

BACK MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

# Members told to pass ordinances regarding drilling

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Members of the Back Mountain Community Partnership were advised April 15 to separately pass ordinances that may help protect against gas drilling issues.

The partnership is an inter-municipal group composed of Dallas, Franklin, Jackson, Kingston and Lehman Townships and Dallas Borough.

Attorney Jeffrey Malak, solicitor of the BMCP, explained it would be best for each municipality to enact its own ordinances rather than to pass joint partnership ordinances because each municipality has its own unique needs.

Malak provided an example of

an ordinance, created by the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Solicitors, which addresses height regulations of equipment, setbacks, access roads, wells, tanks and storage.

He also furnished sample dust, noise and light pollution ordinances and a sample road bond agreement. In addition, he provided a copy of Dallas Borough's zoning ordinance, which restricts drilling to certain areas of the borough and deals with screening and buffering and outdoor lighting issues.

Malak noted such ordinances would take into consideration all types of businesses and cannot be specific to natural gas drilling as the Oil and Gas Act of 1984 pre-

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Atty. Jeffrey Malak  
BMCP solicitor

empts regulation by the state. He stressed a lot of ordinances can be incorporated to help and that the municipalities are not limited to revising their zoning laws.

"We don't know what's allowed, what's not, until we try some different things...." Malak said. "It's a very, very complicated issue and like I said, it's not a one size fits all."

Joe Sallitt, of Dallas Township,

asked Malak if gas drilling companies need to get permission for the locations of their wells.

Malak said it depends on the zoning ordinances of the municipalities where the wells are located. He added that, if a municipality amends its zoning ordinance to restrict wells from a zone where leases already exist, it would be up to the municipality to buy out the leases.

BMCP President Al Fox, a supervisor in Jackson Township, said he doesn't know how local officials could put enough ordinances in place to control every issue related to gas drilling.

"My concern is when do they start drilling on the state prison properties?" said Fox, who lives next to the State Correctional Institution in Dallas.

**Gas drilling meeting set**

Tom Yoniski, a representative for state Sen. Lisa Baker, announced the senator's office has arranged a meeting regarding gas drilling to be held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 13, at Lake-Lehman Junior/Senior High School.

Yoniski said Penn State University officials will give a presenta-

tion on gas drilling. He said that officials from the state Department of Environmental Protection and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will also attend.

**Presentation held**

Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition members Karen Belli and Leeanne Mazurick, both of Dallas Township, gave a brief presentation on gas drilling and its impacts on the environment and the community. The coalition was formerly known as Luzerne County Citizens for Clean Water.

Coalition member Audrey Simpson, of Kingston Township, showed a video she created of Dimock Township residents who were negatively affected by gas drilling.

LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Despite protests from public, board hires wrestling coach

By REBECCA BRIA  
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The Lake-Lehman School Board voted 8-0 to appoint a new wrestling coach on April 19 despite requests from the public to table the decision.

Thomas Williams, of Lehman Township, was hired as the head wrestling coach for the 2010-2011 school year. Board member Harry Cornell was absent.

Head wrestling Coach Phil Lipski is retiring from coaching after 21 years in the position.

Several parents, a senior wrestler and a past wrestler who said he had Williams as a coach, previously spoke against the board's choice to hire Williams before the vote on the matter was taken. Most believed the current assistant coaches should have been considered first.

No visitors spoke in favor of appointing Williams.

"It's the wrong choice and you're going to lose a lot of good people over it," said Matt Raczowski, a former Lake-Lehman wrestler and a current elementary wrestling coach.

Mike Stuart said he was captain of the 1995 undefeated Lake-Lehman wrestling team that was coached by Williams and Lipski.

"I hated every day of it 'cause I had to deal with him," Stuart said, referring to Williams.

According to the cover letter Williams submitted for the position, he was previously a junior high wrestling coach at Dallas

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and Lake-Lehman. He was the varsity wrestling coach at Lake-Lehman for 10 years.

Williams is also a guidance counselor at the junior/senior high school.

At the request of board member Andrew Salko, board members went into an executive session for about five minutes after listening to visitors' comments. When they returned, they approved the entire agenda, including Williams' appointment.

Superintendent James McGovern said there were four applicants for the position and it was the recommendation of the interview team to hire Williams.

Reached by phone after the meeting, Williams declined to comment, stating he did not know what was said at the meeting.

**Hires**

The following people were hired: James McDermott Sr., of Dallas, as a full-time custodian at the junior/senior high school, \$9.50 per hour; and Howard Long, of Dallas, as a part-time custodian at Lehman-Jackson Elementary, \$9.50 per hour.

Also, John Mokychic, of Dallas, was appointed as the assistant golf coach for the 2010-2011 school year.

**Retirees**

The board accepted letters of intent to retire from five district employees. They are Madelyn A. Koch, secondary math teacher, at the end of the school year; Sheila Race, second-grade teacher at Lake-Noxen Elementary, at the end of the school year; Kendra Cosgrove, third-grade teacher at Lehman-Jackson Elementary, at the end of the school year; Dorothy Komsisky, Lake-Noxen Elementary secretary, July 31; and Florence McEntee, food service worker at the junior/senior high school, at the end of the school year.

**Students honored**

McGovern honored Shane Stark, a senior wrestler, with a certificate of achievement. Stark was awarded a bronze medal for claiming third-place in the PIAA Class 2A Championships in March.

