

LEHMAN TOWNSHIP

Gas drilling ban would likely be challenged

By STEVE MOCARSKY
smocarsky@timesleader.com

An attorney said a proposed ordinance that would essentially ban natural gas drilling in the township contains provisions that would require the township to secede from the state and the country if either government challenges it.

More than 100 residents packed the township supervisors meeting room Monday night to either support or oppose an ordinance proposed by the Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition, a local grassroots group opposed to gas drilling in the township and surrounding communities.

Supervisor Chairman Dave Sutton told the crowd at the start there would be no vote on the ordinance because it would have to first go before the Luzerne County Zoning Hearing Board for approval.

Dr. Thomas Giunta, president of the coalition, outlined the provisions of the ordinance, dubbed the Lehman Community Water Rights and Local Self-Government Ordinance which would ban any corporation from drilling in the township or extracting water for drilling within the township.

Jack Haley, solicitor for the township Zoning Hearing Board, said upon reviewing the proposal, he believes it would certainly be challenged in court if adopted, and

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he believes the authors of the ordinance also expected such.

Haley said the ordinance forbids other levels of government from exercising powers to aid or assist anyone who deems the township's laws to be in violation of the rights of others.

In order to do so, it provides that "any attempt to use other units or levels of government shall require

the board of supervisors to hold public meetings that explore the adoption of other measures that expand local control" and that "such consideration may include actions to separate the municipality from the other levels of government."

"In that regard, I must suggest that the proposal needs to be amended to include not only 'sep-

aration,' and read here 'secession from the state of Pennsylvania and also from the United States of America,' as the federal government is likely to take the same view as the state," Haley said.

Giunta said a virtually identical ordinance was adopted just last week in Licking Township in Clarion County.

The local ordinance was written by the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund. A fund representative who attended the meeting spoke about the ordinance and said there are about 120 local ordinances in the state, some of which have been challenged, some of which folded.

Shireen Parsons, Pennsylvania

community organizer for the fund, said the fund would defend the township in court at no charge if the ordinance was adopted and legally challenged.

"What you have here is not a fracking problem; it's a democracy problem," Parsons said. "Who gets to decide in the community of Lehman Township how safe your water is? Is it the people who live here or is it a handful of corporate officers enabled and abetted by the state?"

Township resident Gary Ide, president of Citizens for Cleaner Energy, a pro-drilling group, said it would be wrong to assume that drilling contaminates drinking water.

LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Accomplishments of students lauded

By SARAH HITE
shite@mydallaspost.com

The Lake-Lehman School Board approved hires, granted tenures and celebrated students' accomplishments at its general meeting Monday night.

Superintendent James McGovern said he was "proud to read the superintendent's report," mentioning honorees and program participants he wanted to congratulate.

Marching Band Director Alex Higgins and junior Chris Gerlin were on the list for winning first-place titles at the Drum Corps Associates Championship in Rochester, N.Y. in September. McGovern said it is very rare to have two participants from the same school win the honor, and he stood up to shake Gerlin's hand as the audience applauded during the meeting.

McGovern also announced that Lehman-Jackson Elementary School has entered the "Power a Bright Future" contest sponsored by Clorox bleach. The school could win a \$50,000 grant for a new resource room. McGovern said general public can vote for the school on the contest website, www.powerabrightfuture.com.

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There are two weeks left to vote.

Lehman-Jackson will also be closing doors soon. It's not shutting down—the school was designed in 1975 with "open air" classrooms in which there are no doors where students are taught. Due to safety issues, the board voted to advertise for companies to bid on adding doors to the school.

In other matters...

The board approved the following substitute teachers within the district: April Aldrich of Sweet Valley, Allison Baur of Dallas, Janice Benoit of Shavertown, Mary Ellen Dzia-dosz of Dallas, Autumn Ford of Hunlock Creek, Melinda Gordon of Shickshinny, Samantha Hubert of Tunkhannock, Cynthia Janosov of Harding, Michelle Marroquin of Shavertown, Kerianne Nafus of Shickshinny, Kevin Olshefski of Harveys Lake, Douglas Piazza of

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

The Daily family - Megan, Bev and Noah - decorated the bank of their van as a tribute to Willie Wonka.



Alyssa Angelicola, of Shavertown, gets a big surprise when a garbage can witch jumps out at her.



Gabrielle Sabatini, of Dallas, sports the right hair color to match her family's tailgate decor.

DALLAS TOWNSHIP

Center developer's request approved

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Dallas Post Correspondent

The supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday to approve the conditional-use request from a developer to build a 30,000-square-foot retail building on the site of the Country Club Shopping Center.

Richard Holthaus, vice president of Humford Equities, which owns the land, said it will take close to a year before ground is broken on the planned strip mall, which will house small, retail spaces 1,500 to 2,000 square feet each.

Plans for the project, which will be situated between Thomas Market and M&T Bank, call for doubling the size of the parking lot, Holthaus said. Resident Dave Pellam asked the board if the heavily wooded 50-acre parcel of township-owned land, on which a proposed gas line will run through four acres, could be used for sustainable forestry, thus creating revenue for

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Dave Pellam
Dallas Twp. resident

the township as well as preserving most of the trees.

"I'd like to keep it a forest," Pellam said. "I'd hate to see it get exploited."

The board hasn't yet made a decision as to whether to grant permission to Chief Oil & Gas Company to lay the pipeline. Township solicitor Tom Brennan said he hopes to receive a management plan for the property, which was donated to the township decades ago, from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resource.

In other business...

The board decided to follow the lead of Dallas School District and unanimously deny a request by J.W. Ventures to forgive back taxes on the Mark II property.

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Carly Kappler, of Shavertown, has control of her candy bucket.

TRUNK or TREAT

The annual Trunk or Treat event at the Shavertown United Methodist Church is all about keeping children safe during the Halloween season. Those dressed in Halloween costumes were allowed to collect treats from decorated car trunks.