

Work Session Summary

August 27, 2010
10:30 AM-12:05 PM
Wayne County Park Street Complex

Attendance: Edward Coar (Chairman), Joann Hudak, Ed. D., Dave Messersmith, Michele Stahl, James Labar, Mary Beth Wood, Robert Muller, Robert Suhosky, Laura Travis, Debbie Varcoe

Sub-Committee Reports –

Workforce – Ms. Hudak reported that at their last sub-committee work session on August 20th, an interesting topic of discussion was the Business-to-Business Expo that was held in Bradford County. Feedback indicates people confused this Expo with a job fair and were in attendance to find jobs. Ms. Hudak suggested that in planning the Expo for Wayne County we need to be careful on how it is presented to eliminate potential confusion. Training grants have been secured and Ms. Hudak announced that Johnson College is starting a 96-hour evening welder-training program and Lackawanna College has a one-year Oil and Gas Accounting certificate program that will start in September. The sub-committee is continuing to discuss community forums with Petroskills, an organization that specializes in seminars and coursework related to the oil and gas industry. It was mentioned in some counties, teachers from the local school districts touring the drilling sites to familiarize them with the type of work that is involved. Ms. Hudak talked about a program entitled “Educators in the Workforce” that involves teachers from various industries and provides them with credits to maintain their certification.

Public Safety – Due to the opening of the new 911 Center, Steve Price, Director, Wayne County Emergency Management Agency was not in attendance, however Mr. Muller informed the task force that wild well control training is in progress at various fire departments within the County. A company out of Texas, contracted through Hess, is conducting the training.

Planning – Edward Coar distributed a copy of the Fayette County court case that dealt with the issue of zoning and how gas drilling may be regulated by local land use ordinances. This commonwealth court case further establishes that normal zoning type regulations are permissible and not exempt by the Oil and Gas Act and Act 247. However, regulations through a subdivision and land development ordinance that attempts to regulate the actual drilling of the well would be exempt, as this would be covered by the Oil and Gas Act and DEP. Mr. Coar also discussed the recent Penn State Extension webinar that was a part of the planning sub-committee work session.

Outreach – Dave Messersmith discussed a seminar dealing with pipelines that is scheduled to be held on September 8, 2010 at the Park Street Complex. He also distributed a flyer for the 2010 Marcellus Summit being held in State College in October. Mr. Messersmith recently received a phone call from Jennifer Means to set up a public meeting with DEP and the gas industry to discuss the drilling process. Industry would explain the drilling process and DEP would follow up with what they inspect and regulate throughout the process. October 19th is one of the dates being considered for this meeting, which would be held at the Honesdale High School auditorium.

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Government – Mrs. Travis stated most townships are still working on road agreements rather than bonding. Mrs. Travis informed the Task Force she was invited to attend a pre-construction meeting for the well pads to be constructed for two wells in Scott Township. Mrs. Travis reported October 13th is the township officials meeting and all Task Force members are invited to attend. The Rolling Museum from Erie, PA will be there to demonstrate the drilling process.

Environment – Mr. Muller reported on the tele-conference that he participated in last month dealing with dirt roads and road impacts. He stated a main problem is that there are no state standards for heavy use truck traffic. The Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads out of Penn State University is working on standards with the possibility of conducting training sessions for contractors, gas drillers and municipalities on newer standards for road construction. There was some discussion over posting and bonding of roads. Mr. Muller discussed the possibility of a workshop on posting and bonding as there are many different techniques that can be used to enforce it. Mr. Muller has also been participating in the Common Waters group meetings. This group plans to meet with industry personnel to learn what they might need as far as siteing, identification of sensitive areas and what kind of mapping they may need. Mr. Muller stated he would like to get someone from the industry to attend the environment sub-committee work sessions to talk about some of these on-going issues and concerns.

Economic Development – Mary Beth Wood reported that the sub-committee recently held a work session at the fairgrounds to take a look at the layout in planning for the Business Expo. However Ms. Wood stated that they are not quite ready for an Expo in June 2011 as planned. After discussing this plan with the Workforce sub-committee and industry, the approach is to conduct a series of quarterly forums next year to prepare businesses for potential opportunities associated with the gas industry. Hopefully, out of these forums a list of jobs could be developed in order to conduct the Expo/Career Fair to be held approximately 2012 when businesses would be better prepared to work with the industry.