

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

The meeting of the Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council was held on Monday, November 7, 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 absent	Don Moore – EAC Member absent
Bruce Rabenold – EAC Member	Robert Simpson – EAC Member
Jane Mellert, EAC Secretary and Member	Tom Petrucci – Plainfield Twp. Manager

Also in attendance – Supervisor Glenn Borger

EAC Chairman Terry Kleintop called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

The pledge of allegiance was performed.

MINUTES

Motion – October 3 and October 24, 2016 Minutes - A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Bob Cornman to approve the October 3, and 24 2016 minutes. Vote: 5 Yes

OLD BUSINESS

PA DEP Growing Greener Grant Update – Little Bushkill Creek Study

- Terry Kleintop noted that the Bushkill Stream Conservancy was asked to write a letter of recommendation for the Wind Gap Sewer Authority for a grant application. The grant will address water problems along the 8th Street corridor. Tom Petrucci noted that the Township helped Wind Gap get a Community Development Block Grant for the project. Wind Gap does not have the exact amount for the grant that will be approved.
- Jason Smith from Hanover Engineering noted that not all of the testing has been completed due to the lack of adequate rain. There are time constraints that are placed on the testing process after the rain events. Hanover is continuing to watch the weather. The testing will be for source tracking. There have been two rounds of water testing on the Little Bushkill Creek. Hanover Engineering is still waiting for the water level in the stream to come up higher from rain events before conducting additional sampling. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has been notified of the progress.
- Jason Smith visited the Stuber and Achenbach farms last Friday, November 4th.
 - Stuber - Jason was out to the Stuber farm several times in order to discuss with the property owner where the improvements should be placed. They will be placing fencing on both sides of the stream with a 35 foot buffer and will construct a cattle crossing. The animals will be fenced off from the stream but will be able to drink from a watering facility that will have a pipe going down to a watering station. Wire mesh will be utilized for areas instead of an electric type of

fencing. A permit will be needed for Stuber's cattle crossing. There are wetlands on the property.

- Achenbach - The meeting with Achenbach went really well. There is a broad stream valley that goes into a wooded area that leads to a wetland area. The pasture area where the steers are keeps the animals out of the stream. Restoration will be done along the stream area with plantings and signs. Native shrubs will be utilized. Trees will not be used due to them shading crops and needing to be trimmed so often. Shrubs will not be planted in the canary grass area. Some trees may be utilized along the stream. Water is directed into the pasture. The water will be redirected. A plastic pipe is now being utilized.

Green Knight Economic Development Corporation – Wetlands Jurisdictional Determination
Jason Smith from Hanover Engineering noted the Township needs to have proof from the Army Corps of Engineers and outside agencies before the GKEDC can move forward with the plan. He noted that Conservation areas should be shown on the plans and that lots should not be created that will disturb existing wetland area. He further that part of the property is located in Bushkill Township and the Township has buffer regulations.

UPDATE

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**
 - Lock located in Lower Mt. Bethel and Plainfield Township is moving forward.
 - Witmer has now withdrawn

Northampton County Proposed 2017 Budget- Tom Petrucci

- The Proposed Northampton County Budget currently has \$500,000 allocated towards Farmland Preservation
- Members of County Council will propose to increase the allocation by \$250,000 for a total of \$750,000. The \$250,000 increase will fund the County/Municipal Partnership Program. This will allow the municipalities to commit money toward the Pennsylvania State matching program.
- Members of the EAC are concerned that some of the funds from the PA State match could potentially go to help fund preservation of land in another municipality. The Northampton County Farmland Preservation Board could utilize the money according to how the applicants are ranked and only give a portion of the matching funds to each municipality. The example is that the matching funds allocated could be a minimum of .25 cents on the dollar. If the State matches the committed funds dollar for dollar, then the Township would only get 25% of the match amount that was received from the State.

Terry Kleintop noted that he spoke to Maria Bentzoni and noted that Plainfield Township will probably be willing to put forth the \$250,000 if they will get the entire match amount to be utilized in Plainfield toward preservation. Maria cannot commit to confirming that the entire match amount will go toward land in Plainfield. A percentage (that could be as low as 25%) of

the match will be given toward the Township match. Several EAC members asked if the municipalities could negotiate on what percentage is acceptable.

In 2015 was the first year that the Township did not get the full match. Terry Kleintop thought that the Township representatives made impact when they spoke to the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Board.

If the Township would go on their own to preserve land then all of the incidentals, annual inspections, appraisal, and administration work would have to be picked up by the municipality.

EAC Members would like a letter put together to request the full match amount from the State. The other municipalities should be notified that the full match will not be received. This will allow for negotiations regarding the % amount that the municipalities will receive.

