

SAUCON VALLEY PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2009
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Saucon Valley School District

A. **Call to Order:** The Saucon Valley Partnership meeting was called to order by Glenn Kern on December 9, 2009 at 7:02 PM at the Saucon Valley School District.

B. **Roll Call: Present:** Mayor Fluck, Jane Balum, Glenn Kern, Ed Inghrim, Lanita Lum, Jack Cahalan and Charlie Luthar. **Guests:** Tom Harp; Stephanie Brown arrived at 7:04 PM.

C. **Council of Governments**

1. **Minutes of the November Meeting** – Ed moved for approval of the November 2009 minutes, second by Mayor Fluck. All in favor.

2. **Treasurer's Report** – Jack said the checking account balance as of November 30, 2009 is \$3,872.42. There was one payment made out of that during the month of November to Environmental Planning & Design for \$1,603.31. The balance in the Treasurer's Report as of November 30, 2009 is \$9,924.26. There were no receipts or bills paid out of that account. Motion by Ed second by Jane for approval of the Treasurer's report. All in favor.

3. **Approval to pay bills (if any)** – Jack said there are no bills to pay.

4. **Approval of Northampton County Associate – Non-Voting Membership – Update** – Jack said we had a request from Tom Harp on behalf of Northampton County to become a member of the SVP. Tom had indicated to us that the County is a member of the other COGs in Northampton County. We realized we had to make an amendment to our agreement in order to accommodate his request. The agreement only indicated that municipalities and school districts in Northampton and Lehigh Counties could be SVP members. We first went to the three charter members and obtained the approval from those three bodies supporting the membership of Northampton County. Secondly, we put together amendments to the SVP Agreement creating an associate non-voting category of membership with annual dues of \$250.00 per year for that type of membership. That was submitted to the three bodies and we have copies of the resolutions that the Township, Borough and School District adopted approving this change in the agreement. There are also copies of the amended SVP agreement that contains the changes. That being done, according to our agreement, Jack stated we welcome Northampton County as a member of the SVP. Tom said thank you very much and thanks for taking the time to really go through this process. It's a good thing for the Partnership, in general, to have this category of membership. The County is the first one, and maybe there will be others.

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

1. **DCED LUPTAP Grant Application** – Jack said we have the application all put together. We had gone over that at a previous meeting. The Township and Borough Councils adopted resolutions approving the submission of the LUPTAP application in the amount of \$12,000.00. It requires a 50% match. Jack advised that we do have some money left in the SVP treasury that is in the account where we've been putting money for the Multi-Municipal plan. That \$3,872 will be supplemented by a sum of money from the Township and the Borough. He and Charlie are in the process of sending letters out to local banks asking for donations towards this project. We hope to make up the difference through their contributions rather than use Township or Borough funds. Charlie said we did get assistance from Wachovia and Lafayette Ambassador Bank last time, so we'll do the same. Jack said we have support letters coming in from the area legislators. He

passed around one that just came in today from Senator Boscola. That will be submitted with the grant application. The only thing he needs to do this evening is to get the Chairman's signature on the form that signifies that the SVP meets on a regular basis. As soon as we get the support letters in, which should be by next week, the grant application will be submitted and we will then have to wait and see what happens at the State level. We had explained that after the adoption of the State budget, the DCED funds were cut from \$7 million to \$700,000. There is very little left for grant opportunities. We are one of the priority groups because we are working on the implementation of the multi-municipal plan so we should have a leg up on other applicants and we have been in touch with Cindy Campbell, the representative from DCED. She looked at our grant information and said that they were going to get together and prioritize their projects. Hopefully, we'll come out on top and get the grant. The next step would be to discuss a consultant to work with us on the project. That is to do an audit of the zoning ordinances in the Borough and the Township. Glenn said do you have any idea of what the available funds would be for a top priority project? Jack said they didn't explain how it was going to be allocated. He believes that the purpose of their meeting was to look at what was left in the DCED pot and to line the projects up in order of importance and decide who was going to get funding. We haven't heard back from her in a couple of weeks.

E. Brief Reports and Discussion Items

- 1. Casino Impacts Funding/County Gaming Authority – update** – Jack said Priscilla is not here tonight, but she's the Township representative on the County Gaming Authority. The group, the Northampton County Gaming Revenue and Economic Redevelopment Authority (NCGRERA), has met three times with the representatives that were appointed from the five contiguous municipalities and the City of Bethlehem and the at-large representatives representing the rest of the County. They divided off into a couple of committees and are working on by-laws, grants criteria and an RFP for a Solicitor. They are working through the process informally as they are not official until January 1, 2010. The next meeting is on Monday, December 14th at the Courthouse. Charlie said Stephanie is the Borough's representative and she has sent around the by-laws, the gaming criteria and the grants. The Borough Council sent comments back to her for the meeting on Monday. Glenn said just think how much money is being spent on determining how to distribute the money.

