

SAUCON VALLEY PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2009
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Hellertown Borough

- A. **Call to Order:** The Saucon Valley Partnership meeting was called to order by Charlie Luthar on October 14, 2009 at 7:04 PM at Hellertown Borough.
- B. **Roll Call: Present:** Glenn Kern, Ed Inghrim, Jane Balum, Mayor Fluck, Susan Baxter, Priscilla deLeon, Charlie Luthar. Guests: Tom Harp, Joe Pampanin
- C. **Council of Governments**
1. **Minutes of the September 9, 2009 Meeting** – Motion by Ed, second by Jane for approval of the September minutes. All in favor.
 2. **Treasurer’s Report** – Charlie said there are two reports. One is the fund balance for the SVP which is \$9,924.26. There were no expenses in September. The other side, you’ll see the SVP comprehensive plan funding of \$6,326.20. Motion by Ed, second by Sue to approve the Treasurer’s report. All in favor.
 3. **Approval to pay bills (if any)** – There was a bill in September from EPD for August 1 to August 31 of \$850.47. Jack has reviewed this and it is valid and he recommends payment. Motion by Mayor Fluck, second by Ed, to pay the September bill. All in favor.
 4. **Request from Northampton County for Associate/Non-Voting Status** – Approval of County Non-Voting Associate Membership – Motion by Ed, second by Priscilla for approval. All in favor.
- D. **Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan**
1. **Implementation of Recommendations in Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Plan**
 - a. **Zoning Audits** - Charlie said Jack has actually started the grant application for the LUPTAP grant. One of the things that are required is a letter from LVPC for consistency. He’s received phone calls and so has Jack from Mike Kaiser. They are not 100% sure what the LVPC’s issue is, but Mike is saying they will give a letter to support the grant. They are 100% behind us, they have no problem with what we are doing, but he doesn’t want to be a “consistency policeman” for the state. Jack and Charlie have a meeting set up for next Tuesday to meet with Mike and Olev. They are not sure what the problem is. Mike asked for a copy today of the consistency requirement that is required by DCED for the LUPTAP application and Jack did get that to him. Priscilla said she thinks that the LVPC would have to amend their plan and go through all the public hearings. It’s going to cost money. It won’t be a simple resolution change. Maybe you could ask them when the County Comp Plan is up for revision. Charlie said they will meet next week and find out exactly what the issue is. They are going to need a letter from them, it is required by LUPTAP.
 - b. **Joint Recreation Study Committee** – Charlie said all the entities all agreed to proceed with this study committee. Bob Frey from the school district said he can host the event, so it’s up to us to get all the parties together. Gail Nolf and John Bate would like to be on the committee. Priscilla said it would be appropriate to see if the Township Parks & Recreation Board would like to be on the committee? What about insurance? We used to have a joint recreation board and then there was some sort of issue in the 80’s with insurance. She wonders if the insurance each of us have would cover the joint board? Ed said that’s an interesting question. Priscilla said that would be important. Ed said the school has insurance and he’s pretty sure it only covers the school activities.

Priscilla said we might need to check into that. Charlie said he will follow up with Bob Frey as that's a good question to kick off before we go any further. He will also talk to Jack.

E. Brief Reports and Discussion Items

- 1. Casino Impacts Funding – update** – Priscilla said they had their first meeting of the County Gaming Authority. Mayor Yob was elected Chair. It was held at Northampton County on September 30. There were nine people present. They were trying to come up with a meeting date that was good for all of them. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 26 at 5:30 PM. It's at County Council chambers. They are going to come up with by-laws. Technically the committee doesn't exist until their term begins in January. They are doing this to get organized so they aren't struggling. There was a lawyer at the meeting who gave a Power Point presentation showing what was in the law and what was covered. There were a lot of things that the law doesn't cover. She'd like to match up what is the law versus what is procedure or policy. She is going to try to get a copy of the Power Point. They have their work cut out for them. They will become a separate entity in January. They will need to come up with staff, administration, an Attorney, etc. She will keep you informed.
- 2. Joint COG Projects (Joint Skate Park Facility)** – Charlie said the Borough Council met on Monday. Gail made some comments. Jane said Gail was vocal in the fact that the City of Bethlehem is breaking ground for a state of the art skate park. Since nobody that wanted the skate park was willing take ownership for it, it was put it aside. The first round was with the kids that came to the Council meetings to express their interest; those kids are all gone and have jobs. They are out of that phase. We all agreed with Gail. Mayor Fluck said he received a letter from three kids from school about it and Council directed him to write a letter, which he did, but no one showed up at any of the meetings or showed any interest.
- 3. Roads & Traffic – (Polk Valley Road/Walnut St. intersections; School Zones; Update on SR 412 Resurfacing Project) –**

