

SAUCON VALLEY PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Date: March 14, 2007
Time: 7:06 p.m.
Location: Saucon Valley School District

A. Call to Order - Priscilla deLeon

B. Roll Call - Present: Priscilla deLeon, Jane Balum, Ed Inghrim, Susan Baxter, Richard Fluck, Glenn Kern, Tom Opsatnick, Jack Cahalan, Charlie Luthar, Ira Hiberman. Consultants: Andrew Schwartz, Carolyn Yagle, Teresa Sparacino. Guests: Jenny McKenna, Sharon Stack

C. Council Of Governments

1. The minutes of the January 10, 2007 meeting of the Saucon Valley Partnership were approved following a motion by Glenn, seconded by Jane.
2. Treasurer's Report - Jack reviewed the January and February activity for both the general fund account and the multi-municipal local share account. Jack stated that he will be submitting invoices to Northampton County to obtain the \$20,000 they committed to and to DCED for 1/3 of the grant funds. On a motion by Jane, seconded by Glenn, the Partnership voted to approve the Treasurer's Report.
3. Jack presented two (2) bills from EPD for payment of their services. The first bill dated February 5, 2007 in the amount of \$5,738.92 was reviewed by Jack and Charlie and it meets all the benchmarks of the plan. On a motion by Ed, seconded by Glenn, the Partnership voted to approve the payment of this bill. The second bill dated March 8, 2007 in the amount of \$4,637.36 was also reviewed and meets the plan requirements. On a motion by Ed, seconded by Glenn, the Partnership voted to approve the payment of this bill.

D. Citizens On Agenda Items - None

E. Citizens On Non-Agenda Items - None

F. Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

1. **Meeting Schedule** - Priscilla stated that with the cancellation of the February meeting we are a month behind. Do we need to schedule an additional meeting to catch up? Carolyn advised that we could either have an additional meeting on March 28th or to double up on the April 11th meeting. After a short discussion a motion was made by Glenn and seconded by Jane to advertise a longer meeting (start time will be 6:00 p.m.) on April 11, 2007.
2. **Work Session** - AJ Schwartz, Carolyn Yagle EPD; Teresa Sparacino

AJ Schwartz stated that tonight Teresa will take us through the downtown information that she has compiled on Hellertown. Teresa stated that she had spoken to Geoff Brace several times in the last few months to determine what's going on in Hellertown from the business standpoint. Priscilla asked if everyone knew that Geoff had resigned his position? Carolyn stated that they just found out that he will be moving on to a position with the State. Carolyn reviewed the handout listing the businesses located in Hellertown. The first three pages list the approximately 130 businesses along the Main Street corridor and pages 4-6 the remaining 115 businesses. These businesses can be categorized into five (5) major areas; personal service (39%), professional service (32%), retail (15%), eateries (12%), and government (2%). 71% of these businesses provide some type of professional or personal service. Retail services on Main Street account for only 15% of the business distribution and eateries account for 12%. Of the professional services, 44% of those are medical related. The two predominant services under the personal services category were hair

salons and gas stations. In the retail business category, 17% of those businesses are consignment oriented. Committee members pointed out that the recent fire on Main Street will reduce this number. AJ stated that they do not categorize professional or personal services as retail although some of them may appear to be so to us. Teresa stated most communities like to have a goal of keeping more “pedestrian friendly” retail on the first floor of their downtown rather than the professional services that tend to migrate there. She said that the goal is to have a pedestrian see a storefront every 7 seconds in order for them to continue down a main street and when you throw in some of the large gas stations and parking lots that are on Main Street into this it starts to break down the pedestrian feel. She advised that the retail mix of 15% in downtown Hellertown was “pretty low”. AJ said that a further concern was that 17% of this retail was consignment which is something that we will have to spend some time on. Teresa stated that the secret is bringing “foot traffic” into the downtown area and getting young children to become familiar at an early age with shopping and spending time in the downtown area. Teresa and AJ related how State College and Mechanicsburg, PA were able to bring people to the downtown areas with “destination attractions” such as performing arts centers, libraries and art galleries. Both areas gave the landlords relief from certain development standards, parking, etc. to stimulate this downtown growth. The key is to find what makes us “unique” from our neighbors and has a potential to be a building block that we can build on. There was a short discussion about ideas for the redevelopment of the Champion Spark Plug property as the “gateway attraction” to Hellertown. Teresa stated that more information on the downtown data is available on Claritas.com. Ira said that this information would be useful to their economics and sociology classes at the high school.

