



Bradford County Newsletter

Your Government Working for You!

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Gas Exploration Advisory Committee Meeting

By: Michelle Shedden

The Bradford County Gas Advisory Board met on Wednesday August 20, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Bradford County Conservation District office. Brian Driscoll took a few moments to give a summary of the trip to Texas that the group recently returned from. Commissioner Smith spoke about his observations from the trip, the higher standard of living experienced by the residents, the gas sites, low jail population, and two types of injections wells, one that is property owner and one that is

commercial. Several sub committees were formed ; Economic Development, Government Relations, Public Safety, Planning, Environmental, Public Relations, Public Education, Infrastructure, and Industry Relations. Commissioner Smith spoke about doing a public presentation along with Brian Driscoll. They would hold a public meeting for a presentation of the Texas trip and answer any questions the public might have. John Sullivan mentioned that CCAP has formed a natural

gas committee which will be a statewide organization and Commissioner Smith has volunteered to sit on this board. Planning Director Ray Stolinas spoke about promotional materials, oil and gas exploration website, and his office's recent compilation of data for the different municipalities which he would like to make available to the public. The group's next meeting will be on September 3, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Conservation District Office.

Commissioners Attend CCAP Conference

By: Gayle Kershner/CCAP

The Bradford County Commissioners, Chief Clerk, and Solicitor recently attended the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) 122nd Annual Conference in Montgomery County. County leaders from around the Commonwealth gathered to attend workshops and training sessions, network with their peers, discuss state and federal policies that impact counties and elect Association leaders for the next year during the Annual Conference.

The Association serves to strengthen the ability of Pennsylvania's counties to govern their own affairs and improve the well-being and quality of life for their constituents, to this end the Association offers these Confer-

ences and training opportunities to help county commissioners and county employees to better serve their constituency.

There are many issues that impact Bradford County and we share many of the same challenges of other counties statewide. The CCAP Annual Conference allows the Commissioners to not only learn about the issues and how to solve them, but also allows commissioners from throughout the commonwealth to meet one on one to learn from each other.

CCAP founded in 1886 is a statewide nonprofit and non-partisan association representing the commissioners, chief clerks, administrators, their

equivalents in home rule counties, and solicitors of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

The Association promotes the common interests of counties by encouraging both a dialogue among county elected officials and a better understanding of county government by federal,

state and local elected officials as well as private citizens. The Association provides services and educational opportunities for its members to assist them in better administering the affairs of their offices to the benefit of the public they serve.

We Need Your Help!

We would like to remind all the recipients of this monthly E-mail newsletter to help us add to our growing list of subscribers. We encourage all of our readers to pass the newsletter on to friends and family. Keeping you informed is one of our responsibilities as public officials and we would like to share the issues we are facing with as many residents as possible.

Sign Up Here!

Bradford County Group returns from Wise County, Texas

By: Mark Smith



On Monday morning, August 11, the Bradford County group started its official business. The day began at 8:00 a.m. with a welcome from local government officials. The group spent the day hearing the following presentations; Wise County

Bradford County Commissioners, the Central Bradford Progress Authority and members of the Bradford County Gas Exploration Advisory Committee recently returned from their fact finding trip to Texas. The trip's purpose was to educate those involved about the impacts that natural gas drilling has on the many aspects of our communities such as; Economic, Environmental, Law Enforcement, Taxation, Etc.

The group arrived in Texas the evening of Sunday August 10, 2008. That evening they spent with their host Wise County Commissioner Kevin Burns who coordinated the agenda. The group reviewed the agenda with him Sunday evening and also received a tour of their courthouse.

Chief Appraiser: Mickey Hand, Wise County Sheriff: David Walker, Decatur City Mayor: Brett Shannon, Administrator of Weatherford College: Joe Birmingham, Devon Energy Specialist Gilbert Horton, Ritchie Oilfield Construction: Mike Ritchie, XTO Energy: Ken Howerton, Targa Pipeline: Ken Manning, Barnett Shale Education Commission: Ed Ireland, Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas railroad Commission which regulates the gas and oil industry in Texas. At 7 P.M. Monday evening the Bradford County group had a dinner meeting with a number of presenters from the day's agenda which allowed them to have more informal discussion.

On Tuesday, August 12, 2008 the group was given a tour of gas drilling operations by Devon Energy. Devon is the largest gas company in the world. They also toured the company's Barnett Shale Headquarters as well as a water hauling company and injection well. That evening the group split up for various events which included a Farm Bureau dinner meeting.

Wednesday, August 13, 2008 the group toured XTO Energy operations including what is

known as a "mud farm" which is a disposal site for the drilling waste product.

The Commissioners in conjunction with Central Bradford Progress Authority and Penn State Cooperative Extension are planning a public presentation of their trip and their findings. The Bradford County Commissioners recently discussed the trip on Wiggle 100. The interview can be heard on Commissioners Smith's blog at www.marksmithblog.com.



