

SUSSEX COUNTY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JULY 10, 2014

The meeting was opened at 7:35 p.m. by Chairperson Mensonides. 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
Keith Gourlay, Hampton Township
Howard Baker, Hopatcong Borough, Vice Chair
David Muscalo, Lafayette Township
Eric Powell, Sparta Township
Ian Blanchard, Stillwater Township, 7:42 p.m.
Annette Stendor, Sussex Borough
Denise Webb, Wantage Township, 7:47 p.m.
Ernie Hofer, At-Large
Kathy Little, At-Large
Eleanor Mensonides, At-Large, Chair
John Nugent, At-Large

EXCUSED MEMBERS: Richard Gottemoller, At-Large

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

ALSO PRESENT: Dennis Mudrick, Freeholder Liaison
Nathaniel Sajdak, Wallkill River Watershed Group

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Howard Baker to approve the Minutes of May 8, 2014. The motion was seconded by Eric Powell. All were in favor, with abstentions from David Muscalo, Eric Powell, Annette Stendor, Ernie Hofer and Kathy Little. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Alice Brees said correspondence this month was minimal, so she did not make up a separate Correspondence Sheet. She discussed the annual Consumer Confidence Reports from United Water. They operate in Andover, Hampton Township and there are a number of systems in Vernon. Ms. Brees also received a letter from Newton advising that they are working on Build-Out Model projections in their sewer area.

PLANNER'S REPORT:

The two plan amendments in Wantage (for "Wantage Plaza" and Bicsak Bros.) are still preparing their application to SCMUA. After the MUA and the DEP Review, the applicants will be back for the Final Resolution to the Freeholders.

Ms. Brees said she hopes to have the draft County Wastewater Plan at the September PAC meeting. She also said she hopes to have staff from the Highlands Council attend this meeting. There are eight municipalities in the Highlands and as part of the Wastewater Plan, they are supposed to adopt a Water Conservation Ordinance. The Highlands Council says according to their analysis, there are smaller HUC-14 watersheds that are water deficit areas for water supply.

Regarding PAC attendance, there are 10 municipalities where the appointed representative has not attended a PAC meeting this year. Ms. Brees will be sending out a letter to the towns requesting that they appoint a representative who will attend the meetings. This is especially important because of the work on the County Wastewater Plan. The required septic management policy will also affect all the towns.

A few years ago, a graduate student who was studying groundwater in the Lafayette area made a presentation to PAC. Ms. Brees said the student finished her thesis and will do a final presentation to PAC at the September meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. **RESOLUTION FOR JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP WMP CHAPTER:**

A draft Resolution for Jefferson Township Wastewater Management Plan Chapter of the Morris County Wastewater Management Plan was provided to the PAC. A presentation was heard last month regarding this issue.

MOTION:

A motion was made by David Muscalo to approve the Resolution for the Jefferson Township Wastewater Management Plan Chapter as presented. The motion was seconded by Ian Blanchard and carried unanimously.

B. CHANGES TO WQMP PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURES, FREEHOLDER AGENDA:

Ms. Brees said she has been in contact with DEP numerous times since the last meeting regarding changes to the Water Quality Management Plan Amendment procedures for Sussex County. The final version will be on the Freeholder Agenda for their July 23 meeting. It will then go to DEP for their approval.

C. WATERSHED UPDATES: UPPER DELAWARE, WALLKILL:

Nathanial Sajdak said there have been more developments regarding the Upper Delaware Watershed since his presentation to PAC in May. At that meeting, he talked about the William Penn Foundation's Watershed Initiative. They have been looking to spearhead this extremely large scale program for the entire Delaware Basin. The Watershed Group is officially under contract with the Nature Conservancy to receive a portion of grant funding from the William Penn Foundation. Some of this grant money will allow them to continue the flood plain and riparian restoration efforts and to explore more innovative approaches to stormwater management, particularly in the urban quarters of Newton and Hampton. The William Penn Foundation is asking the Watershed Management Group to utilize some funding to explore various stormwater projects in these areas coupling it with their 319 funding from DEP. Mr. Sajdak said finding other sources of funding is crucial to the group's growth and the ability to promote themselves into the future.

