

## Cumberland Township Approves Tax Abatement

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CARMICHAELS -- Cumberland Township supervisors adopted new tax abatement ordinances Monday for business and commercial construction including additional abatements for larger businesses.

The tax abatement program is aimed at encouraging new development. Under the program, commercial and business owners pay no or reduced property taxes on new construction for a certain number of years.

Ordinances adopted by the supervisors provide a five-year tax abatement for new business construction as well as improvements to existing commercial, industrial and agricultural properties.

A separate ordinance will provide an additional, four-year, partial abatement for businesses that employ more than 100 people and make improvements worth at least \$500,000.

Under the ordinance, a company will receive the initial five-year abatement, during which it pays no property taxes; it will then pay taxes at a discount - an 80 percent discount in year six, 60 percent in year seven, 40 percent in year eight and 20 percent in the ninth year.

A similar tax abatement ordinance adopted by the supervisors last year was rescinded and the new ordinances were adopted. Adoption of the new ordinances was necessary because of changes made in the abatement program by the county.

The county's previous five-year abatement program had expired at the end of last year, however, after the county included the additional tax breaks for large businesses in the program, several taxing bodies failed to renew it.

As a result, the commissioners in October changed the program again to give municipalities and school districts a choice in what kind of tax abatements to offer businesses.

The change allows municipalities and school districts to renew the previous five-year abatements without also accepting the new abatement period for large employers.

The township also continues to offer a three-year residential tax abatement for home construction and improvements.

In other business, the supervisors reorganized and re-elected Bill Groves, chairman; Bill Nicholson, vice chairman; and Debra Rush, secretary-treasurer. Groves, Nicholson and the third supervisor, Jim Sokol, were all appointed road masters.

The supervisors agreed to continue to meet the first Monday of each month at 3 p.m. January through May and October through December. They will meet at 4 p.m. June through September to accommodate their summer work schedule.

If the first Monday of the month is a holiday, the supervisors will meet the second Monday of the month.

Dennis Makel was appointed township solicitor at \$95 an hour, and K-2 Engineering was named township engineer on an as-needed basis.

The supervisors also approved 25-cent-an-hour raises for all full- and part-time employees; and 50-cent-an-hour raises for all full- and part-time police officers.

The supervisors reminded residents new flood plain maps have been prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and areas that before may not have been in a flood plain are included in one now.

Those who live in low-lying areas or near flood-prone creeks should review the maps at the township building to determine if their home or property is in a flood plain.

Groves said residents also can check with their mortgage or insurance company to determine whether they will need flood insurance.

The supervisors accepted the resignations of full-time police officer Brian Korey and part-time police officer Shawn McMinn. They hired Andrew Greene as a part-time officer at \$11.50 an hour and John Beckus as a full-time officer at \$12.25 an hour.