

BUCKS COUNTY CONSORTIUM

Thursday, November 2, 2006

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Bucks County Consortium was held at Warwick Township on November 2, 2006. The following individuals were present:

Chuck Barrett, Commerce Bank
Vivian Bell, Warrington Township
John Boyle, Newtown Township
Gary Crossland, Newtown Township
Jim Coyne, Lower Makefield Township
Dana Cozza, Buckingham Township
Joe Czajkowski, Upper Makefield Township
Bob Depew, Lower Southampton Township
Patty Elkis, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
William Elmendorf, Pennsylvania State University
Carson Freeman, Mercuri & Associates, Inc.
Mark D. Fournier, Telford Borough
Fred Gaines, Warrington Township
Katrina Harding, Warwick Township
Tom Hough, Hough & Associates
Ryan Ingham, Hough & Associates
Ann Klepfer, East Rockhill Township
Kenneth Kugel, Warrington Township
Rick Lee, Delaware Valley Insurance Trust
Mike Lester, DCNR Forestry
Stephanie Mason, Doylestown Township
Linda McNeill, Tinticum Township
Bob Merrick, Warwick Township
Jeanne Ortiz, Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Bob Pellegrino, Newtown Township
Richard Sabol, Upper Southampton Township
Julianne Schieffer, Pennsylvania State University
Tom Scott, Warwick Township
David Sebastian, Bucks County Planning Commission
Brian Shapiro, West Rockhill Township
Marilyn Stecker, Milford Township
Ray Stepnoski, Buckingham Township
Elizabeth Sunday, Plumstead Township
Tim Tieperman, Warrington Township
Gail Weniger, Warwick Township

Preliminary Remarks

Gail Weniger called the meeting to order, announced the morning's agenda, and thanked members for attending the November meeting of the Bucks County Consortium.

Approval of Minutes

Bob Pellegrino made a motion, seconded by Joe Czajkowski, to approve the *Minutes of September 7, 2006*. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Vivian Bell presented the Treasurer's Report for October and November. A motion to accept the reports, and to donate \$100 to Gilda's Club in the memory of Judi Smith, was made by Stephanie Mason, and seconded by Bob Pellegrino. Motion carried.

Moment of Silence

Gail Weniger reported that Warminster Township Manager, Judi Smith, died on Sunday, October 1, 2006. The Consortium held a Moment of Silence. Gail Weniger stated that the October meeting was cancelled so that members could attend the funeral.

Presentation: "Leaf & Yard Waste Collection Requirements (DEP)"

Tom Hough presented on the topic of leaf & yard waste collection requirements. By a letter subsequently e-mailed to Consortium members Tom Hough summarized his presentation:

DEP started a major push to divert leaf and yard waste from the waste stream in calendar year 2006.

In the Fall of 2005 DEP asked the county coordinators to ask specific questions about leaf and yard waste collection in the county annual recycling survey. The county annual recycling data collection form had new spaces for reporting tonnage of curbside leaf collection and Christmas tree collection in addition to the previous spaces for leaf waste and yard waste.

Several municipalities provide curbside leaf collection services using their own staff and equipment others contract with a hauler to provide curbside leaf collection. These municipalities meet DEP program requirements and were able to report their tonnage on the county form.

Many municipalities that did not report substantial tonnage in the curbside leaf collection space received a letter saying their entire recycling program would be subject to a two-day field audit. All other mandated municipalities (over 5000 population) received letters from DEP Southeastern Regional Office saying that they would not be eligible for Section 902 recycling grants or 2006 Section 904 performance grants if they did not provide a curbside leaf collection program in 2005. Non-mandated municipalities received a similar letter saying that if they applied for grants they would have to meet the same leaf collection requirements as mandated municipalities.

We asked DEP central office for clarification and learned that DEP would not withhold grants if municipalities establish a curbside leaf collection program. The program must serve each residential unit at least once per year in the fall and provide a curbside yard waste collection program at least once per year in the summer.

We asked if alternative programs or approaches might meet their requirements (and) DEP said leaf drop off programs would not meet their requirement. Neither would an ordinance that requires all residential trash haulers to collect leaves separated from the trash. DEP said a program where residents call the township to pick up leaf bags when ready might meet requirements but that it would be easier to schedule a single collection day for all residents.

On a parallel course, HB 1902 legislation to reauthorize the recycling fee that funds the DEP grant programs was moving through the legislative process. The initial bill listed seven items that mandated municipalities must have in place in order to be eligible for Section 904 performance grants. If they did not have an item, they had to spend their grant money on that item before they can use the funds for any other purpose. The most expensive item was curbside leaf and yard waste collection. We were able to have this requirement removed from the House Bill by an amendment that passed 198-0. The Senate recently passed the bill without the leaf and yard waste requirement. The Bill is awaiting signature by the Governor.

