

Commissioners' Board Meeting May 7, 2008

The Berks County Board of Commissioners held a special public meeting on Thursday, May 7, 2008, at 7:30 P.M. in the Cafeteria of the Twin Valley High School, 4897 North Twin Valley Road, Elverson, PA 19520 for the purpose of answering questions and gathering additional comments from land owners adjacent to the proposed Hay Creek Trail as well as other members of the public.

Commissioner Chair Mark C. Scott called the meeting to order with Commissioner Christian Leinbach and Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt in attendance. Commissioner Scott then introduced the staff present at the meeting including each Commissioner's Executive Assistant; Chief Clerk Terry L. Styer; County 1st Assistant Solicitor Christine Sadler, Esq.; County Administrator William E. Dennis; Director of the Parks and Recreation Department William Semmel; Superintendent of Recreation, Rebecca Richards; and Director of the Berks County Planning Commissioner, Glenn Knoblauch.

Commissioner Scott described the purpose of the meeting, crediting Commissioner Barnhardt for initiating it, and asked that he provide opening remarks, which he did in a prepared statement:

Welcome / thank you for coming and participating in this process.

Commissioner Scott spoke to how we got to this meeting; I'd like to speak on the facts of where we are now and where we can go from here.

Let me start by saying that I would not like to see this conversation devolve into the moral "rights and wrongs" of eminent domain. As some of you may be aware I have an extensive history with eminent domain in both my personal history as a resident in West Reading and also professionally as Mayor of West Reading with the Penn View Motel. I understand that it is an inflammatory and unpopular topic, and the general opinions of those in opposition to the trail on this subject have been widely documented already. I would instead like to focus on some of the concerns that have been voiced by you concerning the benefits, impacts, concerns and potential consequences of trails.

As a new Commissioner I was not aware of the depth of the issues surrounding the Hay Creek Trail, nor was I privy to any of the history or prior discussions that went into the process. It wasn't until the beginning of March, in anticipation of Mr. Cone's landowner meeting, that I began to get a sense of the public debate. Amid the flurry of discussion, it became clear that the one complaint lodged time and again was a lack of concrete information about the trail, the cost, and the impact on the community of Southern Berks County.

To that end, I decided the only way personally to come to grips with the issue was to better educate myself and make a decision based on facts, not speculation.

I also embraced the idea of this meeting to hopefully dispel some of the myths surrounding the County's understood scope of this project. It has been relayed to me that there are those among us tonight that believe the project calls for a paved, 66-foot wide trail that would cost \$800K a mile – that is simply not true.

In my fact-finding process I:

- walked the trail with other representatives from the County from the Stoltzfus Farm to Rock Hollow Road*
- had numerous conversations w/ Andy, Bill Semmel and Christine*
- consulted Parks & Recreation Board for their history and input*
- consulted Engle, Hambright & Davies (County's insurance broker) to determine the County's liability for the trail*
- read the Peer Review (which mentions Hay Creek as a priority)*
- read the County's Vision 20/20 plan (which also mentions Hay Creek)*
- crunched numbers w/ B. Dennis to establish a realistic financial picture*
- spoke with officials in Robeson, Union, Douglass, and Caernarvon townships as well as New Morgan and Birdsboro*
- reviewed documentation from Townships in Chester County*
- reviewed data on the Nat'l. Association of Reversionary Property Owners (NARPO) website*
- consulted Police Chief Ted Roth in Birdsboro, head of the Chiefs of Police Association and resident of Southern Berks*

I met with:

*Pete Diebolt, Scott & Teresa Moyer, David Sparr @ Joanna Store
Pete Diebolt, Ed & Mike Cone
Sec'y. Michael DiBerardinis, Cindy Dunn w/ DCNR
Todd Stell, Jim Thorne, Chip Karasin
Glenn Knoblauch w/ Berks Co. Planning
local "neighbors" to the trail properties (Martha Costello, Betty Stephens)*

While I appreciate the position of each and every landowner, I had already received a large amount of correspondence conveying those opinions – I call them "opinions" simply because they were passionate and individual, and, in all fairness, speculative. It is important to note that I went further, to the people that live, eat, drink and sleep trails and greenways for a living, and asked them for data to attempt to establish the merits and debits of the Hay Creek Trail. I didn't ask for "pro-trail" or "anti-trail" data, just data. The hybridized result of the information that was provided to me is summarized in the handouts that are available on the table as you enter. I would continue to welcome any further factual and reasonable information that anyone would wish to give to me in anticipation of the forthcoming decision.

