

**Plainfield Township
Environmental Advisory Council Meeting
October 3, 2016**

The special meeting of the Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council was scheduled for Monday, October 3, 2016, at 7:00 pm at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building, 6292 Sullivan Trail, and Nazareth, PA 18064.

Those in attendance were:

Terry Kleintop, EAC Chairman	Robert Cornman – 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

Also in attendance –

EAC Chairman Terry Kleintop called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

The pledge of allegiance was performed.

MINUTES

Motion – September 20, 2016 Minutes - A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Don Moore to approve the September 20, 2016 minutes. Vote: 5 Yes with Bob Cornman abstaining due to not being in attendance at the meeting.

Motion – September 7, 2016 Minutes – A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Don Moore to approve the September 7, 2016 minutes. Vote: 5 Yes with Bob Cornman abstaining due to not being in attendance at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Regional EAC Meeting - Tom Petrucci previously approved the use of the meeting room for a Regional EAC Meeting which will be held on November 15, 2016 from 6 to 8 pm by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Audubon Pennsylvania. Brooks Mountcastle Environmental Planner at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office will host the meeting. The agenda will include the status of EAC’s and the EAC program

PA DEP Growing Greener Grant Update – Little Bushkill Creek Study

- There have been two rounds of water testing on the Little Bushkill Creek. Hanover is waiting for the water to come up higher from the rain events before conducting additional sampling. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is OK with testing taking place in October.
- Jason Smith is working on the Stuber and Achenbach farms. The Township has sufficient funds to do work on both of the properties.

Northampton County Farmland Preservation – County/Municipal Partnership Program

- **Update on the 2015 applicants**
 - Greggo #1, #2 and #3, are moving forward with preservation
 - 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

If all of the 2015 and 2016 properties close Plainfield Township will have 3080 acres preserved. There are approximately 3200 acres that are still available for preservation in the future.

Terry Kleintop noted that some of the farmers have concerns regarding Act #4. Prior to 2014 Northampton County did not have the capability to generate separate tax bills. The tax bills now separate the preserved land from the excluded area. The excluded areas usually have the houses and buildings separated out and are now taxed at the current tax rates from Northampton County, Pen Argyl Area School District and Plainfield Township. Bob Cornman would like to see a chart explaining the different acts and the history of Act 4.

Of the fifty seven Counties in Pennsylvania that participate in Farmland Preservation only four Counties adopted Act 4 and three of the four Counties exclude the area with houses, barns, etc. from the tax freeze.

Tom Petrucci noted that the zoning regulations of the Conservation by design ordinance will need to be reviewed for revision.

The following tax freeze ordinances were adopted:

- Pen Argyl Area School District approved Act# 153 of 1996 on June 28, 2005
- Plainfield Township adopted Ordinance #314 on December 13, 2006 approving Act #4
- Northampton County adopted Ordinance # 452-2006 on November 4, 2006 approving Act#4

It was questioned whether the Township, Northampton County and the Pen Argyl Area School District would all need to be in agreement if the municipality wanted to discontinue Act#4.

Township Ordinance #314 was reviewed and discussed. It was noted that:

- Marcia Hahn is going to get a legal opinion on how the Act #4 law should be interpreted.
- James W. Hunter Jr. the Director of Fiscal Affairs at Northampton County is reviewing the assessments and tax bills of the landowners that have questions.
- Maria Bentzoni will be attending a meeting at the State in order to confirm the information regarding the Counties that have adopted Act#4.

A question came up regarding what would happen if the Township would reduce the tax millage rate then would the preserved parcels remain at a higher frozen millage rate? This question needs to have legal review.

Plainfield Township Earned Income Tax Collection for Open Space Study

The following reports were submitted:

- Bob Simpson handed out a General Outline
- Don Moore handed out an EIT Open Space Collection Study Outline
- Tom Petrucci handed out the 2016 Real Estate Tax Assessments and Bill list for Preserved Farmland and Exclusion Areas
- Terry Kleintop handed out the Average Pen Argyl Area School District Enrollment for 1999-2016 – Additional information is needed and includes
 - Cost per student
 - Number of cyber school students
 - Number of home school students
 - What goals does the School District have for the next five years?
 - It was noted that there is a high percentage of rental properties. There are approximately 50% in Wind Gap and 40 % in Pen Argyl.

Farmland Preservation Study conducted by Lafayette College - Bob Simpson noted that all of the information is laid out in the booklet and can be utilized in our current study.

Opportunity Knocks and Leaders in the Field - Michael Frank gave Terry Kleintop the formula that he used for the studies. The information will be placed in the drop box.

Tax freeze information from Northampton County - Don will get the information from Northampton County. He will also work on a map that will clearly show the current preserved land that the land that has potential to be preserved in the future.

Time phasing of the preservation program with approximate number of acres to be preserved over the course of several years and the dollars needed for the preservation program will also be included in the study.

Tom Petrucci will advertise the special meetings. The tentative meeting dates are as follows:

- October 24 Special Meeting
- November 7 Regular Meeting
- November 22 Special Meeting
- December 5 Regular Meeting
- December 20 Special Meeting
- January 3, 2017 The meeting is moved to a Tuesday due to the holiday falling on Monday.
- January 26, 2017 Presentation to the Board of Supervisors

Tom Petrucci noted that if the Board of Supervisors wants to have the question of whether to continue to collect the .25% of EIT for open space preservation on the ballot in the spring primary election; then giving the presentation at the end of January would make the schedule tight.

Terry Kleintop asked if the Township will send out letters this year notifying property owners about the farmland preservation process. It was noted that Maria Bentzoni the Northampton

County Farmland Administrator sends out letters each year to notify property owners about the farmland preservation application process. The 2017 notification letters should have gone out to the landowners.

Watershed Coalition - Terry Kleintop will attend the Watershed Coalition meeting on Thursday night. Nate Pritchard is the Watershed Specialist for the Conservation District at Northampton County. He would like to have the State agree that riparian buffers are a part of the Conservation Plan in order to protect water quality.

Cellular Tower Regulations

Tom Peturcci noted that the draft ordinance does not apply to the mini cell towers. He did apply for a grant. The money would be used for updating of Township Ordinances and regulations.

NEW BUSINESS

State of the Kitantinny Ridge Report – An email was received from Jeanne Ortiz with a copy of the report. If the EAC wants anything added to the report the deadline is today. Jane Mellert would like a statement added about the ongoing study of the Little Bushkill Creek. Jane will email Jeanne tonight.

Motion – State of the Kitantinny Ridge Report - A motion was made by Don Moore and seconded by Bob Cornman to have Jeanne Ortiz include information regarding the Little Bushkill Creek in the report. Vote: 6 Yes

The next EAC Special meeting may be held in October 24, 2016 to continue the work on the study.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Motion - Meeting Adjournment – A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Bob Simpson to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 pm. **Vote 6 Yes**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Mellert, Secretary
Plainfield Township EAC

1st draft October 3, 2016