

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

5:30 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Government Reform

***Rich Fitzgerald, Chair; Jim Burn, Jim Ellenbogen, Nick Futules, Vince Gastgeb,
Bob Macey, and Chuck McCullough - Members***

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 5:55 PM*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Mark Flaherty, County Controller or Designee

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Mr. Flynn and Ms. Griser*

Recognized attendees: Controller Mark Flaherty and Deputy Controller Guy Tumolo

Council staff in attendance: John Mascio, Jennifer Liptak, and Jared Barker

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Jim Burn, Nick Futules, Bob Macey, Rich Fitzgerald, Council Member Chuck McCullough, Council Member Chuck McCullough, Council Member Jan Rea, Council Member Michael Finnerty, and Council Member Matt Drozd
Absent: Jim Ellenbogen, and Vince Gastgeb

III. Agenda Items**Ordinances****3734-08**

An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 1, entitled "Administrative Code," through the creation of a new Article 705, entitled "Naming Rights," in order to establish uniform County policies for the disposition of naming rights relative to County property.

Sponsors: Jim Burn, Matt Drozd, Brenda Frazier, Michael Finnerty, Rich Fitzgerald, Nick Futules, Bob Macey and William Russell Robinson

Summary: *The Chair read the bill.*

The bill's primary sponsor, Council Member Jim Burn, gave a summary of the bill. He explained that this concept and stated that it is reflective of the legislation that was originally introduced to Council by Former Council Member Lestitian. He continued by stating that this is an alternative revenue stream option that may be available to the county. A discussion then ensued on the merits of the bill and whether the bill would require the creation of a 501C (3).

Action: **Affirmatively Recommended**

3763-08

An Ordinance amending the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 4, entitled "Finances," Chapter 475, entitled "Taxation," Section 475-50.1, entitled "Homestead status reevaluation schedule," in order to clarify the ability of the Allegheny County Controller to provide information to the Chief Assessment Officer regarding properties which are partially exempted from taxation due to application of the homestead exemption under the terms of the Homestead Property Exclusion Program Act (Act 50 of 1998, 53 P.S. §8581 et. seq.).

Sponsors: Michael Finnerty, Rich Fitzgerald, Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Jim Ellenbogen, Nick Futules, Vince Gastgeb, Bob Macey, Chuck Martoni, Chuck McCullough, Jan Rea and William Russell Robinson

Summary: *The Chair read the bill.*

The chair invited the Controller, Tom Bradley (Treasure's representative) and Deputy County Manager Uber to the table for discussion.

The bill's primary sponsor, Council Member Mike Finnerty, gave a summary of the bill.

Controller Flaherty discussed the legislation and explained that there may be properties receiving a homestead exemption in error or fraudulently. This issue is of importance to the fiscal solvency of the county. Controller would like to pursue reviewing this issue as it may result in a means of collecting additional revenues due to the county, but not received due to error or fraudulent activity.

Deputy County Manager Derek Uber stated that the administration supports this effort and will work with the controller and council to comply with this ordinance.

Tom Bradley expressed concerns regarding the eligibility of certain properties to receive this exemption and the fact that once the deed is transferred, the owner must apply for a new homestead exemption.

Chairman Rich Fitzgerald noted that Council passed the legislation that required reapplying for the homestead exemption two years ago.

The Controller recommended that Council's approved legislation is amended to require a new homestead application for any change in the deed. Currently, some deed changes do not require a new application.

Mr. Bradley recommended that county proceed with caution as the homestead exemption will be expanding to apply to school taxes under state law.

Action: **A motion was made by Council Member McCullough, seconded by Futules, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.**

Resolution

3760-08

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, urging the United States Congress to act with all deliberate speed to renew the exemption of the steamboat Delta Queen from the terms of the Safety of Life at Sea Act (P.L. 89-777).

Sponsors: Jan Rea

Summary: *The Chair read the bill*

The bill's primary sponsor, Council Member Jan Rea, gave a summary of the bill. She gave a brief history of the steamboat Delta Queen and described her reasoning for introducing this legislation. She noted that 120 people are employed by this vessel. This resolution would urge US Congress to exempt the Delta Queen from the terms of the Safety of Life at Sea Act (P.L. 89-777)

Chairman Fitzgerald asked if there is any support from our Federal Representatives or Senators and if so why not?

Council Member Rea noted that she is willing to send an inquiry to them and inquire about their support this bill. She will work with Jared and is willing to hold the bill until this information is received and can be discussed.

Council Member Chuck McCullough asked to be added as a co-sponsor.

Action: **Held in Committee**

IV. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM*