

**Plainfield Township  
Environmental Advisory Council Meeting  
March 6, 2017**

The Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council meeting was held on Monday, March 6, 2017, 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 – EAC Vice Chairman
Robin Dingle – EAC Member - Absent	Don Moore – EAC Member
Bruce Rabenold – EAC Member	Robert Simpson – EAC Member
Jane Mellert, EAC Secretary and Member	Tom Petrucci – Plainfield Twp. Manager

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

The pledge of allegiance was performed.

**Also in attendance:**

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** – February 22, 2017 minutes

**Motion – February 22, 2017 Minutes** - A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Don Moore to approve the February 22, 2017 minutes. **Vote: 5 Yes Bob** Cornman abstained from the vote due to not being in attendance at the meeting.

Prior to the vote being taken to approve the February 22, 2017 minutes, Terry Kleintop and Don Moore noted that the source tracking water testing (approximately \$11,000) was funded by the PA DEP. The information is recorded in the February 22, 2017 minutes as PA DEP Growing Greener Plus Grant – Little Bushkill Creek - Tests were conducted on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 after a rain event. (Approximately \$11,000 was paid for the data)

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Plainfield Township Earned Income Tax Collection for Open Space Study** - Information regarding the study was submitted by the February 22, 2017 EAC meeting deadline. The EAC members reviewed the information presented to date. Tom Petrucci made the submitted revisions and submitted the report to the Board of Supervisors (electronically) for review. The report is listed on the March 8, 2017 Board of Supervisors agenda.

**Farmland Preservation Application Process Letter**

Terry Kleintop would like the next steps to include identification of farmland properties in Northampton County that were sold after the land was preserved. The information would be included in an educational informational letter to be sent out to property owners that are in the Ag Security District and property owners that could be eligible but are not in the Ag Security District. It is part of our responsibility to help make property owners aware of the Farmland Preservation program.

Applicants considering preservation of their property need to try to plan for future operation and building needs.

In Lehigh County they allow 10% of the eased land to have buildings on.

Bob Cornman noted we need to review our ordinances to allow for additional uses on farmland in order to give farmers the ability to try and make additional profit on their land.

Terry Kleintop noted that a preserved farm in Moore Township sold for \$9,000 per acre. The sale has not closed yet. The land sold was originally purchased by the Moore Township Board of Supervisors in order to save it for preservation. Moore Township paid \$20,000 per acre.

The following next steps were discussed:

1. Identify properties that went through the resale process.
2. Comparison of the Lehigh County Farmland Preservation Program vs Northampton County
3. Pen Argyl Area School District – It was determined that additional information should not be included in the EIT study. If the Supervisors want information they should go to the school district.
4. Lining up the zoning
5. Natural Features Land
6. The Andrew O'Brien Lafayette College study should be archived.

Terry Kleintop met with Supervisor Steve Hurni and State Representative Marcia Hahn to discuss the Farmland Preservation program and Ag Security District.

Terry reported that Marcia Hahn will be holding a meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Slate Belt Baptist Church. The meeting is a follow up to the meeting she held in September to address concerns from farmers regarding taxing issues. Jim Hunter from Northampton County, Cheryl Johnson from the Northampton County Assessment Office, Doug Wolfgang from the State of Pennsylvania, Maria Bentzoni the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Administrator, Glenn Geissinger from Northampton County Council and an Attorney will attend the meeting. Tom Petrucci called Marcia Hahn to request information on the meeting. It is a closed dinner meeting. Farmland preservation will be discussed.

Tom Petrucci handed out hard copies of the Plainfield Township Earned Income Tax Collection for Open Space Study report to the EAC members.

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

Two articles mentioning farmland preservation were in the newspaper one of the articles quotes Northampton County Executive John Brown when he gave the State of the County address. The quote is in regard to funding of the Farmland Preservation program.

**2017 Northampton County Farmland Preservation Applicants** – The ranking list has been released from the Northampton County Farmland Preservation office. Eighteen (18) farms submitted applications, fourteen (14) qualified under the program requirements. There are two (2) farms in Plainfield Township that qualified. The total acreage of all farms that qualified is 826.93. This could equate a need for over four (4) million dollars to fund preservation. Additional information will be reviewed at the next EAC meeting.

**2018 Farmland Preservation Program** – The EAC discussed developing an educational/ information letter for distribution to potential Farmland Preservation applicants after Northampton County determines the revised dates for the application period.

**Farm Transition Planning Workshop** - The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is holding a Farm Transition Planning Workshop on Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at the Northampton County Community College. Northampton County distributed a flyer to preserved landowners.

**Assessed Values of Farmland** - A letter from the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors was sent to the Northampton County Assessment Office regarding the County reviewing farmland assessments within Plainfield Township to determine if corrections are necessary. Tom spoke with Jim Hunter regarding reviewing the assessments. Jim noted that the County cannot do spot reviews in only one municipality.