Polk Valley Road – Charlie said there wasn't anything further on Polk Valley Road. There was a signal cable installed under 412 from the McDonald's side over to the side where the shopping center was. Jack is still working with PennDOT to get the approved intersection drawings. There was some interest from McDonalds asking what was going on. They had not been interested in this project, but now since they've seen activity, they are asking.

Walnut Street - Charlie said today they started to tear up the handicap ramp on the southwest corner. Of the four of the handicapped ramps that they put in last year, three have been torn out and they are in the process of putting them back. The problem one, they are working on now which PennDOT had made them work on because of some problems on something that happened out in Pittsburgh. After the ramps are completed, there are some issues with a property owner that need to be settled, but then it should be up and running.

Skibo and Friedensville Road – Charlie said he doesn't know too much about those two roads.

Apple Street – Charlie said the Borough received compliments on the Apple Street speed limit reduction. Bob Linney, who is a resident on Apple Street, has been complimentary on the changes.

School Zones - Charlie said he did get an email from Wally Zimpfer who wanted an update for the board on the costs. Charlie asked Tom Henshaw to go back and get the price for all the signs. Wally asked if the school district was responsible for all the signs, and Charlie said it is part of the PennDOT agreement, which we agreed to follow. Susan said there are so many signs around the school. Ed said regulations are regulations. Charlie will get a response back to Wally

Update on SR 412 Resurfacing – Charlie said this has been an interesting project. It got too cold to do paving this week. They have until the end of this month to finish the road. Priscilla said if they

don't finish it, what about the little bumps sticking up when the plows go through. Ed said PennDOT does have the criteria of when they can pave, and if it gets to a certain temperature or a certain date, they shut down. Priscilla said the pedestrian crosswalk signs are not there. Charlie said that is correct. None of them are painted. Hopefully they will get better weather and can work on it next week. It will take them three nights to do it. We're going to get epoxy crosswalks which would last like ten years instead of painting it. The other thing will be pedestrian warning signs. That's all coming, but dependent on the weather. Charlie said if they do pave next week, the handicapped ramps won't be done, so they will excavate around the curbs again

