



WCIDC Purchases 110 Acres in Hempfield and Unity for Office Park Development

GREENSBURG, PA, March 5, 2020 — The Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation (WCIDC) today authorized an agreement to purchase 110 acres in Hempfield and Unity townships for a mixed-use development that would include sites to support regional headquarters, back-office and financial operations, healthcare services and advanced technology opportunities. As envisioned, the project could support as many as 500 jobs when fully occupied and include residential development and potentially a small commercial district. It also would include amenities such as sidewalks, street lights and possibly a walking/biking trail that would link to Twin Lakes Park and Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park.

The property is currently owned by Westmoreland County. Wearing the dual hats of county commissioners and WCIDC directors, Sean Kertes, Douglas Chew and Gina Cerilli agreed to both sell and purchase the George's Station Road property. To ensure that the transaction was carried out at a fair market value, the commissioners relied upon an independent appraisal by Hayden Appraisal Services. The company set a total valuation of \$2.4 million — about \$21,800 per acre of raw, unimproved land.

“This is a win-win for county residents,” said Chairman Sean Kertes. “We’re setting the stage for much-needed development in the center of the county, and the revenue from the sale will enable us — as county commissioners — to do so while being responsible stewards of taxpayers’ money.

“Our comprehensive plan identified several strategies and specific actions to support local business growth and to compete for regional attraction projects, and one of those is to provide development-ready sites,” Kertes said. “The idea of having sites for office buildings and residential development within the same property footprint is really exciting; this is going to make it easy for health care businesses or the tech industry to find a home in Westmoreland.”

Vice Chairman Douglas Chew agreed that the project is a great opportunity.

“Anyone who knows me knows I’m about fiscal responsibility,” Chew said. “This is an opportunity for the county to responsibly spur economic development while also generating revenue. The fact that the price was determined by an unbiased appraisal made this an easy decision.”

The property is less than a mile from U.S. Route 30. Secretary Gina Cerilli noted it’s not the only large project along the corridor.

“There’s a lot of momentum building right now between Westmoreland Mall and the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport,” Cerilli said. “We’ve got the new Live! Casino opening later this year and bringing 500 new jobs to the area, and we have \$11 million in runway upgrades set to take place at the airport, which will increase travel options for residents and local businesses. This office park will similarly increase career options for residents.”

The development is expected to feature lots ranging in size from 1 to 8 acres. With the project being in the conceptual design phase, construction isn’t expected to begin until 2021.

“We’re really excited to introduce this new product type into the county. The idea that you could live and work within the same development and then easily connect to the recreational opportunities at Twin Lakes Park is unique,” said Jason W. Rigone, WCIDC executive director. “That said, we recognize there are congestion challenges from all of the past development, so serious consideration of traffic improvements will be needed first.”

The WCIDC is funding the purchase with a mix of low-interest financing and internal revenue sources. Through the support of Gov. Tom Wolf and State Sen. Kim Ward, a \$1 million grant was approved by the state through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program and will be used to support site-development activities. The WCIDC anticipates spending \$6-8 million to fully develop the concept.

About Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation

Founded in 1983 by the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners, the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation implements a comprehensive economic development strategy to promote growth in terms of job creation, economic output and a stable tax base for Westmoreland County. Through the development of a county-wide industrial park system, a responsive Business Calling Program and involvement in public/private partnerships, WCIDC strives to foster business growth, resulting in job opportunities for the citizens of Westmoreland County.

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