Carolyn briefly went over a map that EPD is beginning to develop that focuses on potential redevelopment opportunities in the Borough and Township. AJ stated that they are beginning to look at the areas indicated on this map and see what are some of the possibilities for uses for these areas?

After a short discussion on the appropriate venue for the public participation portion of the study (charette, listening session) and the appropriate scheduling (Saturday or weeknight) the group decided that a meeting with our community stakeholder groups would be scheduled for Monday, April 30, 2007 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Saucon Valley School District Audion Room.

G. Brief Reports and Discussion Items

1. **Casino Related Issues** - Jack reported that the managers from the Lower Saucon Township, Hellertown, Freemansburg Borough coalition have been meeting to come up with a process that we as priority municipalities can recommend to the County Executive for the distribution of the \$1.6 million dollars in funding that Northampton County will start receiving in late 2008 as the host county.
2. **Regional Policing** - Charlie advised that representatives from the Township and Borough met yesterday with Ron Stern from DCED and the two peer consultants assigned by DCED (Chief Brian Ross and Chief Todd Graeff) to kick-off the regional consolidation study which they expect will be concluded by August 1st. We will be setting up individual interviews for each Council member to meet with the peer consultants.
3. **Polk Valley Road Intersection Enhancements** - We will be holding another meeting tomorrow with the two (2) businesses on the west side of 412 (American Family Services Foundation & McDonald's) to make one last attempt to enlist their participation in improvements to the paper street that runs between their properties. If we cannot get any cooperation from them, we will move ahead with the permitting for the signal at Polk Valley Road and Route 412.
4. **Multi-municipal Enterprise Zone** - We were advised by Tony Hanna from the City of Bethlehem that they would be sending us a draft Inter-Municipal Agreement.

5. **Hellertown – Lower Saucon Joint Recycling Facility** - Charlie advised that the Borough and Township are moving ahead with a joint initiative to open a portion of the Hellertown Farm property located in the Township off Springtown Hill Road as a joint yard waste drop-off facility. We are in the process of visiting neighboring facilities and putting together the required applications to DEP to open the facility sometime this spring. **Combined Bid For Grass Cutting** - Jack also mentioned that the Township and Borough went in together on a combined bid advertisement for grass cutting at the Township and Borough parks and playing fields. The bids will be opened tomorrow.
 6. **School Scheduling During Snow Events** – Glenn Kern stated that he was interested in learning what the policy and chain of command was for coordinating school scheduling during snow events with the Public Works departments? Ira briefly described the process that Dr. Fellin utilizes to reach a decision on a delay or closing. He suggested that we discuss this further with Wally Zimpfer, the Transportation Supervisor. **School Crossing Guard Issue** - Regarding the issue of the school crossing guard, Jack stated that this issue came up here previously and it was described as an issue with students loitering and smoking on private property across from the school grounds. Ira a stated that Dr. Fellin met recently with the woman who owns the property and they hope this will solve the problem. The Mayor and Jack advised that the Borough and Township police are monitoring the area. Sharon Stack stated that she heard that there are elementary students who are crossing in the lower area of Tobias Street and not walking up and crossing with the crossing guard. Ira stated that he will talk to the Elementary School Principal about this.
- I. **Events Calendar** - calendar has been updated. Priscilla passed out a flyer on an event at the Saucon Valley Conservancy.
 - J. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 PM by a unanimous voice vote.

The next meeting of the Saucon Valley Partnership will be held on April 11, 2007 @ 6:00 p.m. at Hellertown Borough.