

DAUPHIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP MEETING

MARCH 25, 2009 10:00 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dominic D. DiFrancesco, II, Vice Chairman George P. Hartwick, III, Secretary

Jeff Haste, Chairman (ABSENT)

STAFF PRESENT

Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk; Marie E. Rebuck, Controller; Janis Creason, Treasurer; J. Scott Burford, Deputy Chief Clerk; William Tully, Esq., Solicitor; Kay Lengle, Personnel; Leila Brown, Solicitor's Office; August Memmi, Community & Economic Development; Steve Shaver, Director of EMA; Jason Miller, Commissioners' Office; Dave Schreiber, Personnel; Diane McNaughton, Commissioners' Office; Amy Richards, Commissioners' Office; Gertrude Farling, Controller's Office; Brenda Hoffer, Commissioners' Office and Richie-Ann Martz, Assistant Chief Clerk

GUESTS PRESENT

Dan Miller, Jason Yakelis, Gary Myers, Diane Myers Krug and Chris Bauer

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. DiFrancesco, Vice Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Everyone observed a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. DiFrancesco: We will have three sets of meeting minutes for approval at our next meeting. They are the March 11th Workshop Meeting, the March 18th Legislative Meeting and the March 18th Salary Board Meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. DiFrancesco: We are at the point in time for public participation. Is there anybody in the audience who wishes to comment? (There was none.)

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS/GUESTS

A. Jason Yakelis of Delta Development Group, Inc. and Chris Bauer of HRG

1. Susquehanna Township – U.S. 22/Progress Avenue

Mr. Yakelis: My name is Jason Yakelis with Delta Development Group. I'm here with Chris Bauer of HRG on behalf of Susquehanna Township. We are here today to give you a briefing on the latest update with the intersection of U.S. 22 and Progress Avenue in Susquehanna Township, as well as request a letter of support for a Federal funding request for construction and right-of-way acquisition that is currently under way.

As you may be aware the project has been routed over the last two decades in various planning efforts that have been ongoing of which the County has been a participant. We are looking at creating a safer and easier access at this intersection point that currently acts as the eastern gateway in and out of the City of Harrisburg. Currently right now we are experiencing less than deficient levels of service at this intersection. In fact, I believe the only time it acts at a reasonable level of service is at 8:00 in the morning on Sunday. Every other time it fails at engineering standards. The improvement that is being proposed has been vetted through a series of citizen advocacy groups. It was originally whittled down to three alternatives. This alternative happens to be the least expensive, as well as involving the least amount of right-of way that would be required to take for the project.

The overall project cost is approximately \$15.5 million. That takes into account the preconstruction, utility relocation and all of the associated design costs with the project. With respect to what we are here before you today, we are looking at a request to the Congressional delegation in the amount of approximately \$12 million for the forthcoming reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act. It is a five year transportation bill at the Federal level that authorizes Federal projects. You may be familiar with the last bill as Safe T Lou, prior to that TEA-21 were the previous two transportation equity acts.

Basically at this point Congress anticipates taking that under consideration this summer, begin to draft legislation and include projects in the course of June and July in the House side and the Senate will take up the bill following that timeframe. As far as technical details, I'm going to leave that to the engineers and he can give you an update.

Mr. Bauer: I'll give you a brief history of the intersection. This has been studied, like Jason said, for approximately 20 years now. HRG did an original study back in 1989 that was Township wide that indicated that this was a problem intersection and will continue to be a problem intersection. That went to an additional study in 2002 done by PennDOT. That study actually indicated that in order to really solve the issue here we would have to think outside the box and conventional widening of the intersection would not solve the problem that we are facing now by just adding lanes and turn lanes. It really doesn't help the intersection for a long period of time. What we have here is an unconventional solution. What it does is removes the conflicting left turn movements from the main intersection in order to allow more smooth flow through the intersection and safer. The existing intersection has a pattern of left turn accidents. The main difference and main change, like I said, is this intersection here the only turns that will occur is right turns on the northbound leg here and the eastbound leg. (Mr. Bauer showed the directions on the map.)

