

Renovo Meeting Draws High Attendance

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by **Barbara Mastriania**

RENOVO – Some forty people attended a recent Renovo meeting at Yesterdays to talk about grant opportunities and improvement means available to municipalities in Western Clinton County.

Those attending included officials from WCC municipalities and from various local and county government agencies, the Renovo PRR group and various other organizations. Betsy Lockwood, project coordinator, said the meeting was the result of conversations she had with Renovo council woman Colleen Testa.

The discussion during the three hour meeting and a luncheon financed by the Clinton County Economic Partnership included goals to improve western Clinton County, projects already under way in Renovo and new ones of importance to Renovo. Community Development Block Grant information was also discussed as was the fact that getting those grants is a very competitive process. CDBG money is federal money that is distributed through the county commissioners.

Bill Seigel of SEDA-COG talked about important steps for applying for CDGB funds. Applications for CDGB grant funds must be a focused effort to reverse blighting influence. It is a competitive grant with a lot of competition statewide.

Seigel said Renovo is on the right track in codes and code compliance. The department is looking at communities who have taken steps in code enforcement. Also important are documentation of codes and the development process of projects.

Renovo has the winter months to develop application to meet a spring deadline. Seigel said it will be about a year to a year and a half until the money is approved; everything must meet federal and state regulations.

The recommendation for approval comes from the county, Seigel said. He told Renovo officials and volunteers to move forward with current ongoing plans. He said it is important to focus on a specific municipal project but likely to fare better if adjacent communities are okay with project. The ripple effect is positive for neighboring municipalities.

Tourism was also discussed. The PA Wilds and Susquehanna Greenway Partnership spokeswoman Alice Trowbridge and Trish Carothers talked about the benefits of WCC municipalities becoming “River Towns.” The River Town program connects 500 miles of hiking and biking trail ways along the Susquehanna River. It makes for better communities interconnected and helps spur economic development and protect natural resources, they said.

Trowbridge, a registered architect, said officials who approve river town designation want to see municipal collective efforts and noted that Renovo has done much of the groundwork already. There is no need to repeat planning, she said. She said to begin the process for designation officials should start with a public meeting to establish plans.

Ryan Graw was named as the key person to organize meetings for The River Town Program. Trowbridge said it will be critical to get in kind matches for grant money to develop the program. She said it will be important to get civic groups, churches, scouts, etc. on board. It will also be wise to get the word out through newspapers, churches, sewage authority bills, and social media, she said.

Alice Tarr, a resident of Chapman Township reported that an Artisan’s group comprised of artists of WCC will be meeting Oct. 16. The PA Wild’s Artisan’s Trails will be among the topics discussed. WCC Artisans,

photographers and craftsmen are all invited to the meeting will be held at the Heritage Headquarters, 530 Erie Avenue in Renovo.

Renovo councilwoman and PRR member Kari Kepler presented handouts developed by PRR of issues important to WCC. She said code enforcement is of primary importance and that Renovo and South Renovo have recently hired a code enforcement company.

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