

Hard work, soft reward

All this snow's got to go so Eve Lohmann, age 3, Beaumont tried to help get some out of the driveway at her home. After a hard day's work, it was time to cuddle with "Whitey" during a well-deserved break.



FOR THE POST/ CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



Developer

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"It's probably going to take a year — once I get my plan — to even get it approved," he said.

"If he meets all the requirements, we'll issue the permit in about a week."

Bob Hassel
PennDOT Permit Engineer

Dallas Township supervisor Frank Wagner said last week that Naparolo will install a traffic light in the area of Route 415 and Lakeway Manor. He will also add an additional lane to 415 along his property. However, PennDOT said no work can begin until the permit is approved.

Grant

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each municipality. Council members Dallas Borough and Dallas, Lehman, and Kingston townships believe such a plan is needed to address three pressing issues: traffic, water supply and open space. They voted last fall to hire Philadelphia planning firm, Kise Straw and Kolodner, to create the plan.

The municipalities are currently responsible for coming up with 50 percent of the cost of the plan. With the grant, their share would be reduced to 50 percent of \$62,500.

The council's grant coordinator Joe Moskovitz said the group applied for the grant to lower costs for cash-strapped Kingston Township.

"The budget difficulties there have made it a priority to identify — sooner rather than later — what other (grant) options there might be," he said.

"If Kingston Township or Dallas Township were to pull out of the master plan or BMACOG, there would be no sense in pursuing the regional plan."

With the second-largest population among council members, Kingston Township is currently responsible for paying \$17,000. If the council receives the grant, however, that amount will go down to \$10,603. How much municipalities pay hinges on the size of their population.

With the largest number of residents, Dallas Township's contribution would go from \$19,400 to \$12,100. With the fewest number of residents, Dallas Borough's commitment would be reduced from \$6,100 to \$3,806. Lehman Township would become responsible for paying \$4,740.

Kingston Township Manager

Eddie O'Neill said any reduction would be appreciated.

"We went into the process with \$17,000 being the worst-case scenario and we were hopeful it would be less. If the grant goes through, it will be a welcome relief," said O'Neill.

A separate \$51,000 Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program grant that will pay for half of the project has already passed preliminary approval, said Moskovitz last week. The group should know within six to eight weeks if it will be awarded.

COG members plan to share zoning code enforcement

The Back Mountain Area Council of Governments voted last week to advertise for a building code inspector or company. Dallas Borough, Dallas Township and Lehman Township jointly plan to hire an inspector to enforce new state construction codes for new buildings and renovations.

By doing this in "bulk," said Dallas Borough Council President John Oliver, the hope "is to get the best deal for residents."

The group also is considering utilizing Kingston Township Zoning Officer Bill Eck in the same capacity.

"There doesn't seem to be any doubt in my mind we could get at least as good a price and probably better response time if we had someone local," said Doug Ide of Lehman Township.

The group will make a hiring decision in April.

— Erin Youngman

Roundabout

(continued from page 1)

public review and comment. Following the comment period, the TIP will be sent for mandatory final approvals at the county, state and federal levels. However, Doble said, those approvals are often routine.

The "five-leg intersection redesign" study will also evaluate other possible solutions for the area.

"A roundabout (or re-engineered traffic circle) is probably a good answer, but you've got to look at all the options," said Doble.

Once the study is complete and engineers have selected the best solution, a series of public meetings will be held to answer questions and receive comment.

The study and preliminary engineering should take about two years, said PennDOT spokesperson Dave Krisanda. If the community responds favorably to the chosen project, construction would begin and take about a year.

Krisanda said community sentiments will play a large role in the intersection's redesign.

"There is community involvement through the whole process — they could change the project, move it forward, or totally kill it."

The final decision on whether to move forward often comes down to what local officials support. "That usually has the most weight," he said.

A separate study will focus on the Route 309 corridor, particularly a section in Kingston Township that has been the site of numerous serious accidents.

Route 309 from Hillside Road to as far north as the Route 309-415 split in Dallas Borough could be studied. Doble said the exact parameters of the study have not yet been defined.

With thousands of vehicles traveling the stretch and numerous driveways and businesses in the area, "there is no easy solution there," said Doble.

Jug handle turns and barriers up the center of the highway to prevent left turns will be considered.

Budget

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procure the money from a loan, suggesting there could be a delay while awaiting approval from the state.

"That's why I was asking for paperwork on it," Yankovich said, so the supervisors could be prepared to act quickly if a loan is needed.

O'Neill suggested that a loan might not be required, projecting a balance on hand at the end of February of just over \$200,000.

But the reliability of future income tax receipts was questioned in light of a change in collection agencies from Don Wilkinson to J.P. Harris. "I'm worried that we're going to come up short," in the first months after the change, Yankovich said.

O'Neill responded that he had been working closely with the Harris agency since October to prepare for the switch, and didn't foresee any lag.

After more discussion, Yankovich asked the other supervisors if they were comfortable with "only \$200,000 or less in the account."

"I do not see at this point a need for a

tax anticipation note," said supervisor J. Carl Goodwin, and no further action was taken.

Richard Morgan, a regular at meetings and consistent critic of O'Neill's performance, called for him to step aside. "Time after time after time he has not given the answers you need," Morgan said of O'Neill.

As he did at other points during the meeting, Goodwin came to O'Neill's defense, waving what he described as 15 pages of facts and figures provided to supervisors.

In later discussions about the budget, supervisor Jeffrey Box questioned the need for seven police vehicles, since the maximum number of officers on duty at any one time is three. "You have more cars than you need," he said to chief James Balavage.

"Don't forget, the people said they want service," responded supervisor Paul Sabol.

Balavage explained that two cars were bought in 2003 using state grant funds that would otherwise have been lost.

One of them was added on condition that it would be dedicated to traffic enforcement on Route 309 and other state roads.

"There are no luxuries downstairs," Balavage said. He offered to give up the car he drives to and from work, but cautioned that six cars are needed in order to have four available for service.

Yankovich said the drive to find savings was necessary because the road department needs to replace a 1982 model truck. The new truck will cost about \$90,000, he said.

In the most concrete action of the 2.5 hour meeting, the supervisors authorized O'Neill to solicit proposals from pension fund administrators and for all township insurance policies except health coverage.

In closing the meeting, Yankovich repeated his disappointment that specifics of a tax anticipation note weren't discussed.

"Unfortunately, I think tonight's meeting was a waste of time for everyone," he said.

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