

PA: Boyertown Borough Council Votes to Transfer Land for Planned Rail Station

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June 03--The Boyertown Borough Council voted unanimously Monday to transfer a land parcel that's to act as a rail yard to the Berks County Redevelopment Authority, pending paperwork finalization.

The \$1 transaction, if approved by the authority, will allow the Colebrookdale Railroad Preservation Trust to apply for grants to build a railroad station, unloading and loading facilities for passengers and a pedestrian walkway between the station and Philadelphia Avenue. Funds would also go toward beautifying the land.

The trust will apply for a \$670,000 grant this month if the transfer goes through, said Roger Lehman, the trust's assistant to the executive director.

The move is part of an effort to revitalize the Colebrookdale Railroad, a 9-mile stretch of tracks between Boyertown and Pottstown. A passenger rail nicknamed the Secret Valley Line is expected to open to the public in October, complete with a caboose, passenger cars and open-air seating.

The borough owns the land at Third and Washington Streets that's been left vacant for decades. But Boyertown can't legally apply for the grants through the state Department of Community and Economic Development, Lehman explained.

Before going into executive session to discuss the matter, council president Frank Deery asked meeting attendees who would favor the land transfer. A significant majority raised their hands in support.

"We're thrilled to work with the borough of Boyertown in what is a historic rebirth of the Colebrookdale Railroad and is the next step in the renaissance of the downtown," preservation trust president Nathaniel Guest said after the meeting.

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