



Naming Rights for Camden Concert Hall Brings \$10 Million

The Feb. 5th *Intelligencer Journal* reports that the Susquehanna Bank of Lititz agreed to pay “in excess of \$10 million” for naming rights for the concert arena in Camden, NJ over a five year term and two five year option periods. This suggests that naming rights for the Convention Center are worth at least as much.

The population of Camden is around 80,000 people and it is reputed to be one of the most impoverished, crime ridden cities in the nation.

While residents from the suburbs of Lancaster City do not hesitate to visit, dine and shop downtown, few suburbanites venture into Camden for legal purchases except when swiftly coming and going to the heavily patrolled concert hall.

So if naming rights for the exterior sign at Camden’s concert hall are worth \$10 million over fifteen years, shouldn’t similar rights for the Lancaster Convention Center for both the exterior and various portions of the Convention Center interior garner a similar windfall?

Oops. For reasons that members of the LCCCA Convention Center Authority can’t figure out, the agreement between the LCCCA and Penn Square Partners ‘gifts’ half of the naming right proceeds to subsidiaries of the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. and the High Group which make up Penn Square Partners.

We were told that Penn Square Partners was going to invest money in the hotel, not get a free ride.

Free and Frequent Trolley Bus Service

An expanded free trolley bus service would encourage people to visit or live downtown by enabling them to get around conveniently and without concern for cost and it would cost much less than the proposed trolley car project.

According to the Red Rose Transit Authority, the trolley buses currently carry 34,800 passengers annually at a fare of \$1.35 per passenger. That amounts to revenue of \$46,980 a year.

The proposed rail trolley service is estimated to cost taxpayers (through government grants) \$14 million initially and \$300,000 a year in operating subsidies thereafter.

For only \$46,980 a year, Red Rose could provide free service and thus greatly enhance ridership of the trolley buses. It could afford to double or even triple the frequency of service for the \$300,000 that it would cost to subsidize rail trolleys and the only cost would be for more trolley buses, a fraction of \$14 million.

Now, which make better sense: Rail trolleys clogging the streets that cost \$1.35 per rider or free bus trolleys that create no special traffic problems?

NewsLanc recommends tripling the frequency of the current trolley buses and a loop running as far north as the Amtrak Station and as far south as Water Street Mission.

New Era Discovers Dick & Molly Not Guilty After All?

The following excerpts are from an article titled “Sunshine Act gets air time in county” that appeared in the Feb. 2 *New Era*. It appears to vindicate former Commissioners Dick Shellenberger and Molly Henderson from Sunshine Act infractions to which, under duress, they pleaded guilty to conclude the year long grand jury witch hunt:

“Teri Henning, general counsel for the Pennsylvania Newspapers Association, discussed the Sunshine Act...

“Hill and Henning agreed that the act allows officials to discuss certain real estate, personnel

and litigation matters behind closed doors.

“They did not fully agree as to whether deliberations involving a nursing home sale must be held in public...

“But Hill said the sale of a nursing home also includes the sale of the business, which some lawyers believe might permit private deliberations.

“It gets tricky when two of three commissioners discuss issues, they said. Such discussions could skate close to deliberation.”

Lancaster’s Best Leader is from Out of Town

John Fry, President of Franklin & Marshall College, recently announced that their five-year goals, which he helped set when he arrived at F&M, have largely been completed within a period of three years.

F&M has: 1) Reduced the student-to-faculty ratio to 10:1; 2) Launched an initiative to internationalize the curriculum; 3) Created the College House system; 4) Completed the Barshinger Life Sciences & Philosophy Buildings; 5) Partnered with Lancaster General Hospital to redevelop the Armstrong World Industries site; 6) Opened College Row to approximately 400 students and several retail tenants; and 7) Welcomed record numbers of applications from increasingly talented students.

Fry has not only invigorated F&M but has been the impetus behind the James Street Renewal Improvement District (www.jsidlancaster.org), another promising effort of intelligence and competence. Fry wisely

enticed Lisa Riggs who worked in urban development in Baltimore before moving to Lancaster to serve as the organization’s president.

Unlike our various benighted community leaders who were born, educated, and seldom worked outside of our region and who often joined the firms they now head as a result of nepotism, Fry is not a native and had distinguished careers in New York City and Philadelphia before accepting the helm at F & M.

NewsLanc is not suggesting that Lancaster hasn’t produced its fair share of extremely able individuals. But a lifetime exclusively in an internecine environment does not often generate highly qualified leaders ... or vocal critics.

Lancaster’s best bet is to bring back the native-born who have made their mark elsewhere or import proven talent.

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