I do not want to spend our time together reading the handouts to you, or spouting statistics, but I encourage you to read them over. We are fortunate that the only trail in the nation that regularly tracks trail usage and can provide timely information is nearby in York County. I understand that a skeptical person may view this data as slanted, given

some of the sources, and I have endeavored to seek out the most unbiased data available. Unfortunately, as Todd Stell pointed out during one of our conversations, the people that invest in trails don't necessarily have the money to invest in studying trails, so what data is available can sometimes vary greatly in location and date. The important point, however, is that I took your concerns to the experts in this field, and the answers they were able to provide told me three things:

- 1. That your concerns are by no means unique. As you can see from the handouts, the concerns that you as landowners have are the exact same concerns that are voiced everywhere across the nation that a trail has been anticipated – crime, property values, trespassers, privacy, usage, economic impacts, etc.*
- 2. That the concerns, almost unequivocally and without fail, do not come to pass. In fact, there is no data that was provided to me to authenticate those anxieties, and I have been assured that it is not because the data is skewed to be “pro-trail”. In fact, it happens more often than not that some of the most vocal opponents of the trails as they are planned become supporters once the trail is installed and they realize that the trail has had a positive impact on their lives and community.*
- 3. That there is a considerable difference between an overgrown, unmanaged abandoned railroad corridor and a completed rail-trail that is managed and maintained, secure, and has permitted uses and trail rules.*

The cost for constructing this project is a fluid number, but with the assistance of County Administrator Bill Dennis we are arriving at a definite figure that hovers around \$200K per mile. We are looking at a crushed limestone surface, not asphalt. We had offered a 66-foot wide easement because of the original railroad right-of-way, but in the majority of cases a narrowing of that corridor is entirely possible. One of the budget items that have been discussed is the hiring of two additional part-time Park Rangers for patrolling the Hay Creek length, most likely on bicycle for maximum coverage.

The community input is also an “X-factor” in these discussions, but thus far there has been nothing to show that there would not be support. Trail users most often become trail keepers, helping to control litter and overgrowth as well as serve as watchful eyes against vandals, dumping or otherwise undesirable usage of the trail – after all, they have a vested interest in keeping the trail safe and nice. We have it on good authority that the friends of the Horseshoe Trail have already adopted three miles of the proposed trail for its upkeep. I feel confident that the remainder would be adopted with little trouble.

A thought on crime, and trespass: It is important not to trivialize or deny that bad things can happen on trails. I spent time as recently as this morning reviewing accounts of unfortunate incidents on the NARPO website, but taken altogether I have been unable to determine that the incidents were anything less than isolated.

In other words, all of the events on trails that I have reviewed could not be attributed to a pattern of behavior on the part of trail users, nor could the presence of the trail itself be directly cited as the source of the problem. Please keep in mind that an argument could be made that bad things occur on roads, parking lots, in shopping malls, office buildings, airports and zoos. However, no one would rationally argue that we shouldn't build any of those because crime might potentially occur there. I have attempted to view this project in that light.

I would like to offer another thought for your consideration that I have not heard mentioned too much in these discussions. This Board is thus far of a like mind in that we wish to establish a practice of looking at how our business today impacts the County in five, ten, twenty years. There are areas in Southern Berks that are ripe for development – both residential and commercial – and indeed there are already plans proposed, from Mr. Cone's 15-lot Livingstone Farms or the proposed 10,000-home mega-development in New Morgan Borough, to draw residents to your community. Not only have trails been proven to attract an affluent, well-educated populace, but the Hay Creek Trail would ensure that as your community is developed there would be a preserved open space for recreation, exercise and education for the use of future generations.

I would close my comments with an invitation to you, the landowners. Like my meetings with Scott Moyer and Ed Cone, I remain of the stance that I am willing to meet with you, on your property, in individual meetings or groups of two or three, and we can sit down with Andy and discuss the accommodations that can be made to the easement offers that have been sent to you. It is unfortunate that the climate surrounding this initiative has become tense in some environs, and downright hostile in others. We have the facts, and we have the will and the means to partner with you in this process. I encourage you to contact my assistant Ryan Hunter so that we can set up these sessions. I would also like to suggest to my colleagues that if the vote is to proceed with the Hay Creek Trail, that we consider establishing a trail advisory committee to provide the residents with the opportunity to participate in the process. I thank you for listening to me, and I look forward to listening to you.

