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Commissioners claim multiple buyers interested in Laurelton property

Doubts Just for Jesus bishop can compete

by Matt Farrand

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LEWISBURG — A Union County commissioner claimed Tuesday more than one potential buyer is looking at the Hartleton Township property which was once home to the Laurelton Center. However, Preston Boop said Gary Murphy and Mountain Valley Inc. still held the property.

“I think there are more than one interested buyer,” said Boop who did not know if Bishop Jack Wisor was among them, nor did he purport to know other names.

“I am not aware that he has the financial resources to purchase it at the asking price,” said Boop who also noted he did not know the price, but indicated it was more than he and his fellow commissioners would personally have on hand.

The center property was bought from the state for \$1.6 million dollars in 2006 by Gary Murphy and Mountain Valley Inc., who reportedly wanted to attract small businesses for it.

Wisor has deflected questions which would indicate whether a deal is imminent, but a number of residents in the West End believe his Just for Jesus Challenge Homeless Outreach would use the site as a shelter for homeless persons, some recently released from incarceration.

A group which is decrying the possible impact the residents of the shelter will have on county services, and continues to hold meetings. Concerned Citizens for Union County, attended a commissioners meeting last month and was given a sympathetic hearing by commissioners.

“We are aware of their concerns,” Supervisor John Mathias maintained. “Right now there is nothing that we as an official body, can do about what is in effect a private land deal.”

Mathias said the county would how events unfold.

"We continue to educate ourselves...particularly about what the homeless shelter is all about, but as an official body, we are not able to do anything about it," Mathias said.

Pam Hackenburg of Laurelton said the next meeting of the Concerned Citizens for Union County was planned for 7 p.m. Monday, March 17, at the Mifflinburg Middle School.

Jeffrey McClintock, approved by commissioners at their February meeting, began work Monday as financial director, a newly created position. He had recently served in Northumberland County as chief financial officer.

McClintock's expertise is in contemporary financial management and human resources software, specifically a system that will replace one from the 1980s. He will be paid about \$75,000 per year.

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