

SPRING 2009 CONVENTION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

EAST NORRITON TOWNSHIP – PRESIDENTIAL CATERERS
FEBRUARY 20, 2009

REGISTRATION AND GREETINGS:

The 2009 Spring Convention of the Montgomery County Association of Township Officials (MCATO) was called to order by President Don Gracia at 8:35 a.m. on Friday February 20, 2009 following a breakfast sponsored by Pennoni, at Presidential Caterers, East Norriton, PA. Mr. Gracia asked the attendees to join him in the Pledge of allegiance. He then expressed thanks to Gus Mandraccia of Presidential Caterers, Shirley Jording and Carole Culbreth.

He then introduced the host township which is celebrating its 100th anniversary that evening at the Presidential. The township supervisors were introduced. President Gracia then acknowledged that East Norriton Township Manager, Helmuth Baerwald, was receiving the Excellence in Public Service Award from the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Gracia also thanked all the vendors who were participating and asked all in attendance to view their exhibits at the break. He also recognized the various sponsors, Pennoni for the breakfast, CMX, PLGIT and RETTEW for the morning break and Verizon for the lunch.

The Nominating Report was presented by Joe Dunbar. The proposed slate included: President – Scott Sibley, Upper Merion Township; 1st Vice President – Craig Dininny, Lower Providence; 2nd Vice President – W. Keith Freed, Franconia; Past President – Don Gracia, East Norriton; Secretary – Ralph Volpe, Upper Merion; and Treasurer – Helmuth Baerwald, East Norriton. The floor would be open for any additional nominations at the afternoon session when the officers would be elected.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - FALL CONVENTION

The next item of business was the approval of the September 19, 2008 convention minutes. The motion to approve was made by Dan Littley with the second by Kandy Heckman and it was passed by a unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF THE TREASURERS REPORT

The Association's Treasurer, Helmuth Baerwald presented the report for the period of December 31, 2008 to January 31, 2009. The opening cash balance was \$58,897.33 and the closing was \$57,884.00. Elaine Dewan made the motion to approve the report as presented and Scott Sibley made the second and it was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Ron Wagenmann of Upper Merion presented the five proposed resolutions for the state convention.

1. Insurance company's coverage should be paid directly to the emergency service providers and ambulances. This was approved by the assembly.
2. A proposed change to the amortization schedule under Act 205 was also approved.
3. Proposed amendment to Act 110 which was also approved.
4. Proposed change to the Municipal Services Tax to require that exclusions be obtained from the municipality was approved by the convention.
5. Legislation to permit local police departments to utilize radar was also approved.

BYLAWS CHANGE

Ron Wagenmann presented the proposal which would allow non second class townships to join MCATO in a limited form. This was also adopted.

SPEAKERS/PRESENTATIONS

Larry Comunale introduced the first speaker on the program. It was Donald L. Steele, Project Manager of the PA Turnpike Commission: The Northeast Extension Improvement Construction. This is a \$300 million dollar project and he went over the proposed time line for completion. He summarized what has transpired to date plus projection of the work to be let. He also briefly discussed other projects around the state including the proposal for tolls on I-80. Mr. Steele then responded to various questions from the floor of the convention. There were questions about sound barriers and he explained the criteria necessary for installing and that it would only be done when widening or realigning a road. There was also discussion on vegetation basins that could be used.

Larry Comunale, the program director, introduced the second speaker, David M. Camarda of the PA. Residential Fire Sprinkler Coalition: Fire Sprinkler Systems in New Residential Construction. He pointed out that in 2009, the International Residence Code will require sprinklers in new residential construction. There are attempts being made to weaken this requirement. Mr. Camarda noted that 70% of fatalities and injuries to firemen occur in residential homes. He gave examples of how the use of sprinklers is beneficial to homeowners. He used examples of how fires in Upper Merion, where the requirement for sprinklers for new homes has been in effect since the 1980's, has been very successful.

After the morning break sponsored by CMX, PLGIT and RETTEW, Mr. Comunale introduced the next speaker, Fran Rupert of DCNR. Mr. Rupert gave information on the Grants and Trails Conference which is scheduled for March 19th 2009.

Mr. Comunale then introduced James Wheeler of PSATS for a legislative update as well as a discussion on the Open Records Law. Mr. Wheeler also discussed transportation funding and the grass roots network and gave an update on the various issues in

Harrisburg as well as answered questions on prevailing wages. He noted that the changes in the federal regulations on handicapped ramps could cause the municipalities to correct any ramps that do not meet these regulations. He also updated the convention on the status of the Executive Director for PSATS. Representative Kate Harper gave some additional background on the Open Records Act.

Mr. Comunale then introduced the panel for: A "Press" Conference with your State Legislators. The representatives were Bob Godshall, Kate Harper, and Matt Bradford. The items they discussed included: Stormwater, prevailing wage, pensions and amortization, unfunded mandates, direct pay to ambulances, gambling - what is going to replace the funding if gaming revenues drop off, fuel taxes at pumps, the smoking act and exemptions for restaurants, slot parlors and delay in gaming commission on Valley Forge Resorts Casino and reduction of school districts. The morning session was adjourned at 11:30 am for lunch and to view the exhibits.

The afternoon session commenced at 1:30 p.m. The various federal, commonwealth and county officials in attendance were introduced. The date for the fall convention was set for Friday September 25, 2009 at Presidential Caterers. The slate of officers presented in the morning session was approved and there were no other nominations and the executive committee was established. New President, Scott Sibley, on behalf of the executive committee and entire association presented a plaque to Mr. Gracia commemorating his past two years of service as President.

With no further business, the convention was officially adjourned at 1:50 p.m.