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Newsletter of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Solicitors

May 24, 2021

Headlines

Governor Wolf Renews Emergency Declaration . . . Act 15 Remains in Place

Last Thursday, May 20, Gov. Tom Wolf renewed his Proclamation of Disaster Emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the provisions of Act 15 of 2020 governing virtual public meetings remain in effect. PSATS will monitor whether the General Assembly will take action in the aftermath of the ballot questions being approved during last week's election.

Townships Urged to Contact Their Senators Today to Request Support for RTKL Bills

The Pennsylvania Senate currently has two Right-to-Know Law bills before it: 1) SB 312, which would allow townships to charge a reasonable fee for commercial requests, and 2) SB 552, which would allow townships to petition the Office of Open Records for relief from "vexatious requesters" — those who use the Right-to-Know Law to intimidate, harass, or punish an agency, leading to wasted taxpayer resources. PSATS is asking its members to contact their senators **today** to request their support. Please encourage your clients to do so.

Dates Set for Fall Solicitors Seminars

PSATS will be holding three in-person Solicitors Seminars this fall. They will be held: 1) September 28 at the Courtyard Marriott in Cranberry Township, Butler County; 2) October 7 at PSATS, Cumberland County; and 3) November 4 at the Holiday Inn Lansdale-Hatfield in Montgomery County. To register go to solicitors.psats.org.

PSATS Town Hall on Treasury's Interim Final Rule on Recovery Funds Available

PSATS recently held another Town Hall in which it reviewed the U.S. Department of Treasury's Interim Final Rule, which provided additional guidance on the application and use of recovery funds allocated to municipalities through the American Rescue Plan Act. To access the Town Hall on demand, [click here](#).

Proposed Federal Plans to Impact Single-Family Only Zoning?

In a recent blog post "Uncle Sam Giving You More Chances to Love More New Neighbors?" Chris Knarr of McNeas examines the growing trend toward providing additional housing opportunities through revised planning and zoning regulations. He noted that President Biden's proposed

American Jobs Plan would include \$5 billion in competitive grants that would include requirements that multi-family housing be allowed in areas traditionally zoned for single-family dwellings. To read more, [click here](#).

Penn State Hosting Online Solar Law Symposium in June

The Penn State Solar Law Symposium will be held on June 15 and June 17 and is targeted at those with beginning or intermediate knowledge about utility-scale solar development. It will be eligible for 6 CLE credits. For more information or to register, [click here](#).

Upcoming Opportunities for Speaking Engagements before PSATS Members

PSATS will be hosting numerous in-person events around the state, both for solicitors and regular members, this summer and fall. If you are interested in making a presentation, please contact Scott Coburn at scoburn@psats.org.

Recent Decisions

Boundary Dispute Ends in Win for Woodward Township

In *Woodward Twp. v. Dunnstable Twp.*, ___ A.3d ___, 2021 WL 1897690 (Pa.Cmwlth. May 12, 2021), the Commonwealth Court affirmed a decision adopting a property line favoring Woodward Township in part because the township was not attempting to “illegally annex” the land from Dunnstable Township without a referendum. To read more, [click here](#).

Borough’s Complete Ban on Digital Billboards Fails

In *Adams Outdoor Advertising, Ltd. v. Zoning Hearing Bd. of Borough of Stroudsburg*, No. 392 C.D. 2020, 2021 WL 1961925 (Pa.Cmwlth. May 17, 2021), the Commonwealth Court affirmed an order granting site-specific relief for placement of a 60-foot high, 1,344 square foot electronic billboard that would be visible to motorists on Interstate 80 because the borough failed to justify its total ban on electronic billboards. To read more, [click here](#).

Upcoming Educational Offerings

[Social Media: The New Public Forum - 5/26 Virtual Conference Workshop \(1 CLE\)](#)

Attend this session to learn more about the newest public forum, social media. The presenters will cover a number of concerns for local leaders, including navigating the First Amendment, the Right-to-Know Law, and record retention requirements.

[Successful Collective Bargaining with Municipal Employees - 5/26 Virtual Conference Workshop \(1 CLE\)](#)

It is essential for solicitors to understand the Act 111 and Act 195 collective bargaining and interest arbitration process. The presenters will review critical skills, including how to negotiate and communicate your goals appropriately. Participants will walk away with practical advice on getting the most out of these processes.

[Navigating the Minefield of Employee Medical Leaves of Absence - 5/26 Virtual Conference Workshop \(1 CLE\)](#)

Many public employers have difficulty navigating the legal minefield surrounding employees who have medical issues that require time away from work. This workshop will explain the rules of the road in an easy-to-understand manner and provide practical, real-world advice on how to get these issues right every time. Participants will leave knowing how to confidently handle such situations in the future.

[Employment Disasters in Social Media - 5/27 Virtual Conference Workshop \(1 CLE\)](#)

From the White House to the local police station, examples abound of officials and employees who have used social media in good and bad ways. This session will address recent social media disasters and how townships can avoid them.



Comments and suggestions about this biweekly newsletter for members of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Solicitors can be emailed to Scott Coburn at scoburn@psats.org.



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