**Farmland Preservation funding** – Terry and Don will be attending the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Board meeting on Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>.

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

Tom Petrucci, Terry Kleintop and Robin Dingle have the information on the source tracking. Robin Dingle, Terry Kleintop and Jason Smith, PWS at Hanover Engineering had another meeting at the beginning of March to discuss the data a moving forward.

- Notification will be going out to the Taylors. Their cattle have access to the stream and should be fenced off from the stream and provided with an alternate water source.
- Jason Smith will be sending out a letter to the Wind Gap Borough/Wind Gap Municipal Authority
- Gary Walters from the Pennsylvania DEP will be notified

It was noted that some municipalities have Ordinances regulating regular septic tank maintenance. Tom Petrucci is familiar with a program that another municipality set up. Septic tank pumping's were required every two years.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Grant Award - Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Assessment and Evaluation of Plainfield Township's SALDO and Zoning Ordinances - \$17,500 Grant**

- Ann Hutchinson of the Natural Lands Trust previously submitted a seven page review dated January 2, 2012.
- The grant money needs to be used by the end of the year. The work will be done by a consultant. The consultant will get input from the EAC, Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. A study of the natural features in the Township will be done along with Commercial/Industrial and cell tower regulations.
- Tom will be composing the RFP. Township staff could supply the necessary information. The RFP will be sent out to all the environmental planners in the area. The EAC will be involved during the drafting of the ordinance. Letting of the RFP was approved by the Board. The EAC and Planning Commission will review the draft. A committee may be put in place for the process.

### **Ordinance #357 Tree Protection and Timber Harvest Management Ordinance**

Tom Petrucci has a copy of a notification letter from the State. The original letter was received by another municipality regarding their Timber Harvest Ordinance. A copy was submitted to the municipality by a timber harvester. The letter notes that timber harvesting falls under the right to farm act. Tom noted Ordinance #357 adopted in 2014 is not really a tree protection ordinance. The original ordinance was put in place in the 1980s. Ordinance #357 needs to be reviewed.

**Discussion – Ordinances #92-240-A Disposal and Storage of Sewage Sludge and Septage enacted August 12, 1992** – It needs to be determined if the Ordinance should be reviewed and rewritten. The Board of Supervisors would have to approve whether the ordinance should be reviewed and revised. Legal review of the ordinance will be necessary.

**Grand Central Sanitary Landfill Air Quality Permit Update** - When an update is received, Tom Petrucci will provide it to the Township Officials.

**Grand Central’s Landfill Permit** will be up in 2018. The permit process will start in 2017.

**Proposed Cell Tower Ordinance** – Companies are trying to site 120 foot poles in the Township right of ways. The Township is trying to limit installations to 35 foot poles with justification as a special exception use. The ordinance has been advertised and will be on the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Board of Supervisors special meeting agenda.

**Subdivision Ordinance** – Tom reviewed the regulations for subdivision of land that is preserved. The way the current regulations are written it can be restrictive. A better subdivision process needs to be put in place in order to expedite the process.

**Slate Belt Comprehensive Plan** – There are several funding sources to update the plan. Each participating municipality pays a Per Capita Slate Belt COG cost, LVPC MAPS Grant and a grant from Northampton County. The Board of Supervisors will discuss moving forward at the March 8, 2017 Board meeting.

**Zoning Ordinance Update** - The update of the Zoning Ordinance according to the MPC is more of a responsibility of the Planning Commission to review. Will a consultant be hired to review the current regulations and make recommendations? Tom noted that he could do a review and make recommendations.

**Ordinance #342 Maintenance and Preservation of Riparian Buffers and Open Space** – The ordinance needs revision.

### **Official Map – Greenway Protection**

The EAC Members discussed having the Ordinances needing revisions posted on Novus Agenda or in the Dropbox program. This will allow for all members to have access of the documents. It was noted that the Board of Supervisors will decide what ordinances will be reviewed for revisions and the MPC regulations have to be followed.

Tom will compile a side by side comparison of the Northampton County Farmland Preservation regulations and the Township regulations. The EAC will review the information.

**DCNR Riparian Forest Buffer Grant Program Maintenance Responsibility Options**

Maria Bentzoni will probably recommend contacting County Conservation

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**2017 Northampton County Grant Workshop** – Monday February 27, 2017 8 am to 12:30 pm at  
Northampton County Community College  
Lehigh Valley Greenways, Northampton County DCED,

**2017 Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference** – Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at the Lehigh University  
STEPS Building

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion - Meeting Adjournment** – A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Bob  
Cornman to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 pm. **Vote: 6 Yes**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Mellert, Secretary  
Plainfield Township EAC