

Spotts, Stevens and McCoy to design Amity industrial park

By Denise Larive, News Writer

On June 23, the professional engineering and consulting firm of Spotts, Stevens and McCoy, Reading, said it can prepare Amity Township's Western Industrial Park for zoning updates by the end of the year.

The plans would include SSM writing zoning regulations and performing a site assessment with a phase one environmental study.

Amity officials started writing the zoning regulations a year ago for the 300 to 700 acre park and then decided to employ a professional engineering and consulting firm to do the work and help ensure a successful industrial park off of north Limekiln Road.

Engineer and Manager of Land Development at SSM Timothy J. Krall told the Amity Township supervisors and planning commission members that they should also be ready to authorize a preliminary \$20,000 market study for AWIP and to "get out the door on this \$200 million build-out project."

He said Bethel Township wanted a food processing industry but a market study indicated box warehousing would be successful and that proved to be correct for that area.

SSM recommended the firm of Cushman Wakefield for the marketing study.

"Zoning is number one and my scope is to lead you down the path with what you want to do," said Krall, adding that the site will likely be ready for rezoning the site from low density residential to light industrial by the end of the year.

Supervisor Terry L. Jones said he thought the process would be faster.

"We were heading into this thinking the county would not agree with AWIP but we're ahead of schedule and Berks County officials fully endorse the AWIP project," said Krall.

"AWIP will be a \$200 to \$250 million build-out project and site analysis will be that first step toward the engineering," said Krall.

He said Amity also needs to wait to be compliant with the county's 2020 plan that will be revised by the end of 2010 with the Route 422 and Limekiln Road area as a "designated growth area" because of the

infrastructure.

“The county said they want more industrial in this part of the county,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Robert R. Yanos. “But Amity hasn’t determined what it will mean by industrial.”

“With a few exceptions this park should be as open to as many possibilities and as exclusionary to as few items as is reasonable,” said Yanos. “We’re not looking at the big box warehouse on 78, a lot of hazardous issues, we want decent jobs, but our goal is to get this land developed and on the tax rolls before anymore of our people are forced out of their homes and the rest of us go bankrupt from paying school taxes. The zoning regulations should be broad.”

“Flexible zoning is definitely a selling point with developers,” said Krall. “AWIP’s marketing will indicate that all of the utilities are there (water, power, and sewer with reserved capacity) and not too many parcels in the county can boast that.” The AWIP Committee confirmed that the park area will be as it has been drawn to include current LDR lots on both sides of Limekiln Road continuing north to Weavertown Road and some properties on Amity Park Road.

Yanos said the township will also submit its AWIP transportation needs to Alan D. Piper, Berks County transportation planner.

Krall said there are a lot of items on the county’s Transportation Improvement List — failing bridges, work needed on Route 222 — but that the county realizes AWIP would bring jobs to the area.