Tom said Dorothy Niklos the representative to this body from Chapman Borough had to step down. The Nazareth COG recommended Tim Tenges from Lower Nazareth Township to replace her. Instead, the County Council approved Deb Hunter who was a candidate for County Council. She didn't win, but applied directly to one of the Council members and they voted her in over the COG nominee which caused quite a stir. They were furious as it was part of the so-called verbal agreement that it would be the COG that would recommend an individual. Jack asked if she was a resident of the COG? Tom said yes, she's a resident of Nazareth, but not a representative to the COG. That's where the Gaming Authority is.

Jane said didn't the County give money out by now? Tom said they can't as the committee isn't official yet. They have to do it through the Authority. Glenn said part of this committee is deciding how to distribute this money. They are not even close to being there. They are just forming the by-laws now.

Jack said can you talk about what the County Council is proposing to do about using the gaming funds in their 2010 budget? Tom said they are going to use those funds in order to balance the budget. Jack said he read that it was a substantial amount. Tom said he doesn't know how much it is. They had about \$300,000 already, so it's probably more than that. They get a large share. They are going to be voting on their budget tomorrow. Part of it is to use that revenue.

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

Saucon Rail Trail - Charlie said the Rail Trail Advisory Committee has met four times, the last one being at Upper Saucon Township. They are making good progress and looking at things such as the road surface, trail surface, and comparing it to other communities. Ms. Brown was at our last meeting. The next meeting will be on December 28 at Lower Saucon Township. They did have the ordinances for the intergovernmental agreement and it was approved for advertisement in Lower Saucon Township. The same thing happened in Hellertown Borough on Monday. They do have the agreements and the by-laws ready to go as soon as those ordinances are adopted. They really haven't heard much about Upper Saucon. We heard that they approved their lease last night at their Supervisors meeting. Jack said they thought they were waiting for the signed lease to come back from SEPTA before they did this. SEPTA should be signing the lease on December 17 at their Board Meeting. They thought they would do them all together, but for some logistical reason, they decided to do the two townships in December and the two boroughs in January. That pushes Hellertown's approval back until January. It will probably be mid-January before Hellertown and Coopersburg will get approval on their lease that covers their portion of the track. We are moving along and trying to nail down a name. We think it will be called "Saucon Rail Trail". It seems to be the one that everyone is most satisfied with. We are trying to come to an agreement on a surface for the trail. It looks like everyone favors a gravel surface, using screenings or No. 9 stone. That's the cheapest and the easiest to put it down using our Public Works Departments. They can put it down with their machine and roll it. We are trying to get a consensus on uniform signage for the road crossings. Charlie said Hellertown and Upper Saucon would need an agreement with PennDOT as there are PennDOT roads they are crossing. Jack said they are trying to get that all together as quickly as possible so that after the leases are signed, they can move on it as the public is going to want to get on the trail. Ed said if you are dealing with PennDOT approval that might take years. Charlie said the Borough would like to do some work down at the Grist Mill. The pipeline under the track bed feeds the Grist Mill pond, but obviously, they can't do that until January when they get the lease approval. Tom Henshaw has talked to Phil Weber already at Modern Concrete and there is some pipe available that is going to be used to replace that section of pipe. It's pretty deep, so it will be a major project. The quicker we get in there, the better it will be. We do want to walk and inspect the rail trail. We want to make sure that the environmental hazards with the equipment that was left there has been taken care of. Jack said it's been cleared and left alone for some time now and there's been some weed growth that we need to get in there and clean up.

Charlie said the High Street Bridge is a one-lane wooden bridge over the rail trail. The Borough has been complaining to the PUC for many years to have that bridge repaired or replaced. Norfolk Southern owns it and it's in the City of Bethlehem. It's about five feet off of the Hellertown Borough line. Bethlehem did an inspection every two years just as we do on bridges, and in 2006 it was reported that the under pinnings for the west bank of that bridge were failing and they needed to do something to re-support them. It wasn't that it was going to collapse, but it was showing signs of erosion. Bethlehem has been on the PUC list as well as Hellertown to get something done with the bridge. There were a series of meetings that were held with the Borough Engineer and City of Bethlehem representatives, Norfolk Southern, PUC, and PennDOT. Everybody has met at the bridge two or three times over the last two years since that inspection. Finally, a sub-committee of the PUC made a decision earlier this year that they will allow Norfolk Southern to abandon the bridge, fill in the gap that the bridge crosses with stone to within a foot of the grade crossing and have the City of Bethlehem build the bridge across there. They would have to fill in just enough for a one-lane bridge which of course is ridiculous, but that's what they volunteered to do. The City is objecting. The Borough also objected to this. The Borough is not a direct participant, but we are participating with the City on it. The City challenged and in the course of all of this, PUC pretty much said it was okay and they didn't have a problem with it. The City then threw another wrinkle in it and said that DCNR was not invited to those meetings. That was important because of what it's going to do to a possible rail trail through there which will connect to the City's greenway. He doesn't know what Frank Pazzaglia has told them since, but there are fossils a hundred million years old that are in the west wall of that gap. These are not giant dinosaurs. They are tiny little fossils, but he uses them for education of his students at Lehigh and some of the high

