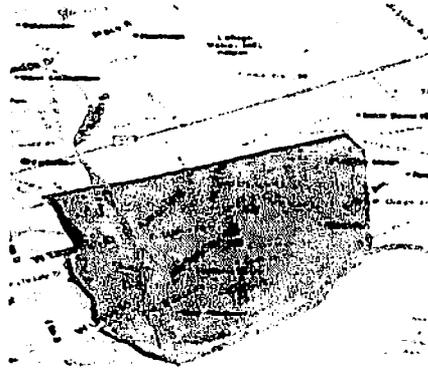
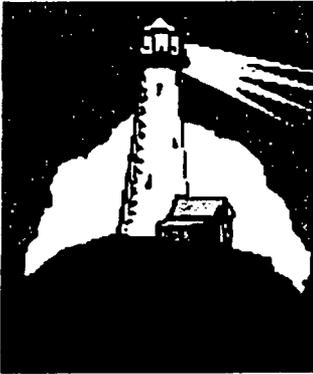


EARN FRONTIER (JANUARY 29, 2009) EAST ALLENTOWN RITTERSVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1136, Allentown PA 18105
Telephone # -- (610) 434-1229 E-Mail ---
dpearson@enter.net
Web Site --- www.eastlehighearn.com



**Next Neighborhood Meeting --- Monday, February 15, 2010
7:00 PM. St. Peter's Evan. Lutheran Church, Hanover Avenue**

THE EARN FRONTIER --- WE ARE EAST OF Lehigh
River...The Public Voice For The 14th & 15th Wards

Department of Public Welfare to Close Allentown State Hospital

Harrisburg -- Acting Secretary of Public Welfare Harriet Dichter announced plans 1/28/2010 to close Allentown State Hospital in Lehigh County by Dec. 31. Dichter said the closure is part of Pennsylvania's commitment to reducing its reliance on institutional care and improving access to home- and community-based services for Pennsylvanians living with mental illness. ;

"For more than 25 years, Pennsylvania has been on the leading edge of developing local partnerships and community based service options that promote recovery for people living

with mental illness, said Dichter. "As facilities close, we open doors to opportunities for residents to live their lives to the fullest by returning to their homes and communities as contributing members of society, all while managing their own health and well-being."

The closure of Allentown is part of the department's plan to create a more unified approach to funding community services and supports for those living with mental illness. The department will reinvest the millions of dollars saved to further develop and sustain clinically-based, recovery-oriented services and to continue to improve the mental health service delivery system.

The resident population at Pennsylvania's seven state hospitals has decreased by nearly 65 percent since 1994, from almost 5,000 to the current 1,627. Allentown State Hospital currently serves approximately 175 residents at its 217 acre campus, with a staff of approximately 379 people and a current budget of \$35.3 million. The hospital serves Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, Monroe and Pike counties.

Prior to being discharged, hospital residents will participate in a series of assessments in order to determine their level of need for services and support as they look toward a successful life within a more integrated setting, such as a group home, public housing or with family.

The assessment process according to the State will ensure that safe and appropriate placements are made. DPW has established a toll-free number for family members of residents of Allentown State Hospital to use during the closure process. Family members will be able to speak with staff from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, by calling 1-877-695-7462.

To aid in the closure process, the department will establish a strong community advisory team made up of Allentown residents, county representatives from the Allentown service area, as well as other interested stakeholders who will monitor and assist the department through the process. DPW will hold a public hearing from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 22, at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel & Suites, 3400 Airport Road, Allentown, to accept comment about the closure from stakeholders, officials and the community. Those wishing to provide comments are asked to register by contacting Beth Neston at (610) 740-3409.

The department will attempt to provide hospital employees with the opportunity to continue their work with the commonwealth, using all of the departments under the Governor's jurisdiction.

Allentown State Hospital was originally opened and received its first resident in 1912, helping to alleviate overcrowding at state hospitals in Norristown and Danville. Originally called the Allentown Homeopathic Hospital for the Insane, it was the first homeopathic institution of its kind in Pennsylvania. As the homeopathic medical approach gradually changed to the more

standard medical model, the hospital became known as Allentown State Hospital. The patient population quickly rose to 867 and eventually peaked at 2,107 patients in 1954.

A Statement from Dennis Pearson

It is the desire of the East Allentown Rittersville Neighborhood Association for the Allentown State Hospital, a good neighbor of ours, to remain Open. Unfortunately the DPW's irrevocable announcement of the closure of the State Hospital on or by December 31, 2010 may be the last word on the subject.

Consequently, we turn our focus to its reuse. Not that we want to, but from the sense of reality.

