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Planners discuss parking proposal

City may revise lot regulations

BY LINDA METZ, Staff writer
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Washington Planning Commission moved a step closer Thursday to making recommendations to change the city's ordinance pertaining to off-street parking in the city's business district.

At a special workshop session, commission members were presented with a revised parking ordinance by city solicitor Lane Turturice, who said the revisions were made following meetings with Tom Kearns, city parking director, and Matt Uram, business owner and representative of the Washington Business District Association.

Last week, the commission said it would be open to considering changes that would place restrictions on parking lots proposed for the city's business district. With the restrictions, the commission could then review each proposal on a case-by-case basis rather than the city again implementing a moratorium banning the building of all lots in the city.

The moratorium issue is back in the hands of the planning commission at the request of City Council. Last year, council, upon the recommendation of the commission, approved a temporary moratorium on parking lots. The purpose of the moratorium was to protect revenues from city parking lots and garages.

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Assault victim hospitalized

A Washington man was assaulted Wednesday afternoon in the 700 block of Ewing Street by two men.

Washington police were called about 4:45 p.m. to 736 Ewing St. When they arrived, police found Preston Klages, 27, of 556 W. Chestnut St., sitting in the middle of the street.

Police said Klages was bleeding from cuts on his scalp and mouth. He also had bruising on his face, a tooth was knocked loose and his right elbow appeared to have been dislocated.

Klages told police that he had been staying at the home of Regina Caldwell, 736 Ewing. The mother of his son, Tiffany Sloneker, came to the address, and she and Klages got into a brief argument.

Klages said he was then grabbed from behind by someone who put him in a chokehold. He broke free but was chased into the street, where a second man knocked him down and kicked him.

The two assailants fled before police arrived.

Klages was taken to Washington Hospital and transferred to a Pittsburgh hospital for treatment.

Unlocking their potential



From left, Josh Kaplan and Joey Travolta watch a cameraman in action recently at the Joey Travolta Short Film Camp at Point Park University. The camp gives youths with autism-spectrum disorders the opportunity to learn about filmmaking.

Travolta brother's film camp aids autistic youths

BY ANDY MCNEIL, Staff writer
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For some, the Hollywood film industry may bring to mind a movie-making machine run by cutthroat studio executives, cranking out blockbusters on bloated budgets that star pampered actors.

For Joey Travolta, 60, older brother of actor John Travolta, filmmaking is all about inclusion.

Over the past decade, he has worked with children and adults with neurodevelopmental disabilities such as autism and Asperger's syndrome. Travolta runs two full-time vocational training programs in Southern California and a traveling film camp for high school-aged students that focus on teaching socialization and communication skills through movie-making.

Recently, Travolta teamed up with Achieving in Higher Education with Autism/Developmental Disabilities, a Pitts-



Camper Michael Kurland of Mt. Lebanon dances alongside Joey Travolta.

burgh-based organization that assists college students on the autism spectrum, to bring his two-week short-film camp to Point Park University. The camp wraps up today.

In a busy classroom, Michael Kurland, 20, of Mt.

Lebanon, sported a director's hat and discussed his favorite sound effects with fellow camper Aaron Burke, 18, of Monroeville. Travolta said that he would be Kurland's assistant during the project and promised that he'd keep the

door cracked at the Directors Guild of America for the young man.

Kurland explained that the movie is a part of a series called "The Bizarre Zone" and follows the exploits of a forgetful professor played by camper Sean Reilly, 19, of Oakmont. They said the main character pays homage to Indiana Jones as he tries to outsmart the film's antagonist, Tukdashirtin, a puny mummy with wardrobe issues.

A short time later, music began to play, and immediately campers started dancing. Travolta said they do this to get the creative juices flowing and because filmmaking has a rhythm to it. There are no wallflowers in sight, a little surprising for a roomful of teens.

AHEADD operations manager Heather Conroy said that many students are anxious when they arrive, but this

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DCED OKs county's 25 local share projects

BY MICHAEL BRADWELL
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The state Department of Community and Economic Development has approved all 25 projects from Washington County's list of 2011 Local Share Account recommendations, including a \$1 million request for the second phase of sewer projects in Florence and Bavington proposed by Hanover Township Sewer Authority.

