

**Plainfield Township  
Environmental Advisory Council Meeting  
June 6, 2016**

The regular monthly meeting of the Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council was held on Monday, June 6, 2016 at 7:00 pm at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building, 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064.

Those in attendance were:

Terry Kleintop, EAC Chairman	Robert Cornman – Vice Chairman
Robin Dingle – EAC Member	Don Moore – EAC Member arrived 7:08pm
Bruce Rabenold – EAC Member arrived 7:05pm	Robert Simpson – EAC Member
Jane Mellert, EAC Secretary and Member	Tom Petrucci – Plainfield Twp. Manager

Also in attendance – Joyce Marin, Executive Director of Renew Lehigh Valley, Julie Thomases, Chair of the Renew Lehigh Valley Farmland Preservation Committee, Jason Smith of Hanover Engineering, Inc., Supervisor Joyce Lambert, Supervisor Steve Hurni, and Planning Commission Member Paul Levits

Terry Kleintop called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

The pledge of allegiance was performed.

**MINUTES**

Chairman Terry Kleintop asked for a motion to approve the May 9, 2016 minutes.

**Motion-May 9, 2016 Minutes** – A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Bob Simpson to approve the May 9, 2016 minutes. The motion carried. Vote: **5 Yes**. Bob Simpson and Don Moore arrived after the vote took place.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Renew Lehigh Valley Farmland Preservation Survey** – Joyce Marin, Executive Director of Renew Lehigh Valley and Julie Thomases, Chair of the Renew Lehigh Valley Farmland Preservation Committee were introduced to the EAC members.

Joyce Marin noted that Renew Lehigh Valley has the following initiatives for the Lehigh Valley:

- Farmland Preservation
- Food Sustainability
- Smart Transportation
- Education and Awareness

Julie Thomases explained that one of the biggest challenges that the Lehigh Valley is the loss of farmland. In January of 2016 RenewLV Farmland Preservation Committee did a snap shot of what the current status is for farmland preservation. Lehigh and Northampton Counties have the goal of preserving 25% of the available land for preservation. The organization made contact

with both of the Counties and Becky Bradley the Executive Director at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. Joyce Marin provided a hand out dated 2/26/16 titled RenewLV Farmland Preservation Snapshot 2016. The document notes that out of the 241,438 acres in Northampton County there are 5.92% acres preserved.

RenewLV received a donation from a business leader in order to conduct a survey. The survey was prepared by the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion. RenewLV is requesting that Lehigh and Northampton Counties restore farmland preservation funding in the 2017 Budget. The request is for Lehigh County to fund 2 million and Northampton County 1 million.

Don Moore noted that he called Becky Bradley regarding the Farmland Preservation Survey information. Don previously attended Northampton County Council meetings for the 2015 and 2016 Budget years. Don spoke at the meetings to request funding in the County budget for Farmland Preservation. At that time Don and Terry Kleintop studied the figures for Farmland Preservation and put together an informational sheet of the history of farmland preservation funding at Northampton County.

Robin Dingle asked why RenewLV is requesting funding of 2 million for Lehigh and 1 million for Northampton County when there are more acres to be preserved and a shorter time frame to preserve acreage in Northampton County.

Joyce Marin noted that for this year there should be enough funds in Northampton County to clear the amount of eligible farms. Julie Thomas noted that after speaking to Maria Bentzoni there are 32 farm parcels with owners that have shown interest in submitting in the future. It was noted that the citizens of Northampton County expected the .25% of 1 mill that was previously allotted to open space preservation to be utilized for farmland preservation. It was noted that Northampton County is currently utilizing the money for the General Fund.

It was noted that according to the RenewLV survey a majority of residents in both Counties are in favor of paying higher taxes in order to preserve farmland.

Jane Mellert noted that the survey results show *the majority of residents are in favor of higher taxes to support farmland preservation if the amount is \$1 - \$10 dollars a year. The majority of residents (71%) are not in favor of paying higher taxes if the amount is an extra \$25 - \$45 dollars a year.*

RenewLV is requesting Lehigh and Northampton County to restore funding to the previous levels. Joyce and Julie will be going to the June 16<sup>th</sup> Northampton County Open Space meeting to advocate for money for farmland preservation. It is estimated that 1.8 million is needed from the County. *They are requesting that the EAC and Board of Supervisors send letters to Northampton County requesting Farmland Preservation to be funded in the 2017 Budget.*

A discussion was held on how Northampton County has been funding farmland preservation utilizing money from the County, Chrin, and State matching, and gambling revenues. Terry Kleintop estimated that Northampton County could get 1.5 million from the State as matching funds. This amount could preserve approximately 250 acres.

Jason Smith a Board Supervisor in Bushkill Township noted that most residents do not fully understand how Farmland is preserved and how it is funded. When preservation is explained to landowners they are more in favor of funding it through taxes.

Terry Kleintop noted that during the first 4 years of the County/Township Partnership program the County gave the full State match amount to the municipality from the amount sent forward from the municipality for matching by the State. In the 5<sup>th</sup> year Plainfield did not receive the full match from the State which was acquired due to the Township putting funds forward for matching.