schools. We did submit letters objecting to all of that. There was a hearing on December 2 with all of the parties in Harrisburg and the next step is going to be a follow up hearing that is going to occur sometime next year. It will involve Hellertown as well as Mike Alkhal, Darlene Heller and Matt Dorner from the City of Bethlehem, and also the Saucon Rail Trail Committee will be called as witnesses on behalf of the City. DCNR, PennDOT, Norfolk Southern, PUC, all of these folks will also be there. There's hasn't been a date set. Charlie said he is kind of optimistic. He thinks there are enough allies that are against eliminating that bridge for a variety of reasons. He thinks it's going to be a positive ending.

Ed said if you fill that in, how are people going to use the trail? How are they going to get out of the trail with a 25 foot wall there? Charlie said that's exactly our point. There's a lot of positive energy opposed to it. Norfolk Southern's proposal is ridiculous anyway for a one lane bridge. The other thing that is involved is that the steel truss bridge that is beyond this one crosses the Saucon Creek and that is on the 12-year PennDOT TIP list. There are a couple of factors that will come into play. Frank Pazzaglia did a great job on behalf of the Rail Trail Advisory Committee giving us a letter which was quoted as valuable.

Joint Recreation Study Committee - update – Glenn said they met a couple of weeks ago and Bob Frey, the Athletic Director at Saucon Valley School District, is spearheading it. At the last meeting he had his laptop and everyone was feeding him information that was on the blackboard. They are accumulating information such as where the fields are, who is using the fields, what the fields are used for, the playing fields, football, soccer, all of that. It's all accumulated into a database so we can go to the next step which is inviting the different youth groups to see what's available. In addition to the fields, they are looking at the storage sheds and where the storage facilities are. The ultimate goal is to get all the youth groups and people who are involved and using the fields to determine the best usage of the fields and coordinating these fields. It's a good group because they get the work done quickly. Charlie said we have to admire Bob Frey for pulling together the information the group provided because he had a blackboard loaded in that Audion room with all the different things. He also has a contact list of everyone. Glenn said at both meetings we've been finished in less than an hour.

Skate Board Park – Charlie said Hellertown Borough Council addressed that and found the kids who were gung-ho are no longer gung-ho. Jane said that's not the only factor. The skate park they are building in Bethlehem is going to be state-of-the-art.

Stephanie Brown, Meadows Road said one of the things she found on the historic bridge site is in order to have emergency vehicles on the rail trail, the railroad bridges have to be up to Department of Transportation standards. Is that something you are aware of? Charlie said he doesn't think anyone is anticipating emergency vehicles on the trail. Jack said if it has to be accessed for emergency reasons we'll be able to do that, but as far as police and emergency vehicles driving up and down, they aren't going to do that. There are a number of places we will have access to and will be able to get emergency vehicles on the trail.

3. Roads & Traffic – (Polk Valley Road/Walnut St. intersections; School Zones; Update on SR 412 Resurfacing Project; Speed Limits on Skibo & Friedensville Roads) –

Polk Valley Road & 412 - Jack said there is no update on the signal application submitted to PennDOT. Some time ago they did get a copy of the police report that was done by the Hellertown PD about the two youths that were hit by the car and that's been given to our Engineer. At the suggestion of the Council President, Glenn Kern, we were going to submit this information to PennDOT and use it as a reason to ask them to expedite the processing and approval of the signal application.