Right to Left: Tom Murphy, Kevin Burns, Tom Henson, Mark Smith, Jason Petlock, John Sullivan, Dakota Burns, Bob Storch, Tony Ventello, Brian Driscoll, Doug McInlino, Dave DeCristo.

Understanding Bradford County Planning & Grants

Part 3: Sub-Division and Land Development

By: Ray Stolinas

Since 1981, the Office of Community Planning and Grants and the Bradford County Planning Commission have regulated and enforced the Bradford County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The ordinance, or SALDO, was originally adopted in 1981 and subsequently revised in-house and re-adopted in 2003. This means that the County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

covers all land within municipalities that have not adopted or enforce their own similar regulations. To date, six municipalities within the county have adopted and enforce their own SALDO, namely, Asylum Twp., Athens Twp., Litchfield Twp., Troy Borough, Wyalusing Twp. and Wyalusing Borough. Even though these municipalities have adopted individual ordinances, County

Planning staff still provides technical planning assistance associated with reviewing survey and engineering plans within (30) days of receiving these plans.

What is a subdivision and/or a land development? A **subdivision** of property is defined in Pennsylvania as a division or redivision of a lot into two or more lots that result in a prop-

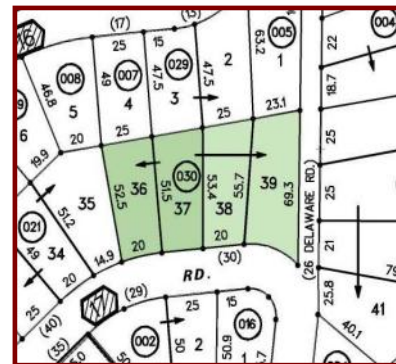


Image: Typical lot addition

erty line change. This is done for the purpose of distributing property to heirs, leasing property, transferring property ownership or developing property. In Bradford County, our office, receives on the average, between 100 and 130 subdivision applications per year. This includes lot additions, divisions and some non-agricultural leases.

Brian Davis, County Planner, reviews subdivision applications with several considerations in mind: road access, sewage disposal needs, setback lines, minimum lot size, lot orientation, local zoning (if applicable), floodplain, just to name a few.

Under the PA Municipalities Planning Code, all municipalities in Pennsylvania have ninety (90) days to review and approve a subdivision or land development. This holds true under the County Ordinance where applicants file their application twelve (12) days prior to the County Planning Commission meeting, held on the third Tuesday of each month. Once submitted, staff has the opportunity to begin the review and recommend the official acceptance of the application at the monthly meeting.

From time to time, an applicant may request a **modification** or waiver of the County Subdivision Ordinance standards due to an undue hardship. The applicant must additionally file a modification request for the Bradford County Planning Commission to review and consider. If the County Planning Commission determines that there is no hardship, the modification may not be granted and the applicant may need to re-examine the plans and provide the correct ordinance standard. Planning Commission staff does not have the authority to grant modifications, only recommend to the County Planning Commission whether a

modification is warranted. Another part of the review process involves sending a copy of the proposal to the municipal governing body for a thirty (30) day review and comment. The review period is necessary, in that, it gives the local municipality an opportunity to consider issues such as the presence of floodplain, the need for a driveway permit or placement of sewage facilities. This also gives the municipality with a local planning commission an opportunity to educate members on the subdivision review process.

A **land development** on the other hand is a review and approval of a site plan that may include proposed improvements to one or more contiguous lots or tracts involving two or more residential buildings and/or a single non-residential building. Exemptions include a single-family residence or subordinate farm buildings. The land development process can be a bit more technical than the subdivision review.

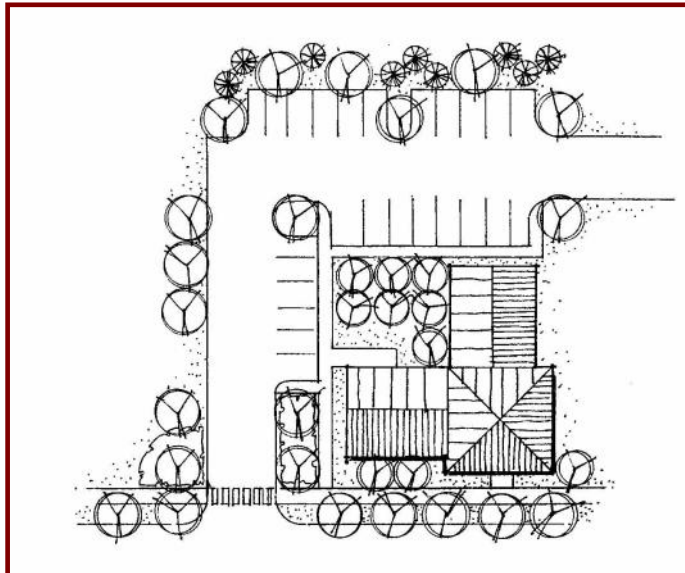


Image: Minor land development

With land development the staff considers similar requirements for setbacks, access and lot size, with additional regards for number of parking spaces,