William McGowen, executive director of the Redevelopment Authority of Washington County, on Wednesday told board members of DCED's approval.

"We are fully proceeding now with looking at 2012," McGowen said, adding that four workshops will be held in August for potential appli-

cants to learn about the requirements for submitting requests for funding from the LSA account, which is funded by a dedicated percentage of revenue from The Meadows Racetrack & Casino.

Last year, the Local Share Committee, which conducts hearings on each application, "went green," requiring applications to be filed digitally.

McGowen noted Wednesday that the new, streamlined process "was very well-received by the people who were applying and by the review committee" and that it will be continued for the 2012 application process.

While 70 projects were originally submitted by numerous local governments, authorities and nongovernmental organizations, the ones that have the best chance of making the final cut are generally approved

because the applicants can find either tax money or private grants to pay for the biggest portion of the projects.

From 2008 through 2011, local share money has totaled \$34 million, while the additional money leveraging the LSA money has totaled around \$120 million.

In other business Wednesday, the authority board adopted resolutions authorizing the execution of a cooperation agreement with California Hotel Associates Inc., California University of Pennsylvania, California Borough and the authority to execute a grant contract with Pennsylvania's Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program funding for a hotel and the university's convocation center project.

McGowen said Thursday the R-CAP grant will provide

\$3.5 million toward a \$10.2 million project in which CHA will build an 84-room Hampton Inn & Suites in California Technology Park. Construction will begin this fall.

The hotel will be used by the existing businesses in the park, as well as by the university's new convocation center that will open this fall. The center's plans include providing space and services for executive conferences.

The board also authorized the execution of a cooperation agreement with the Authority of the Borough of Charleroi to govern the receipt, disbursement and use of LSA funds for the Cokeburg water system improvement project.

A list of August meeting dates for the 2012 LSA workshops is posted at www.Observer-Reporter.com.



BETH DOLINAR

Activity envy on Facebook

The worst thing about the first day of school was coming back to find that all the other girls' hair had gotten longer over the summer. This caused me a moment of envy, often coupled with the equally irritating news that some of those same girls had gone to the wave pool. And finding out that the long-haired girls had all gone to the wave pool together made me jealous enough to squirrel around in my own head for a day.

But the fun had long passed, and there was nothing I could do about it by then, and the feeling of being left out quickly faded.

Now there's Facebook, a way for everybody to feel left out all the time. When you have a forum on which to announce your every move, you are going to make at least a few of your many friends a little bit jealous. Which might be part of the fun.

My son argued this when he asked to join Facebook. "How else am I going to find out what everybody's doing?" he said.

I reminded him that his what his phone is for, but have you noticed that teenagers don't really talk to each other on the phone?

I'm on Facebook again (having abandoned it for this and other reasons) so that I can keep an eye on my kid. And I'm struck again by how exciting and active and outdoorsy other families are. Not to mention beachy-attractive.

Will somebody please tell me how those mothers manage to get their children to: 1.) keep those matching crisp white photograph shirts clean on the walk from the house to the sand, 2.) show up at the sand at precisely the moment the setting sun becomes a big red ball, and 3.) consent to having the professional photographer irritate them for as long as it took to get that shot. I do not post my family vacation pictures because we look like a small group of refugees.

Facebook is a book of pretty people. Pretty people who get along nicely on vacation. I can't compete with that level of life success, and although I am happy for you, your pretty successfulness is starting to make me feel bad about myself. Facebook is really just a daily updated version of a Christmas card newsletter.

If on a summer day, I manage to find the kids at home and awake and willing, I might suggest we take a walk to the local coffee shop for a snack. There, I will get a green tea, my daughter a smoothie and my son a Gatorade, and we will sit together in the soft chairs and chat a bit, but mostly just slurp. Then we will walk back home and return to doing whatever it is we do. This is what I call a big summer outing with the chillins.

Once home, my son might log onto Facebook and find that, in his absence, his friends had organized and executed a trip to mini-golf, and he missed the boat. I tell my son that if he didn't have Facebook, he wouldn't know what others were doing, and it wouldn't make him feel left out.

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