Walnut Street - Charlie said Walnut Street is basically done in terms of the construction part of it. Stephanie has pointed out that the pedestrian signal doesn't work going south, so they are still

checking it out. They called PennDOT numerous times as they have to check on all the crosswalks they changed and handicapped ramps. They still have some details on the road widening that occurred there to work out with the property owners. Ed said they did a good job repaving 412. It's very, very nice. Lanita said on Polk Valley, how long have you been working on that? Jack said two years. Lanita said anytime there's any type of an accident; we add that to the list? Jack said this last one was because it was school age children. Lanita said she knows sometimes things have happened down there and it's frightening. Jack said there are some conflicts, especially with the left turn and McDonalds, getting in and out. Hopefully that will be resolved when the signal goes up. There were studies done by the Township Engineer looking traffic counts, etc., which were submitted with the application. Since the submittal, we haven't kept track of the accidents at the intersection. Charlie said one time they had a meeting in the Borough with all the parties present. and Chief Balum said there are more accidents internally in the McDonald's parking lot than there were at the intersection. Ed said that's a major ingress and egress for the school district. He can't understand why PennDOT doesn't move on that. Charlie said if you look at what the Township Engineer has done with all the plans and revisions they provided, each time PennDOT's Permit Engineer comes back with two or three pages long of changes. It's unbelievable that they can't expedite it. Ed said they didn't seem to have a problem on Route 33 at the intersection of the Freemansburg Road at the hospital. Glenn said Lanita brings up a good point; we should dig up the accidents that have occurred there. Mayor Fluck said there are a couple of occasions when the school let out and there are accidents. It's been taking a long time. Lanita said they are all young drivers, and it's risky when she's pulling out there. Stephanie Brown said is there a stop sign coming out of McDonalds? Charlie said no. Stephanie said that's where she walks every day, right by McDonalds. Glenn said he wants to talk about this at the next Council meeting, so can we get the Hellertown and Lower Saucon Police accident reports at that intersection?

Speed Limits on Skibo and Friedensville Roads – Jack said regarding Friedensville Road, a letter went into PennDOT after the last meeting for reduction in the speed limit for the approach zone. We'll wait for Joe Rauscher to see what they are going to do. On Skibo Road, the Council decided to take no action on the reduction of the speed limit.

School Zone – Charlie said Tom Henshaw dropped the signs off at the school district and is talking to Roger about the installation. They will be talking to Wally. He did go back because Wally had asked for a different time zone in the center of the day because of the kindergarten classes which was not in the original permit they gave us, so he's still waiting to hear back from Joe Rauscher on that. There is also another school zone they are looking at upgrading, which is at St. Theresa's school. They have to add another time of day in there and upgrade the one flashing signal. The Borough pays for St. Theresa's, but the other one is being shared by the inter-municipal agreement with the school district. Ed said they pay for the signs and the Borough and Township are going to install them. The signs were already approved. Lanita said is the speed limit going to 15 MPH? Charlie said yes. It's three different times, and pretty much the whole day because the campus is consolidated. It's 7 AM to 9 AM; 11 AM to 1 PM; and then 2 PM to 4 PM. It's being done on Walnut and Constitution and Polk Valley Road on the other side.

4. **Joint Enterprise Zone with City of Bethlehem – update** – Charlie said he hasn't heard anything back. He's tried to reach Wayne Wassler from the City who is kind of directing traffic, but he didn't hear anything back from him.
5. **Saucon Valley Compost Center – update** – Charlie said they had an excellent year. To give you an idea, he passed out a handout which is the compilation of statistics for the past three years. Every year it's been increasing significantly. There's been about a 13% increase from last year with almost 5,500 daily visits recorded in the same period of time. Last year it was 4,824. The nice thing he's seeing is the Hellertown folks are regular patrons, but the Township folks are starting to increase, which is really a positive. Especially in the month of November, the individual numbers have really gone up. There was at least one day that the number of Township folks was a greater number than the Borough folks, which doesn't happen frequently. It's excellent and doing

a great job. Tom Henshaw is going to try to get the mulching machine in sometime within the next couple of weeks and mulch up the material and then we get a tonnage estimate from that which we use for our recycling reports. We are going to be open four Saturday's in January for Christmas tree drop-offs.