It is fact that the City of Allentown sees the sale and development of the open area of the Hospital as one of the solutions to its current financial problems; and other groups look at the land to advance their social and development interests. The truism here, is that none of these interests care how their plans would impact on those closest to ground zero.

Therefore, we assert and proclaim that whatever major decision that is to be made for reuse of this property should be in the best interest of those who live nearby the site. Therefore, we request that the residents of East Allentown Rittersville Neighborhood as well as the Association be kept abreast of all activities related to the redevelopment of this site and be invited to all hearing, meetings and discussions ... It is the last thing we want is for the Politicians and Special Interests who do not live in the area to make things worse for the neighbors that live in this area in order to advance their particular agenda for their benefit.....

And the last thing we want is for our neighbors to fear making open comment on all issues related to the Allentown State Hospital situation because of the fear of reprisal from their political leaders, bosses or from other special interests in the community.

Established in 1976, EARN has seen a recent drop-off in membership and wants your input and ideas. If you live, operate a business, or simply have a vested interest in Allentown's East Side, please come!

- ✓ **Know what is happening in your neighborhood and be a part of the flow of information – have your voice heard.**

- ✓ **Have a direct communication link with local government officials and other influential groups.**
- ✓ **Help to preserve and improve East Allentown.**
- ✓ **Plan social activities for your neighborhood.**

Let's get together, share our ideas, thoughts, and feelings and work cooperatively to make Allentown's east side a better place to live.

All neighborhood residents and guests are welcome ... This is your neighborhood ... Help it be a strong one ...Get Involved ... Be part of the adventure ... Be a Frontiersman for the neighborhood.

Have any questions? Contact: Dennis L. Pearson, President 610-434-1229 dpearson@enter.net

Or visit EARN on the web: www.eastlehighearn.com

Between 2000 and 2008, eight people were killed in six accidents on Hanover Avenue, making it the deadliest stretch of road in the city, according to an analysis of a federal database that tracks vehicle-related deaths. The figures don't include a woman who was killed in December when she was hit by a car as she crossed the street.... And they may not include the death of an elderly gentleman from the Country of Lebanon while crossing Irving Street at East Tilghman Street.

Minutes from the January 18, 2010 meeting of EARN

The East Allentown-Rittersville Neighborhood Association met Monday January 18 at the St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church...The meeting was conducted by Neighborhood President Dennis Pearson in an informal town hall discussion style... A style very much to his liking... Attendees to the meeting respectfully listened to the initial comments what Allentown Police Captain Dean Schwartz and City Engineer Richard Young made and without any contentious

debate stated their own input on the problems as well as possible solutions as related to the Hanover Avenue situation, President Dennis Pearson desired that participants in the discussion give possible solutions to the problems that exist on Hanover Avenue. He did not want the meeting to be an reinstatement of the problem just for show... And surely, he did not want to predominate discussion himself, and he didn't. The following people were in attendance: EARN President, Dennis Pearson, EARN Vice President - David Schell, EARN Treasurer- Robert Jacoby... EARN Board Members --- Robert Litts, Hilda Sawka and Lois Morrell... Midway Manor President - Richard Wilburn... Interested Neighbors --- Michael D'Amore (also a Allentown City Councilman), Richard Young (Also the Allentown City Engineer), Paul Kochanasz, Barry Detweiler, Denise Simon, and John Phillips... And finally Interested Parties - Allentown City Councilman -- Mike Donovan and Allentown Police Captain and PSA for the East Side District --- Dean Schwartz. Both Schwartz and Young made comments about recent traffic studies on Hanover Avenue... And listened to the ideas of neighbors present in regard to measures that should be taken on Hanover Avenue to create more safety for pedestrians on the road.... A number of reasons were cited that have attributed to the problems at hand on Hanover Avenue... These include speeding , aggressive driving, traffic volume, width of road, perception that this road is a major substitute to the thru-ways, lack of pedestrian relief in the center of the road, lane switching and vehicles passing at walk areas. Suggested solutions --- Lower speed limits, create traffic islands and larger center painted lines, create more defined walking areas, install overhanging yellow caution lights at Halstead Streets and Jerome Streets to make drivers aware that they are entering a major pedestrian crossing area... Replace older traffic lights with more modern traffic lights with the most modern pedestrian walking signals, reduce the volume of traffic on Hanover Avenue by completing the American Parkway. City Engineer Richard Young said in the end, since traffic volumes west of Irving Street are heavier than those volumes east of Irving Street different solutions must be offered in those zones (27,000 vehicles a day compared to 18,000 vehicles).... Mr. Young emphasized that traffic on Hanover Avenue west of Irving Street is heavier then all city streets except 7th Street North of Washington Street where it is two ways. Traffic islands may be put in for pedestrians west of Irving Street... East of Irving Street, Painted Center lines may be increased in size for pedestrian safety...It should also be noted that West of Irving Street, existing painted lines create a 4 lane street with two lanes going east and two lanes going west... East of Irving Street Hanover avenue is a 2 lane street with 1 lane going east and 1 lane going west... Then too, east of Irving street the width of the road tempts drivers to pass and otherwise drive in two lanes when this is not the expectation of traffic designers. Mr. Young also stressed the fact, that while the City of Allentown bought the ownership of its traffic lights from PPL some tears ago... It cannot install new ones unless it receives a permit from the state and that involves a great deal of paperwork. Denise Simon who has lived along Hanover Avenue 17 years of the OLH Home Society said that she thinks that speed is the # 1 problem... For a point of time an accident occurred every week... Plain and simple that is the underlying issue... People think it is the Indianapolis 500... I look out of my window and see people making illegal U-turns when traffic is coming and I mean people have to slam on the brake... It's just drivers not obeying traffic

