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River town designated for Susquehanna Greenway Partnership

March 11, 2013

by Barbara C. Barrett (bbarrett@muncyluminary.com) , The Luminary

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MONTGOMERY - Committee members are working full speed ahead to prepare their town of Montgomery for a designated River Town through the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership (SGP), an organization devoted to the Susquehanna River Watershed. This is Pennsylvania's most important natural asset and the largest tributary to the Chesapeake Bay.

Funding has allowed Montgomery to be a partner in this endeavor along with Jersey Shore. Both communities have been designated as River Towns through the Partnership. According to the mission of SGP many of the river towns were built during the industrial era, and many are now suffering from loss of industry, jobs and so-called "urban abandonment." This brings a shrinking tax base, and the partnership would like to improve economic potential for tourism by offering assistance to those communities who need it the most.

With the help of Penn College, Montgomery is now beginning to plant some trees along its main corridor. Alice Trowbridge, Greenway coordinator, met with the committee to discuss locations and species hoping to get the trees ordered by March 15. "We have until the end of September to plant the trees," she said. "Seven of them will be planted in the fall." She showed the group a map of Montgomery Borough with an 'enhancement plan' for Main Street and the gateway to the River Town of Montgomery. "Students will act as squad leaders to help the volunteers and public," she added. A total of 68 shade and flowering trees are scheduled for planting for 2013. Students from Penn College will prepare the ground pits according to Trowbridge. Two large red oaks have already been planted behind the 'Welcome Montgomery' signs, and also one has been planted on the corner by the Library.

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Alice Trowbridge, coordinator with Susquehanna Gree...

Tom Grbenick also from SGP came to organize committees and focus groups for the organization.

Linda Stein from Muncy, who is a committee member, said that this committee was formed as a result of the Main Street Program which has subsequently dissolved. In the meantime, the infrastructure, upgrades, modifications and goals have been identified for improvement. "We have put together a bigger, broader vision with a plan," announced Stein.

Holtzapple said some funds have been rolled over from Montgomery's 125 year celebration and donations from local businesses will also be used towards Revitalize Montgomery. A five year program is in place with a core committee of volunteers to revitalize the community. "We are working on a contract with technical assistance to the River Towns," said Grbenick. Montgomery is one of the first to be established in Pennsylvania. "This economic restructuring will impart a special character to Montgomery, strengthening the connection to the River," he added. Grbneck, a landscape architect by profession, is the assigned liaison to work with the committee. During the meeting he worked with the members to prioritize the projects such as extending streetscapes for the upcoming sewer project. The committee will be meeting again on March 13 to review committee structure recommendations.

In the meantime, the Montgomery Borough will be watering the trees until they are established. More trees, possibly red buds (bare root trees) for planting are expected to arrive on April 15.

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