When we looked at a conventional intersection we were looking at an intersection that was so wide that it would be about seven lanes wide in order to handle the traffic volumes. The main issue with this intersection is 30,000 vehicles use U.S. 22 on a daily basis. Progress Avenue has 18,000 on it. That is a lot of vehicles being processed by this intersection. If Progress Avenue didn't have that level of traffic on it we wouldn't be here today. Side streets would just fail and we would favor the main line of U.S. 22. That is not the case. What is causing the delay most is the turns at the main intersection. We have separated those out and all the turns will happen through the jug handles. If somebody wants to make a northbound left to go into the City from Progress Avenue, what they will do is go straight though the intersection, use the jug handle and go out. To make a left eastbound, you will come through the intersection, go through the jug handle here and then back down. In order to go through to make a left westbound, up onto Progress Avenue towards 81, you will come through here and stop at the intersection and while this traffic is moving you can make this left through the jug handle and then back out. In order to make a southbound left, you will stop here and make a left here and come out here through the jug handle. This is an interesting part and it's probably a little easier to see on your handout. This part is called the continuous green T and what that is left turns will stop here at the stop bar, wait for a signal indication to go and eastbound traffic will be stopped back here, the traffic will flow through this merge lane and merge into traffic. The eastbound traffic never stops. The only place it will stop is at this intersection, but this can go concurrently with other phases. We are allowed to mix and match phases now. We are getting major efficiencies. To give you an idea the intersection right now has about level service A of somewhere around a hundred seconds of delay. This intersection in 50 years will still have a level service A, because we don't have that conflicting movement. This is a very

good solution to the problem. It is the cheapest solution, because everything is compact. When we are talking about adding two and three lanes to U.S. 22 and two lanes on Progress Avenue you are impacting a lot more properties, because you have to chase those lanes back further. We are not adding as many lanes. We are also shifting everything, keeping as close as we can to the Progress Avenue and U.S. 22 right-of-way. There will be approximately 41 property impacts. There is still quite a bit of property impacts, but that is about half of what a conventional intersection would be.

Mr. Hartwick: My only concern, obviously I understand, there has to be an appropriate amount of signage here.

Mr. Bauer: Absolutely.

Mr. Hartwick: A lot of options and I understand because I have been one of those persons that try to make a left turn. It is a challenge and it is always backed up with people trying to make a left turn, particularly coming towards the City from Walnut Street trying to make a left turn to go back towards Union Deposit. But making sure we know which loop to go, I can see, based upon the current traffic pattern of people being confused.

Mr. Bauer: Absolutely. There will be an education process and a learning curve. This is going to be different than what anybody has seen here in Central Pennsylvania. There will definitely be a learning curve and there will be a public outreach. There will have to be some driving classes on that.

Mr. DiFrancesco: On 21st Street and 15, where they made those improvements is very confusing over on the West Shore, where to make that left you have to veer off an exit really early and I'm not so sure that the signage is all that great. In this area the signage is going to have to be fantastic.

Mr. Hartwick: With Gary Myers in the crowd, we want to make sure that local law enforcement is there assisting rather than writing tickets until this traffic pattern becomes known.

Mr. Myers: Actually local law enforcement was part of the planning process. We had a citizens' advisory committee made up of representatives from Penbrook Borough, Progress Fire Company, Susquehanna Township EMS and Susquehanna Township School District. We explored 20 separate options and this is the option that was finally recommended to the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Commissioners unanimously approved this as the best of the options and having the least number of acquisitions.

Mr. DiFrancesco: What is the plan to keep people from making that left hand turn anyway? Obviously, now you are going to say no left hand turns, but people are going to be confused and are going to come up and they are going to stop at that intersection and try to make a left hand turn. They are either going to get rear-ended or they are

actually going to try to make the turn and get killed. Again, signage is going to be so important.

Mr. Bauer: We have gotten to the point where we have a preliminary signing plan that is very detailed. In fact we even thought of horizontal signage where it is on the street, just to bring it to the next level so people really understand how things work.

Mr. Myers: We actually put the traffic pattern onto our website. We have a program that shows how the traffic will move. We would make that access to our website and also at the public meetings we would have before construction. We would do every educational thing possible.

Mr. DiFrancesco: As long as you take away every indication that this is Progress Avenue and make Progress Avenue at the jug handle, it clarifies, because I'm not just thinking about local people. I'm thinking about people who are now on their GPS and they're saying oh wait that is Progress Avenue I don't want to go by that.

Mr. Yakelis: It is a major access to the Capitol. It is the gateway to the Capitol.

