

Kurt W. Schenk's Newsletter

Issue 1

Coatesville City Councilmember

June 4th, 2008

City Council Approves City Manager Harry Walker Contract Renewal

At the May 27, 2008 Council meeting, City Council extended the expiring contract of City Manager Harry Walker for an additional three-year term. I joined four of my Council colleagues in voting favor of this extension, and I want to take a moment to explain my reasoning.

When facing a situation where the City was in severe financial distress and the promised revitalization and redevelopment was not moving forward as promised by previous administrations and City Councils, I had to evaluate the City's direction and monitor progress towards achieving our objectives. One major objective was to stabilize the City's finances and not raise taxes or fees, or further invade the trust fund from the sale of the water and sewer authority.

All of these objectives have been achieved through Council working with the Walker administration.

Further, I wanted to see progress in the areas of public safety and revitalization. The public safety and police issues are addressed elsewhere in this newsletter. On the revitalization issue, we are finally seeing progress, even in a recessionary market environment, in moving projects forward. This is not an easy process, and it often involves two steps forward, and one back. The important thing is to have stability and continuity in the City during the revitalization process. The worst thing we could do is return to the days of "revolving doors" when Council became impatient with the pace of progress and changed administrators frequently.

However, for me there is another essential, overriding issue: integrity. In order to serve the people of Coatesville, I need to feel confident that the City Manager and other City officials are being straight with me, and with the people who live and work here. I will not be party to deception, false promises and financial subterfuge.

I feel confident that we are moving in the right direction and am gratified that you have given me the opportunity to serve the City as a member of Council.

Police Chief Matthews Contract Extended for Second Year

City Council agreed to retain the services of Police Chief William Matthews as Chief of Police for another year, waiving a provision of his contract that required him to obtain certification as a full-duty police officer within a year of his hiring. The waiver was due to a non-service related injury and medical condition that prevents the Chief from passing the physical examination that is a required precondition of obtaining certification. Chief Matthews, due to his extensive experience, would have had no problem obtaining Pennsylvania certification if not for his unfortunate injury.

Some people have objected to Council's action, but I would like to explain my support for Chief Matthews. First, the City needed a Chief who would be able to deal appropriately with the law enforcement issues faced by the City. Second, the new Chief had to set the direction for the Police Department so that we could move into the future and face our many challenges with poise, professionalism and confidence. Many residents have expressed their support for my decision to support Chief Matthews despite his unfortunate and unforeseen health setback.

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I am actually very disappointed with the personal attacks I have seen on a fine man who has always exhibited the highest degree of propriety and professionalism in the exercise of his duties. It's a sad fact that some people have tried to use Chief Matthews' personal misfortune for political advantage.

I will continue to support our Police Chief and will always work to make sure we have a top-notch department that serves the needs of the public and is dedicated to protect and serve us.

Progress Report on Development Projects

I am pleased to report that a number of construction and development projects have been completed or are moving forward in Coatesville. These include:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Status</u>
PAWC replacement of Sewer Mains	Complete
Brandywine Health & Housing (medical and dental, Clinics; 24 units senior housing)	Complete
Pulver Hotel, Restaurant and Office Tower	Construction to start summer 2008
"Flats" (former G.O. Carlson site)	Residential and Commercial developers identified and negotiating with RDA
Brandywine View, Phase 1 (75 residential units)	LERTA approved by Council; construction to begin summer 2008
Artist Colony (residences, 200 block E. Lincoln)	Site sold to developer by RDA; conceptual plan-prepared
Train Station improvements	Federal grant secured; plans in development
N. 3rd Avenue Parking (for train station)	City project moving forward

Other projects are also in the works, and the City expects these projects and others to generate many permanent and construction jobs, tax revenue and more commercial and retail activity, which are all a great plus for the City.

Graffiti be Gone!

Like all of you, I'm fed up with the graffiti problem that seems to be growing in our City. Instead of talking about it, I am planning to present the idea for dealing with this to my fellow council members and City Administration as follows. Please note that there may need to be modifications to this idea to make it work properly.

Basically, I feel the City needs to put together a stake body trailer to be pulled around by our City truck(s), that would house a pressure washer, water tank, generator, chemicals, a commercial paint sprayer and a paint mixing machine. When graffiti happens, we simply send out the wagon to blow it off, then try to match the paint as best as possible. The affected property owner would have the option to give us the O.K. to do this or they can be mandated to clean it off themselves. That's the idea. I believe this equipment can be put together for less than \$15,000. It's worth it's weight in gold.