6. Act 32 EIT Tax Collection Districts – update – Ed said he missed the last meeting on the TCC, so he's not sure what happened. They are meeting tomorrow and they are going to actually get presentations from four Solicitor firms who are vying for the Solicitor position for the TCC. They got updated by-laws which he sent a copy to everyone; and hopefully, they will get approved tomorrow. Tom said the second meeting of the group, the County hosted it on November 12 at the Courthouse. There was another good turnout. They had 40 out of 46 municipalities and school districts present. It was a very good meeting and very well run by the Chair. He did a great job. The Meyner Center from Lafayette did a great job facilitating things. They asked the delegates representing the municipalities and districts for their recommendations for a Solicitor, so it was a select group, a total of eleven. They sent out the RFPs, now they are narrowing it down and doing interviews tomorrow night at Bethlehem Township at 6 PM. Ed said he's surprised they changed the meeting time to 6 PM in the evening. Tom said there could be somebody raising that as an issue tomorrow. Ed said you have a lot of Managers from the townships and boroughs and you have elected people who are working. Tom said yes, it's finding that balance. Ed said we will never get 100% participation. Tom said he thinks it will drop off obviously, but for now, the groups are doing well. Ed said the fact that over 50% of the representation there is basically the schools is great. Tom said he will keep you posted. Ed said with many things coming out of Harrisburg, it's a total waste. The theory in Harrisburg was they wanted to consolidate the collection of EIT. They said there are too many collections agencies involved so it's too complicated. When you really look at the EIT taxes, it represents a small percentage of the income to the schools and municipalities, so even if we decide to settle on a single collection source by the County, he doesn't think we are going to see any savings to the municipalities, boroughs and schools as we still will have to collect the per capita taxes and so forth. Glenn said the point was to have one collection agency to cut costs? Ed said yes and to reduce errors and accelerate the collection of revenue. That is the theory behind it. It is possible that the TCC could join with Lehigh County to have a regional collection agency which might make a little more sense. It's also possible that the TCC could decide not to outsource the EIT, but to actually create an internal organization which would be responsible for collecting the EIT. The school districts around here already collect the EIT, so there are a lot of different options and it really boils down to what makes sense and what's the best choice in terms of the resources we would have to add. This is going to add to the bill. He may be wrong, but we shall see. It's creating another bureaucracy, another commission. The commission will take on a life of its own. It will have a Solicitor, staff, etc. Somehow they think that a new bureaucracy will save us money. We are unique in the sense we are the only COG that has a single representative on that committee. Every other one has two or more. Lanita said is it possible the committee may come up with a solution that does not save any money and we can then decide to not do anything? Ed said he doesn't think that's a choice. It's the law. The county has been very helpful. He has nothing but respect for Mr. Stoffa, the County Executive, as he's really doing a great job.

7. Fire Services - update – Jack said in Lower Saucon Township, at the last Council meeting, we recognized Se-Wy-Co Fire Company for achieving a certification of 100% of their active members. They all have a fire fighter Level 1 of training. This took about seven years to achieve that. They are the first fire company in Lower Saucon and the first fire company in Northampton County to achieve this level. State-wide, out of approximately 2,400 fire companies, there are only about 39 of them that have achieved this certification. The Council was very proud to recognize Se-Wy-Co for their accomplishment. Also, Dewey Ambulance will be coming to the Council in January and announcing they will be providing both Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) services to the Borough and the Township. Previously, we had to go to Bethlehem Township to get ALS services. It use to be two ambulances responding when there was a call, Dewey and Bethlehem Township. The one was BLS and the other was ALS. Sometime in

January, John was saying all those services would be in one truck. That's something that is very positive. Ed said how is the campaign going to solicit more firefighters? He sees signs all around the Township. Jack said that's an ongoing activity that they are working on together for recruitment. Charlie said the Fire Chief, Rick at the Dewey really hasn't said too much about it. All of the companies chipped in together to get those signs and share the cost of them. Jack said they had an open house at Se-Wy-Co and according to the Chief, there were people waiting to get in when they opened up the gates. Hopefully, they'll get one or two volunteers out of that.

8. **Leithsville Act 537 Plan – update** – Jack said no update.
9. **Other Issues** – Charlie said Borough Council was asked to help support the Hellertown Library with additional funding this year. It was a difficult year for the Council as everything is going up in cost. To try and fund their request for an additional \$7,000 was just beyond question. Robin Rotherham spoke to Council a couple of times and did again on Monday night and explained that the PA ACCESS program is being eliminated in the state and what that means to the library is not only will there be a loss in the future, but a loss for the year because they were entitled to receive \$4,000 for this year and they won't receive the future payment either from the PA ACCESS for 2010. Council asked that we bring this up at the Partnership to consider a regional approach to supporting the library. Robin explained to the Council what cuts she has to make in her budget for next year. Borough Council did approve providing the Library in-kind services for mowing and for snow plowing which will save them about \$4,000 in the budget. We talked about various options. The funding cuts will be affecting all libraries throughout the state. Jack said we went through that at the Township with our Library Committee. One of the things they were looking at was the contribution that the Township makes to the Bethlehem Area Public Library (BAPL). We also have an agreement with them that we renew each year. We had some issues with the agreement and we brought that to Council. Funding was an issue that was particularly difficult this year because every library was waiting for the State budget to get resolved and they were anticipating there would be cuts. We were concerned because we were hearing that some of the cuts would be passed on to the supporting municipalities. We were concerned about that and talked to the library. The end result was that the City of Bethlehem stepped up and agreed to pay for additional expenses for the library for 2010. Our contribution for 2010 is going to be the same as it was in 2009. We have notified them that we would like to renegotiate the agreement. The Council asked the Library Committee to look into other options, particularly the Hellertown Library or the Southern Lehigh Library in Upper Saucon Township. That is something that the Library Committee intends to look into this year and come back to Council with recommendations and options for library services in the future. Today in the Morning Call there was an article stating that Upper Saucon Township will be reducing their contribution to Southern Lehigh which will force some adjustment in their hours. Charlie said that Hellertown Borough contributes \$55,000 to the library. Glenn said the Township contributes \$167,000 to the BAPL and it's been going up and up and up. Lanita said why do we have to have our residents go to Bethlehem? Why can't we say we want our residents come to Hellertown and pool those funds into Hellertown? Jack said one of the things we did last year was to send out a survey on library services to residents. It wasn't to the whole Township, but overwhelmingly the people who responded said they liked getting library services from the BAPL. There's another segment of people in the Township who like to go to the Hellertown Library, such as mothers with young children for story times, teens; so 50% of the usage for Hellertown Library is from Township residents. There are a lot of people who use that library. Ed said if someone from Lower Saucon uses the Hellertown Library is there a fee? Jack said if you get the PA ACCESS card, you use that. You have to go to Bethlehem and get the card there, and then you can go to Hellertown Library. Jane said with the PA ACCESS program, the library got credit for those patrons and that's where Robin came up with the \$8,000. Under their library responsibilities, they are obligated to serve those patrons. She doesn't know what the options are as to charging those patrons a membership fee. Jack said almost 80% of the survey respondents in Lower Saucon Township liked continuing our agreement with the Bethlehem Area Public Library. Lanita said then why doesn't the Township give 20% of their allocation to Hellertown and 80% to Bethlehem? Jack said if the Township were to say let's go with Hellertown Library, the State would probably