Mr. DiFrancesco: As George already mentioned your signage is going to be major issue. I can sit here and ask a dozen questions as to that looks pretty extravagant but it has been through so many eyes now I'm sure that my questions would not serve any purpose. The property within the loops would that just be green space then or...?

Mr. Yakelis: That hasn't been determined. There has been some talk of infields with the Walnut Street Corridor Study that this was part of there was some talk of maybe infield redevelopment of some type of mixed use.

Mr. Hartwick: Is the Baskins Robbins still there?

Mr. Yakelis: There is a gas station, funeral home, Sunoco station, used car lot and Amoco.

Mr. Hartwick: And a Puff N Puff or something. I have a couple of questions. You don't want people standing out in the middle directing traffic in the beginning. It is going to be difficult to try to get people moving in that direction, because traffic cops are not going to be in the position to direct traffic. What are the steps to monitor that for the first couple months to ensure that all safety standards are being met?

Mr. Yakelis: That is something that we will have to bring up and discuss. One thing to remind everybody is that this is a large commuter corridor.

Mr. Hartwick: As I come up to that intersection I probably would be confused knowing how much I have driven that in the past. I'm not going to get on the website each morning, as good of an idea as that is to check to see which way I'm going to be turning

onto Progress Avenue. Maybe the Patriot-News will assist us in reaching out to the citizens.

Mr. DiFrancesco: It is seriously counter-intuitive because, again, if you are coming south on Progress and you want to turn into the City instead of making a right you are going to make a left to go around the jug handle.

Mr. Bauer showed on the map the way that you would go.

Mr. DiFrancesco: I see you actually had to turn...

Mr. Bauer: The only time you have to, is if you are going to make a left from Progress Avenue. (He pointed the directions on the map.)

Mr. DiFrancesco: I'm thinking, again, the signage is going to have to push people into the opposite lane that they are thinking they are going to be in. That is better.

Mr. Bauer: It is going to be a large learning curve and an outreach program that will have to happen. It is different from anything that we have had.

Mr. Hartwick: There is no doubt that progress needs to be made on Progress Avenue. I see you are making a request to the Feds that you want us to support through the Board of Commissioners. What other things are you asking for today from the County?

Mr. Yakelis: Currently that is the extent of our request today. We are looking to pursue the funding at this point. HRG is pushing forward with the preliminary design efforts through the remainder of this year. As they continue forward with that there will be additional opportunities for comments and public input as the project moves forward. At this point, because of where we are at with the overall funding exercise, we are merely asking for a letter of support from the County to continue to push for construction and right-of-way funds for the project.

Mr. Hartwick: \$12 million and probably by the time it is all said and done it will be about a \$4 million shortfall. It will probably be pushing around \$16 million.

Mr. Yakelis: Our overall project costs right now are about \$15.5 million. About \$7.7 million of that is construction, \$6.6 is for right-of-way. We are obviously looking at a pretty substantial right-of-way number compared to some other projects.

Mr. Hartwick: You are obviously going to ask for the local and state share to meet the other amount that is required for the completion of the project?

Mr. Yakelis: We will be providing a briefing to the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study Technical Committee. What we are looking to do is secure the Federal funding; the Township is committed to securing, looking for both local and state sources to pursue

the required 20% match for Federal Transportation funding. The Feds require 80%, which was the reasoning behind our \$12 million request.

Mr. DiFrancesco: Again, the light signalization coordination is not just in the corridor, but on down the road, if you are saying that one of the points of this besides the safety impact is to keep traffic flowing, how does this, what's highlighted, tie into the multiple lights that are down the road further?

Mr. Yakelis: This intersection will be tied into the Susquehanna Township system. There is an area in Penbrook that doesn't have coordination or interconnection, but then into the City then you do have coordination. We are trying to look at it from a regional basis. At this time I don't believe Penbrook has any mechanism to put in place the interconnection at this point in time.

Mr. DiFrancesco: The ones down further will be coordinated?

Mr. Yakelis: Lower Paxton will also be interconnected.

Mr. DiFrancesco: When those decisions are made, when somebody is setting up those light systems, do they set them up, what is the municipal philosophy in terms of setting them up to stop traffic and slow traffic or setting them up to keep traffic flowing through?

Mr. Bauer: To keep traffic flowing. All the permits required are from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the traffic signaling permitting process.

