

SUSSEX COUNTY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

DECEMBER 8, 2011

The meeting was opened at 7:37 p.m. by Chairman Armeno. 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
Jeffrey Butz, Vice-Chairman, Fredon Township
Keith Gourlay, Hampton Township
Howard Baker, Hopatcong Borough
David Muscalo, Lafayette Township
Paul Baldwin, Town of Newton
Eric Powell, Sparta Township
James Benson, Stanhope Borough
Denise Webb, Wantage Township
John Armeno, Chairman, At-Large
Richard Gottemoller, At-Large
Kathy Little, At-Large
Eleanor Mensonides, At-Large
John Nugent, At-Large
Susan Zellman, Freeholder Liaison

EXCUSED MEMBERS: Joe Pinzone, Sandyston Township

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

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

Minutes were not available.

CORRESPONDENCE:

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

PLANNER'S REPORT:

Alice Brees reported that she and Eric Snyder had a pre-application meeting with Hampshire Companies. They own two vacant lots on Route 23 in Wantage Township, just south of the shopping center that is in the SCMUA sewer service area. They are interested in being included in the County Wastewater Plan and will come before PAC in the future. DEP has already looked at this project for environmental constraints and said those lots could be added.

Ms. Brees said she followed up on the issue that came up at the October PAC meeting regarding Aqueonics and the Village Center in Sparta Township. There was a question of ownership of the project. Ms. Brees said the owner/operator for the wastewater treatment facility will be a private company, C.C. Holdings. She added that she looked in the DEP Rules and ownership is not a question that PAC typically needs to deal with. When the plant is built, it will be under NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) jurisdiction because they will be serving 90 single-family lots with different owners.

There has been some progress lately with the State's review of the Wastewater Plan. She will discuss this under New Business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. WATERSHED UPDATES: UPPER DELAWARE, WALLKILL:

Nathaniel Sajdak said that in the past month, they formalized and finalized the Restoration Plan draft which was submitted to DEP. Contained in this Restoration Plan is four years of characterization and assessment work for the entire Paulins Kill basin and the headwaters area. Also contained in this Restoration Plan are the eight projects that he spoke of in October. DEP will review this plan and hopefully they will allocate funding to cover those eight projects. The eight projects cover stream bank restoration, agricultural BMPs, education and outreach initiatives and some significant storm water restoration initiatives. The total budget for the projects identified in the plan is close to \$1 million. This work is similar to the restoration work being done in the Papakating and Clove Brook.

Mr. Sajdak said they've met with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to propose working with them in implementing projects on farms. They now have an NRCS agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding. They do not have financial commitments but a partnership has been identified in which NRCS recognizes them as

an organization that can go out onto the farms to work with the farmers. One of the obstacles that had to be overcome is privacy issues within the agricultural community. Often farmers have projects identified but they do not have the funding capability to implement them. If DEP can be convinced to use watershed funding to help implement agricultural projects, then the watershed, the farmer and the agricultural community as a whole benefits. Mr. Sajdak said that in the past month, they've already been on three separate farms and have had the rights signed over to them to see the conservation plans.

The Wallkill Wildlife Refuge granted them funds to do a visual assessment characterization of the entire river from Route 94 in Hamburg, across the New York line into Oil City Road. Mr. Sajdak said the only way to do the assessment was by canoe or kayak. This was done late September/early October, after hurricane Irene and tropical storm Lee. He said there was significant damage from falling trees.

There has been a big organizational change for the Watershed Group. Ernie Hofer has moved on to a different position. He is now the manager at Lake Mohawk Country Club. Mr. Sajdak said Ernie was a mentor to him for close to 11 years and he wished Ernie the best. Ernie is not in the office everyday but he is still part of the Watershed efforts. There is also a new individual, Eric, who has been with them for about a year. He is leading the agricultural outreach program.

B. DEP REVIEW – PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SEWER AREA MAP:

Alice Brees reported that DEP has finally finished their comment letters and making changes to the sewer service area map. County Planning should receive the revised map soon. She and Eric Snyder will look at the map to see what changes they are making and it will be posted on the County website, as well as the comment letters, listed by town. DEP did not restore all the areas the County wanted restored, such as the Vernon Town Center.

She added that according to the new State Strategic Plan, town center's sewer service areas should remain intact. All the State Agencies, including DEP, are now supposed to cooperate under one State Plan. There was also an Executive Order that went with the draft State Plan saying that all the State Agencies will be part of a Steering Committee and will have to submit functional plans that relate back to the State Plan.

Freeholder Liaison Susan Zellman said that there was a Six County Coalition meeting last night. Dan Kennedy, one of the authors of the plan, gave a presentation of the plan. It seemed like it will be a more friendly State Plan but the Coalition's concerns were whether the State will be mindful of the Counties' Strategic Growth Plan. Mr. Kennedy said the plan is not going to be about Land Use; it's going to focus more on Economic Development.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. DRAFT GENERAL PERMIT FOR SCHOOLS, DISCHARGE TO SURFACE WATER, COMMENTS BY DECEMBER 14, 2011:

Chairman Armeno said PAC members received the report on the new "Discharge to Surface Water Consolidated Master General Permit" that deals primarily with schools. It involved six or seven schools in the County. Alice Brees said this is a streamlining effort by the State. Chairman Armeno asked PAC to read the document. The comment period ends on Monday, December 12, 2011.

B. APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Chairman Armeno said he already appointed Jim Landrith and Eleanor Mensonides to a Nominating Committee. Anyone wishing to serve on this Nominating Committee should speak to them. They will bring their report to the January meeting.

C. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2011:

Copies of the Schedule of Meetings for 2012 were inadvertently omitted from the mailing. Chairman Armeno read the document and the meeting dates. The meetings are scheduled for the usual 2nd Thursday of the month. The Agenda for the meetings remains the same.

A motion to accept the 2012 Meeting Dates and Agenda for all Meetings was made by Eleanor Mensonides. The motion was seconded by Jeffrey Butz and carried unanimously.

Chairman Armeno reminded the PAC members who represent municipalities that they need a letter of reappointment for 2012.

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 Kathy Little and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.