lot coverage, method of storm water management, screening and buffering, sidewalk improvements, lighting and other improvements associated with the development. Activities such as cell towers and wind turbines also fall under this category of land development. Applicants for land development applications usually submit a **preliminary plan** that is best described as a tentative proposal illustrating proposed streets and building footprint. Once a plan meets all ordinance requirements, the applicant submits a **final plan** for the County Planning Commission's consideration. All final plans for subdivisions and land developments are recorded in the Register and Recorders Office and become legally recorded documents. This means the applicant has met all ordinance requirements and can now divide a property or start the construction process.

Staff prefers to meet with applicants for both subdivision and land development applications

preliminary plans and other agencies such as the Bradford County Sanitation Committee for proposed on-lot sewage facilities or PENNDOT for a Highway Occupancy Permit. Staff provides applicants with a checklist and application suitable for their proposal. In addition, our County Planning staff provides review and comment to municipalities that choose to adopt their own Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance through a simple Memorandum of Understanding so that their local planning commission can review and approve plans at the local level.

Why review subdivision and land development activity? Communities change one lot at a time and it is a permanent change to the community, for better or worse. Over time, as subdivision or land development becomes more prevalent with growth, cost to provide public services may increase and developers should bear some of the burden of these impacts. In addition, development may involve the future dedication of streets, open space or recreation area to the municipality. Subdivision and land development review assists the municipality set standards for constructing these potential dedications. Lastly, the subdivision and land development process should not be adversarial and a collaboration between the applicant and planning body. The planning commission not only regards their position as upholding the public interest, but also making sure projects are built to be an asset to the whole community.

well in advance of application submission. This is due to the fact that the applicant will need to meet with a surveyor or engineer to begin drawing the

Quick Updates

...keep up to date with what's going on!

Bradford County Parks

The Bradford County Parks Advisory Committee met on August 12, 2008. The Group discussed how to move forward with sub committees for each park. They also discussed their involvement in the upcoming parks Master Plan. A bid conference was held for the Master Plan on August 26, 2008. The following attended the meeting: HRG, Larson Design, YSM, Gannett Fleming, Barry Isett & Assoc., Mike Jones, Gerard Zeller, Ray Stolinas, Ellen Crowley, Mark W. Smith and Doug McLinko.

Bradford County Tourism Committee

Members of the Bradford County Tourism Committee were appointed at the August 28, 2008. Commissioners meeting. The appointees include Linda Warner, Gene Ann Woodruff, Sharon Kaminsky, Roger Druck, Brian Driscoll, Susan Storch, Bonnie Boreck and Mark W. Smith. At their first official meeting since the by laws and appointments the group appointed Mark Smith Chairman. They also discussed second quarter financials, updating the Bradford County Tourism website and the upcoming September grant round.

911 Re -Addressing Update

Bradford County Commissioners have finished working out the contract amendment with the 911 readdressing contractor M.S.A.G. They expect to sign the contract at their September 11, 2008 meeting. The Commissioners will be working with M.S.A.G to present the project to the public and get the project restarted within the month. The Commissioners put the project on hold to work out contractual and operational complications.

County Government Directory

Accounting	265-1723	911 Center	265-9101
Assessment	265-1714	Conservation District	265-5539
Auditor	265-1716	Coroner	297-0720
Bradford County Human Services	265-1760	District Justice (Troy)	297-3880
Bradford County Manor	297-4111	District Justice (Towanda)	268-5057
Collections	265-1746	District Justice (Wysox)	265-9393
Commissioners	265-1727	District Justice (Athens)	888-6324
Courts	265-1707	Emergency Management Agency	265-5022
District Attorney	265-1712	Planning	268-4103
Domestic Relations	265-1718	Grants	268-4193
Elections	265-1717		
Hearing Master	265-1711		
Jury Commissioners	265-1732		
Personnel	265-1722		
Probation	265-1706		
Prothonotary	265-1705		
Public Defender	265-1713		
Register & Recorder	265-1702		
Sheriff	265-1701		
Treasurer	265-1700		
Veterans Affairs	265-1704		
Victim Witness	265-1759		
Penn State Agricultural Extension	265-2896		
Area Agency on Aging	265-6121		
Airport	265-4900		
Library	297-2436		
Correctional Facility	297-5047		

Newsletter Now Available as Download from County Website

By. Michelle Shedden

In response to requests received the Commissioners Office has added the Bradford County Newsletter on the county website for those who do not have email access. It is now available by going to and clicking on the Newsletter link. In the future all newsletters will be added to provide residents access to all past newsletters.

www.bradfordcountypa.org

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