

SUSSEX COUNTY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JUNE 10, 2010

The meeting was opened at 7:05 p.m. by Vice Chairman Butz. The meeting was held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 of 1975, as amended, and notice has been forwarded to the newspapers and posted on the bulletin board maintained at the Sussex County Administrative Center for public announcement.

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Landrith, Andover Borough
Vita Thompson, Andover Township
Jeffrey Butz, Vice-Chairman, Fredon Township
Howard Baker, Hopatcong Borough
David Muscalo, Lafayette Township
Eric Powell, Sparta Township
Geraldine Pflugh, Stillwater Township
Richard Gottemoller, At-Large
Kathy Little, At-Large
Eleanor Mensonides, At-Large
John Nugent, At-Large

EXCUSED MEMBERS: John Armeno, Chairman, At-Large

STAFF MEMBERS: Alice Brees, Principal Planner
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Christopher Obropta, Ph.D., P.E., Rutgers Cooperative Ext.
Jeremiah Bergstrom, LLA., ASLA, Rutgers Cooperative Ext.

PRESENTATION:

A. “GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE” PRESENTATION, RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:

Christopher Obropta, a Water Resources Extension Specialist for Rutgers Cooperative Extension gave a slide show presentation on “Green Infrastructure.” He said he started with Rutgers eight years ago to start a Water Resources Program. Rutgers Cooperative Extension is a piece of the New Jersey Agriculture Experiment Station. It was formed in the early 1900’s to help farmers. An office was established in every county.

The goal of the Water Resources Program is to help people solve water problems in terms of quantity and quality. They accomplish this by integrating research, education and assistance to local governments and residents..

Green Infrastructure work came about out of the challenge to develop in a way that will protect the environment. Dr. Obropta said some of the projects they are working on are watershed restoration plans, water quality trading projects, regional stormwater management plans, educational programs and drinking water conservation.

Jeremiah Bergstrom, Senior Project Manager said he wanted to define what Green Infrastructure is and describe some of the programs that are going on throughout the country. The challenge is to address stormwater management through plant materials and soils; to be able to take advantage of natural processes, such as evapotranspiration and infiltration and use the water that comes down as precipitation, which limits the amount of runoff.

Mr. Bergstrom described some of the tools that communities are beginning to use such as green roofs, porous paving, rain gardens, vegetative swales and rainwater harvesting.

Dr. Obropta said Rutgers is helping people take sustainability ideas and put them into action. They’ve built several rain gardens in Union and Middlesex Counties. A rain garden built at the Woodbridge Health Department, solved a flooding problem they had with the building. He also described a project at the Rockaway Mall to capture some water from the parking lot pavement in tree boxes and at the DPW in Parsippany, a road of turf stone, concrete block with grass that grows through it. There is also a great deal of interest in rain barrels.

Ms. Brees said that as part of the County Wastewater Plan, 20% of the grant money is for Green Infrastructure. This came down from EPA to DEP. The County would also like Rutgers to meet with the Municipal Engineers in the County.

Howard Baker asked if these products are done on commercial scale. Dr. Obropta said they are and gave an example of islands in the Home Depot or Wal Mart that are raised up with trees planted in them. He said that if these islands are not raised but in depressions, it would allow water to seep into the ground. He also said that a study showed that people are willing to walk on top of raised islands but are reluctant to step down into a depression. Dr. Obropta said that municipal buildings are ideal places to build rain gardens. It attracts the attention of taxpayers and they can pick up the

brochures explaining the rain garden inside the building. He also said Home Depot or Lowes can put in a rain garden and then have training as one of their Saturday morning workshops---the supplies are right there for the homeowners to purchase. He said this effort creates jobs, stimulates the economy and helps the environment.

Kathy Little asked about the project at Rockaway Mall. How do they keep garbage from getting into the tree boxes if there isn't a curb around it? Dr. Obropta said that there is a box that a tree grows out of and the front of the box where the curb would be is empty and the water goes into there. The opening is too small for bottles and cans to fit through but water can. There is a mechanism where they can lift up a grate for cleaning if needed. The tree boxes do require more maintenance than a rain garden.

Howard Baker asked if DEP was cooperating with this effort. Dr. Obropta said that DEP funds a lot of what they do. He said that DEP first saw a rain garden at the Parsippany/Troy Hills Municipal Building about a year ago and they were very excited about it. He added that a rain garden is part of the bio-retention system umbrella which is the first best management practice in DEP's manual.

David Muscalo asked if a discharge to groundwater permit was needed for the tree boxes since point sources of contamination will go into them. Dr. Obropta said no, that it was all included in the general permit for the stormwater system. DEP has been looking at the effectiveness of tree boxes. There are two types of media for the boxes. One is specially designed to remove pathogens in areas where there are a lot of geese. Another one is designed to remove the nutrients and phosphorous. Some oil can get assimilated by the mulch layer in the boxes. When the rain gardens are on roads, a three or four feet of grass is put in between the curb cut and the rain garden. The grass filters out the sediment and salt. This keeps the plants from being destroyed from the salt on the road.