4. **Joint Enterprise Zone with City of Bethlehem – update** – Charlie said he hasn't heard anything on this besides the ladies name he mentioned last month. They are definitely keeping us in mind for amending the enterprise zone.
5. **Saucon Valley Compost Center – update** – Charlie said it continues to do very well and they are getting excellent turnouts. He's sure they are 10% ahead at the last year's count. They will be open until the last Saturday in November. They are closed the day after Thanksgiving. In January, they will come back for four or five Saturdays for Christmas trees. There was a group that came to Borough Hall to volunteer to collect the Christmas trees. Mayor Fluck said there's a Boy Scout project where they will charge \$5 to collect the trees from the residents and they are supposed to go to LST for their permission.
6. **Tax Reassessment: Act 32 EIF Tax Collection Districts – update** — Ed said their first official meeting is scheduled for October 22. An earlier meeting was held at Williams Township. There are 46 entities on this committee. Eight school districts, and all the other are municipalities. More than half of them showed up. It was obvious at the meeting that chaos will reign. They decided to form a preplanning committee which he is on just to get it going. It will be very time consuming. The people who will probably volunteer will be business managers from school districts. The people who are on this committee are the Mayor of Bath, the Township Manager of Williams Township, Business Manager of Lower Nazareth and Nazareth School District, Ed representing Hellertown, LST and the SVSD. There's the Business Manager from Easton. There's a fellow who showed up from the Lafayette College Meyner Center who seemed to be very vocal. The committee met and they put together a set of proposed by-laws which he will forward to Jack and Charlie as eventually we have to vote on them. They will be meeting again tomorrow to basically review the proposed by-laws, come up with proposed agenda for the general meeting on the 22nd with a list of the candidates who had submitted their names for the various positions on the tax commission itself. The tax commission will consist of a chair, vice chair, etc. They will have overall responsibilities in terms of leading the 46 entities down the path of officially passing by-laws, so forth and so on. The group will then have to come up with some recommendations. They will have to hire people. The operating committee will be responsible for the day to day collection of taxes, auditing, reconciliation, etc. We all have to pay our fair share and the fair share is based on the weighted voting average that was put together by the DCED. Initially we are going to come up with a recommendation for a starting budget of about \$50,000 which means we'll have to pay \$1,000 or so, it won't be much. His own sense is it's going to be chaotic and not going to save us any money at all. He believes it will eventually cost us money. We still have to collect property and per capita taxes. He doesn't know that it will generate any more money. This could all get done if the state would add two more lines on the state income tax form. Tom said it would make more sense for the state to do the collection. It's something that they passed last year. He will be at the meeting tomorrow night and they will go over what they believe will be the election process. The voting will be based upon your weighted vote. As you go down the ballot, it will have to be adjusted by percentages. They have a tentative agenda for next week. The meeting had to be moved to the Jury Lounge at the Courthouse on the first floor. Ed said the weighted vote is probably good, as there are eight school districts and they represent more than 50% of the vote. Dave Bonenberger has been very active on this Act 32 process; and hopefully, we can get Bethlehem Township on board. Priscilla said when she was at the PSATS conference, she attended the meeting they had on Act 32 and there was discussion about people who are self-employed and how they are supposed to file their estimated taxes, and nobody knew what to do with that. Ed said

that's why he suggested the state do it since everybody has to file. Priscilla said right now, whoever collects our tax, that entity has to approve the list every year; so ultimately, it's the municipalities who control the list. That's what they were complaining about and that's why we had to do this as we weren't getting the money from everyone. Ed said because you have these different tax collection entities, if you don't know exactly what township this person lives in, what they've seen is they look at the mailing address and it says Bethlehem, and then it goes to Bethlehem. Half of Lower Saucon has a Bethlehem address. It could be settled very simply by a code. Every school district has a code. By adding a two character code that represents the municipality, you've solved the problem. When you fill in your state income tax, they ask for your school code. It's a state law now, so we have to go down this path

