

BUCKS COUNTY CONSORTIUM

Thursday, June 2, 2016

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order:

A meeting of the Bucks County Consortium was held at 9:00 a.m. at Middletown Township, on June 2, 2016. The meeting was called to order by Consortium President William Wert.

2. Roll Call, Introductions and Community Updates:

The following Bucks County communities were represented at the meeting:

Sandra Zadell, Chalfont Borough
Caroline Brinker, Doylestown Borough
Stephanie Mason, Doylestown Township
Autumn Canfield, Doylestown Township
Bill Wert, Dublin Borough
John McMenamin, Lower Southampton Township
Stephanie Teoli Kuhls, Middletown Township
Scott Sadowsky, Middletown Township
Angela Benner, New Britain Township
Robert Pellegrino, Northampton Township
Jamie Gwynn, Northampton Township
Michael Walsh, Northampton Township
Mark Fournier, Telford Borough
Alison Smith, Tullytown Borough
Judy Collings, Tullytown Borough
Herb Schoell, Upper Southampton Water & Sewer Authority
Joseph Golden, Upper Southampton Township
Gregg Schuster, Warminster Township Municipal Authority
Gail Weniger, Warwick Township
Kyle Seckinger, Warwick Township

Sponsors:

Chris Englebert, Beirne Wealth Consulting
Brian Jeter, Comcast
Ryan Ingham, Hough Associates
Elisabeth Sibley, Hough Associates
Jeff Hugo, InR Advisors
Dan O'Brian, RBC Capital Markets
Jim Gray, RBC Capital Markets
Severine Zarza, Royal Bank
Sal Urbano, Virtual Towns and Schools
David Ohman, Uninvest Bank

Community Updates:

The local managers went around the room and introduced themselves and briefly shared "Front Burner" issues affecting their community. Sponsors in attendance also shared updates or current issues in their field of expertise.

3. Approval of Minutes – May 5, 2016:

Upon motion by Caroline Brinker, seconded by Robert Pellegrino, the Minutes of May 5, 2016 were approved as presented.

4. Treasurer's Report and Payment of Bills:

William Wert reviewed the treasurer's report for May 2016. Upon motion by Stephanie Mason, seconded by Mark Fournier, the Treasurer's Report for May 2016 was approved.

5. Presentations:

Stacey Mulholland from Congressman Fitzpatrick's office stated that due to a last minute change in schedule, Congressman Fitzpatrick was unable to attend today's meeting. Mrs. Mulholland stated that since Recovery Homes are a hot topic in Bucks County, she invited Bryan F. Allen, Chief of Staff for Representative Tina Davis.

Presentation: Bryan F. Allen.

Mr. Wert introduced Bryan F. Allen, Chief of Staff for Representative Tina Davis.

Mr. Allen stated that Recovery Homes have been exploding in the past 2 to 3 years in Bucks County. They are houses in residential neighborhoods that are rented out to people in the recovery process. Recovery houses used to be well managed, with supervision and backgrounds check however since the down turn in the market, people have been buying bargain houses and filling them up with 15-20 people. Those houses have no supervision and no background checks. The neighbors next to the houses are not notified, because the law does not require them to be notified.

Mr. Allen stated that Representative Tina Davis introduced House Bill 1884 to Congress on March 14, 2016 and has proposed an amendment to Title 53.

House Bill 1884: Mr. Allen stated that this bill provides for the certification of recovery residences and recovery residence administrators; for the establishment of a State Board of Recovery Residences and its powers and duties; and imposing penalties. The intent of the General Assembly is to ensure that recovery residences provide a safe environment for residents and the surrounding community.

Mr. Allen stated that the State Board create by House Bill 1884 shall develop and administer a voluntary certification program for recovery residences, establish procedures, develop a code of ethics for recovery residence administrators and staff, and establish application, inspection and annual certification renewal fees. The procedures would be established to: administer the application, certification, recertification and disciplinary process; monitor and inspect a recovery residence and its staff to ensure compliance with certification requirements; and interview and evaluate residences, employees and volunteer staff on their knowledge and application of certification requirements.

House Bill 1884 is modeled after a bill that was passed in Florida for recovery homes that was passed in 2015. This bill will help to provide certified facilities for individuals who need to be in a recovery home providing them the optimal environment. The recovery homes that are not certified will not be able to receive referrals from rehab facilities and will not be eligible for state funding. Although the bill does not prohibit non-certified recovery homes, the state will not promote the non-certified recovery homes on their website or provide them funding. Mr. Allen stated that his legal counsel informed them that the bill is legal because it does not prohibit non-certified recovery homes.

Amendment to Title 53: Mr. Allen stated that this amendment would allow municipalities to adopt an ordinance that establishes standards for recovery residences that comply with Federal and State Fair Housing Laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The ordinance may include provisions relating to: written notification that specifies for a recovery residence that may include the name and address of structure, property owners names, address and contact information, and a copy of the lease if property is leased; Supervision of the residents and staff employed by or volunteering for the recovery residences, and establishment and maintenance of an operation plan that facilitates the rehabilitation process and addresses the maintenance of the property and noise abatement consistent with other applicable ordinances.

The Amendment also defines a "recovery residence" as a residential dwelling unit or other form of group housing that is offered or advertised through any means, including oral, written, electronic or printed means, by any person or entity as a residence that provides a peer-supported, alcohol-free and drug-free living environment. The term includes a residence described as a sober house or a house where there are residents in recovery from alcohol or other drug addiction.

Mr. Schoell asked if there is large opposition to the proposed House Bill and Amendment. Mr. Allen stated that a hearing was held back on April 4, 2016 and the recovery home supervisors are in favor because this will eliminate the fly by night operations. Mrs. Mason asked if a zoning ordinance for SE Group Homes is still viable. Mr. Allen stated that it depends on the number of individuals in the home that indicates it. Mr. Allen also stated that his office has examples of zoning ordinances that work. Mrs. Mulholland added that definitions of group homes and families are very important in zoning ordinances.

6. Discussion:

Verizon Franchise Renewal Update: Mr. Pellegrino stated that an email was sent out with the background information on the Verizon Franchise Renewal and once a final list of participants is complete a meeting will be set up. An executive committee has been established that will work on the negotiation of the contract.

7. Other Business:

Liquid Fuels: Mr. Pellegrino stated that a result of their recent Liquid Fuels audit indicated that Northampton Township will have to start bidding out traffic light maintenance. Mr. Pellegrino stated that this is something that can become a Consortium Joint Bid, and Northampton can do the bid on behalf of the Consortium. Mr. Pellegrino suggested municipalities check to see how much they spend on traffic lights annually, and that even emergency work counts towards the threshold that determines if the work needs to be bid out. Ms. Benner stated that she would send out an email to find out who is interested in participating in a Traffic Light Maintenance Bid. Mrs. Mason stated that Doylestown Township has an existing RFP for traffic lights that she can share with Northampton Township.

9. Adjournment:

Upon motion by Jamie Gwynn, seconded by Caroline Brinker, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

The next meeting was scheduled on September 1, 2016 at Warrington Township.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela P. Benner
Consortium Coordinator