The girls' basketball team was also honored by McGovern. The team was the Wyoming Valley Conference Division III Champions, placed third in PIAA District 2 competition and advanced to the state playoffs.

McGovern also congratulated the students who recently performed in "The Wizard of Oz" musical and their director, Gina Major Ackerman.

**School calendar**

The calendar for the 2010-2011 school year was approved. McGovern noted the school year will begin on Aug. 30, 2010 and end on June 8, 2011.

DORCAS SOCIETY PLANS RUMMAGE SALE



Members of the Dorcas Society are pictured with just a few of the many items that will be available at their upcoming rummage sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday April 30, and Saturday, May 1, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Route 118, Dallas. From left, are Betty Schray, Ruth Ide, Val Rothrock, Lois Hardisky, Betty Glass, Catherine Grieshaber, Jean Wilson and Hope Beisel.

DALLAS BOROUGH

## New traffic signal is approved

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Borough council approved a resolution on April 21 to allow for a new traffic signal.

The resolution permits the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to install and operate a traffic signal at the intersection of Route 309 and Dorchester Drive.

The new traffic signal is a requirement for the construction of Dallas Geisinger Medical Clinic which will be built on Dorchester Drive in the area of the former Sacred Heart Park.

**Misericordia University**

A resolution was passed to approve the financing and/or refinancing by the Dallas Area Municipal Authority of certain capital projects for the benefit of Misericordia University.

Attorney Benjamin Jones, solicitor of DAMA, said Harveys Lake Municipal Authority acted as a sponsor for the university in 1999 for a bond. Jones said the university wants to refinance or refund notes through DAMA as a conduit.

According to Jones, the measure was approved by DAMA but must also be approved by DAMA's founding member municipalities - Dallas Borough and Dallas and Kingston Townships.

Jones said there is no personal or municipal obligation or any liability whatsoever to the borough and townships.

He said the Kingston Township supervisors approved the measure at their last meeting and that the Dallas Township supervisors were expected to pass it Wednesday evening.

**Project bid approved**

A base bid in the amount of \$13,851.76 was awarded to the lowest bidder, Neal Lynn Inc., of Luzerne, for a storm sewer inlet replacement project.

Borough manager Tracey Carr said several storm sewer inlets

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Three Back Mountain residents who recently participated in a display of military marching during the University of Pittsburgh's Detachment 730 Air Force ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) are, from left, Brian Haughwout, Drew Clouse and Christopher Box.

## Locals participate in military display

Three Back Mountain residents recently participated in a display of military marching during the University of Pittsburgh's Detachment 730 Air Force ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps).

All three are students at the University of Pittsburgh and cadets in the Air Force ROTC and

displayed their marching skills during a Parents' Day Parade.

Brian Haughwout, a freshman from Trucksville, is studying mathematics. He is the son of Brian and Louise Haughwout.

Drew Clouse is the son of Dale and Susan Clouse, of Dallas, and is a freshman studying computer science.

Christopher Box, of Shavertown, is a sophomore studying mechanical engineering. He is the son of Jeff and Maire Box.

During Parents' Day, there was also an Awards Ceremony and a Military Ball in the evening.

All three cadets are graduates of Dallas High School.

HARVEYS LAKE BOROUGH

## Alleged violation will be defended

By EILEEN GODIN  
Times Leader Correspondent

Pending litigation about an alleged violation of the state's Sunshine Act and concerns about gas drilling topped the agenda at Tuesday night's council meeting.

The majority of council approved attorney John Dean to represent Chairman Francis Kopko and council members Boyd Barber and Richard Williams III in litigation of an alleged Sunshine Act violation. Council member Diane Dwyer voted against the move, saying "taxpayers should not have to pay for this."

The state's Sunshine Act requires the public's business to be performed in meetings open to the public.

In January, council changed insurance carriers from Walters Associates Inc. of Kingston to Thomas Insurance Group Inc. of Philadelphia. Council members came under fire from some residents for de-

termining on the issue without seeking quotes from other carriers and with only three council members approving the decision.

Last month, Kopko said the insurance switch saved the borough \$12,814 within the first quarter.

Another issue on the minds of residents is the encroaching Marcellus Shale gas drilling.

Resident Michelle Boice said that, with gas companies coming within "two miles of our borders," she was asking council to educate itself on the subject and try to push the state Legislature to pass regulations on the industry.

"It is frightening what could happen," Boice said.

Another resident, wishing to remain anonymous, attended a Back Mountain Partnership meeting on gas drilling and learned that 50 acres within the borough have been leased. She asked if the borough could prohibit the gas companies from coming through the use of noise or zoning ordinances.

Council member Ryan Dough-ton said he has attended four or five meetings and all the informa-

tion is the same.

"Local authorities cannot do anything," he said. "All we can do is bond the roads for weight limits."

Council attorney Charles McCormick said the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Act precludes all local ordinances.

In other business, the annual Harveys Lake Dump Day will be 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday, May 15, at the municipal building. Permits are available at the borough office by calling 639-3300.

Senior citizens can have their unwanted items picked up in front of their homes for a \$25 fee. They also can register with the borough office. The pickup services will be held April 26-30 and May 3-7.

Vehicles under a half ton will be charged \$25 for their loads; vehicles over a half ton will be charged \$50.

Items accepted include tires, which must be off the rims and uncut (car tires, \$5; truck tires, \$10); batteries and propane tanks, \$3 each; appliances, \$10. No shingles, drywall or insulation will be accepted.