the Chamber at Northampton Community College. Some of the major projects in the County are the new annex of the juvenile center which was opened on September 2nd. It does add 24 new beds for the juvenile offenders and for the first time, 12 beds for female offenders. Up until this point, any female offenders had to be sent out to private facilities, so now at least they can remain in the community, and that's a good thing. It's doing very well so far.
- If you've been at the Courthouse, they are still working on the parking deck. They ran into some snags with it. It's going to be taking longer. Hopefully, it will be done by the end of November.
- The only other immediate capital project is the restoration of the windows in the historic old courthouse. That is going to be done by a Department of Energy grant.
- Our County Executive presented his 2011 budget back on October 1st as required. It's a \$330 million budget. It's \$11 million less than the current year. He asked every department to reduce their budget by 5%. Over 60 positions have been eliminated. We have a large workforce. Overtime has been reduced and we're going from 2,000 to about 1,800 employees. There's efforts being made, but even with next year's budget, they are going to be up about \$14.5 million in the red. What Mr. Stoffa proposed was because of the budget of choices, you either use the \$58 million fund balance that we have, which is a rainy day fund, to take it out of there. That seems like a lot of money, but in two years if the County has to pay for the swaption they got in years before Mr. Stoffa's time and that is going to cost the County \$20 million. That's in October 2012 when it's due. You have to look at that. You have to look at negotiated wages, increases there and so forth. No one wants to raise taxes. If they did, it would be a 2 mill tax increase which would be about 18.5% or they could continue to make additional cuts, so those are your choices. In the new budget, the only new items other than the operations of the various county departments are \$3.7 million for open space preservation. There are four components of the open space. There is farmland preservation, municipal parks, county parks and then wetlands. That might be one that's on the chopping block. If that's something for next year that you do have some interest, that might be something you might want to advocate. Jack said we still have money left in the fund and they are going to be there tomorrow in front of the Open Space Board as the Township is applying for Steel City Park development. Tom said there's \$1 million for jail renovation and \$750,000.00 to lease DUI treatment center in West Easton. Mr. Stoffa said they've given up on the Bethlehem Township Treatment Center for a number of reasons. After four years of fighting, they are trying to get the Township to allow it. What they discovered was the consultant that came into the County six years ago and said our population at the prison would be going from 800 inmates to over 1,500 by 2010 was wrong. The prison population actually stayed the same. It hasn't gone up significantly. One of the things is the community education center which is in there now dropped the recidivism among those graduates. Traditionally, the recidivism rate has been about 69%. With this program, it drops down to about 20%. With the DUI center, that will house 100 people and these are people that are in there for DUI charges who have to spend time in jail, but you don't want them necessarily spending time with the hardened criminals in the hardened cell blocks. This will give them a chance to get some treatment and services; and hopefully, they don't keep returning. That's in this budget also that might get cut. The budget continues to fund Gracedale even though it might be sold next year. It's a 183 page budget book. It's online so you can go and look at it. Budget hearings began yesterday. The next one is scheduled for October 19th at 4:00 PM in the Council meeting room.

- The next Council meeting is October 21st and it's quite possible they may bring it up and Mr. Angle may come up with his own budget as he's looking for a budget of his own. It goes on and on. Mr. Stoffa is not interested in raising taxes. The only way any of this is going to work over the next two years is if something happens at Gracedale. They reported last time that we went through this operational study on Gracedale, a complete health care resources study. The report is available on line which is 196 pages. It's very interesting as they do get into every aspect of running a nursing home. The Council has approved a resolution to proceed with looking at RFPs to lease or sell Gracedale. As such, the first thing is to hire a legal firm who has the experience in doing this – converting public nursing home facilities to the private sector. They did an RFQ and had five legal firms that did proposals. A committee including Council members and some administration folks listened to them and got their proposals and they made their recommendation. Probably at the Council meeting next week, they will be approving a contract for them to proceed further. All of this doesn't mean that it's going to be sold. It just means we're going out to explore the market further to try to make the case for the sale which the best estimate says it's going to get the County between \$25 million to \$31 million. It's the fourth largest nursing home in the state of PA and the second largest County-owned public nursing home in PA. The feeling is it will be highly marketable. It will save the County at least \$6 million in the budget. The Council had to contribute about \$6 million the last couple of years. For a long time, we didn't have to do that as Gracedale actually made money. With the Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement situation, and other factors, the County has been subsidizing it. That's happening in Lehigh and a lot of other counties. That's why you are seeing a lot more counties spinning it off. They don't see it necessarily as a County service. It's a business that can be operated possibly a little more efficiently and leveraging other dollars with a private ownership. That's coming out next Thursday at the Council meeting. They will be naming this group which will be going out and doing a complete study. There are also labor issues over there. There are two unions. The Steelworkers which represent the nurses and the social workers and they have a succession clause which means they are fortunate, even with private ownership, they have to accept their contract. That's good for them. There are only 60 some employees out of 680 employees. The rest are all AFSCME. They do not have a successor clause. Mr. Stoffa does support the sale and so does a majority of Council at this time, but that could change. It's going to be their decision.
- They had a joint meeting of the COGs on September 14th in the Chrin Center. There were good presentations. He did send out the minutes and they are pretty comprehensive. The one thing that came up if anyone is interested is the Miracle League which is the baseball league with kids with disabilities. They are planning to build a field at the Chrin Center and has been approved by the Palmer Township Supervisors. They do have a Board of Directors that has been formed to apply for a 501c3. If anyone is interested in joining the board from this area and you know of someone who has a child with a disability, they may want to help children. Let him know as they are welcoming new board members all over the area. They'd like to see someone from this area as it's the Miracle League of Northampton County. If you know of anyone, let him know.
- They had their Voter Hall of Fame event on September 23rd. It was a great affair. They had it up at Plainfield Township Volunteer Fire Company. They had about 120 voters who were there and received their certificates – inductees in the Hall of Fame. These are voters who have voted in at least 50 consecutive elections without missing one. They actually had one lady there from Bushkill Township who voted in 74 straight elections. She's 95 and back then it was 21 when you could vote. It was a great event and it was great for them. There were over 360 people there. With the guest and dignitaries, it was very nice. That's a good example of good citizenship.
- Tom Dittmar was in charge of the recycling events. The first one was. October 2nd and it was the E-cycling event at Nazareth Intermediate School. There were 314 cars and 1.5 tractor trailer loads of electronic scrap. The household hazardous waste event on October 9th went okay. Tom Dittmar was a little bit disappointed. He wanted 2,000 cars to come through. There were only 1,200 cars, which was less than last year even with all of the publicity and everything else. He said the weight figures weren't in, but he said there were 2,700 lbs. of car batteries collected which components are recyclable in those. He did say only 15 cars were from Hellertown and 23 from Lower Saucon Township. When people came in, they did surveys. They want to see where people are coming