law, doing things they are not supposed to...Young said initially thought it is speed but studies show that may not be necessarily the case...City Councilman Mike Donovan observed if 85% is 34 below that means 15% are above. I heard at City Council the maximum speed was 48. What interests him is the breakdown of the 15% because it only takes one to cause a serious or deadly accident. John Phillips asked what was the time element... He said he drives Hanover Avenue every day... If he drives it from 7:30 -8:00 in that peak area... It's terribly congested and everybody is doing a heck a lot more than thirty-five...The point is if you range it a period of time it's going to average out to a lower speed... But the peak times are when the Kids are going home from school and going to work... There is a huge amount of people that travel throughout this whole area to Bethlehem he believes and doesn't know where they all going but I believe that is fair. The other thing is there has been a lot of accidents...He has an office at 668 on the Avenue and he had a gal flip over and land on the curb upside down on a perfectly sunny day so to speak and that was because whatever she was doing was a problem but also the traffic was moving very fast at the time which was close to three O'clock...Then there was two kids from Dieruff High School who could not cross the road on Hanover Avenue, did not make it one day, and both ended up in the hospital... The traffic just moves, even if it's just thirty five but it moves up to the forties and then becomes congested and that becomes another problem. Schwartz agreed that the area becomes congested, but he says that congestion generally slows the traffic down... That's the peak times. He did not doubt there are accidents... But when they are looking at the causes it does not appear totally speed related so the police and the City or looking for other reasons 85% are within the law... That does not say that people are not flying through there... After all the police do give citations...They are looking at other probable causes also ---is it the width of the road too wide so people can't cross... Is there too much distance between traffic lights so people can't cross? Paul Kochanasz, a resident of East Allentown for the last 55 years, said: As I see it, some of the problems in this area of the Church (Our Lady Help of Christians) is that N. Jasper Street is not a straight street intersecting with Hanover Avenue... It's an offset. There is a painted Cross Walk from the North side of Jasper street to the south side of Hanover Avenue... After the terrible accident that took the lives of Mr. & Mrs. Rice ;standing stands were added at the crosswalk (calling for motorists) to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalks. The standing stands are in place on school days, for Saturday evening church services and Sunday mornings until Noon... Many of the motorists do not stop when the pedestrian is in the Cross Walk... I know I stand one step off Hanover Avenue and I counted as many as 10 and more cars go by before someone stops to let you go across.. Another problem at the Church is that with people parking on the North Side of Hanover Avenue and J-Walk or cross in the middle of the block. In the latest two accidents I don't think the pedestrians were using the Crosswalks at Irving Street or at Jasper Streets. Unfortunately both motorist and Pedestrians do not always obey the traffic laws. In Bethlehem on Union Boulevard near Nitschman Middle School they have wide white lines painted on the street for the crosswalk that can be seen from a good distance as you approach it, an over head flashing yellow flashing caution light, this may help at the Jasper and Hanover Avenue crosswalk. .. I am not familiar with the other problems on Hanover Avenue but I do drive it often and many

