

HARVEYS LAKE BOROUGH

Council redefines boat house, avoids fracking issue

By EILEEN GODIN
Dallas Post Correspondent

INTERESTED?

The Harveys Lake Environmental Advisory Council has an opening for a resident of Harveys Lake Borough. EAC consists of seven council members who advise the Harveys Lake Borough council on all environmental issues that encompass Harveys Lake Borough. Interested residents should contact EAC secretary Denise Sult at 639-1042 for more information.

The Harveys Lake Borough Council unanimously approved a redefined Boat House Ordinance, was approached with an anti-fracking ordinance and awarded a garbage and recycling bid at its regular monthly meeting Tuesday night.

Council diligently worked with the borough's planning and zoning boards and the public to redesign the controversial Boat House Ordinance.

In May 2009, the ordinance was adopted along with a new zoning manual. At that time, the term boat house was simply defined as a "structure constructed completely over a body of water, designed and used exclusively to shelter water craft or marine-related equipment."

The definition was designed

to prohibited people from living over the water but also eliminated amenities such as bathrooms and kitchens. Many lakeside property owners have voiced their displeasure with the ordinance and worked with the council, the zoning and planning commissions to redefine the terminology and other aspects of the ordinance.

The new ordinance defines a

boat house as "a structure which has direct access to a body of navigable water and is used only for the storage of vessels and associated equipment." But sewage disposal and water supply can be provided in the S-1 lakeside district. Boat houses with living quarters will be allowed, but only "one dwelling unit shall be permitted upon a lot within the S-1 district."

Other changes include a clause stating that any development of properties within the S-1 district which extend into the water will require approval of the Water Encroachment Permit under the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, plus a soil erosion study and approval by the Luzerne County Conservation District.

Borough attorney Charles McCormick said the height of the boat house has been changed to 12 feet above the high water

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While many residents were happy with the boat house changes, others left disgruntled due to council's lack of action to arrange for a public hearing to address an anti-fracking proposal.

The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, of Summit Hill, prepared the Harveys Lake Community Water Rights and Local Self Government Ordinance and had copies available for everyone.

neighboring municipalities responsible for pollution caused to water sources and the environment within the borough.

In a standing room crowd, many residents calmly expressed their desire to have council consider this proposal and asked for a public meeting to discuss it.

"The protective association is for this," said John Halbing, president of the Harveys Lake Protective Association. "The lake should be protected."

Resident Neil Turner asked, "What can we do? Contact our state and local legislature, control it through local zoning and with local rights and self government. Or do nothing and accept the consequences?"

While Rich and Peggy Cronin thought council would have set a time and date for a public hearing

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LEHMAN TOWNSHIP

Both sides of gas drilling meet head-on

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Dallas Post Correspondent

"I think it's healthy to have an open discussion. I'm not against drilling but I'm for a moratorium and getting the rules and regulations in place."

Jack Hanish
Lehman Township resident

Residents from both sides of the gas drilling issue packed the board of supervisors meeting Monday.

Last month, the board denied a request from the Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition, a local grassroots organization opposed to drilling in the township and surrounding communities, to advertise an ordinance it had drafted to ban any corporation from drilling in the township or extracting water for drilling in the township.

Supervisor Dave Sutton said the proposal, dubbed "Lehman

Community Water Rights and Local Self-Government Ordinance," contains provisions in direct violation with the municipal planning code and would be challenged in the courts if adopted.

Many residents asked the board why they weren't allowed to discuss the gas drilling issue for longer periods of time.

Supervisor Ray Iwanoski pointed out that more than seven

and a half hours had been devoted to discussing the issue at the last several meetings, including an hour and a half at Monday's meeting.

"I think it's healthy to have an open discussion," said resident Jack Hanish. "I'm not against drilling but I'm for a moratorium and getting the rules and regulations in place."

Hanish said he has read the

proposed ordinance and admitted it is "far from perfect" but suggested it could be modified to suit the needs of the township.

Resident Tony Rutchauskas told the board he has witnessed numerous trucks from the gas companies in the area taking different routes other than the roads that are on the approved traffic plan. Sutton told Rutchauskas and the other residents to report any violations in the traffic plan as soon as they witness them.

"If you see something going on, let us know and we'll nip it in the bud," Supervisor Doug Ide said. He said residents can call him at (570) 899-1060 if there is no answer at the township building.

In other matters, the board passed the first reading of the 2011 budget. There will be no tax increases in the \$2,122,379 spending plan. The board plans to adopt the budget Dec. 20.

Wyoming Co. Chamber launches annual shopping contest

The Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce is launching its fourth annual "I Shopped Local This Holiday Season" contest.

Retail purchases made in Wyoming County from November 26 through December 24 during the 2010 holiday season

will qualify shoppers for entry to win a \$500 grand prize. Qualifying purchases include everything from meals in restaurants, gift certificates, furniture, clothing and appliances to shoes, food, home improvement materials, cars, vehicle upgrades, jewelry and more.

Plus, purchases made at Wyoming County Chamber member businesses will be awarded a double entry so Look for the "Buy it Here, Keep it Here" logo on retail store doors. For more information, contact Maureen Dispenza at the Chamber office at 836-7755.

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