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Finally, the last witness testifies at Chief hearing

By SARAH HITE
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UP NEXT

After nearly a year, the final witness testified and attorneys presented closing arguments Tuesday at a Dallas Township zoning hearing to determine whether Chief Gathering LLC can build a natural gas metering station off Hildebrandt Road.

Sonia Maslowski, a resident of Fairground Road, testified on behalf of the opposition and her concerns ranged from the possibility of explosion to being uneasy about out-of-town workers in the area.

The 17-year township resident said she and her husband moved to the area for its clean amenities, beautiful scenery and access to nearby cities.

Now, she said she worries about strange vehicles on the dead end road where she lives, chalking it up to employees working on the Transco interstate natural gas line located near her home.

Chief Gathering LLC filed an application for a special exception to build a natural gas meter-

The board will make a decision on the matter at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 7 in the Sandy & Marlene Insalaco Hall at Misericordia University. Solicitor Phil Gelso said residents can present findings of fact to the board no later than November 16 by submitting materials to the township municipal building. Residents also have until November 16 to submit conditions the board will consider if the motion is approved.

ing station off Hildebrandt Road about 1,300 feet from the Dallas School District campus and about 600 feet from the Maslowskis' home.

The metering facility would measure gas extracted from wells in Susquehanna and Wyoming counties flowing through a not-yet-built Chief gathering line that would tap into the Transco line so the gas could be sent to market.

Maslowski questioned the testimony of Chief witness Ali Reza, a fire and explosions expert, because she felt her house could be-

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FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP

Taxes will likely remain stable

By SARAH HITE
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Supervisors aren't worried about raising taxes for the 2012 fiscal year.

At a special meeting Oct. 27, supervisors reviewed a preliminary budget for 2012. Most costs stayed within a consistent range for the past three years, said Secretary/Treasurer Rick Melvin.

The first draft of the \$294,435 budget for 2012 only features a few tweaks from previous years, including an allowance for a new township computer if needed, savings from cutting back on laundry services and others.

Supervisor Mike Prokopchak said Franklin Township has never considered instituting the \$52 local services tax primarily because there are not enough businesses in the township for the municipality to make a profit.

The municipality does collect a \$10 annual local services tax from residents, which is paid through their employers.

Melvin said the township has been working on assessing and fixing damage sustained from Hurricane Irene in late August and Tropical Storm Lee in early September, but those bills won't break the township's bank.

"Right now, it would be nice to get reimbursed, but we don't know if

the state's (funding) is going to come in," said Melvin. "We're fronting our own money and getting these issues resolved before the bad weather sets in. We've been able to get most things done."

He said spending money from the general fund to resolve these issues isn't a concern to the board because the township has yet to utilize its state liquid fuels allowance, which Melvin said has been approved to use on these types of projects.

Township employee wages have not yet been decided upon, but Chairman Ted Dymond said he doesn't anticipate any increase to the .5800 millage rate for 2012.

"Hopefully, we won't have to raise taxes," he said. "The budget looks good."

Melvin said Franklin Township's budget doesn't include some major expenses other larger municipalities face, such as police department costs, street light maintenance and public water and sewer systems, which helps keep the budget in line.

The township's volunteer fire department and the state police barracks at Wyoming respond to emergency calls and residents are required to construct water wells and septic systems on their properties.

"Other municipalities incur these costs on a weekly basis, and they have to budget for them," he said. "Sometimes there's very little room to spare, especially for automatic raises and increases in compensation."

A final budget will not be voted upon until the December meeting.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Pat Cleary paints a backdrop for his haiku poem at the Verve Vertu Studio at Arts Youniverse in Wilkes-Barre.

Special artists are recognized

Work of Pat Cleary and Erin Dougherty will hang in Bryn Mawr hospital.

By SARAH HITE
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ARTISTS' WORK CHOSEN FOR EXHIBIT

Donna Marinus, "Dragonfly Frolic"
Josh Schlegel, "Flight Over Flowers"
Billy Sukus, "Sunblock"
Jeannie Hammerbacher, "Beach Tiles"
Erin Dougherty, "Angel Fish"
Patrick Cleary, "God Bless USA"

Pat Cleary has had a fascination with shoelaces since he learned how to tie his own sneakers.

