

The Newport Township Authority

Written by Tom Kashatus The Newport Township Authority was established and its members have been appointed by the Newport Township Board of Commissioners over six years ago with the purpose of solving issues involving the Ridgeview Section of Newport Township and the Newport/Nanticoke Dan Flood Industrial Park. The Authority members fill positions that are non-salaried or compensated in any way.

After bringing those issues to a satisfactory conclusion the Authority was able to accumulate funds and became involved as the “key players” in a successful demolition program throughout Newport Township over the past four years at a time when Township finances became strained and limited. Success has been noted with grant funding from Luzerne County Community Development which is funneled to the Newport Township Board of Commissioners; however, the Authority has been committed to paying the “soft costs” involved in the demolition process. “Soft costs” include those involving attorneys’ fees, asbestos and other inspection fees, engineering fees, advertisement, tax & lien fees, etc. Many hours of “legwork” by Mistery Wilkes, Wanchisen, and Deluca have been involved acquiring sign-off signatures and contacting individuals responsible for ownership of targeted properties and others involved in the flow of funds. As circumstances would prevail the Authority has even dipped into their own general fund to offset the cost of some demolition projects.

As funding and budgets become even tighter, the Authority has plans and is still committed to move forward with further demolition of dilapidated structures. With much more work to be done in a challenging financial atmosphere, a positive attitude and approach exists with members of the Newport Township Authority. Credit for the demolition of the fifteen plus properties which have been demolished must also be given to the Newport Township Board of Commissioners, the Luzerne County Community Development Office, and former 119th Legislative District Representative John Yudichak (D).

Pictured from the left are members of the Newport Township Authority: Stephen Phillips, President John Wilkes Jr., Secretary Diane Hillan, Treasurer Peter Wanchisen, and Vice President Joseph Deluca. Absent when photo was taken Solicitor Attorney Jonathan A. Spohrer and Engineer Michael J. Pasonick.