Several members asked about the accuracy of the figures shown on the RenewLV Farmland Preservation Snapshot 2016 information. Julie and Joyce will look into their concerns as well as making the corrections noted for the 2016 Lehigh Valley Farmland Preservation Survey.

Steve Hurni noted that the Slate Belt COG is holding a meeting to discuss a Slate Belt Comprehensive Plan. It was noted that Becky Bradley of the LV Planning Commission has studies that project an increase in truck traffic in the next 20 to 30 years. Municipal officials are invited to the June 22, 7 pm informational seminar on Multi Municipal Comprehensive Planning and Economic Development which will be held at the Bangor Borough Municipal Building.

Scott Parsons is now the Executive Director of the Slate Belt COG which encompasses 10 municipalities and 2 school districts

A speaker at the RenewLV Save It or Pave It event spoke about Ag Connect. The organization assists in connecting new and existing farmers with financing. It was noted that farmland is economic development and is one of the largest industries in the State of Pennsylvania.

RenewLV is a 501C3 organization and there are paid individuals and there are volunteers. Julie Thomases is a volunteer and she Chairs the Farmland Preservation Committee. The organization is accepting additional volunteers. They would like to have more representation from the Northampton County area and asked if anyone was interested.

Joyce and Julie noted that only 24 percent of the population in the Lehigh Valley can be fed off of the current land so it is also a matter of food security. They have inquired about putting questions on the ballot and/or utilizing petitions. They will continue to work toward having the two Counties restore prior funding for Farmland Preservation.

Robin Dingle suggested having a representative from each municipality speak at a County Council meeting.

**Motion – EAC letter to Northampton County requesting Farmland Preservation Funding -** Don Moore made a motion for the EAC write a letter of recommendation to Northampton County requesting the County restore farmland preservation funding with a minimum amount of 1 million dollars a year and to consider restoring the full .50% of 1 mill of real estate tax revenue for Open Space. Robin Dingle seconded the motion. **Vote: 7-0**

**Motion – EAC letter to Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors regarding Northampton County Farmland Preservation Funding -** Don Moore made a motion for the EAC write a letter of to the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors requesting the Board send a letter to Northampton County recommending the County restore farmland preservation funding with a minimum amount of 1 million dollars a year and to consider restoring the full .50% of 1 mill of real estate tax revenue for Open Space. Bob Cornman seconded the motion. **Vote: 7-0**

*Jane Mellert presented a short power point picture presentation and spoke on how farmland preservation monies assist landowners in maintaining farming operations and enabling them to keep the land.*

#### **Northampton County Farmland Preservation – County/Municipal Partnership Program**

- Update on the 2015 applicants – The Lydia Glennon farm closed on May 24, 2016. Greggo #1, #2 and #3, Lock, and Monocacy Heights are still in process.

**Plainfield Township EIT Collections for Open Space Collection Study** - Tom Petrucci set up Drop Box and has posted several documents to the site. All of the EAC members have access to the information and can contribute toward the study.

#### **2014 PA DEP Growing Greener Plus Grant Update – Little Bushkill Creek**

- **RFP for the Little Bushkill Watershed Management Plan**
  - The contract with Hanover Engineering Associates in the amount of \$46,763.00 is in place. Jason Smith, PWS Senior Scientist at Hanover Engineering Associates will be the main contact. Jason Smith will meet with Tom Petrucci and Terry Kleintop to go over a sampling plan.

#### **Environmental/Wetlands Consultant**

Tom Petrucci is proposing to hire Jason Smith as a Wetland and Environmental Consultant. Tom would then be able to utilize Jason's services when needed for reviews on plans, MS4, etc. This work will be completely separate from the Little Bushkill Watershed study.

**Motion to recommend the hiring of Hanover Engineering as an Environmental/Wetlands Consultant at a rate of \$99.00 per hour for Jason Smith, PWS Senior Scientist and \$52.25 as Technician 3 as per the 2016 Hanover Engineering Rate Schedule** - A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Don Moore to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to hire Jason Smith from Hanover Engineering. **Vote: 7-0**

#### **2015 State of Kittatinny Report/Need 2015 Kittatinny EAC Accomplishments**

Jeanne Barrett Ortiz, Program Manager, Landscape Conservation at Audubon Pennsylvania sent an email requesting information from the EAC regarding accomplishments during 2015. Members from the EAC will look over the 2015 Year End Report and utilize information for the submission.

**Motion – 2015 Kittatinny EAC Accomplishments** - A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Robin Dingle to submit information to Jean Barrett Ortiz. Robin Dingle seconded the motion. **Vote: 7 yes (The submission must be done by June 17<sup>th</sup>)**

#### **Ordinance #357 Tree Protection and Timber Harvest Management and Ordinance #342 Maintenance and Preservation of Riparian Buffers and Open Space**

- The Ordinances will be reviewed at a future meeting.
- The revisions for the draft ordinance #357 were emailed to the EAC members for review at the April 4, 2016 meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Regional EAC Meeting**

Terry Kleintop reported that there is a Regional EAC meeting tentatively scheduled for June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The meeting will be held at the Upper Mount Bethel Township Municipal Building.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion for Meeting Adjournment** – A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Bob Simpson to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 pm. **Vote 7-0**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Mellert, Secretary  
Plainfield Township EAC