David Muscalo also asked if there was any monitoring of the discharge of the water going through the systems. Dr. Obropta said there is a lot of data being collected, mostly from Vermont and Maryland. He said that pollutants might move differently through the systems in this area and that they are trying to collect data here.

Dr. Obropta said that they would like to build some demonstration projects in Sussex County. A Rain Barrel Workshop was planned in Hopatcong for this weekend but it was postponed. Mr. Bergstrom said that the power point presentation that was shown this evening will be on their website by Monday, which is www.water.rutgers.edu .

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Geraldine Pflugh to approve the Minutes of January 14, 2010 as presented. The motion was seconded by David Muscalo. All were in favor, with abstentions from Howard Baker and Eric Powell. Motion carried.

The Minutes of March 11, 2010 have been changed from what was originally sent to PAC to reflect that the meeting was opened by Vice Chairman Jeffrey Butz. A motion was made by David Muscalo to approve the Minutes of March 11, 2010 as amended. The motion was seconded by John Nugent. All were in favor, with abstentions from James Landrith, Geraldine Pflugh and Kathy Little.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Alice Brees reviewed the correspondence listed on the attached sheet and answered questions on Correspondence Numbers Two, Four and Seven.

PROGRAM MANAGER'S REPORT:

Ms. Brees reported she should be getting the signed Freeholder Resolution for the Plan Amendment for Nouvelle Associates by next week. She will then send the application to DEP for review. The issues listed in the Lafayette Report will be addressed by DEP.

Mr. Brees said that yesterday she received a telephone call from her contact person at DEP regarding a letter that was sent to Andover Borough and the MUA. The NJPDES Permit in Andover Borough may be revoked due to the Category 1 stream.

Byram's Town Center was approved by the Highlands Council. Byram decided to go with plan conformance in the Highlands and they sent in their Resolution to the Highlands Council to have them approve their center. The Highlands Council will be working directly with the town relating to that Sewer Service Area. They will advise the County as to what goes in the County Plan.

There has been a number of meetings relating to the Highlands. Eric Snyder attended a Stakeholders Meeting held by DEP. Another meeting is planned on June 15 to give DEP feedback about issues in the Highlands. The next County Planners meeting with DEP is on June 23 to discuss Wastewater Plan issues.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

County Counsel was excused from this evening's meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. PROPOSED SPARTA RECREATION CENTER, WMP AMENDMENT:

Alice Brees said the applicant for Sparta Recreation Center requested that this be tabled to next month. They are still working on getting answers to questions that were raised at the last meeting.

B. DEP REVIEW OF SUSSEX COUNTY WMP:

Alice Brees said the County is still trying to let DEP know how the Sewer Service Areas fit into the County Strategic Growth Plan. DEP has not made the decision yet about the Highlands Area. Many of the County's centers are in the Highlands Planning Area. There has been reorganization in DEP. The Assistant Commissioner is in charge of Land Use Management and the Wastewater Plan.

Ms. Brees gave a power point presentation of what will be shown to DEP. It showed the Sewer Service Areas that DEP is focusing on. She said that DEP doesn't realize when they take the Sewer Service Area out of Main Street in Franklin; it is right in the middle of a town that already exists. Sussex County is the only county in New Jersey that has

an endorsed Strategic Growth Plan. The County's Plan allows for both growth in centers as well as protection. DEP has an Office of Sustainable Planning and Sussex County's Plan meets those goals. The Office of Sustainable Planning has the goals to reduce greenhouse gases, reduce vehicle miles traveled and promote walkable communities. This is what the County's Plan does.

One of the slides showed the town centers. Ms. Brees said that the County's centers line up with the transit areas. A new train station is planned for Andover Township. The southern part of the county is near the existing Netcong station. These areas are all in the Highlands Planning Area.

DEP removed 50% of Sussex County's Sewer Service Areas. In November 2008, DEP enforced consistency with the Highlands Regional Plan even when the town was in the Planning Area. Highlands consistency was supposed to be voluntary. Only 5% of the total land area in the County is in the Sewer Service Area to begin with. Only 16,500 acres in the entire county are sewerred. DEP review took away half of that. Under DEP's rule that says if there is an endorsed plan, all they should be looking at there is actual endangered habitat for the environmentally sensitive areas that DEP is concerned with, 57% of that is already protected. The overlap problem is 3% of the environmentally sensitive area would be in sewer service. If DEP can agree to that, then Sussex County can have growth in its centers.

C. WATERSHED UPDATES: UPPER DELAWARE, WALLKILL:

Jeffrey Butz said he did not have anything new to report on the Upper Delaware Watershed. Since both Ernie Hofer and Nathaniel Sajdak were not present this evening, there was no report on the Wallkill Watershed.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Eleanor Mensonides. The motion was seconded by Geraldine Pflugh and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.