Terry Kleintop noted that the ½ mill (2.9 million) is being utilized by the County toward other obligations.

Supervisor Glenn Borger attended a Northampton County Council meeting in the past and spoke at the meeting regarding the original commitment made by the County to fund Open Space Preservation.

Motion – Letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding Farmland Preservation - A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Bruce Rabenold to recommend that the Board of Supervisors send a letter to Northampton County explaining that Plainfield Township would move forward with committing \$250,000 of EIT funds for the PA State match program provided that the full match amount be allocated to the Township. **Vote: 5 Yes**

If the letter is approved by the Board of Supervisors Terry Kleintop would like it to be copied to Moore Township and Upper Mount Bethel Township.

The timing for the commitments to be officially sent to the State is by mid-January. Maria Bentzoni the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Administrator needs a response before November 17, 2016.

Plainfield Township Earned Income Tax Collection for Open Space Study

The following reports were submitted:

- Don Moore revised the Plainfield Township Agricultural and Natural Features Easement map. Tom Petrucci placed the map in the Drop Box and made copies for review. Jane Mellert would like the Northampton County properties and Plainfield Township properties color coded separately.
- Summary of Prospective Properties with the Ag Security 1450 acres
- Summary of Prospective Properties without Ag Security 1824 acres
- There is approximately 3,200 acres still available with potential for preserving
- There are 486.4 acres in the process of being preserved
- 3,725.9 acres will be preserved after the land in process is complete.
- Land was ranked by owners and the size of the property. There are approximately 40 owners.
- The Township has 2.6 million in the EIT funds for Open Space Preservation. This amount could potentially preserve 500 acres.

- Terry Kleintop previously handed out the Average Pen Argyl Area School District Enrollment for 1999-2016. Walter Schlegel will provide the 2016-2017 information. The information indicates that the class size will decrease. Despite the decrease in students the cost per student is escalating from 2001 from 7,000 per student to current of over 17,000 per student.

Terry Kleintop noted that in the past the Board sent out letters to land owners to solicit interest in the preservation program. The letters had greater detail about the benefits of the preservation process than the letter sent out by Northampton County. The letters were also sent to landowners that are not currently in the Ag Security District with information on how to apply. The property owners that are not in the Ag Security District do not receive a letter from Northampton County about the preservation application process.

It was noted that Plainfield Township has not received an update from State Representative Marcia Hahn's office or Jim Hunter at Northampton County regarding the questions posed about the area excluded from the farmland preservation easement area. In Northampton County the exclusion area was implemented in order for the farmer to have more options if the property needs to be sold, or subdivided.

Motion – Farmland Preservation Letter for Landowners – A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Bob Cornman to request the Board of Supervisors send out a letter to the landowners with potential for preservation. Vote: 5 Yes

Terry Kleintop noted that the new owners of the Fuente's property the Hahn's may be interested in the program. The property was removed from the farmland preservation list due to the property being sold.

The excluded area and how it is taxed needs to be fully explained to farmland preservation applicants. The potential additional uses that can be placed on the property should also be explained. In Plainfield Township Zoning laws allow for certain additional uses.

Bob Simpson noted that we need to include an explanation in the study regarding Act #4, #319, #515 and Act #43.

Jane Mellert suggested waiting for the review by Jim Hunter at Northampton County and Marcia Hahn regarding how Act #4 and the excluded areas should work. It is also necessary to review the Acts to see if they hold language that conflicts.

Bob Simpson noted that Act #4 could be adopted in whole or in part. He discussed this matter with Dave Backenstoe.

It was noted that noted that only two Counties in the State adopted Act #4, Northampton County and Lehigh County .

Tom Petrucci will work on the additional information and add it into the dropbox.

Items for the EIT study list should include:

- **Natural Features Easement Map – Revisions** to the map were discussed. Bruce Rabenold would like to purchase easements in the Grand Central Woods area. Terry

Kleintop would like that area color coded on the map for land with the potential for prospective natural features easements.

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

Regional EAC Meeting - Tom Petrucci previously approved the use of the meeting room for a Regional EAC Meeting to be held on November 15, 2016 from 6 to 8 pm by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Audubon Pennsylvania. A request was made to move the meeting to November 16th. Tom will notify them that the meeting date can be changed to November 16th. 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

NEW BUSINESS

The next EAC Special meeting may be held on November 22, 2016 to continue the work on the Plainfield Township EIT Collections for Open Space Study.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Motion - Meeting Adjournment – A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Jane Mellert to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 pm. **Vote 5 Yes**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Mellert, Secretary
Plainfield Township EAC