Montco Commissioners Make Policy Change In Open Space Program

Norristown, PA (April 5, 2012) – Josh Shapiro, chair of the Montgomery County Commissioners, made the following statement today at a meeting of the board of commissioners:

“I would like to announce a significant change in policy concerning the administration of open space grants in Montgomery County.

“We have discovered that historically, dating back to the creation of the county’s open space program in 1993, there have been no signed contracts between Montgomery County and the recipients of the open space grants. Previously, the grants were approved by resolution of the county commissioners, but there are no signed contracts.

“This board thinks that is wrong, and from this day forward signed contracts between the county and the recipients of the open space grants will be required. Contracts are required for other county grants, and the open space program should be no different. We think this new policy will be good for the county, good for the taxpayers, good for the recipients, and ultimately good for the future of the open space program.

“Due to this new policy, all open space projects where the county funding has not been released are now on hold until county staff can review the projects and an agreement is signed by both parties.

“There may be other policy recommendations made by staff or the Transition Team relating to county grant funding, but this was one issue that needed to be addressed before any additional county funds were spent. This review period will not be indefinite. We will move as quickly as we can to review each project and will keep the local municipality or organization informed of the progress.

“This policy change will only apply to grants that were acted upon previously, but have not yet been released to local organizations as well as any future grants made by the county.”