

Public Water and Sewer Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 16th, 2015

In attendance: Chairman Ed Harvey (DTMA representative), Members Gary Munkelt, John Canterbury, Wallace Pattyson, Joseph Van Houten, Board of Supervisor Liaison, Rick Colello, Director of Operations, Richard John, Township Manager, Stephanie Mason, Special Projects Coordinator, Autumn Canfield, Legal Council, Mr. Harris, Residents, Steve Pierce, Teresa Carroll

Meeting called to order at 5:03pm.

Minutes Approval:

Noted that the date on the minutes of the last meeting "June 18th, 2015" is incorrect. Correct date is May 21st, 2015. After correction, Gary Munkelt motioned to approve minutes and Wallace Pattyson seconded. All other members in favor.

Guests/Introduction:

Mr. Harris explained his client's position on hooking up to public water. Referring to maps he handed out, he explained that property B in the corner of the map is by an existing interceptor and that manhole 29 is located on his clients' property. Steve Pierce and Teresa Carroll request to connect to the manhole that is on their property instead of being a part of the sewer extension in the Pebble Ride area. He cited the reason for this request as connecting to the manhole on the property would mean that the sewer system would be a gravity pump instead of a grinder pump which is preferable.

Mr. Harvey asked if it was verified that it would actually be a gravity pump.

Mr. Pierce confirmed that it would be.

Mr. Harris explained that he was directed to Doylestown Township and is requesting the Public Water and Sewer Advisory Committee allow the hook up.

Mr. Harvey asked about previous easements.

Mr. Harris said they have them.

Mr. Harvey questioned the timeline of the easement as they were given an allow period of time to hook up to that interceptor and Mr. Harvey believes it is past that timeframe.

Mr. Harris explained the authority had no problem with the timeframe if the committee allowed it. Bucks County did not take a stance in reference to time running out. The house was constructed in 1955 so was not immediately connected to sewer. He stated the township ordinance states that they must connect when system fails or they sell the house. At that time they want to connect to the manhole on their property.

Mr. John said if the connection is already there, it makes sense to connect to that interceptor instead of connecting to a new line.

Mrs. Mason stated going to the committee for a recommendation is the first step and then the request must go to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

Mr. Harris explained that the prior owner granted the easement and then subdivided the property. His client bought the existing house and sold the subdivided lot which is hooked up to sewers currently.

Mr. Van Houten inquired about when they planned on connecting to the line.

Mr. Harris said they will connect in accordance with the township ordinance. He believes that is when the current system fails or they sell the house.

Mrs. Mason corrected Mr. Harris saying that the ordinance for the Pebble Ridge area has not been put in place yet. Those who need or want to connect will. There is a preliminary discussion of not having it done when the property is sold, but beforehand by not allowing repairs to existing systems and once it fails, connecting to the sewers.

Mr. Harris said they would be bound by ordinance and connect when their system fails.

Mr. Van Houten asked if they would be part of the payment for the line in the street.

Mr. Colello said yes they would still pay their share of it.

Mr. Harris said they have to pay fees to the county to connect to the interceptor and to install the line. They would not be paying for the line in the street.

Mrs. Mason explained that there are a certain number of people in the count of houses for the Pebble Ridge project. It has been taken into account the properties that have already connected to sewer, if Mr. Harris' clients were to connect to the manhole tomorrow, the township's count would go down and the request includes not having to pay for the line in the street.

Mr. Harris said he assumed that if they hooked into the current interceptor, they would not have to pay water line fees.

Mr. Colello said that it was a big assumption without putting it in any correspondence.

Mr. Harris explained again that there would be fees paid to Bucks County in addition to installing a line and that it would not be appropriate to pay county and township fees.

Mr. Van Houten brought up that they are two different fees.

Mrs. Mason said anyone connected is not in the numbers for hook up.

Mr. Colello said that was not accurate as there would be a lot of changes to make.

Mrs. Mason suggested a conversation with Mr. Garton about it for clarification.

Mr. Colello asked if they are currently part of the project.

Mrs. Mason said they are part of it and it is a legal question that we need clarification on.

Mr. Colello said he understands they want to use a gravity feed, but was upset they did not express the desire to be exempt from the other fees when they are already part of the project.

Mr. Harris asked to clarify that the committee does not have an objection to his clients hooking up to the current interceptor, they object to his clients doing so and not paying the new line fee.

Mr. Colello stated he was not part of the committee.