He would tie knots in every shoestring he could get his hands on, much to the chagrin of his father, Jack.

"I would tie knots, and my father would go crazy," said Cleary, 34, of Dallas.

Now his former nervous habit has turned into a lucrative hobby. Cleary is a student at the Verve Vertu art studio in downtown Wilkes-Barre, and he's been using his collection of shoelaces to create artwork.

The Verve Vertu studio is an art apprenticeship associated with the Deutsch Institute in Scranton that provides a creative outlet for those with special needs.

Pat Cleary's work titled, "God Bless U.S.A.," which features an American flag made entirely of colored shoelaces, was recently chosen as part of a juried exhibit at the Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Hospital Annual Art Ability Exhibit to be held November 5 through January 15.

Cleary, who has Down syndrome, created the flag to honor his brother, First Lieutenant Michael J. Cleary, who was killed in Iraq in December 2005.

"It's also to honor all those people in Iraq," he said.

Cleary also created a piece that was featured at Misericordia University, where he works as a custodian, which depicted his brother as an angel. Cleary depicted himself and his three sisters as stars in the artwork.

"I'm very proud of my family, and they're proud of me," he said. "I love my family."

Gwen Harleman, director of the Verve Vertu studio, said Cleary's love of shoestrings is now something he can enjoy through creation.

"What was a nervous habit is now a viable hobby for him,"

she said.

Jack Cleary said his son has "just blossomed" from participating in the art program this past year.

"The first thing he brought back from the studio was this beautiful painting of an angel and five stars to represent the family," the elder Cleary said. "Now he's doing other things, such as the work with the shoelaces, and people are buying them."

He said his son loves to be around people and enjoys being out and about, so taking art classes is just another way to express himself.

Cleary bolstered his shoelace collection last year when a family friend named Alice retired from her job at a warehouse. She collected several boxes of colored shoelaces in several different shades and offered them to Cleary as a gift.

He made her a "thank you" gift, and the artwork he made featured several brightly-colored balloons in the sky and flowers made of pulled-apart shoelaces lying in the grass - also made of shoelaces.

"It's certainly unlocked his creative side - he's making nice stuff," said Jack Cleary. "And he still wants to be the best custo-



The artwork of Erin Dougherty, of Dallas, will be on display at the Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Hospital.

dian at Misericordia. We're proud of everything he does."

As a testament to Cleary's creative ingenuity and social skills, he's been chosen as this year's honorary chairperson of the Deutsch Institute's annual brunch in November.

"This is the first year one of our artists has been chosen," said Harleman. "Usually, it's reserved for someone in the community who's very involved and well-known to be a master of ceremonies. We're very excited."

Cleary is also taking drama classes at Arts YOUniverse in Wilkes-Barre, and recently performed the song "Edelweiss" in a production of "The Sound of Music."

"I love to create things, beautiful things," he said. "I love everyone here at Arts YOUniverse."

Five other artists' works were

also chosen for the annual exhibit in Malvern, including a silk batik called "Angel Fish" by Dallas resident Erin Dougherty, 37.

Dougherty's work was chosen last year for the exhibit, and she's been working with Harleman for more than 10 years pushing her creative boundaries.

Harleman said the artists were working on fish-themed pieces at the time Dougherty fashioned her artwork using some of her favorite colors, turquoise and magenta.

Dougherty, who has Down syndrome, has worked on pieces for commission and has been successful in selling her artwork throughout her time at the studio. Her work can be seen in galleries across the country and even internationally.

"I love it," she said.

Dallas Board cancels special meeting

A special Dallas School Board meeting scheduled for October 31 was canceled and has not been rescheduled.

Superintendent Frank Galicki said he could not comment further because the planned meeting involved a personnel issue. A secretary in the Dallas School District Administration Office said the meeting will not be rescheduled.

The school board's regular work session is set for Monday, Nov. 7 with the regular meeting set for November 14.



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