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City eyes consultant for streetcar study

According to Public Works Director Charlotte Katzenmoyer, the City expects to contract with URS Corporation to conduct a planned \$40,000 streetcar engineering feasibility study. This San Francisco-based firm led the design and implementation of Portland, Oregon's first modern streetcar system.

Because the grant is half-funded by County urban enhancement dollars, URS will not be formally recruited until the City receives go-ahead from the county commissioners, Katzenmoyer said.

The City invited three different firms experienced in streetcar systems to bid on the engineering study. The scope of work began with several driving questions for the study, which included the following:

- *"Will the streetcar operations on [Queen and Prince] negatively impact traffic operations?"*
- *"How would the streetcar line impact utilities?"*

The scope later stipulates that the contractor must investigate at least one alternate streetcar route using Water Street instead of Prince.

Of the three consultants invited, only URS responded with a bid.

Katzenmoyer noted that one experienced firm—Stone Consulting—was not invited to bid because of its existing connection with the proposed downtown streetcar loop. The firm had in 2006 produced a streetcar feasibility study for the Red Rose Transit Authority. It projected a **\$384,527.48** annual loss.

"We were looking for somebody that's going to look at it independently and very objectively," Katzenmoyer said, "Not somebody that's just coming in here and wanting to sell us on moving forward with the design."

Haiti, Hungary and Lancaster

The **Watchdog's** day started at 6:00 AM in Budapest with BBC video reports of the earthquake disaster in Haiti, with photos of buildings irreparably damaged and lifeless and injured bodies strewn on the streets.

Later he visited with staff of a center for the homeless, accompanying them to look at a three story hotel hitherto used by workers from Eastern Hungary or from out of the country but now for sale due to the lack of occupancy in a slow economy. The Red Cross is losing a similar sized housing dormitory that had been supplied by a district government.

Having recently interviewed some of Lancaster's social safety-net leaders, the Watchdog recognized

that the challenges faced in Budapest and rural areas of Hungary were quite similar, only many times greater in number, than in Lancaster.

In Hungary as in the USA, social safety net charities depend upon government compensation to defray much of the cost of their services. **However, the amount of such aid has been very significantly reduced over the past year. So at the very time when expansion of aid is warranted, contraction is taking place.**

A meeting with Hungarian Red Cross President George Habsburg (Yes, of the royal Habsburg family!) [Continued on rear...]

was followed by a conversation with its General Director Erik Selmyes.

He proudly reported that aid for Haiti was already in the pipeline from Hungary. The **Watchdog** reflected that Hungary might have been served by applying the funds at home... but then again, we are taught that even beggars should give something to those more needy to perform a good deed and preserve their self respect.

The **Watchdog** brought up the two schools of thought: 1) Spend the money received on immediate relief because this is the intent of the donors, or 2) hold back half or two thirds for future years to fund longer periods of evolution to independence for needy individuals, since this is what is required to turn around lives.

Questioned as to which approach Selmyes supports, he responded, “*both.*”

Academy of Music announces new leadership

Robert Falk, M. D., Chairman, announced that Thomas C. LeCrone has agreed to serve as the Acting President of the Pennsylvania Academy of Music for a period of at least ninety days.

LeCrone was a County appointee to the Lancaster Convention Center Authority in 2007 and played an instrumental role in a complex and successful negotiation involving an aspect of the County’s guarantee of convention center bonds.

It is common for artistic institutions to have both a business leader and an artistic leader. Presumably LeCrone’s partner at the Academy is Michael T. Jamanis, recently appointed Faculty Dean who is both an instructor and an international performer as a

member of the Newstead Trio. PAM co-founder Fran Veri continues in the key role of planning, which includes pursuit of further accreditation of the school and strengthening relationships for the future with institutions local, national, and international.

Business Committee Advisor (and *NewsLanc* publisher) Robert Field commented, “*PAM has long suffered from a lack of business competence. If strong business leadership can be combined with the existing artistic leadership, PAM should be able to achieve and even exceed what is expected by its participants, backers, and the community. Ninety-days should tell the story. In fact, a lot will be known in ten days.*”

LETTER: Perhaps they should go back to school

“The January 18, 2010 Newsweek magazine Letters section has a comment from a reader in response to a previous article, ‘The Big Apple’s Big Problem.’ The reader says ‘Michael Bloomberg is also the first mayor in decades to protect the character of neighborhoods while converting industrial land to residential and park uses.’

“John Fry, working with the clout of F&M’s long standing reputation, is trying to accomplish similar goals and, I would bet, trying to make a national name for himself. How unfortunate he seems to have missed that one important piece of the puzzle—to

‘protect the character of neighborhoods’—in this and other projects under his direction. Even with F&M’s \$300,000,000+ endowment, he has been and remains dead set against funding a \$17,500 independent study to verify whether an alternative location is feasible for the relocation and/or revamping of the Dillerville Rail Yard.

“How unfortunate for the adjacent Barrcrest and School Lane Hills neighborhoods affected by this push to beautify F&M’s campus, increase its endowment, and feather one’s cap. How unfortunate for John Fry’s and F&M’s reputations.”

**The above have been excerpted from NewsLanc.com.
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