drivers do not observe the 35 mile speed limit Robert Litts echoed Mr. Kochanasz when he stressed the point that it is dangerous for pedestrians to think that they have the right to cross Hanover Avenue at will and at any spot and think that all traffic will stop for them... The more attentive drivers may be able to stop but with the less attentive or aggressive drivers they could be making a fatal mistake... Pedestrians need to proceed with precaution in crossing the road, and cross at available cross walks or traffic lights... Even there, Mr. Litts advised that it is best to cross with caution and watch out for traffic... Mr. Litts is indeed saddened by all the deaths that have occurred in this road, but he knows that in at least one of these cases, those who died were J-walking. Barry Detweiler said upon Mr. Young statement how much problems Crossing Guards at Plymouth Street and Jasper Streets have at getting drivers to stop when they have their paddles out to motorist to stop... But motorists don't stop... Mr. Young, That's a fact, she (Our Lady Crossing Guard) told me not to step off the curb until she gets the traffic stopped... I'm the one who put the piece in the paper... Because people ignore her or when she does stop them... They scream at her, curse at her... Mrs Morrell I bet you have the same thing don't you... Said Mike D'Amore... She's the iron lady at Irving and E. Washington... She'll hit the motorists on the head with her paddle. Continued Mr. Detweiler: Mr. Donovan hit it right on the head... Until you get people to care and change their habits... And get people to care... And stop hurray for me, I'm not stopping for any crossing guard, you're not going to stop the problem. David Schell said that motorist may be confused whether Hanover Avenue east of Irving Street is 2 lane or 1 lane... Fears if turn it into two lanes would have more speed... Said his vehicle was hit from behind while he attempted to turn right on Jerome from Hanover Avenue... And also, when he properly walked with the light on Irving Street he was almost hit by a motorist... He also questioned Mr. Young on what is being done with New England Avenue seeing that the area that it was his being landscaped... Was told that access to New England Avenue the former Dauphin Street is being redirected behind the existing building at the site rather than in front of it... And the traffic light moved as well to East Ellsworth Street... And finally, questioned Mr. Young whether lighting conditions were involved in the fatalities... Whether the pedestrians or motorists were able to see each other. Dennis Pearson noted that more than residents of Jasper, Sycamore and East Tilghman Street proceed North on Jasper... Non residents proceeding east avoid making a left hand turn on Jerome Street by short cutting through Jasper Street to East Tilghman Street using the alley like street almost like a New York City street... The problem as pointed out by Mike D'Amore is that traffic proceeding east must go through the crosswalk to get on Jasper Street... Therefore, it might be a good idea to prohibit left hand turns north on Jasper... Denise Simon playing devil's advocate suggested that banning vehicles heading west to turn left on Jasper Street would cause a handicap for Our Lady for parents taking their children to and home from school or for parishioners going seeking to park in the Church parking lot for services... To this D'Amore responded that this need not be forbidden as such left hand turns do not cross over the crosswalk... David Schell responded that a good reason not to ban left hand turns south on Jasper Street is that there are no alternative side streets to get to the Our Lady Parking Lot... However the ban on left hand turns north on Jasper can be justified because residents can get to Jasper, Sycamore, Jude and East Tilghman Street from

Irving or Jerome through Sycamore and East Tilghman Street. Mr. Young said that such an option proposed was one that he was considering but feared some opposition. Then Pearson asked about situations where people are parked at traffic lights... And cars sometimes three deep beep their horns as soon as the light changes, or almost before the light changes... Sometimes they seek to get around as quickly as possible... Mrs Morell said that this is what happened at Plymouth Street where a Crossing Guard had all travel stopped to allow a child to move across... But one car from the back went around the stopped cars and hit the child. Mr. Young said that before he submits his plans for funding he will come back to the neighborhood for review and possible changes .Robert Jacoby stressed the point that the late David Lockhardt also voiced a concern about traffic conditions on Hanover Avenue...Taking his message to City Council time in and time again warning that people will eventually be killed on the road as has happened more and more recently. Dave, in fact, wanted all neighbors along the Hanover Avenue-E. Hamilton Street corridor to address the issue of Hanover Avenue Motor Vehicle-Pedestrian Safety. He wanted a link of neighbors from Club Avenue to the Hamilton Street Bridge... And this wish was the impetus that led to the coalition of CNO neighborhoods East Allentown 27 and 28 to form EARN which later expanded to include all the East Side.

WE STAND FOR A COMMUNITY BUILT UPON STRONG FOUNDATIONS* We ask today what type of Community are we creating for ourselves? Shall our community be like the man or woman who built his or her house on rock? The wind blew and beat upon that house; but the foundations were embedded in rock and did not crumble. Or shall our community be like the man or woman who were foolish enough to build their house on sand? The rain came down and the flood waters rose; and the wind came and beat upon the house; Down the house came with a crash. We all know the story of the Three Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf *** Which house would you prefer to live in when the wind blows and the earth shakes A) Straw B) Wood C) Brick or D) Steel**

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