The following information regarding trails was compiled by Commissioner Barnhardt's Executive Assistant, Ryan Hunter, and was handed out at the meeting:

Statistics on Trail Usage in Response to Citizen Concerns

Established in 1992, the Heritage Rail Trail County Park in York County is 21 miles long and runs north from the Mason Dixon line just south of the Borough of New Freedom through Glen Rock, Hanover Junction, and Seven Valleys in the Colonial Courthouse in the City of York. The most popular activities on the trail are hiking, jogging, bicycle riding, and horseback riding and it ultimately connects to Maryland's 20-mile long Northern Central Railroad Trail. The following statistics were obtained from the **Heritage Rail Trail York County Park 2007 User Survey and Economic Impact**

Analysis. This is the only study in the United States that has consistently tracked trail users over time from the year that the trail opened.

Trail Usage:

Public comment: Trails and Linear Parks are little used and poorly maintained, and the public interest is so negligible as to not make it worthwhile pursuing.

- Nearly 80% of respondents agreed with the statement that trails are important to the community and a good use of tax dollars. 99% of the survey respondents would like to see more trails developed in York County.
- The maintenance of the Heritage Rail Trail has been rated excellent or good by more than 90% of the survey participants in each of the surveys, from the year the trail opened through its eighth year. This is a credit to the staff of the York County Parks Department.
- The cleanliness of the trail has consistently been praised. To a large extent this is probably due to the initial decision by the Parks Department to have a “carry in, carry out” policy. Additionally, because the trail is such an admired community asset, many users pick up the litter of those who are less respectful.

Demographic information about trail users (including average income, distance traveled and the like), etc.:

- More than 80% of the trail users are over the age of 35. Over 38% are between 36 and 55 years of age. The ration of men to women using the trail is a 60% male, 40% female split.
- For many of the survey respondents, trail usage is a frequent occurrence. More than 56% of the respondents use the trail at least once a week. Less frequent usage, a couple of times a month (13.2%) and a few times a year (14.1%) still point to the trail as a regular activity. Even at eight years of age, the trail is still attracting new users. 11.4% of the survey respondents were first time users, almost identical to the percentage reported in 2004.
- Most frequently when someone uses the trail they do so with one other person (38.9%). Using the trail alone (21.3%) or in a group of two or three other people (family groups – 26.9%) are also frequently seen along the trail.
- Use of the trail on weekends was significantly higher in the 2007 study than in previous studies. The weekend use was 12% higher than the weekday usage. Most trail users prefer the morning (40.7%) or afternoon (30.7%) for their trail outing, although 15.8% indicate that they will use the trail “anytime” that they can get there. Survey respondents make a significant time commitment when they venture out on the Heritage Rail Trail. Nearly 48% are on the trail for more than two hours and another 44% are on the trail for between one and two hours.
- More than 64% of the survey respondents reported that they arrived at the trail by driving. Another popular way of reaching the trail was to bike there (24.1%). Others walked (8.6%), ran (2.2%), or even arrived on horseback (0.4%).

- Trail users were asked to “define” their use under one of five categories. 44.8% of respondents consider their use of the trail for health and exercise (nearly identical to the 2004 finding). Another 10% use the trail for fitness training. 38.2% of the respondents consider their use of the trail as recreational.
- Biking remains the predominant form of recreation on the Heritage Rail Trail. Just over 71% of respondents indicated that their primary activity on the trail is biking. The use of the trail for walking/hiking increased slightly since 2004 and running/jogging decreased slightly. Nature study and the museums were each listed by 1.2% of the survey participants.

Incidents of crime/vandalism/trespass:

Public Comment: Trails are havens for illegal dumping, as well as a constant nuisance of trespassing and vandalism.

- The Heritage Rail Trail has had very few security issues to deal with. The physical appearance of park rangers and trail ambassadors helps to add to a user’s sense of security.

Economic impact of trail:

Public comment: There is no evidence that trails attract visitors from outside the County to come to York (and, importantly, purchase goods and services while here).

