

I. **OPENING**

CALL TO ORDER: The Environmental Advisory Council meeting of Lower Saucon Township Council was called to order on Tuesday, August 7, 2007 at 7:00 P.M., at 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bethlehem, PA, with Tom Maxfield, Chairman, presiding.

ROLL CALL: Present – Chairman, Sandra Yerger; Vice Chairman, Tom Maxfield; Allan Johnson, Ted Beardsley, Tom McCormick, Dennis Aranyos, Laura Ray, Glenn Clouser, and Haz Hijazi. Absent - Terry Boos, Hellertown Representative and Glenn Kaye.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **LOWER SAUCON AUTHORITY – ACT 537 DISCUSSION**

Mr. Chris Argall, P.E. from Hanover Engineering was present and Gar Davidson from LS Authority. Mr. Davidson gave a slide presentation as follows:

He said the original sewer was built in 1989. It works its way over through Hellertown and serves that side of it. It goes along the Saucon Creek and goes through the Thomas Iron Works, then connects into a city of Bethlehem interceptor roughly in the same location the Hellertown sewer connects in the city of Bethlehem. The Creekside Marketplace was built in 1999. They needed public sewer. The initial design, it was a very deep pump station. The pump station was very close to the Saucon Creek. The LSA preferred a gravity solution. In that Creekside, they built a temporary pump station which is collection of sewage from the shopping center, a little force main, and pumped up to a manhole by McDonald's and crosses the street at SV Diner. It pumps it to Hellertown Borough Authority's little pump station in the Springhill Shopping Center and from there, goes into their gravity system. With permission from Council, the LSA imitated a sewerage planning alternative study in November 2001. That was expanded to include a section of Bingen in 2002, and then an area of Bingen East in 2003. The study results showed a high to moderate need for public sewer in the area in addition to the new shopping center. There are enough failing or marginal systems in the Leithsville and in Hellertown Park and isolated in other areas, but those two areas are the most difficult. These places are very small lot sizes and don't have a lot of options. He showed a graphic of the overall service area. The initial presentation was made to Council in 2004 where they basically made an overall recommendation on what they wanted to do. LSA and HBA agreed to extend the interim agreement for the transport of Creekside flow via HBA sewers in mid-2004. They began to approach the surrounding communities. In October 2004, they made the same presentation to Hellertown Council and at that time, they raised the issue of the Hellertown Marsh and how they were proposing to make their way across that. The original route that had been proposed which goes way back to a study of Weisenburg Associations in 1976, showed the sewer hugging the RR tracks. Hellertown Council sent it back and said take a look at it as they wanted them to find another way and they suggested they consider a rerouting of a shared gravity line along Front Street. Hellertown looked at this for a two to three year period trying to figure out if this made sense in the whole scheme of their sewer system and finally concluded they needed to get in there and figure out how much water was getting into the sewers that shouldn't have and try to figure out what the Front Street line justified or could they get by with it. In early February of this year, they did purchase a Robotic camera and used that to conduct a field study and looked at about 1/3 of the Front Street line to see what it looked like. They found a number of places where it leaked, or water was getting into it. Pretty much the main body of the sewer is in good shape with some cracks, all of which can be replaced on a spot basis. They decided they

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didn't want to do that and Gar was thrilled because to relocate and go into an improved city street, would have added a \$2.7 million burden to the project. In spring, they decided to look seriously at how would they get around the Hellertown Marsh and at that time they became aware of the issues at the Thomas Iron Works. They wanted to take a serious look at the gravity solution over the pump stations because of long term operating costs and reliability of operation. He showed a good overview of the system. In March and April they looked at the marsh and HBA was right, there was no way through the marsh. They went down with a Professor from Lehigh University and walked the whole thing. When they walked around, something they were relatively unaware of because the aerials they had covered up the greenway that occurs. It's like a 50' wide natural greenway that goes up alongside the creek. It is separated from the marsh and there's actually a little bank that's been formed by the stream over the years. The feeling was they could go up the greenway in some fashion, and avoid problems with the marsh. It looks like good soils to pass through.

Mr. Maxfield asked if anybody figured out why the marsh is right there. Mr. Davidson said what was said was in the 1700's it was where they would dam the creek in order to get water power for mills and various activities. A lot of the soils were deposited when they put this dam across which doesn't make it any less logically unique. It actually is something worth saving. They think they can do this safely. They'd have to make a crossing and bore across the road and that would be where the Silver Creek comes through. They would not be open cutting that. It looks doable at this point. They think they have a solution. As they come up and approach the Thomas Iron Works, the initial plan would be to go along the little path that goes up through, which is also the path on the Hellertown site where their sewer runs. He showed the route that looks the best, but it still has to be evaluated. The western part is loaded with obstacles and trees.

Mr. Maxfield said before the marsh area, that's the ball field, and you've got that right angle turn, would it make more sense not to do the 90 degree angle? Mr. Argall said this is just conceptual, just so they get it over to the end of the marsh right now.

Mr. Davidson said Council sent them back after they made a presentation to them and said take a good look at this environmentally. Council thought it would be good to team up with the EAC because if there are issues, they can work on them together. Mrs. Yerger said because it's been disturbed down there, the plants there are very invasive and just continuing to spread. If they are going to go back in and tear it out, she suggested they plant it with something better than what's there now. Mr. Davidson said he doesn't see that as an issue. Mr. Maxfield said the township got an inquiry from the RR if they were interested in a greenway through there. Mr. Davidson said it's a beautiful "Rails to Trails" project. Mrs. Yerger said Bethlehem has said there is a small area they are not willing to share which is behind Wendy's. It won't be contiguous into Bethlehem right now.

