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## In S. Phila., indecision has a price

A board's inability to choose is delaying a \$1 million payment.

Selection of director delays compensation

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It was supposed to be easy money.

When the city decided to put two new sports stadiums in South Philadelphia, residents there demanded cold cash. They figured it was their due for putting up with the extra traffic, trash and noise created by sports fans.

The teams agreed. The Eagles, Phillies and Comcast-Spectacor, which runs the First Union Center, said they would contribute a combined \$1 million yearly for 30 years to ease the neighbors' pain.

Trouble is, getting into position to spend the money has proved harder than getting it in the first place. For months, the board that was selected to oversee the funds has not been able to choose an executive director.

First, the selection process was delayed by the failure of some board members to attend board meetings. A final vote was postponed for the same reason.

Several people involved in the situation see State Sen. Vincent Fumo (D., Phila.) as the force behind the holdup. They say he wants the board to select his candidate for the job, which will have a great deal of discretion over how the money is spent.

None of Fumo's accusers would speak on the record. Fumo himself declined to comment. The board of the **special-services district** - whose seven members are representatives of the Phillies, the Eagles, Comcast, and four South Philadelphia neighborhoods - completed interviews for the position on Nov. 12.

But when the board held a meeting on Nov. 19 to vote on candidates, two neighborhood board members - John Sfrisi and Ted Scairato - did not show up. Sfrisi and Scairato had missed earlier meetings as well. The group's bylaws require three of the four neighborhood representatives to attend. No quorum, no vote.

Some board members and those close to them see Sfrisi and Scairato as pawns of Fumo. Sfrisi could not be reached for comment. Scairato said he was acting independently of Fumo. Fumo's critics note that the letter informing the board that Sfrisi and Scairato would not attend came from Robert Scandone, a lawyer who has worked for Fumo.

And at the Nov. 19 meeting, Christian DiCicco, the son of City Councilman Frank DiCicco and a staffer in Fumo's office, tried to stop the board from discussing anything, noting that there was no quorum. DiCicco said he was present as a member of the public.

Three candidates are vying for the executive director job, including Jeffrey Travelina, an employee of Traffic Court who is the nephew of Democratic ward leader and longtime Fumo aide Rosanne Pauciello. Travelina did not return calls seeking comment.

The board is scheduled to meet tonight, and Scairato said he plans to attend. He said he did not want to hire anyone yet because the board had failed to put together a contract listing the executive director's salary, job responsibilities, and other key items.

"I haven't spoken to Fumo or anyone in his office," Scairato said. "I'm business-minded, so I

would want to know and get together salaries, duties, requirements, terms of contract, but this is not discussed. To me, this is putting the cart before the horse."

He said the letter from Scandone was written pro bono because the two men have known each other for a long time. Scandone did not return a call seeking comment.

Neighborhood board member Barbara Capozzi said she was hopeful that, despite the delays, the board would be able to make a decision tonight.

Neighborhood board member Judy Cerrone said she was frustrated by the slow pace. With Veterans Stadium scheduled to come down later this year, she said, she and other neighbors want to know what happens if their houses are damaged in the demolition.

"I really hope we can come to a vote because there's issues that have to be put on the table," Cerrone said.

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