- While the majority of trail users reside in York County (60.8%), the trail has attracted users from Maryland/Virginia/Washington D.C. metropolitan areas (25.7%), Lancaster County (3.6%), Harrisburg Metro area (2.2%) and the Philadelphia Metro Area (2.7%). In addition, users from various other additional areas accounted for 4.1% of the survey respondents in the 2007 study.
- In terms of economic impact, more than 85% of the survey respondents indicated that they had purchase some form of “hard goods” (defined as bike, bike accessories, auto accessories, running/walking/hiking shoes or clothing) in conjunction with their use of the trail. The average spending of those who provided spending data was \$367. This is about \$20 higher than the average figure from the 2004 survey. While these types of purchases are not annually recurring, even with the most conservative usage estimate it amounts to millions of dollars in sales.
- The purchase of consumables, or “soft goods” (water, soda, candy, ice cream, lunches, etc.) was reported by a little less than 72% of the respondents. The average expenditure per person per trip was reported at \$12.66. Considering that the average user makes several trips to the trail on an annual basis, at the minimum these types of purchases contribute several hundred thousand dollars to the York County economy. Additionally, these types of purchases are recurring year after year.

In conclusion, the Heritage Rail Trail County Park continues to attract an increasing number of users who regularly visit the trail as a means of improving their health and fitness. The trail's economic impact in terms of both user spending and as a business stimulus has more than repaid the cost of developing the trail. The dedicated efforts of the York County Department of Parks and Recreation have resulted in a well maintained, safe and clean facility that is an asset to York County. It is a credit to the York County Department of Parks for their continuing to conduct these trail user studies. These studies are a valuable asset for the entire trail community across the country.

Further data addressing public concern:

***Public comment:** Residents of Southeastern Berks do not need any more trails, as there is already an ample amount trails in other parts of the County that trail walkers could use.*

- According to the *Pennsylvania Recreation Plan 2004-2008 Executive Summary*, published by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (2004), 23% of respondents cited "facilities too far away" as a major barrier preventing them from recreating. Other barriers included "lack of information" (25%), "facilities too crowded" (23%), and "lack of facilities" (20%).

***Public Comment:** Properties that abut the trail will see a significant drop in the assessed value of their land.*

- There is no concrete data that supports this statement; rather, by all accounts the opposite is true. One recent example, in South Bethlehem, Mayor Ed Callahan reported that condos built along the South Bethlehem Greenway sold at an unheard of \$300,000 due to the proposed, but not yet built, rail trail, in anticipation of the completed trail.
- According to a 2002 survey of recent homebuyers by the National Association of Home Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders, trails ranked as the second most important community amenity out of a list of 18 choices. (*National Association of Realtors and National Association of Home Builders Consumer's Survey on Smart Choices for Home Buyers*). Additionally, the study found that 'trail availability' outranked 16 other options including security, ball fields, golf courses, parks, and access to shopping or business centers.
- A land developer from Front Royal, Virginia, donated a 50 foot wide seven-mile easement for the Big Blue Trail in northern Virginia after volunteers from the Potomac Appalachian Club approached him to provide a critical trail link along the perimeter of his second-home subdivision. The developer recognized the amenity value of the trail and advertised that the trail would cross approximately 50 parcels. All tracts were sold within four months (*American Hiking Society, 1990*).

Public comment: In such trying economic times, the County should not be investing tax dollars in frivolous endeavors such as walking trails.

- A 2004 study quantifies the benefits of money spent on trail development from a health standpoint. The conclusion is that for every dollar spent on trails nearly three dollars of public health benefits are produced. On average, per capita annual cost of using trails was \$209.28 (\$59.28 construction and maintenance, \$150.00 of equipment and travel). Per capita annual direct medical benefit of using the trails was \$564.41. Therefore, building trails is cost beneficial from a public health perspective. (*Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bike/Pedestrian Trails; Journal: Health Promotion Practice; April 2005 Vol. 6, No. 2, 174-179*) Simply put, recreation activities involving exercise reduce health care costs.
- The impact of preserving open space, especially a rail-to-trails project that involves very little radical change to the grade and vegetation to install, has a significant ecological benefit. In a study conducted in 1991, a population with only 11 percent tree cover concluded that the trees removed an estimated 17 tons of carbon monoxide, 93 tons of sulfur dioxide, 98 tons of nitrogen dioxide and 210 tons of ozone. The value of this pollution removal was estimated at \$1 million annually (*Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, U.S. Forest Service; Nowak, 1994*). Pollution can also be decreased by establishing trails and greenways which encourage people to walk or bicycle rather than drive automobiles.
- Trails can provide an invaluable educational resource for local school districts. Good trails might be viewed as close-by mobile classrooms, safe places for kids to explore nature and learn about their own neighborhoods. (*Trails: an antidote for "Nature Deficit Disorder"; Bell, 2008*)

Commissioner Leinbach said that he was aware of the proposed trail and was very interested as an avid hiker but after he took office in January of this year, he began to receive letters from citizen objecting to the County's intended use of Eminent Domain proceedings to acquire easements for the trail if they refused to sell to the county. He stated his position that Municipal Condemnation has a place in government for critical infrastructure needs and he does not consider a recreational trail critical infrastructure. He also described the confusion of estimated cost for the project added to his discomfort and in reference to the Parks Peer Review report which also identified the need to maintain the Park properties and facilities the County already has including the newly acquired 560 Acre Antietam Lake property. He said while the 51 property owners are a small minority, their voice is significant.

At this time Commissioner Scott called the names of those who signed in to make public comments:

Dave Sparr of Mullen Hollow Road thanked the Commissioners for taking the additional time to listen to the citizens before making any decisions regarding this project.

Jim Thorn, Representative of the Natural Lands Trust and Founder of the Hopewell Big Woods project (73,000 acres of protected open space) described the value of the connection of existing trails with the proposed Hay Creek Trail. He reflected on the positive impact to an area's Economic Development that he has witnessed with the trail projects with which he's been involved.

William McNaull of North Twin Valley Road described his background in PA Rail Trails and had personally and successfully had to deal with eminent domain with his properties. He then reviewed the point system developed in a Rail Trails publication and suggested that of the possible 16 potential positive points that a trail could achieve, the proposed Hay Creek Trail would probably reach a level 13. He felt that this trail could end up being the best Rail Trail in Pennsylvania and that no trail of this size and nature was ever completed without the use of Eminent Domain proceedings.

Scott Moyer, owner of Joanna Store, indicated that he had petition with over 500 signatures opposing the Commissioners taking Eminent Domain action for this trail project. He indicated that he supports trail projects but objects to the use of condemnation to acquire the property. He then described some concerns regarding the location of the trail and the previous rail right of way, and noted that if constructed on that same location, it would put him out of business. He then stated that the letter from the County to the Adjoining property owners sent last December that threatened Condemnation if they refused to sell was what caused him to rescind his trust of the County.

Andrew L. Strauss, AICP/PP of Strauss and Associates/Planners, trail consultant employed by the County was asked by the Commissioners to respond to some of the concerns. Mr. Strauss indicated that if the project goes forward, he would meet with all concerned property owners to resolve any issues the trail causes for their property. He explained that the reason that this has not occurred to date was that this new board had slowed down the process to re-examine all the information. He said the issues presented may seem complicated but has not seen anything on the trail that, to date could not be resolved or doesn't not have a design solution.

David Sloyer, 5th Street, Reading, said he represented Walk/Bike Berks as well as the Reading Trail Blazers. He said he represents 50,000 cyclists that have used the biggest and longest rail trails in the county. He said he has seen all kinds of configurations and that anything can be fixed. He indicated that he lives and operates a business in Hamburg near the Bartram Trail and can speak to the upswing in economic development that has occurred following the opening of the trail and further noted that the trail had a more positive impact on local economic development than Cabella's did.

Emerson Gundy, Moyer Road, Morgantown, said that he owns property through which the Thun Trail runs and has experienced problems with hunters, trail bikes, and campers encroaching on his property after accessing it via the Thun Trail. He emphasized that due to his personal experience he wanted to stress the importance for the county to have strong security patrols on the trail.

Todd Stell, Briarwood Drive, said he was a trail advocate and has previously served as Chief of the Trails and Greenways for the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. He described the rural community in which he resides and how walking trails help to preserve that sense of community. He then reported that for the first time ever reported in the US that children now have a shorter life expectancy. He attributed this to childhood obesity and diabetes due to the lack of accessible recreational facilities in neighborhoods. He agreed that the property owner's concerns have merit and need to be addressed but believed that trails are good for a community and argued that they should be considered critical infrastructure. He also said he lives 100 ft. from the proposed trail and looks forward to serving on volunteer patrols to monitor the trail.