Mr. Davidson said the advantage of gravity includes:

1. non-powered "zero carbon footprint" for the life of the system,
2. potential for working with HBA to eliminate their Springhill pumping station,
3. keeps a major pump station away from the Saucon Creek,
4. it's more secure and not as susceptible to power outages,
5. puts less stress on downstream interceptor by evening out flows,
6. Last, it's an opportunity to develop a bike/walking path through the area.

The real marshy part is wet, but as you get up farther, it drains and is harder and more stable there.

Mr. Davidson said the next steps are to seek an environmentally-friendly route along the Saucon while minimizing negative impact. They need to identify possible alternative gravity routes. They need to refine alternatives and update costs. Conduct further environmental impact study. They

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need guidance from Lower Saucon Township and Council. They want to partner with the EAC on route identification and environmental protection. On September 4, 2007, they will make the presentation to HB Council and then they will come back to our Council in the fall to see if they want to move forward. It might need maintenance in 25 years or so. It's a totally different construction approach. The threat to the creek is pretty much a non event from that perspective. The pipes would be fairly leak-tight. If it makes it and they are able to make the run, they may be able to eliminate the Skibo Road and do it all by gravity, but it's possible they won't. They might be able to add gravity to what they are adding on, but the Skibo Road will have to stay there, and that depends on the next engineering stages. He has a PDF of the overall plan which you can look at on the website. They just updated it, but it's not put on the website yet. He will update it by the end of the week and you can see the map and see where the current conception is of where they will be serving. He'd recommend having the newspapers and everybody point everybody in that direction so they can refresh themselves on what it is and how it will affect their neighborhood.

Mr. Maxfield said Council still has to look at the plans to make sure where there were alterations with Polk Valley Road. Mr. Davidson said the actual plan includes the Polk Valley Road piece. Where they are at it isn't likely to make it into the final, final, but when you looked how things drained, it should have been in there to be considered. It's in the original study. He is going to present Hellertown with this same presentation. This Township's Council is in control of the Act 537. The routing is through Hellertown properties, in part, so much of what has been in question is theirs. We just have to all coordinate it. This Council controls what we do. After everyone agrees, it then has to go to DEP.

Mrs. Yerger asked for any recommendations. The EAC decided that they would like to have the riparian corridor increased. Mr. Maxfield felt they should hold their recommendations until it goes further along. The EAC may also want to initiate a talk with the Thomas Iron Works Committee.

B. LVPC – 2007 – LEHIGH VALLEY GREENWAYS PLAN PACKET

Mrs. Yerger said everybody should look at it and review it. This will be brought back in a month or two and will be put it on the agenda and see if anybody has anything to discuss at that time. These are just recommendations.

III. DEVELOPER ITEMS

Mrs. Yerger said there was a small complication with BRE. Mr. Tralies showed the BRE site. It was the gas to fuel project site. They went through all the approvals they needed and then someone realized on site, that a tree they had surveyed was surveyed incorrectly. They had previously proposed the maintenance building where the tree was and they wanted to save the tree, so they submitted plans again so they could save this one existing tree out there. Boucher & James reviewed it and had no issues with it. They are relocating the maintenance module building. There's really no change.

MOTION BY: Mr. Hijazi moved that the EAC allow BRE to relocate the maintenance module building and commend BRE for saving the tree.
SECOND BY: Mr. Maxfield
ROLL CALL: All in Favor: Yes
Opposed: None

IV. OLD/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

A. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MAY 1, JUNE 5, AND JULY 3, 2007 MINUTES

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May 1, 2007

Mrs. Yerger said on page 2, line 41, it should read "Seifert-Ray property". Ms. Ray said a name typo on page 2, line 6, it went to Brostead, not Prostead. (correct the P to a B).

MOTION BY: Mr. Maxfield moved for approval of the May 1, 2007 minutes, with corrections.
SECOND BY: Mrs. Yerger
ROLL CALL: All in Favor: Yes
Abstained: Mr. Hijazi – he missed the meeting.
Opposed: None

June 5, 2007

MOTION BY: Mr. Clouser moved for approval of the June 5, 2007 minutes.
SECOND BY: Mr. Maxfield
ROLL CALL: All in Favor: Yes
Abstained: Mr. Aranyos – he missed the meeting.
Opposed: None

July 3, 2007

MOTION BY: Mr. Maxfield moved for approval of the July 3, 2007 minutes.
SECOND BY: Mr. Aranyos
ROLL CALL: All in Favor: Yes
Abstained – Ms. Laura Ray – she missed the meeting.
Opposed: None

V. UPDATES/REPORTS

A. HELLERTOWN REPORT

Nothing to report.

B. OPEN SPACE SUB COMMITTEE

Mr. Beardsley said the Open Space Committee did not have a meeting this month. They have not heard anything about the Reiss property. They want to write him a letter saying they enjoyed meeting with him and they await his reply and then schedule another meeting. Mrs. Yerger said Diane Gehringer called and asked her if she could have the township email her and Mr. Reiss a copy of the current timbering ordinance.

MOTION BY: Mrs. Yerger moved for the Sub Committee to send a letter to Mr. Reiss with a copy of the current Township Open Space plan.
SECOND BY: Mr. Maxfield
ROLL CALL: All in Favor: Yes
Opposed: None

Mr. Johnson wanted to know what was going on with the other piece of property. Mr. Maxfield said Council, at a public meeting, said it would expend up to \$550,000 to purchase conservation easements and they were told there is a deadline which has come and gone, so he doesn't know what's going on right now (three guys who wanted to buy the property and wanted to know if the township would chip in for the conservation easement). A second appraisal was done. They had an agreement to buy, so they need to make agreements among themselves, which they could be

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doing right now. They want to conserve the entire piece of property and each of them add a chunk to their property.

For developmental value, they don't think about what it's going to be worth after the conservation easement is put on it.

Mrs. