

Penn Square Partner's craven, Wells-Fargo's smart, and Tourist Bureau's dubious end games re Martin Plan

From 'word on the street', here is some local commentary assuming the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau (PDCVB) pulls its support for the Martin Plan:

It does not really matter. The PDCVB is not currently getting its 20% of the hotel room sales tax. Its part of the plan was to forego its 20% (of the bed tax) for 5 years either way. While it has some set of numbers that claim they might get it back, it is highly unlikely that they would ever see that 20%, on a regular and consistent basis, ever again.

If the Martin Plan does move forward and resolves things for the short-term, it is reasonable to expect that the PDCVB will make an immediate push to raise the excise tax to replace the \$1 million it lost in the bed tax.

But if the Martin Plan now fails because PDCVB has pulled its support and the County partial convention center bond guarantee comes into play, it is highly likely that Commissioner Scott Martin would then move to raise the bed tax portion of the hotel room sales tax. If that happened, the PDCVB would be far

less likely to then get an increase in the excise tax portion of the hotel room sales tax.

So does the PDC VB new position shoot itself in the foot?

What Wells-Fargo, the convention center bond holder, really wants is the full county guarantee. After that, they could care less who pays for what. They will now be able to collect in full.

And from the point of view of Penn Square Partners, the county will now be much further committed to pay for the maintenance and continuation of the convention center... a tax payer bail out of the convention center and, indirectly, PSP which leases and is equitable owner of the adjoining Marriott.

It would not be surprising if Mayor Rick Gray pulls out the City next in hopes of forcing the Commissioners hands to what he and PSP want, the hotels and county to pay the entire cost now and forever.

(Continued on rear)

BOTTOM LINE: Another big victory for the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. and Dale High at City and County tax payers' expense.

READER'S COMMENT: *"Article up on LNP, link below. I'm glad somebody is standing up."*

"Way back when, Fulton Bank dropped out of PSP. I don't know their motive, but I'm thinking they should receive some recognition for excusing themselves from PSP."

READER'S COMMENT: *"Lancaster County taxpayers should NOT be held responsible to guaranteeing ANYTHING more than we are already being held hostage to. LET THIS THING DIE.....we're on the hook for 20 million now (which is WAY TOO MUCH!!), rather than the entire amount."*

"Whatever happened to all the early proponents.....their silence is deafening!!!!!"

LANCASTER NEW ERA

Editorial **"Taxing situation for city, county"** observes: *"In all, Lancaster General Hospital voluntarily pays \$6 million a year to Lancaster city, county and school districts and municipalities where it has facilities..."*

"Yet the payments are a fraction of what they would be had the nonprofit hospital been on the tax rolls."

"On the Barshinger facility, for example, the hospital is paying about 16 percent of what it would if it were a taxable entity."

WATCHDOG: Two wags of the tail for the editors who finally prick the myth that Lancaster General Hospital is paying the same taxes as if they were not tax exempt. They aren't.

But in the *"people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones"* department, they might mention that the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. along with the High Group connived so that their hotel, the Marriott, would be the only one in the county exempt from all real estate taxes!

**The above items have been excerpted from www.NewsLanc.com
Visit the website daily for news, commentary, letters, and other features.
Suggestions and letters can be sent anonymously through the home page.**