



Downtown Mission: “Ain't No Place Like This”

The Water Street Rescue Mission Center, which opened a week ago, provides “a daytime drop-in facility that serves as a safe haven for chronically homeless individuals to rest, shower, launder clothing, and receive help with accessing human services.”

Director Adrian Rodriguez said that the Center has been seeing “about 24 people a day, 16 of whom are regulars.” He expects that number to grow.

Mayor Rick Gray and a number of those involved with the project emphasized the point

that homelessness is a countywide problem as opposed to just a city one.

“They kick you out of everywhere else,” one woman complained. Another revealed that he has been sleeping on the bench of a nearby bus stop. “They have breakfast at St. James, or I would hang out at the library, but eventually they kick you out. Ain’t no place like this,” he said.

The Community Homeless Outreach Center is located on the premises of the Water Street Rescue Mission at 210 South Prince Street.

Authority Needs \$5.9 Million. Half for ‘Partners’ a Rip Off?

At the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority meeting held on November 27, 2007, LCCCA chairman and acting director Art Morris reported on the state of contingency funding for the taxpayer-financed hotel and convention center project.

Complicating this is a passage from the “Joint Development Agreement,” as amended, which clearly states that HALF of all future additional funding for the LCCCA must be shared with the Penn Square Partners. Morris has been attempting to negotiate a change of this formula with partners The High Group and the monopoly Lancaster Newspapers.

Morris admitted that if the State of Pennsylvania fails to provide the necessary funding to complete the hotel and convention center project, alternative sources of funding must be found. Since the LCCCA has no sources of funding other than the "hotel tax" and State grants, without additional State money the LCCCA would be forced to ask Lancaster County for a substantial increase in the “hotel tax.”

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Three Examples

The Good:

On Nov. 20th, when the School Board unanimously approved \$198 million for a ten year program for all but three of the Lancaster School District's schools, there was nary a dissenting public comment to be heard. The Board was candid in explaining the cost to taxpayers. And the audience approval reflected large scale public sentiment: This was an investment in the future of the children.

The Bad:

In contrast, an extensive Fox 43 public opinion poll in 2005 established that almost 80% of county residents with an opinion (72% overall) disapproved of the county guarantee of financing for the Convention Center project. Moreover, the Convention Center Authority was divided 4 to 3

concerning the viability of the project. And a large portion of the audiences at meetings condemned the way that the \$200 million project had been misrepresented by the sponsoring Lancaster Newspapers and The High Group, the waste of millions of taxpayers' dollars for needless consultants, and blatant disregard of factual information by the Authority leaders.

The Ugly:

And now the Convention Center Project sponsors, the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. and The High Group, are again working together to sell the public on the proposed rezoning for the Conestoga Crossings Shopping Center and the State on a \$22 million expenditure to alter the currently satisfactory interchange of Harrisburg Pike and Rt. 30

***New Era* exploits woman to titillate readers**

On Nov. 30th, that bastion of public morality, the *New Era*, owned by the paragon of virtue the monopoly Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., (partner in the greatest rip off in Lancaster's history) published the photo of a sad looking woman accused of offering to perform an act of prostitution for an 'undercover' detective who

patronized a massage parlor.

At a time of frequent murders, bank robberies and when the elderly are swindled out of their life's savings, it is comforting to know that Rick Gray's "finest" are "hot" on the trail of victimless crimes.

Letter: "Belly Up"

From the onset I consistently mentioned the example of Springfield, Massachusetts. 300,000 strong but very similar to Lancaster's makeup.

Unfortunately it took going bankrupt to just recently put all the people that did illegal deeds in jail. The convention center/hotel went belly up and Peter Pan Bus Line bought it for 25 cents on the dollar.

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