

MIDDLETOWN

Repaving bid lower than expected

The township should be able to do a lot of extra road repaving this year with the extra \$2 million.

By CHRIS ENGLISH STAFF WRITER

The sagging economy apparently has provided at least one benefit for Middletown.

With more contractors anxious for work and willing to bid accordingly, the low bid of \$2.62 million recently received for repaving the remainder of roads in the township's Levittown sections was \$2 million below what had been allocated in the budget.

That means the township should be able to do a lot of extra road repaving this year, said township Manager Richard Gestrich. He's instructed Public Works Director Rick Wendel and township engineer Herb Gery to survey the township and prioritize what roads are in the most need. They will report back at the April 29 meeting, Gestrich said.

At Tuesday's meeting, the township supervisors approved a notice of intent to award the \$2.62 million contract for repaving of the Levittown sections to Arawak Paving Company of Hammonton, N.J. Also approved was a notice of intent to award a separate contract of \$134,035 to General Asphalt of Philadelphia for repaving some roads in the Summit Trace development in northern Middletown.

The firms will be awarded the contracts after township professionals check to make sure they meet all requirements of the responsible contractor ordinance. That happens in all but a few cases, township officials have said.

Supervisor Chuck Thompson said it was nice to get some good financial news on the Levittown repaving.

"We're hoping the same thing happens on several bids now," he said. "We're in a recession. These companies have overhead and they have to keep their people working and their equipment operating. It's not a good time for the economy in general but a good time to be putting bids out."

Companies are apparently bidding low despite the high cost of gasoline and other fuel, said Gestrich.

"They are hungry for work out there," he said.

The money for Levittown repaving is coming from a \$10 million bond issue approved by the supervisors earlier this year. Under the terms of the bond, money from the issue also is allowed to be used toward a new township community center, improvements at two township parks and improvements at the township-owned Middletown Country Club.

Gestrich said the supervisors will decide whether to use all of the remaining \$2 million on repaving other roads or allocate some of it toward other uses allowed under the bond.

The Levittown sections of the township scheduled to be repaved this year are Forsythia Gate, Juniper Hill, Cobalt Ridge, Quincy Hollow and a small part of Highland Park that wasn't done the last two years. The other Levittown sections were repaved in 2006 and 2007.

Money for the Summit Trace repaving is coming from the \$365,000 the township will receive this year from the state liquid fuels tax, Gestrich said. The \$231,000 left over after the anticipated awarding of the General Asphalt contract will likely be carried over into next year, he said.