Mrs. Mason stated that the question is now or later. Will they be responsible for the line in the street?

Mr. Harris asked if fees were going to be determined by benefit assessment.

Mrs. Mason explained that the fees would be determined by equal share of impacted lots, so evenly divided amongst all.

Mr. Harris stated that the way the cost issue would be resolved would be the Board of Supervisors ultimately taking action. He asked if the committee wanted him and his clients to return after the township had spoken with their lawyer. Mr. Harris also asked for clarification that the committee does not object to the hook up at the interceptor currently on their property.

Mr. Harvey said that the committee did not have enough information yet to make that statement.

Mr. Van Houten asked that they re-submit their request with a clause that they want to be exempt from the new line fees.

Mrs. Mason said she would see about an amended request being sent to the township Lawyer.

Mr. Harris thanked everyone and said they would be back at the September meeting. He and his clients then left the meeting.

Mr. John stated that it would be a trade-off. The project would be less costly because they would not have to run the sewer line into the cul-de-sac if this household leaves the project.

The committee discussed the reason for the visit was to avoid paying the fee and whether or not the property could be taken out of the project at this point. It is understood why they wish to avoid the fee however the committee did not like the approach. It was also pointed out that the residents of the household seem to have no intent to hook up now. They have had the option for years and did not connect. The question was raised of how much it would save to not have to run a line to the residents' house.

Mr. Harvey said that they would have to run the line anyway to hook up to the interceptor.

Mr. John said it would not have to go all the way down the road anymore.

A map was brought out for clarification and there was a discussion of where the hook up would be, where pipes are, where flow is etc.

Mr. Van Houten said that as homeowners, all properties would benefit. This property happens to have option A and option B, but will still benefit from the line in the street so should still pay for it.

Mr. Harvey stated that if they are going to be exempt from the project cost, they should be required to hook up immediately and all agreed.

Mr. Van Houten asked about bringing in contractors for clarification.

Mrs. Mason said she would talk to Alex and the solicitor and have information for the next meeting. The official ordinance has not been completed.

Mr. Colello said that they will not hook up because the system is working great, but they are still going to pay.

Mrs. Mason said if not hooked in, they have to pay for the line in the street.

Mr. Van Houten asked how many properties were not hooked in. He brings up the concern that Mr. Harris will move down the line and see who else can make the same deal.

Mr. John stated that we should save the money by not laying the pipe and it would be a wash.

Mr. Colello is concerned that without this house in the project it is going to be more expensive for every other house involved.

Mr. John said the engineer needs to look at it. Without that property it may be a cheaper and shorter route.

Mr. Harvey states that you need the line there regardless to reach all houses on both sides.

Mr. John said to shorten the line and go around other house and to have the engineer look at it.

Mr. Harvey asked what Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority thoughts were on the matter.

There was then a discussion of where the project currently stands. We have three easements currently and need seventeen more.

Mrs. Mason explained that some of the residents have attorneys that the township is working with. The engineer going back out and any other extra costs would be factored into the cost of the overall project and divided amongst the affected residents.

Mr. Colello states that by sending people out it is costing more money.

Mr. Van Houten asked what the options were.

Mrs. Mason explained that there is a whole process with consensus, condemnation and Board of View. All of these are at additional cost to look at a property again. From there, an additional appeal process is a possibility as well.

Mr. Van Houten asked how long it could delay the project.

Mrs. Mason said there cannot be a bid until we get the easements which could take months depending on how long the Board of View takes.

Mr. Harvey asked if we could send out more than one engineer.

Mrs. Mason explained that Alex is her contact person. She is not sure he is the only one who goes out but he works for the company we are currently using and is in charge of this particular project.

Mr. John stated that he hopes we have everything cleaned up and in order by the end of the year.

Mrs. Mason said that by the end of July we need to see where we are with easements and then reach out to homeowners again.

Mr. Harvey pointed out that delay is a tactic.

Mrs. Mason said there will be follow up and hopes to have things in order by September.

There was discussion of the committee going out to talk with some residents to explain the process and help ease any concerns. Mr. Harvey would like to get all things in order as soon as possible.

Past Business:

No updates on phases 1, 2, or 3. The committee will informally be discussing ideas at a later date.

With no further business, Mr. Van Houten motioned to end the meeting and Mr. Pattyson seconded. All in favor and meeting adjourned at 5:54pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Autumn Canfield

Special Projects Coordinator