require that all of the resources there, space, staff, books, etc., all those things would have to be dramatically increased. The lack of parking would also be an issue. It's a great facility, but it's not big enough to accommodate the additional people that would be using it. There would be immediate issues and complaints from residents with the lack of those resources. It might seem like that's what we should do, but it's not physically possible. The BAPL does have parking issues, particularly at night in the winter. At least they have the resources to accommodate all of the patrons who come from the Township. We should bring in the School District and the County and see if we can come up with some plan that could accommodate everyone in the future. Glenn said if 50% of the Hellertown's usage is Lower Saucon Township, is it the assumption that if we did not participate in Bethlehem, that would increase? Jack said there are a lot of people that go to BAPL as they are doing research and doing things that they need the resources that are there. If they went to Hellertown, they would not have those resources. He doesn't know if they could borrow these materials through some sort of a State system. Charlie said he would suspect so. Ed said if he has a BAPL card, doesn't Hellertown also issue cards and it has a PA ACCESS on the back? Charlie said he didn't know. Ed said if it did, why couldn't he take that card and go up to BAPL and use that library. Jack said can Hellertown people go to the BAPL? Jane said she thinks you get the PA ACCESS sticker from the host municipality. You can go to any library. If you are in NY City, you can go into any public library. Jack said it's a lot more than just taking out books. A lot of people go to the library for a lot of different services. Because of the current economic situation, more people are going to the library to access computers to look for jobs, etc. Jane said you go in and there's a lot of people just sitting there reading books and magazines. Speaking about books, there would not be enough resources at Hellertown and you wouldn't have the staff. Glenn said that's assuming by not participating in Bethlehem, the population that comes to Hellertown would increase. We don't know that because 50% of the library is Lower Saucon residents. Jack said wouldn't we be promoting Hellertown as our library? Glenn said we would be. Jack said we'd be pushing the numbers up and if we didn't have the resources there, people would say they went to the library and they couldn't get the book they wanted, or there was a line for the computer, etc. Jane said she's only \$18,000 short, how much are you contributing to Bethlehem? Glenn said \$167,000. Jane said they could get the resources then with that amount of money. Jack said not with that amount of money. You'd fall under State requirements for libraries of a certain size. BAPL has to staff their library and have sufficient resources based on formulas the State sets. If you are increasing it, you are moving it up to another level. That space cannot accommodate everyone in Hellertown & Lower Saucon. There's no way you could use the current facility. There would be a parking problems, traffic problems, etc. Ed said you have to be careful, you have 50%. Let's assume 2,000 people want to go to Hellertown and 1,000 of them are Lower Saucon, you might have 8,000 Lower Saucon people going to Bethlehem, so we don't know. Jack said the library computer system only shows who checks out books. Glenn said we asked them how many of our patrons go there, and they can't answer that. They have no way to track it. Ed said if they have the books you checked out on an annual basis, there is a date on the checkout. They haven't really made an attempt to let you know how many Lower Saucon residents use the library. Lanita said maybe they don't want us to know either. Jack said they have someone on staff who does their computer stuff. Charlie said if the Library Committee is looking at this issue, they might be able to look at it for this year. Robin told him in the past, many of the young people who show up at the end of the day are students who say they can't get access to the school district's computers after school as the building is locked. The library is open until 8:00 PM. These are the kinds of things we have to look into. Ed said they handle computers at the school district. The computers are on carts and they get rolled into classrooms. It would be good to find out what portion of our students don't have internet access. Stephanie said when she was at the community college and she used their computers, you got access to certain databases that you can go on to look up information for research. That's something else to look at also. Ed said there are certain databases that schools put together and the school tells the student that's the database to go to get their research. Jane said the Library still does the hoagies and the basket bingos. They'll do a fundraiser and get \$600. Robin said they are relying too heavily on that and they are not raising much money, but they are going to continue doing them. Glenn had said a few years back, why can't the people who are using the library actually pay an annual fee. That way all our residents

