

# Charter school proposed at former Express-Times site



The Easton Arts Academy Elementary Charter School is proposed at the former Express-Times building, 30 N. Fourth St., Easton. Article By Rudy Miller | For lehighvalleylive.com on Mar. 29, 2016

An elementary charter school for the arts is proposed at the former Express-Times building in Easton.

September 2017 is the targeted opening for the Easton Arts Academy Charter School, according to Thomas Lubben, who has opened charter arts schools in Bethlehem, Allentown and Salisbury Township.

The City of Easton's new police station is going in on this portion of the former Express-Times building and the surrounding parking lot. Rudy Miller "We concentrate on the arts. Arts make a huge difference in the life of a kid," Lubben said. He's planning a question-and-answer session in the parking lot of the site of the proposed school at 30 N. Fourth St in Easton. The session is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Monday, April 4.

Bethlehem based-Alt Realty owns the property. Lou Pektor is Alt Realty's principal owner. Pete Reinke, the vice president of operations for Alt Realty, said the firm is in discussion with Lubben about the school and thinks it would be a good fit.

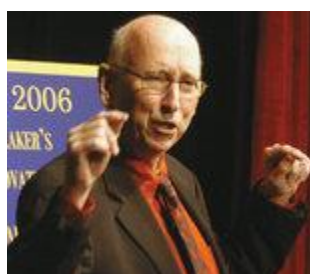
Plans are still in flux, so they haven't been submitted to the city yet, Reinke said. Lubben said he'd submit his charter plan to the Easton Area School District in either May or June. The city approved plans for a new police station on the northernmost portion of the property. Putting an elementary school in the same building as a police station makes sense to Lubben

"It will be very safe," Lubben said. "The buildings are separated so police will bring bad guys in the back door. We're not worried about that." He said the school would have its own security.

Charter schools are publicly funded. They draw state revenue away from the home school district based on the number of students they can recruit. Easton Area School District officials didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

Lubben tried to bring his first charter school to Easton in the late '90s but wound up opening the charter arts high school in Bethlehem in 2003. That school moved to 321 E. Third St. in Bethlehem in 2015 and has 460 students.

A charter arts middle school is in Salisbury Township. A charter arts elementary school opened last year in Allentown. Lubben's news release says Easton is outside the 10-mile zone that requires busing to the Allentown arts school, so a new Easton charter school would eliminate the need for parents to drive their children to Allentown. The Easton school would house children in kindergarten through fifth grade.



Dr. Thomas Lubben