

**Plainfield Township
Environmental Advisory Council Meeting
September 7, 2016**

The regular monthly meeting of the Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council was rescheduled to Wednesday, September 7, 2016, at 7:00 pm at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building, 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064. The meeting was rescheduled due to the regular meeting date falling on the Labor Day holiday.

Those in attendance were:

Terry Kleintop, EAC Chairman	Robert Cornman – Vice Chairman absent
Robin Dingle – EAC Member	Don Moore – EAC Member
Bruce Rabenold – EAC Member	Robert Simpson – EAC Member
Jane Mellert, EAC Secretary and Member	Tom Petrucci – Plainfield Twp. Manager

Also in attendance – Pete Albanese, a member of the GKEDC Board of Directors and Jason Smith, PWS Senior Scientist at Hanover Engineering Associates

EAC Chairman Terry Kleintop called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

The pledge of allegiance was performed.

MINUTES

Chairman Terry Kleintop asked for a motion to approve the August 1, 2016 minutes.

Motion- August 1, 2016 Minutes – A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Bruce Rabenold to approve the August 1, 2016 minutes. The motion carried.

Vote: 5 Yes 1 abstention Don Moore abstained due to not being in attendance on August 1st

OLD BUSINESS

PA DEP Growing Greener plus Grant Update – Little Bushkill Creek - Little Bushkill Watershed Management Plan

- Jason Smith, PWS Senior Scientist at Hanover Engineering Associates previously met with Tom Petrucci and Terry Kleintop to go over the sampling plan.
- Hanover Engineering is waiting for high flow of the stream in order to continue sampling. It has been a very dry summer.
- Jason Smith noted some sampling was done and Hanover is putting the results together. The results weren't too bad they were hovering around the 200 mark. Some areas were higher. There were higher results near where cattle are not fenced off from the stream.
- Enterococcus has shown up in some of the test results. Enterococcus faecalis and Enterococcus faecium are some of the most prevalent species cultured from humans indicating there is human waste in some areas of the stream.

- In the future in the areas near where fecal coliform or enterococcus is showing up in the stream, the neighboring area septic systems should be looked at in order to see if septic systems could be contributing.
- A section of the stream on Benders Church Road below Heitzman Road continues to be a main concern. This is the area where animals are not fenced off from the stream.
- It was noted that wild animals do come out at night and go to the streams for a water source. This can be a contributing factor in the test results.

Northampton County Farmland Preservation – County/Municipal Partnership Program

- **Update on the 2015 applicants**
 - Greggo #1, #2 and #3, are still in the program.
 - Monocacy Heights on Jones Hill is moving forward.
- **Update on the 2016 applicants**
 - The Fuentes property on Getz Road recently sold. Due to the sale the property automatically dropped out of the program
 - Lock located in Lower Mt. Bethel and Plainfield Township is moving forward.
 - Witmer is moving forward

Terry Kleintop noted that Marcia Hahn is having a meeting for farmers regarding questions they have on real estate tax assessment corrections made by Northampton County for the excluded areas (homes and buildings) on preserved properties. The meeting will be held on Thursday night at the Plainfield Township municipal building.

Plainfield Township Earned Income Tax Collection for Open Space Study

- Bruce Rabenold has looked at various studies. The studies show that Township's do not lose money from preserving land. The property around the preserved properties real estate value increases over time. Township revenue actually increases over a period of time with preserved land. There are specific studies. The Return on Environment study was done by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. The report has 89 pages of case studies. The return is long term not immediate. The studies were focused on revenue. Tom Petrucci added the documents to the Drop Box.
- Jason Smith a Bushkill Township Supervisor and Bushkill Township EAC member noted that Bushkill has purchased land with Open Space funds in order to preserve the land from development. The Township worked with the Heritage Conservancy.
- Jane Mellert noted that she started to talk to some of the farmer's that preserved land and put on paper how preserving land impacted their operation and/or what it meant to them.
- Terry Kleintop noted he is working on a list of the farms that have the possibility to preserve in the future.
- It was noted that the Township cannot currently utilize the 25% of Earned Income Tax funds for maintenance costs, due to the fact that eligible land has not been purchased with Open Space funds.

NEW BUSINESS

Green Knight Economic Development Corporation

Green Knight Industrial Park II - Preliminary Major Subdivision Plan Review

- Review of requests for waivers from SALDO Sections 10.23.D.2.b and 10.23.D.3 requesting to reduce the riparian buffer areas.
- Jason Smith, Hanover Engineering – Review of the wetland areas

Pete Albanese a member of the Green Knight Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors noted that the waivers have been withdrawn at this point. Chad Helmer, Senior Project Manager at Taggart Associates made a request to Township Manager Tom Petrucci for the review to be removed from the EAC agenda. The request for removal was submitted on September 1, 2016 by email. Due to the Board of Supervisors voting on August 25, 2016 to have the EAC conduct the review the item remained on the agenda.

Township Solicitor David Backenstoe submitted a letter dated September 2, 2016 with his legal opinion on the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance regulations regarding riparian buffers.

EAC Chairman Terry Kleintop noted that the EAC does not have all of the information needed in order to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. In order to make a fair evaluation the wetland delineation information, copies of correspondence from the DEP and/or Army Corp of Engineers confirming their review of the site needs to be received. The EAC can discuss the information that we do have.

Pete Albanese noted the wetland areas were delineated by the Army Corp of Engineers prior to the plans being submitted to the Planning Commission and the GKECD has been working with all parties involved regarding the plan.