who use the library will pay an annual fee. Those who don't use the library don't pay it. Lanita said if the school district chipped in, then residents would have to double dip to pay for the library. That's the problem she would see and that's another issue.

F. County Report – Tom Harp – Tom said he did see John Stoffa this afternoon and he did want to wish all of you a very Happy Holiday. John really does respect this group and respects the entire municipal group COGs. That's sincere from him.

Tom said tomorrow at 4:00 PM, County Council will be debating and approving the 2010 County budget. They start early and it could go on for a couple of hours. He thinks it looks as the resolution is moving towards either no tax increase or a very minor one - certainly not the one that the administration proposed, but over time you are going to have to catch up because you can't dip into the reserves. That'll be interesting tomorrow night.

Tom said he sees you have a copy of the letter that was sent to Ann McHale supporting Tom Dittmar's position. They were looking at millions of dollars in the budget and they picked on certain positions and Tom's was one of them. The support from all of the COGs for retaining Tom's position was instrumental in them withdrawing that proposal. Tom Dittmar greatly appreciates that. He's done a terrific job and is looking forward to the year ahead and working with the COGs, the Solid Waste Authority, and the EACs. Tom certainly appreciates all of that.

Tom said you probably read in the paper the casino assessment that came in from the consultants that the County had used and it was a \$250 million appraisal where the assessment is about \$74.9 million, which some people are saying they were really hoping for about \$100 million. It's kind of based on revenue projections and so forth. Right now it's not performing up to the level they anticipated. They were being very grandiose with their projections for the state of PA as far as the slots revenue. They are in a position now that if they over assess it, it'll be more tempting for the Sands to take them to court. They are at least on pretty solid grounds with it.

Tom said we were talking earlier about the H1N1. The County EMS services have been coordinating the clinics at the school districts. He's assuming it occurred at Saucon Valley. Seven out of the eight school districts participated. Easton went their own way. Bob Mateff advised that approximately 1/3rd of the student populations have participated in the clinics. Others probably don't want to get the shot or don't think they need it or they are getting it through other sources. He said we are seeing the so-called incidents and rates of the influenza have been going down dramatically. Everybody was panicking about a month ago and now it's really just dropped way off. All the experts are predicting there is going to be a third wave in the spring. Now they are saying that it's not that bad of a flu. It was kind of maybe a little exaggerated. With kids, they are supposed to get booster shots, a two shot process. They are now saying with some of these kids, the first shot seems to be enough. They are kind of assessing this whole thing as time goes by. We are just not seeing the incidents there.

Tom said they had their joint meeting of the COGs yesterday at the 911 center. Priscilla deLeon and Ron Horiszny attended. It was a good meeting. We had a good presentation from the Cohen Law Group. Some of you may have heard about the cable franchise agreements and they did a presentation of the state PA COG Conference that was held back in September. It was very useful information. They send the minutes out from the meeting and they are very thorough minutes. Any of the handouts he can scan and provide all the municipalities. There are ways you can get leverage to get the most out of your cable franchise agreements and that's what they are pushing. The law group is there to help you. They are saying consortiums or COGs working together may have a little bit more influence over a cable company and a better bargaining position if you go together and talk to them about rates. Priscilla was saying one thing you didn't want to see was going to the 5% fee as it would be passed on to the cable subscriber. There are other things that are non-transcriber fees, percentage of advertising, things like that you could capture. Cohen is representing the City of Easton now and they are actually in negotiations with both Service Electric and RCN at the same time. They are doing it together versus having one agreement with one. They are hopefully getting the best deal from both of them. Verizon and Fios wanted to go to a state franchise fee instead of a municipality fee, and the state shut that down because of the municipalities. At

the national level, it was shut down and it even went to the Supreme Court. Cohen talked about Fios; he talked about Comcast and NBC. They are speculating RCN may be bought out by Comcast. Another matter discussed at the COG meeting was the health bureau. Bob Lake, a Board member from the new Lehigh Valley Health Bureau was there. Northampton County Council has expressed some concern about the cost of the health bureau. There are public comprehensive health services that are available. They now have an office in South Bethlehem. They are going around and trying to have meetings in communities and trying to get community feedback. They think they'll be up and running next July or be able to start delivering the services out to the communities and rural areas. It's an ongoing issue. We at least gave them an opportunity to talk to them. Next year they will continue the meetings, quarterly, in March of next year. They are looking for a township or borough that will maybe host a couple of the meetings. That will be nice so they can move around a little bit. That went pretty well.

