

Regional planning group wants survey widespread

By Diane Van Dyke
Berks-Mont Writer

The members of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission reviewed a proposed resident survey recently and discussed some of their planning concerns and priorities.

The PMRPC is comprised of representatives from the townships of Douglass (Mont.), East Coventry, Lower Pottsgrove, New Hanover, North Coventry, Upper Pottsgrove, and West Pottsgrove and the Borough of Pottstown.

PMRPC's goal is to establish regional planning under one joint comprehensive plan with shared land resources for the entire Pottstown Metropolitan area.

The preliminary survey will request input on reasons why people are attracted to the area, work locales, issues residents want addressed, where and what type of new development should occur, transportation desires and service and retail store needs.

While PMRPC is still fine-tuning the language of the survey that will be distributed in January, the members agree that they want to reach a wide, cross-section of the population.

"We want the broadest distribution possible," said John S. Cover, associate director/chief of community planning for the Montgomery County Planning

Commission, which PMRPC hired as its planning consultant.

The survey, therefore, will not be limited to property owners but will also include renters.

In addition to the public survey, PMRPC members are in the process of completing their own surveys to evaluate the priorities of municipal officials.

East Coventry representatives Connie Megay and David Leinbach said that township officials felt that there was enough high-density housing.

There are approximately 700 units currently on the books in the planning stages for East Coventry, said Megay.

Megay said that for the future, officials see East Coventry as primarily a bedroom community with some light industrial and commercial businesses along the Route 724 corridor in the northern portion of the township.

The township's highest concerns are preserving the remaining agricultural areas, protecting natural resources and maintaining open space, said Megay.

The representatives for the Borough of Pottstown expressed very different concerns and priorities.

"Forty-eight percent of the property in Pottstown are rental units with absentee landlords who are unresponsive to codes and decent housing issues," said Jack

Wolf.

Pottstown also has a high share of special needs housing group homes and Section 8 housing that stresses schools and municipal services, said Wolf.

The borough obviously encourages commercial and retail development as well as industry and manufacturing in the Keystone Opportunity Zone along the Schuylkill River.

Public transportation is also a high priority.

"We are committed to the Schuylkill Valley Metropolitan rail and feel it is very important to the welfare of the community," said Wolf.

The proposed commuter rail line will one day connect Philadelphia to Reading.

Cover stressed that the concerns of Pottstown affect all of the municipalities in the region.

"Pottstown is the heart of the region," said Cover. "It would be naïve to think that such decay will stay in the boundaries of Pottstown.

"If Pottstown is the heart, the soul is the rest of us," added Wolf.

The PMRPC will continue discussing the issues and concerns of the municipal members at its next meeting on October 2 at 7 p.m. at the New Hanover Township building.

District Justices

Boyertown

Before District Justice
Mike Hartman

A 28-year-old Boyertown man is in Berks County Prison after being charged with intimidation of a witness, making terroristic threats and simple assault.

Daniel Ellis of 149 Village Drive was charged after he entered the home of a friend and demanded money for drugs, according to court records.

Ellis, police said, entered the home and when he didn't get money he started wrecking the place and making threats. When police arrived he tried to flee the home.

Bail was set at \$25,000.

Richard C. Hower, 36, of 9 Willington Drive, Macungie, was arrested by State Police and charged with DUI and other charges.

Hower, who was stopped in Hereford Township, waived his hearing and bail was set at \$5,000.

Cindy Kay Smith, 36, of 707 Mountain Road, Boyertown, was arrested by State Police and charged with simple assault and harassment.

Bail was set at \$2,000.

Justine Oxman, 36, of 614 West Schuylkill Ave., Pottstown, who had been arrested by the State Police, had a number of charges brought against her, dropped.

She will face a hearing on harassment and disorderly con-

duct.

A 45-year-old Royersford man faces charges of theft by deception.

According to court records, Colebrookdale District police arrested **Eric S. Standhardt** of 209 N. Third St., after he used a credit card that belonged to someone else.

Police said he used the card in April at Grand Rental Station.

He was put on \$10,000 bail.

Oley

Before District Justice
Ronald Mest.

Dalton H. Loudenflager of 8853 Breing Run Circle, Breingsville was released on \$5,000 bail after being charged with indecent assault.

State Police said the alleged assault took place in May when he was visiting his step son.

Lee F. Hilbert, 32, of 44 Kemp Rd., Barto waived his hearing on charges of criminal mischief.

His bail was set at \$2,500.

According to Berks/Lehigh Regional Police, Hilbert was at 72 Franklin St., Tipton on March 4, when he got angry and flipped over a pool table.

Ken Willman, 35, of 3 Covered Bridge Rd., Oley, waived his hearing on charges of disorderly conduct and making terroristic threats.

Oley Police charge he was at the Quick Pick on Memorial Highway when he and his girlfriend became embroiled in a domestic argument.

BUSINESS NEWS

The Boyertown Area Times welcomes business news pertaining to local companies and employees. Send business information and a clear black-and-white photograph (if applicable) to: The Boyertown Area Times, 124 N. Chestnut St., Boyertown, PA 19512. Information will be included on a space-available basis.

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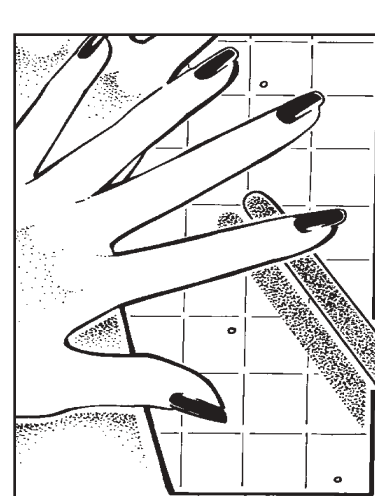
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