from. They are doing this from a marketing standpoint for the future, they may need to do more advertising here or wherever. Half of the cars were from Bethlehem, Easton and Two Rivers area, Palmer, Forks, that area. Priscilla said the 9th was Columbus Day weekend, and a lot of people may have gone away as it's a three-day weekend. They may want to do it on another weekend. Tom said he will mention that.

- He said regarding the emergency responder training, Northampton Community College was seeking a \$125,000.00 grant to pay for courses for first responders and using some of that County share of the gaming dollars. John said the fire school is coming in with a grant with the uncommitted funds. Tom said some of the communities like the Nazareth COG got a sample letter from Jay Finnegan, who is Chair of the Gaming and Economic Development Authority. He was wondering if you got a similar request. John said he knows the fire school is doing something with some kind of mobile platform for training. Tom said these are courses through the Community College. Priscilla said how does a chair person support something without bringing it to the board? She is not aware of it as they did not vote on it. Jack looked at the letter and said it wasn't from Jay Finnegan. Somebody put together a sample letter of support to send to the communities to tell them to send this in to the attention of Jay Finnegan, the Gaming Authority Chairman. They want the municipalities to send in letters of support.
- John asked Tom where he took the question about the highway. Tom said immediately after the last meeting, he emailed John Conklin with those concerns. The one concern was with the fire ban because of the drought at the time, which was last month. The other one was about the barriers at Route 78. What he said is it is on PennDOT's TIP. He was under the impression if not next year, sometime soon, and he knows Bob Mateff is aware of it too. You were looking for more advocacies. John said he was looking at the County Council sending out letters of support or sending it to PennDOT and telling them they need to move this forward. When you enter from Lehigh County to the Jersey line, there's just too many. Lanita asked if it would be helpful if a letter was written to the County? John said Hellertown has no coverage, it's Lower Saucon. Jack said they can bring something back to the next meeting and you can endorse it and then they'll take it to the Councils for approval. Tom said the County Executive could also write a letter saying it has come to our attention. John said they have taken a look at it and the angle the cars are coming across the highway doesn't make any sense. Some have been cut off by tractor trailers; some have not made the bend; and some simply just drive across. They had one just the other night at mile marker 65 or 67, a car came from the eastbound side, went across the median and launched right into the field where you come off of the exit. It's east or westbound. Something has to be done as most of those accidents in our area are crossovers. He's seen the troopers up there more trying to control the speed. Lanita said she thinks you need to do it together, and get as much power behind it as you can. John said he mentioned something to Tom Dietrich from County Council. Tom said when he sees Tom, he will mention to him that maybe he could introduce a resolution that could go on the record and go to Harrisburg. He's well aware of it. Priscilla said the letter should also go to the LVPC.

G. Citizens Commenting on Non-Agenda Items

H. Events Calendar

<http://sauconvalleycalendar.blogspot.com>

- Priscilla said Hellertown-Lower Saucon Chamber is having a Hellertown Haunting Mixer which is going to be held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 20th. The cost is \$13.00 and will be held at the Historical Hellertown Grist Mill on Walnut Street. The brochure says: "Join us for an evening of networking and local folklore at the Historic Grist Mill in Hellertown. We are excited to have regionally renowned historian and author, Charles Adams, III, bring to life the local legends he has written about in his book, Ghost Stories of the Lehigh Valley. Mr. Adams will have his book available for sale and to sign."
- Priscilla said on Sunday, October 24th they have the Saucon Valley Halloween Parade at 2:00 PM.

- Priscilla said on Friday, October 29th is Trick or Treat night from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM in Hellertown and Lower Saucon Township.
- Jack said for your information, Linda Costa sent something in about the PA COG next year in 2011. Tom said the one this year was poorly attended. Priscilla said that conflicts with the Barn Tour next year which is on September 10th.

I. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Lanita, seconded by Priscilla. The time was 8:48 PM.

J. Next Meeting: November 10th @ Lower Saucon Township; December 8th @ Saucon Valley School District