7. **Rail to Trails** – Charlie said the Rail Trail attorneys have met. There was pretty much in agreement with the four attorneys except in one area where SEPTA had an issue with the arbitration which is the way to settle disputes. The rest of the agreement was as we wished. In terms of when SEPTA will act on it, it was too late to go on their October board meeting, so it will be in November. The Rail Trail Advisory Committee continues to meet. The first meeting was in August. There was another one in September. The group had a presentation from the Ironton Rail Trail organization. There were a number of people in the audience, from LST, in particular. There was a good dialogue going on and Ironton's example of what they've done between the three entities, they have a trail that is ten miles long and have really done a great job. He has some handouts. It got the group enthusiastic about working and the way they've tentatively put the by-laws together as they must be approved first, they originally said there would be quarterly meetings, one every three months. The group decided to have meetings every month and Ironton's group said you have to do that when you are starting. Joe Hoffman was present and they are applying for grants. He's going to research and get more information back. Steve Labrake, the bike owner in Hellertown, and Frank Pazzaglia, both of them have volunteered to help in writing grants. There's a lot of enthusiasm. The next meeting is October 26th at 5:00 PM in Coopersburg. We'll see where that goes. It was a very good dialogue. Glenn said how is Coopersburg involvement? Charlie said not very active yet. The Borough Manager was at the last meeting. She explained they have a lot of activities going on right now. We have not heard anything from Upper Saucon where they stand with their advisory committee members. We're just pressing ahead. There is only a small amount of the trail in Coopersburg. Hellertown probably has about 1-1/2 miles. LST has about 3 miles, and Upper Saucon is bigger. Priscilla said what's below Coopersburg? Charlie said a small segment before you hit the Bucks County line. Priscilla said what happens if Coopersburg doesn't maintain their section. Glenn said right now Upper Saucon is planning on terminating the rail at their park. Priscilla said how are people supposed to go from one end to the other? Glenn said it would be at the trail head. That's the preliminary concept. Charlie said in terms of Upper Saucon what has come up with their attorneys is the Lutron Plant which they are trying to work out. The rail line goes through Lutron and Lutron says they don't want the path through their property. He thinks there was some positive movement from Lutron. Charlie said they want to go forward regardless of what the other communities do. Glenn said it's a nice section from Hellertown through Lower Saucon.
8. **Fire Services – update** – Charlie said he doesn't know if there were any further changes. The Chiefs are meeting though. Glenn said at our last Council meeting, they updated the policy for the employees to make future hires with PW know they are going to be getting involved with fire training as part of the employment process.
9. **Leithsville Act 537 Plan – update** – Charlie said the LSA is working on this. They did authorize a study to begin.

- F. **Other Issues** - Ed said the school has a strike going on now. This morning when the teachers arrived at school and started to picket, a number of the teachers were picketing on the sidewalk along the school property. Wally went out and said to them they had to move as it was private property. The union representative said there was an easement and it was public property and they had a right to be there. They contacted their Solicitor who spoke with various people and it was determined there was no easement on

the sidewalks, and the easement stopped at the curbs. The LST police told the teachers they had to move to the other side of the road. Later on in the afternoon, the Chief contacted our business manager and Wally, and said if people started picketing on the school property again, they would not ask them to leave. They said as long as they were peaceful, they weren't going to do anything. This presents a problem for the SVSD because we said its private property and we asked them to move, and now we're saying tomorrow its okay for them to use sidewalk, what happens the next day when they want to go on the grass? The SVSD School Board's solicitor said they can get an injunction, but the last place the board wants to be is in court with a judge who tells us we have to settle the contract dispute and we have to go to a hotel for the next three weeks, so we'd like to avoid that. He'd like them to find out what's going on. Priscilla said would our people be able to strike on township property? No one knew the answer. Glenn said they will try to find out what happened. Ed said they wanted to keep the resident picketers separate from the teachers. They don't want any picketing on the school district property.

- G. County Report – Tom Harp** – Tom said John Stoffa presented the proposed 2010 County budget this morning at a Greater Lehigh Valley breakfast, which does include a one mill increase. If you'd like to see the entire budget, it is on the County website in its entirety. Rather than get into a lot of detail, John would have been here tonight, but he had another meeting. One of the issues is we have a reserve fund that has been dwindling for a number of reasons. The administration thought we should retain a two month reserve for operations, and it has paid off for the last two months. A number of the agencies that rely on state money, it has enabled them to continue to operate and provide services. Since the only source of revenue for the County is property taxes, with the building bust and us losing quite a few tax appeals left and right, we're seeing dwindling revenues and increased costs, particularly at Gracedale, and also with our labor contracts as we have eleven unions. There's been a 10% reduction across the board. The proposed budget is \$330 million, which is \$32 million less than this year. Lehigh County elected not to have any increase. John's perspective is to do the 1 mill now instead of 3 or 4 in one year. He's trying to do what he thinks is the proper thing right now. Having a two month reserve, we are able to get very good bond rate. There hasn't been a tax increase for a number of years except for the one for open space. You can read John's budget address in the paper tomorrow.

There are budget hearings scheduled on County Operations such as the prison, human services, etc. If you are interested, feel free to attend. You'll learn a lot about these programs.

