

A Special Justice Center Edition

January 2009

Bucks County

Moving Forward



Project Background

In July 2008, Doylestown Borough Council passed four ordinances that permitted the Bucks County Justice Center project to move forward. Final plan approval for phase one, building the new parking garage was granted at that meeting. The next two phases will include demolition of the existing parking garage, and finally, construction of the Justice Center on the site of the existing garage. In November 2008, by a 2-1 vote (with Commissioners Charles H. Martin and Jim Cawley voting affirmatively, and Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia casting a nay vote), the

Bucks County Commissioners approved a \$6.57 million contract with design firm Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK) to provide architectural services for the new Justice Center. The architectural contract represented a savings of approximately \$5.5 million from a March 2008 proposed contract. Commissioner Chairman Charley Martin said about the contract, "The desire was to continue, but not at any cost."

The new garage (seen above) will feature 1,200 spaces, three elevator towers, three entrances, and a planned security office. The county has kept its commitment to partnering with the borough to ensure an aesthetically pleasing yet functional design.

Ground was broken in December on the garage site, with construction soon to follow. According to Mayor Libby White who joined county and borough officials on the frigid December morning, "It's the 21st century, and we need a 21st-century courthouse." Bucks County's Director of Operations Jerry Anderson has met with homeowners and local businesses to discuss construction. He encourages anyone with questions or concerns to call the General Services Division at 215-345-3949.



(Above) Comm. Jim Cawley speaks to the crowd gathered at the ceremony held on Dec. 22, 2008. (Right) Raising a shovel were (l-r): former Comm. Sandy Miller, Doylestown Borough Council President Det Ansinn, Comm. Cawley, former President Judge David Heckler, Doylestown Borough Mayor Libby White, Comm. Charley Martin and Doylestown Borough Councilmen Mark Double and Lou White.

Parking Garage Groundbreaking Ceremony



Why do we need a new Justice Center complex?

Several issues have necessitated a new Bucks County Justice Center. When the existing courthouse was constructed, Bucks County had 310,000 residents and four judges. Today, there are 625,000 residents and 13 judges. Since 2005, the number of criminal cases has grown more than 18 percent. In addition, Domestic Relations' caseload – conducted in cramped quarters at 30 N. Main St – has led to overcrowding in that facility. The new facility will also provide for improved security measures.

How will residents benefit from these projects?

In an effort to be a good neighbor, the county is taking on a major traffic improvement project to funnel traffic via Broad St. to the bypass, at a cost of over \$1 million. It will include new signals, turn lanes and a fiber optic traffic control system to efficiently regulate flow. The county will also install pavers in walkways, in keeping with current design. Bucks will rebuild a retention basin in need of upgrading, which will not only accommodate the new complex, but also the borough in general. These projects total upwards of \$1.5 million that the borough will not have to spend.

Where will the new facilities be located?

The parking garage is being built on the block of Union-Broad-Doyle Streets. The new Justice Center will be built where the current parking garage stands.

What is the timetable for completion of the projects?

The garage should open by July 2010. The Justice Center complex will take about 46 months, with a target ribbon cutting for October 2013.

How will the county keep me informed during the project?

The county is committed to keeping those in Doylestown Borough informed throughout the duration of this capital improvement project, the county's largest-ever. In addition to these **newsletters**, a page will be created on the county's Web site to providing up-to-date information (**www.BucksCounty.org**) and will feature a live Web cam of the construction. You may also sign up on our Web site for **e-alerts** to receive information when any new information is updated. Additionally, a number has been established to address questions or concerns (**215-345-3949**).

A Message from the Chairman



Charles H. Martin
Bucks County
Commissioner
Chairman

We understand that as construction begins on the parking garage and later, with the Justice Center, there will be concerns from those living and working in Doylestown Borough about the impact the project will have on day-to-day life here in this historical borough and county seat. It is our pledge to keep you regularly and directly informed with updates such as this, so that you maintain a comfort level as we forge ahead with creating a 21st century courthouse that will best serve all Bucks Countians' needs.

It will remain our goal to balance the need for a new Justice Center with consideration of its impact on the surrounding community. Construction parameters will take into respect creating the least amount of disturbance to our neighbors. Construction vehicles will be as unobtrusive as possible, entering and exiting downtown Doylestown by Broad Street and the 611 bypass.

Be assured that our architect, HOK, understands the importance of maintaining the character of this fabled downtown. They have and will continue to work closely with county and borough officials to create a building in keeping with the charm for which Doylestown Borough is known. HOK's long resume includes the design of nearly 90 justice-related buildings in the US and abroad.

We look forward to our continued partnership with borough officials, residents and business owners, with the goal of bringing a new safe, secure courthouse to the people of Bucks County.



Bucks County Board of Commissioners
55 East Court St.
Doylestown, PA 18901

Charles H. Martin, Chairman
James F. Cawley, Esq., Vice Chairman

(Commissioner's name omitted at her request)

David M. Sanko, COO/Managing Director



Address

First Class Mail
US Postage
PAID
Doylestown,
PA Permit #311

Visit county website for news, photos, and coming soon, a live web-cam to keep up-to-date with construction.