Steve Tunbridge, Birdsboro, argued against the need for additional trails saying that he can drive to French Creek in minutes. He also reflected on the hard economic times we are facing and the number of other parks commitments the county faces. He feels the trail will increase property taxes and that constructing is now would be a mistake.

Martha Costell, Geigertown, said she lived on her property for 17 years and is also adjacent to Mr. Ed Cone's property, whose housing subdivision known as Livingstone Development which has been discharging storm water for over two years onto a neighboring property and causing damage is in effect a taking of that property. She said the storm water run-off has felled trees and is threatening an historic structure listed in the National Register. She explained that due to this issue, she doesn't understand why Mr. Cone so strongly objects to the county's proposed taking of the easement for a trail.

Rose Rodriquez of Giegertown argued that problems of child obesity have more to do with parenting and not the lack of trails. She then shared experiences she has had with the existing rail road right of way, including damage to her property. She also agreed that the area has enough trails for recreation.

Kyle Moyer disagreed with the need for a trail to benefit economic development and also said he preferred riding on the trail as it exists on his father's property; he then said that is wrong to take somebody's property and that is not the freedom I am fighting for (as a marine he expected to be deployed to Iraq in two weeks.)

Craig Glass said he objected to the threat in the letter from the county. He also expressed concern over the loss of an easement he uses to access his property if the condemnation goes through. He questioned that if this project has been reviewed for the 12 years as has been suggested, then why are issues like preserved farms, driveway easements etc. only now being considered. He said there is no way that residents can be assured of 24/7 Park Ranger patrol on the trail. He said that he believes that with the municipal and school parks together with French Creek Park, there are plenty of recreational trails in the area.

Andy Strauss responded again by saying that if the project moves forward he would be happy to meet with Mr. Glass to assure he retains access to his property. Mr. Strauss also offered that a trail is only as good as its administration and management. He said he has

attended many meetings for this trail project and have never heard complaints from citizens saying that Berks County runs a lousy Park system. He also said he has many years of professional as well as personal experience with trails as he has a public trail on his property in Bucks County. He said once trails are opened and signed they become very, very safe facilities. He then described several different construction tools other trail projects utilized to restrict snowmobiles, ATV's and other unwanted motorized vehicles onto the trail. He said having walked this trail the trail bed doesn't show evidence of the type of damage that motorized vehicles would cause but as with all trails, the landowners surrounding the trail would need to be vigilant and report any violators. Mr. Strauss then expressed apologies to the property owners accepting responsibility for the strong language in the letter sent to them last December.

Michelle Barret, President of the Bike/Walk Berks submitted a letter for her comments.

Gail Mast indicated that her property is already cut in four parcels due to the Horseshoe Trail.

Julie Stoltzfus said she is an adjoining property owner of the proposed trail and supports it and believes that the county Parks Department would be able to control it but she has concern over the use of eminent domain to acquire the easements but feels that the Joanna store would derive financial reward from the users of the trail.

Ed Cone, Briarwood Drive, said he appreciates all the comments of the trail advocates but felt they are only a special interest group speaking for other trail advocates. He said that he was speaking for other property owners and doesn't agree that all trails are the right decision for every area. He said that the eminent domain issue is still on the table for 20 to 30 people who may face the action from the county. He said people selling easements out of concern for facing condemnation proceedings are not willing sellers and feels that eminent domain is a process that has been abused in recent years. He then said that the Berks Greenway plan states that the recreational areas in southern Berks are twice what are recommended.

At this time each Commissioner made some closing remarks starting with Commissioner Barnhardt who thanked everyone for coming out and hopes that the Board of Commissioners will come to a decision about proceeding with the process within one month.

Commissioner Leinbach also thanked everyone for coming out on a Wednesday evening. He said he is pleased to be able to get together to discuss difficult issues and challenges and remain respectful of each other.

Commissioner Scott ended the evening by citing several effective uses of eminent domain by the county including the acquisition of the Antietam Lake property preventing it from being purchase and development into housing units; the acquisition and demolition of the Penn View Hotel putting and end to one of the hottest crime areas in West Reading; and he supported the Exeter Township Supervisors who exercised

eminent domain proceedings to obtain the Reading Country Club thus preventing the construction of a 500 unit housing development creating an immediate impact on the School District. He said when Rt. #222 expands there will be many business and houses taken in the process for this project to proceed for the public good. He thanked everyone for coming out and expressing their positions on this trail project

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L. Styer, Chief Clerk