Tom Dittmar reported that the E-cycling event on October 3rd up in Nazareth went better than expected. They had 285 cars that dropped off nearly 29,000 lbs. of electronic equipment. Even more successful was this past Saturday, the household hazardous waste event. It was incredible. This year they had about 1,500 cars. They collected 120,000 lbs. of household hazardous waste including nearly 20,000 lbs. of batteries. It's an expensive operation. It will probably end up costing about \$75,000. They are already planning next year's event to get a bigger turnout. Glenn said they have a Jr. Council Program, and the Jr. Council Member came up with a flyer for that event as well as our own event and it was distributed to every parent in the school district. Tom said it was in all the newspapers, on municipal websites. They are finding the best way to market it. That was great that the Jr. Council member did that.

Tom said Tom Dittmar wanted him to do another pitch about a representative to serve on the solid waste advisory committee. Has there been anybody interested at all? Glenn said he did make a phone call to someone, but they weren't interested.

Tom said they talked about Act 32 already, that's been done.

Tom said on September 15th, they had their joint meeting of the Northampton County COGS at Allen Township Municipal building. There were about ten municipalities represented there. They had a big presentation by the US Census Bureau. They will be presenting materials in the next couple of months. They'd like people in the community to participate in this. There are only ten questions on the questionnaire. They are also looking at all the building permits and would like them to be included in the 2010 census. It's not going to be an enormous amount.

Tom said they have an employee newsletter with the County. There was an article on the software that the

County purchased. It's very popular. He understands Hellertown got the software installed on September 22nd. They've already had a couple uses of it. It's been a big help to zoning officials. LST is scheduled for October 20th. It's a really great and handy tool. It is a memory hog and that's why he has to do all these individual files for each municipalities.

Tom said their COG website has been up and running. Most of the four COGs have been posting materials, meeting agendas, minutes, and upcoming events. We're going to encourage people to do that.

Tom said prison forum communities are coming up. There is one tonight in Lower Bethel Township. It's the first one of the annual forum. On October 28th there is one in Easton, November 10th in Bethlehem and December 10th in Cherryville. The meetings start at 10 AM. The purpose is to get public input on strategies to reduce non-violent offenders, like drug, alcohol, DUI's in the county jail. They have a new Director of Corrections, Bob Myers, in Northampton County who is doing a terrific job. These meetings are great to get community input. The forums are really interesting. The meetings are on the County website.

Tom said there is a program coming up through LV Economic Development at the Barrister Club in Allentown. It looks like a good program. There will be some municipal representatives there. Priscilla said for those of you who haven't been here when the COG got founded, Diane Elliot was there and they met and she wanted to work together and get the municipalities and County to work together. She was very much behind us.

H Citizens Commenting on Non-Agenda Items – None

I. Events Calendar

<http://sauconvalleycalendar.blogspot.com>

October 18, 2009 – SV Halloween Parade - Priscilla said she can't make the parade.

October 24, 2009 – Priscilla said this is the second annual SV History Day. Ed told Priscilla to call the school and they can put it on the website. She said we all care about our history and it's great.

October 26, 2009 – Priscilla said this is the Gaming Authority meeting.

October 28, 2009 - Priscilla said the Hellertown-Lower Saucon Chamber sponsors a breakfast and Jack and Charlie will be speaking on the multi-municipal plan. The tickets are \$13.

November 7, 2009 - The Conservancy is holding a fall basket bingo fundraiser at the Dewey Fire Company.

Priscilla asked for an update on the State COG meeting. Tom said he didn't attend. At the Nazareth COG meeting, Dorothy Miklos said it was a good meeting. One subject was the electric rate deregulation and they are invited to their next meeting on the 27th. He can get the information on the group doing the presentation. He heard Ron Angle did a good job of hosting it. It could be on their website, PA COG.

Priscilla said the COG website, would this be appropriate to put the dates for the above events she just spoke about. Tom said sure, have Jack put them on.

J. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn. The time was 8:25 PM.

K Next Meeting: November 11th LST; December 9th SVSD)