Tom said they have one more of their Prison Community Forums coming up, so if you are really excited about this, you could travel up to Cherryville tomorrow night. So far the forums have been going pretty well. The first one they had at Lower Mt. Bethel, there were over 40 citizens there. This one in Cherryville at the church, there should be about 80 people there. The church is trying to get their congregations to come out to this. They've already got some ideas on recidivism and new volunteers to come in to the prison to teach classes, teach basic education, recreation purposes, and so forth. There was a real concern of trying to reduce the trend of recidivism in the system. That's the last one of those forums.

Tom said Bill Brackbill from the Nazareth COG is retiring. He's the Director of the COG. He submitted his letter of resignation. They are looking for a new part-time Director. Two Rivers COG is actually looking to maybe hire a Director so they may even be talking about if they do it together, there are enough hours between the two of them. If anyone is interested, please let them know.

Tom said their new Sheriff is starting next week in the County. He's the former Police Commissioner in Bethlehem, Randy Miller.

Tom said if anyone is interested in history, the Bachman Publick House in Easton that the County has owned for the last year is finally going to be turned over to the Northampton County Historical Society. Settlement is this Friday. It's kind of an unfortunate situation as the County took it over because the previous non-profit organization that ran it defaulted on the \$500,000 loan that the County had given them. We became the owners, but the County really felt it should be in the hands of a historical society. They would know better how to run it and get some programming in there, so by the end of the week they should be the proud owners. Their museum in downtown Easton has come along and is due to be completed by April at the latest. It has all kinds of new programming in there. If anyone is interested, this Friday, they will be having an author at the Bachman house on the Lenni Lenape, which is Indian tribe. He will give a talk and do a book signing at noon.

Glenn said the Cohen presentation you went to, you mentioned the possibility of a Township or Borough procuring additional fees for advertising; can you explain that a little further? Tom said the advertising the cable companies do, that is a potential fee you could get whatever percent it is. If you have 3.5% of the subscriber cable fee, it shows the various benefits they have. They talked about the pay channels, the educational channels. Glenn said was there a way the cable company actually got a percentage of the advertising? Tom said that's revenue. Ed said you could get a cut of their revenue. No business is going to pass along any loss or revenue to raise rates. That is just some revenue you can get access to, but free services for the municipalities. It's pretty common to give free cable service, for instance, to the municipal building. The one thing they mentioned was they were trying to get the franchise fee extended to their internet service and that was turned down. That even went to the Supreme Court and it was upheld that the local municipalities can't charge a franchise fee for internet service through the cable. Dan Cohen is going to send him a survey that Tom will send out. It's voluntary, and a municipality could fill it out. It's like where they are now, a marketing thing from Dan's standpoint. He'd be more than happy to talk about anybody on the advantages of trying to renegotiate. It was hard to understand from Priscilla's standpoint how old your agreement was. Jack said we have an ordinance, so the fee is paid per the ordinance, not an agreement. Tom said he doesn't know how that works. Some of these other things like trying to get a

piece of the revenue they get from advertising, you might want to take a look at that. You might then have to have an agreement. Jack said you have to negotiate that in the agreement. Tom said yes. We'll make sure you get all that information and get what he said as it's all reflected in the minutes. That should be helpful.

G. Citizens Commenting on Non-Agenda Items

Stephanie Brown said she didn't know when the meetings were. Glenn said on every agenda, it's at the bottom and it tells you when and where the next meeting is, and it's been like that. Stephanie asked who Tom worked for? Tom said he works for the County Office of Administration. He works for County Executive, John Stoffa. One of his duties is to be the liaison for the COGs in the municipalities. Stephanie asked when the County reorganization meeting is? Tom said that should be the first meeting in January. The first meeting they have to swear in the new Council members. He's not sure if it's that meeting or the second meeting where they vote for the President, VP, etc. It has to be done by the end of January.

H. Events Calendar

<http://sauconvalleycalendar.blogspot.com>

I. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned, the time was 8:42 PM.

J. Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 13th @ Hellertown Borough @ 7:00 PM; Wednesday, February 10th @ LST @ 7:00 P.M.; Wednesday, March 10th @ SVSD @ 7:00 PM.