

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MINUTES

OCTOBER 25, 2012

Members in Attendance: Richard Wishnie, Jeff Binder, Julie Killian, Steve Mayo, Anne McAndrews, Florence McCue, Jane Morgenstern, Guy Parisi, Vincenza Restiano, Bertrand Sellier, Paul Windels, Gary Zuckerman

Absent Members: Raymond Belair, Alfred Gatta, Herman Geist, Derickson Lawrence, John Mattis, Paul Meissner, David Menken, Matthew Thomas, Ronald Volino, Sam Zerka

County Staff in Attendance: Justin Adin, Stacey Dolgin-Kmetz, Melanie Montalto

Commission Counsel: Lester Steinman

Guests: Jay Pisco, Commissioner, Department of Public Works & Transportation

MINUTES

Chairman Wishnie called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM.

With a motion by Guy Parisi, seconded by Gary Zuckerman the minutes of September 27th, 2012 were approved with a vote of 12-0.

Chairman Wishnie introduced Jay Pisco, Commissioner of the Department of Public Works & Transportation.

Commissioner Pisco broadly discussed the various responsibilities and functions of the department which include transportation related services, the coordination and oversight of construction projects, and the maintenance of County services and infrastructure.

The commission asked about the function and scope of County roads. Commissioner Pisco discussed the Department's responsibilities in relation to the determination of County roads and who the authority of the road falls to, along with the maintenance of the roads.

The Commission asked what would the Charter Revision would be able to do to help make the department run more effectively. Commissioner Pisco noted that on projects greater than 10 million dollars, the project must be passed by a public referendum, which in today's economy is a relatively smaller figure than in the past and can hold up projects. The commission discussed the legality of this.

Commissioner Pisco discussed the County bus system, noting that ridership is generally good. He stated that they change the bus routes roughly three times a year based on ridership and the various seasons.

Chairman Wishnie asked if we receive state aid for the maintenance of the County fleet. The commissioner discussed the state of the County fleet, along with the costs and efforts for maintaining the fleet and new initiatives being taken to improve service. The commission also discussed specific routes and stops within the County.

The commission asked if there were any other initiatives within the County with the same principles as the County Road system. The Commissioner did not believe there were any present. The conversation shifted into a discussion about the development on open space parkland property.

Chairman Wishnie asked if the airport makes money for the County. Mr. Pisco stated that due to the federal funding receive to help offset the costs of maintenance and improvement projects the airport does make money. He stated that the County does in fact make money from the airport and that the Department just signed a contract to begin the new master plan for the future of the airport.

The Commission asked what about the Airport Advisory Committee. The commissioner stated that they meet in order to discuss the airport, often inviting the public for their input. They present financial reports and address complaints and concerns. It was noted that the airport fund is a separate entity from the Public Works and Transportation budget.

The commission also discussed airport security. Commissioner Pisco stated that the TSA handles the majority of the security functions. The commission also went on to discuss the departure of Air-Tran from the Airport and the possibility of bringing in new airlines.

The Commission discussed the merger of Public Works and Transportation in 2010 with Commissioner Pisco. Commissioner Pisco stated that when he assumed his position the Department had already been merged, but that he thought it worked well as it currently is. Budget-wise Transportation and Public Works are separate, but he is responsible for both. The commission went on to discuss the breakdown of Department leadership.

Mr. Zuckerman asked about the ridership of bus routes in general around the county. The Commissioner gave the example that with numerous recent school closings they have had overflow on certain routes; while there have been a drop-off on others.

Chairman Wishnie asked if the buses are still involved in the emergency plan for Indian Point. Commissioner Pisco stated that yes they are. He explained that if there is a possibility of an evacuation the Commissioner will contact Liberty Lines and order them to bring all of the buses in. He said the buses will drop off their passengers, not take any new ones and head back to the depot to fuel up and if needed head to Indian Point to evacuate.

Mr. Zuckerman stated that the Executive/Legislative Relationship Focus Group narrowed down their issues to approximately seven for the final report and will continue to work on them.

Ms. Restiano stated that the Local Government-County Government Focus Group met today and asked that Randy and Gary submitted lists of suggested items for the report and the group is going to continue to review them and use them for their final report.

Mr. Binder stated that the Budget & Finance Focus Group will meet next Thursday November 1st at 6:30 and Legislator Sheila Marcotte will speak to the group about her suggested changes for the budget process.

Mr. Parisi stated that he and Ms. McCue met for the Charter & Codes group and discussed their list of issues. Ms. McCue stated that since then the Playland proposal has come up and they are going to watch to see what the Board of Legislators does and analyze everyone's actions before making a recommendation on Playland and its processes.

Chairman Wishnie discussed the schedule for the Commission going forward, stating that the plan is to start meeting twice a month in order to get everything done. Ms. McCue suggested that the full Commission meet once a month and the Steering Committee meet once a month instead.

Chairman Wishnie stated that the next meeting will be on November 29th, 2012.

With a motion by Gary Zuckerman seconded by Steve Mayo the Charter Revision Commission adjourned at 8:10 pm.