Mr. Sajdak said they are submitting a large proposal to The Nature Conservancy to take the Decker Road corridor project along the Paulins Kill and turn it into a 3 to 5-mile restoration project. This grant proposal has unofficially been selected for funding by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation out of Washington, DC. A Press Conference is being held next Tuesday in Philadelphia where they will officially announce the grants they awarded. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation received 30 grant proposals from all the partners throughout New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania involved in this watershed planning initiative---only 15 were funded. This project has been referred to as the largest restoration project on the east coast.

The properties that have been linked so far are the State owned property, the Jorritsma property and the Chatterbox property. Those three continuous properties form about two miles. With the new funding, there are plans to continue down past the Chatterbox and Ross' Corner following along the State-owned portion in Augusta, which is another mile of restoration work. When asked about the reestablishment of the original habitat and the displacement of the invasive species, Mr. Sajdak said the long term goal is to do that. By bringing a forested corridor back, the shade cover alone will eventually out-compete the invasive species. With funding from The Nature

Conservancy, they purchased materials from Kuperus Nurseries and successfully installed 20, 8-10' maples, swamp oaks and other species along this flood plain.

Mr. Sajdak said Fish and Wildlife Service offered him 800 small trees, too small to survive if planted now. All 800 trees were taken to McKeown School in Hampton Township. The school agreed to do a planting project where soil, pots and trees were brought in and every student planted a tree in a two-gallon container. The planted trees were brought the SCMUA where a temporary nursery has been built. The goal is that these trees will be brought back to the Paulins Kill flood plain next spring and those same students from McKeon School will them. The students were very excited to play a part in this restoration and they were told when they graduate from high school, they will be able to see the impact of this project. Mr. Sajdak said they are exploring some significant stormwater management projects (rain gardens) on the school campus, with the help of these same students.

After an article appeared in The Herald about the school tree project, Mr. Sajdak received a telephone call from the Wildlife Refuge in Vernon. They have an area near the wetlands ponds which has an island of silver maples. These maples do not belong in the area. The maples were available for the taking and since they were growing in black dirt, they were very easily removed. The 250 silver maples are now in pots at the MUA's nursery. These maples are already 4' tall and are one of the best wetlands restoration species because they grow quickly.

Mr. Sajdak asked Ian Blanchard to speak about work being done in Stillwater. Mr. Blanchard said two weeks ago they had about 40 volunteers help with clean-up. Out of a 6-mile stretch from the Paulins Kill Lake dam, they cleared about four truckloads of trash from the river; most of the trash was very old. As the project progresses, he looks forward to presenting to other municipalities and encouraging them to have a Paulins Kill River Clean-Up Day.

Eleanor Mensonides asked if the old tires could have washed down from earlier flooding on farms. Mr. Blanchard said the tires were found downstream of farm accesses. There was a discussion about an outreach program relating to stream bank protection and restoration. There was also discussion about the difficulties of cleaning up areas owned by the State.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. EXISTING SEPTIC SYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS:

Alice Brees said initially there were supposed to be Septic Management Ordinances required in the Wastewater Management Plan. DEP backed off of that requirement and is now looking for Septic System Initiatives from the Counties. Ms. Brees said she looked at ongoing efforts in Sussex County. A copy of the Sparta ordinance for Septic Management in the Lake Mohawk area was sent to PAC. This also covers part of Byram. The Township of Byram is also doing septic management since they are conforming with the Highlands.

Ms. Brees said Sussex County has a history of septic management. A Rutgers study in 2005 said there were 18 municipalities in New Jersey that have septic management and Sussex County has four of those. In the 1980's the DEP Manager, Lynn Halliday received a grant from DEP and did four pilot programs.

There was some discussion on means of enforcement and incentives for septic management. There was also discussion on proper care of septic systems and the frequency of septic pumping.

Ernie Hofer said the motivation for septic management in Lake Mohawk was lake water quality. You need to control nutrient addition to a lake, particularly phosphorous and nitrogen. The Sparta Septic Management Ordinance not only covers septic systems but it also covers fertilizers used on lawns. Sparta has a zero phosphate ordinance.

There was also discussion on alternative septic systems. These systems have maintenance contracts with a company that is certified to maintain the system. This is more costly to the homeowner and is usually done in situations where the water table is very high and there are environmental constraints on the lot.

Ms. Brees said this is the start of Septic Management discussion and that it will continue to be discussed at PAC meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

Eleanor Mensonides said she wanted to discuss the cancellation of the August meeting. A motion was made by Keith Gourlay to cancel the August PAC meeting. The motion was seconded by Denise Webb and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Howard Baker. The motion was seconded by Eric Powell and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.