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Authority urged to seeks county funds

By Amy Karpinsky, Herald-Standard
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Saying the Fayette County Business Park is a top priority for funding out of the remaining money from the county's bond issue, the Fayette County commissioners Tuesday directed the executive director of the county redevelopment authority to formally submit a request for additional money.

Raymond C. Polaski, the authority's executive director, anticipates a final \$600,000 allocation for the business park out of the \$2 million that was promised toward the project, although he didn't formally request the money. After Commission Chairman Vincent A. Vicites said a formal request is needed, Polaski said he would write one.

Commissioner Ronald M. Nehls said the county has \$3,243,000 left in the bond issue.

During the commissioners' agenda meeting, Polaski reported that inside the business park, the Career Link building is nearly complete and construction of the county Mental Health/Mental Retardation building soon will be under way. At the end of the month, the authority will open bids for a major public improvement at the site, which includes extending Wayland Smith Drive and Matthew Drive, Polaski said.

The park, located along Route 40 near the Uniontown Mall, also has a motel and an engineering firm as tenants. Across Route 40, near the Holiday Inn, the redevelopment authority recently agreed to sell 31 acres to Superior Automotive Group as a site for four car dealerships. Polaski said another tenant may be announced soon.

Next to the business park, work is under way on the

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Widewaters Development Group project, which includes a Home Depot and other stores.

Commissioner Sean M. Cavanagh said with Widewaters moving forward quickly, it is important for the infrastructure of a traffic light and intersection to be lined up, to avoid traffic fiasco when the new businesses open.

Cavanagh said the business park is the "most critical project in the county" with which to allocate bond issue money. He said that between U.S. Rep. John Murtha (D-Johnstown) and state Sen. Rich Kasunic (D-Dunbar) additional money will be secured for infrastructure. Kasunic recently secured more than \$2 million to build an intersection and upgrade the road surface in the area of the business park.

Cavanagh said the development is the "epicenter of the county." Vicites said that hopefully the \$2 million provided by the county can be used to match some state funding. Vicites said with a state match of 50 percent, \$4 million instead of \$2 million could be available. He said that since Polaski estimates it could take \$6 million to \$8 million to finish obtaining the infrastructure in the business park, \$4 million will go a long way.

"A lot is happening out there," Cavanagh said, adding that the business park is a crucial element for economic development for the county and is his main focus of where to spend the bond money.

Vicites said the business park and improvements to the Connellsville Airport are his top two priorities for funding.

In a related issue, Tammy Shell, executive director of the county office of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, was granted approval to seek grants of \$250,000 for infrastructure at the business park and \$250,000 for the access road at the park. Shell also is seeking \$275,000 for an access road at the Connellsville Airport and \$5,000 for a zoning overlay.

Regarding development at the Connellsville Airport, county Emergency Management Director Guy Napolillo reported that construction of the new county emergency management annex is going well. He said the floors will be pounded at the end of the week, and he is hoping for an early fall completion.

The commissioners voted to place two items on Thursday's agenda regarding the county Fayette Area Coordinated Transportation (FACT) transit center site to be built at the airport.

They include a proposal from Galluzzo Construction Co. for cutting and clearing paths to six bore sites, at a cost of \$1,700, and a proposal from McMillen Engineering for geotechnical work at the site, for \$9,875.

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