Jason Smith noted that if the Army Corp of Engineers come in and say this is wetland then the other areas could still be wetlands regulated by the State but not by the Federal government. There are wetlands on the site and DEP will probably require mitigation of some of the area on the site. He noted that the EAC does not necessarily need to grant waivers at this point. You can discuss waivers and information and waivers can be requested at a later date.

It was noted that wetlands and ponds exist on the site and some of the areas need to have buffers. The planned development is within Plainfield Township, Wind Gap and Bushkill Township. One of the areas with wetlands is in Wind Gap but is very close to the Plainfield Township border.

The Township must have the information submitted by the agencies prior to moving forward with waivers on riparian buffers.

Motion - To table the EAC review and recommendation for the Green Knight Industrial Park II waivers – A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Don Moore to table the EAC recommendation pending the receipt of additional supporting documentation (if the waiver request is resubmitted) and due to the waiver request being withdrawn.

Vote: 6 Yes

Prior to the vote the EAC discussed the review will be resumed if the waiver request is resubmitted. Then the outside agency support documents will be required along with review of the then current plan. The EAC will then conduct a review and make a recommendation to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. All parties agreed that additional documentation will be needed

OLD BUSINESS

Draft Cellular Tower Ordinance Regulations along the Appalachian Trail

Township Manager Tom Petrucci and Solicitor Backenstoe previously submitted a mini cell tower ordinance for review to the Planning Commission. The Ordinance was moved forward for review due to cell tower companies taking the stance that they are like a public utility and can site cell towers in public right of ways.

Appalachian Trail Grant – Tom Petrucci requested a time extension to submit the grant.

- The municipal match is 20% and the total grant request is up to \$17,500.
- If successful the grant will be used to review the Appalachian Trail view shed and to update Zoning Ordinance regulations.
- The conservancy money would be utilized to hire a consultant to update the regulations and the review will include the Planning Commission.
- The grant money will be utilized to make the Zoning regulations more stringent for siting a cell tower, windmills, etc.

Windmills for energy were discussed. It was noted that there has been opposition to new windmills along the Appalachian Trail. One area is near Leighton. The large blades create a lot of noise and property owners are testifying to the difficulty of living near the structures. When ice builds up on the large blades (approx. 30ft) and breaks away it can create a dangerous situation for people near that area. In our area the land on one side of Route#33 is owned by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the land on the other side of the road is owned by the water company.

DCNR, DEP Grant to Plant Trees Along Streams to Improve Water Quality (Riparian Forest Buffer Program Grant)

- The grant deadline is September 15, 2016. Authorization to apply was granted by the Board of Supervisors. The minimum application is \$50,000
- The regulations are similar to the Growing Greener Grant. The grant match is 50%.
- Environmental Fund money will be utilized for the \$25,000 grant match.
- The funds can be utilized to help with costs to get cattle out of the streams.
- If the grant is secured then the next step will be to hold property owner outreach.
- The trees have to be planted on public property or with an agreement with the landowner. The trees cannot be removed after planting.

Tom Petrucci made contact with DCNR representatives Christine Dettore and Lorne Possinger prior to moving forward with the application process.

Plainfield Township Earned Income Tax Collection for Open Space Study - Continued

Bruce Rabenold submitted information for the drop box to Tom Petrucci. He noted that the studies suggest that Open Space preservation raises property assessments in a municipality. The

property has to be located with a short mileage radius from the preserved land. The research indicates that there is some benefit to preserving natural lands.

Terry Kleintop noted that he believes that farmland preservation should continue in Plainfield Township for the next two to five years.

Jason Smith noted that the Official Map is one of the best things that Bushkill Township has done. Bushkill preserved approximately 1400 acres in the last nine years. The municipality does not have a lot of large farms. There is value for the natural areas. Some of the properties that are preserved have public access. A municipality can take 25% of the EIT open space money for maintenance of the preserved areas. He does not believe a community can preserve enough open space. Bushkill Township has an official map that protects the greenways (wetlands and streams) The residents must have uses within the blue lines on the official map approved by the Township.

Jane Mellert noted that one of the farmers she spoke with voiced concern over the fact that the assessed value of his land is lower since preserving. This has made it difficult to get loans for continuing farming operations.

Bob Simpson noted that the Board of Supervisors wants a report completed by the EAC before December. It was decided that a special EAC meeting needs to be held in order to work on a concise bullet point report.

The report content should include:

- List of Preserved Farms
- List of Number of Acres preserved
- List of farms that could be preserved in the future along the an estimate of the acreage
- Original vote for preservation
- Open Space Plan Regulations
- How much has land preservation been effected the Township Tax base

Tom Petrucci is working on the tax impact of preservation, Terry Kleintop is identifying farms and farmers that want to preserve in the future, Jane Mellert is interviewing farmers that are in land preservation, and Bruce Rabenold submitted information for the drop box.

Jason Smith noted that the study done by Michael Frank could be utilized. Michael Frank did the studies of the benefits of farmland preservation for the Delaware Valley River Planning Commission and the publication Leaders in the Field.

It was noted that Open Space preservation EIT money can also be utilized for preservation of natural areas.

An EAC Special meeting will be scheduled for September 20, 2016 in order to work on the report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Motion for Meeting Adjournment – A motion was made by Don Moore and seconded by Bob Simpson to adjourn the meeting at 10: 08 pm. **Vote 6 Yes**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Mellert, Secretary
Plainfield Township EAC

1st draft – September 8, 2016 jam