The DEP Southeastern Regional Office sent a second letter to all the municipalities in the region apologizing if their first letter caused any confusion. The letter said that DEP would not withhold any grants including 902 and 904 recycling grants if a mandated municipality did not have a curbside leaf and yard waste collection program.

CONCLUSION

It does not make sense to remove organic leaf and yard waste from the landfills and waste to energy plants. This reduction in waste would increase the state recycling performance substantially and save landfill space for materials that can't be recycled.

We believe that municipalities are free to develop the leaf and yard waste collection program that makes sense for their community. A high density Borough may be able to use a street sweeper. A low density rural municipality might be able to make arrangements with local farms that would accept leaves dropped off by residents. There is even a place for back yard composting provided that residents report the estimated number of cubic yards of leaves they compost.

We will continue to monitor the DEP leaf and yard waste collection requirements and will report to the Bucks County Consortium when we receive any change in course.

In addition to this document, Mr. Hough also distributed a summary of House Bill 1902 from Senator Mary Jo White, a letter from DEP dated October 3, 2006, and copies of his e-mail correspondence with Todd Pejack of DEP.

Members, including Stephanie Mason and Mark Fournier, discussed how their municipal leaf recycling and trash collection programs work.

Presentation: “TreeVitalize”

Patty Elkis of the Delaware Valley regional Planning Commission introduced the topic of TreeVitalize. She stated that in the period 1985-2000 Pennsylvania lost five million trees. As a result of the decline, she stated that Michael DiBerardinis, Secretary of Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, implemented the TreeVitalize program.

The TreeVitalize program is designed to help communities overcome obstacles to restoring and managing their tree canopy. The audience for this project is municipal managers, elected officials, business improvement district managers, and other municipal decision makers. TreeVitalize is not about the best species to plant or the latest pruning methods – it’s about the big picture of why communities need trees and finding ways for even small local governments to plant and manage trees. This program challenges municipal leaders to treat trees as part of their community’s infrastructure, and to consider trees in their plans, ordinances, and capital improvement projects. TreeVitalize will also connect municipal leaders with the resources they need to get the job done, through technical support provided by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and Penn State Extension Service.

The program is offering grants of up to \$25,000 in each of four suburban counties: Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware. Eligible projects will include, but are not limited to: tree inventories, integration of trees into municipal plans, tree protection ordinances, and tree planting projects on public spaces. Priority will be given to projects that build the municipality’s capacity to sustain community forestry efforts, as well as to multi-municipal efforts. More details on the funding program will be announced in late fall 2006, with application due in January 2007.

Patty Elkis introduced other participants in the TreeVitalize effort. Her introduction included Jeanne Ortiz of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council who discussed the role of municipal environmental advisory councils. A second introduction was for Bill Elmendorf of Pennsylvania State University who provided a power point presentation of general tree related topics such as the expected decline of forests, increased sprawl, invasive threats to tree species, how trees improve property value, etc.

Members were provided with the following topic related handouts:

- “The Trouble with Trees: Some practical Solutions” by Dr. Bill Elmendorf
- Questions and Answers by Julianne Schieffer, Penn State Extension Community Forester
- “TreeVitalize: A Partnership to Restore Tree Cover in Southeast, PA”
- “TreeVitalize – Frequently Asked Questions”
- “TreeVitalize Municipalities Program”
- “Trees Pay Us Back” by Patrice Carroll, Project Director, TreeVitalize
- “Become a Tree Tender”
- “Tending the Urban Forest”

New Business: Roundtable Authorization

Gail Weniger reported that the Consortium will hold a roundtable presentation on November 16, 2006 at 11:30AM at the Bucks County Country Club, 2600 York Road, Jamison, PA. The guest speaker will be Timothy O' Reilly, a labor relations attorney with Morgan, Lewis, and Bockius, who will discuss current trends in municipal labor law. The cost of the event is \$25 and will include lunch. Those wishing to attend are required to make a reservation by e-mail Gail at gweniger@warwick-township.org.

Ray Stepnoski made a motion, seconded by Bob Pellegrino, to pay a \$100 deposit for a roundtable room reservation. Motion carried.

New Business: County GIS

Carson Freeman of Mercuri and Associates, formerly with the Warminster Water & Sewer Authority, asked about the Consortium's interest in GIS. Specifically, he asked if the Consortium could play a role in the County's further release of its GIS database. Mark Fournier and other members discussed the importance of the database. Stephanie Mason asked that the Consortium invite Lynn Bush of the Bucks County Planning Commission to a future meeting.

Adjourn

Stephanie Mason made a motion, seconded by Tom Scott, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:55 AM. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