Mr. DiFrancesco: They look at the timing of the lights and everything.

Mr. Yakelis: We have to remember that it is a balance between the side streets and the main line, which in this case would be U.S. 22 or Walnut Street. There is always a fine balance between making the side streets wait too long to keep traffic moving and there are always stops along the way even in a large corridor, because you have to reform that platoon again in order to get a flow. There is always going to be some place where there is going to be a stop. It is very infrequent that you can get through an entire corridor without stopping somewhere.

Mr. DiFrancesco: What I'm concerned about is those corridors where it's more likely that you will stop at every red light, because again, from a traffic flow perspective, it makes no sense and today from an energy standpoint it makes no sense. I never really thought about the coordination of lights, because I've never represented a municipality that really had that as an issue. Again it is an extravagant plan, but it makes sense. Signage is going to be the biggest issue. I don't see any problem with us giving you the letter that you are requesting today.

Mr. Hartwick: I'm going to have to take my map with me.

Mr. Myers: On behalf of the Township I do want to thank the Board of County Commissioners, because there was a \$1.3 million financial commitment for this project already, \$700,000 of which came from the County Commissioners. Thanks to Mr. Memmi also for assisting in this and \$600,000 from the Susquehanna Township bond issue for the preliminary design. Thank you for that.

Mr. Saylor: The letter should be addressed to? (Mr. Yakelis provided Mr. Saylor with a name.)

PERSONNEL

Ms. Lengle: Are there any questions on the Salary Board items?

Mr. Hartwick: Number 11 is spelled wrong. It should be Berard.

Mr. DiFrancesco: Is that under Personnel?

Mr. Hartwick: Sorry, I have no questions on the Salary Board items.

Mr. DiFrancesco: Personnel Packet.

Ms. Lengle: Are there any questions on any of the transactions? (There was none.)

PURCHASE ORDERS

Mr. DiFrancesco: Our Director of Purchasing is not with us today, but he did leave a note on the Agenda that as he so eloquently says all funding issues will be taken care of over the next week. Any questions you may have I would strongly suggest that you do not call him over the next couple of days, but certainly call his office and leave a message and he will resolve them when he gets back into Pennsylvania. Are there any questions on the Purchase Orders?

Mr. Hartwick: No one to ask them to.

Mr. DiFrancesco: You can ask them to Chad.

Mr. Hartwick: No one to ask them to.

TRAINING PACKET

Mr. DiFrancesco: Are there any items on the Training Packet that we have to address?

Mr. Saylor: I'm told that we need action on Item #9. The payment is required before attendance and that begins on April 5th.

It was moved by Mr. Hartwick and seconded by Mr. DiFrancesco that the Board approve Item #9 on the Training Packet; motion carried.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- A. Refund of County taxes in the amount of \$1,333.70 to Dennis & Celia Spicher (due to fire) Parcel #43-021-034. This refund includes the payment of the County's 2008 portion to Tax Claim in the amount of \$303.01 and authorizes the Tax Claim Bureau to remove the 10% penalty, Bureau costs and interest from the 2008 County & County Library amount due. (***A VOTE IS REQUESTED 3/25/09***)
- B. 2009/2010 Child Care Network, Inc. Grant Renewal Agreement between Dauphin County and the PA Department of Public Welfare. (***A VOTE IS REQUESTED 3/25/09***)
- C. Agreement between Dauphin County and Excelon.

Mr. DiFrancesco: We have two items for approval today. Item C will be taken up at next week's meeting.

It was moved by Mr. Hartwick and seconded by Mr. DiFrancesco that the Board approve Items A and B, listed above under Items for Discussion; motion carried.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Tully: All matters scheduled for action next week will be in order and ready for a vote. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Mr. Hartwick: If I could just see the recommendation that is being made to assure that it is in accordance with what our planning committee discussed for Item #9.

Mr. Tully: Okay.

CHIEF CLERK'S REPORT

Mr.: Saylor: Commissioners, I have nothing unless there are any questions of me. (There was none.)

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

(There was none.)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. DiFrancesco: We are at the point in time again for public participation. Is there anybody in the audience that would like to voice their opinions or comments? (There was none.)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Mr. Hartwick and seconded by Mr. DiFrancesco that the Board adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk

Transcribed by: Richie-Ann Martz