

Doylestown Township
Public Water and Sewer Advisory Board
November 16, 2023
Minutes

In Attendance: Joe Van Houten, Chairman; Matt Oakes, Secretary; Steve Hartman, Carroll Engineering
Via Zoom: Robert Shaffer, Vice-Chairman; Dan Wood, Board of Supervisors Liaison; Wallace Pattyson,
Member; John Canterbury, Member

Township Staff: Dan Wood, Board of Supervisors Liaison; Stephanie Mason, Township Manager

Guests: Steve Hartman, Carroll Engineering

Meeting started 5:00pm

Minutes Approval: October 19, 2023

Update on 537 Plan – Public Comments

Mr. Van Houten opened the meeting to briefly discuss the 537 plan, the history, cost per EDU, and it's stage in public comment. He mentioned that nothing is carved in stone and that the 537 plan serves as a roadmap. Joe mentioned his experience with having public sewer put in his neighborhood.

Mr. Hartman with Carroll Engineering introduced himself. Carroll has been an engineer for BCWSA since the 1980's. He mentioned the 537 plan is in the public comment period. For the Pine Valley/Buttonwood/ Shady Grove area, in his experience the cost for the public portion (part in the street) would be \$29,100 per EDU. Grinder pumps \$10,200; tapping fee from BCWSA \$6,200. Chestnut Valley Drive area public portion per EDU would be \$18,900, lower due to a more condensed area.

Ms. Mason wanted to reiterate that we are in the public comment portion and the planning process and does not become a project until an ordinance that lists the tax parcels and adapted by the Board of Supervisors. She confirmed there is a 5-year escalation factor on Carroll Engineering estimate.

Public Comments

Patrick Murphy, 112 Chestnut Valley Drive. Thanked the board for everything so far. He addressed concern that when you see a plan/proposal that this is a "done deal." His other concern is that communication was not send via mail. In addition to satisfy the legal communication, he would like to see communication mailed out to homes effected. Cost was a concern and also the possibility of a lien put on the house/property if the money was not spent by the homeowner.

Mr. Van Houten responded that this is not a "done deal." He asked that number from the engineers be used and not hearsay from other neighbors.

Ms. Mason responded that this affects the entire township, and some areas may be in different timeframes. She also mentioned that the information, in addition to the newspaper the information has been in the E-News and the township newsletter.

Mr. Donald Raskin 68 Buttonwood Lane: Addressed cost concerns of the tapping fee and would like clarification of what that cost is.

Dennis Kozak, 138 Chestnut Valley Drive: Would like scenarios of when the project would start and cost. Wanted to know how severe the problem is that septic tank might fail or testing that can be done to see when a good time would be to perform the project.

Mr. Van Houten mentioned there are expansions to the current sewer system and those are communicated to the state. He mentioned that part of the 537 plan gives residents the ability to plan for the future. He mentioned the fiduciary duty to provide the residents a roadmap to the future. He mentioned coliform testing that had been done going back to 2016 detecting coliforms in the wells due to failing septic systems. He also mentioned the lack of possible space for a new septic system due to new construction (pools/patios/decks/shed).

Mr. Richard Deschaine, 79 Buttonwood: Wanted to know of considerations that already have sewer hookup.

Ms. Mason mentioned that if a property is already hooked up, they are not obligated and will be excluded from a future project.

Mr. Andrew Sypawka, 154 Pine Valley Rd: Mentioned some homes in his neighborhood already has sewers. He was wondering if the line that is already in the ground suitable for future properties. Mr. Sypawka asked if state grants are available for financial assistance. He was also concerned that for some neighbors, the cost to replace a septic system is cheaper than putting in a sewer line and tying into it.

Ms. Mason and Mr. Hartman mentioned that the line was oversized to allow more connections, but not all of it. You would need to add a parallel line. Mr. Van Houten mentioned that no one is forcing you to tie into the system, it is the shared cost of the neighbors to run the sewer line in the ground.

David Jarosz, 164 Pine Valley Rd: Expressed opposition to putting a pipe in the street. Also had concerns with costs. He also wanted to put into record that he found the \$78 monthly sewer charge “offensive.” He also expressed concerns that newly paved roads would need to be dug up to put a pipe in the street and found that to be a terrible idea.

Mr. Van Houten, in response, cited from the 2005 537 plan “the continued use of the current type of on lot systems is undesirable for portions of the township presently utilizing the method of wastewater treatment and disposal. Continuing the existing use of on lot systems could be expected to lead to increased incidents of system failures. For an area of wide basis, this practice would most probably contribute to further deterioration of local ground and surface water as well as the creation of undesirable public health conditions. Therefore, the second option, which is to not do anything portion of the alternative, was also not viable.”

Mike Giegerich, 208 Pine Valley Rd: Mentioned that from a financial standpoint, a septic tank is a depreciating asset with a limited life. We quoted \$40-50K for a septic tank. Expressed an opinion to move forward with the project.

Mr. Van Houten noted that with his personal experience the DEP told the Board of Supervisors that they will need to do something, or they will come in and do the project themselves. Mr. Van Houten notes that it is inadvisable to have DEP come in and run the project if the township can do it themselves and maintain local control of the process.

Mary Raskin, 68 Buttonwood Lane: Had concerns when selling the house, how is the cost transferred to the new owner.

Ms. Mason mentioned that is mostly a private manner.

Lynne, Sandy Ridge Road Wanted to know the colors of the map. As a residential realtor she mentioned that she would advise a buyer that the loan be paid off prior to settlement. She mentioned the possible issue of not getting title insurance if there was a lien on the property. She also mentioned that a home with a sewer hookup is much more desirable than septic.

Mr. Hartman responded that Red is the 5-year, yellow is the 10, blue is ultimate, no time given. Regarding the loan, Ms. Mason mentioned there are many different circumstances.

Announcements: The next scheduled meeting for the Public Water & Sewer Advisory Board will be January 18, 2024 at 5PM.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Oakes,
Secretary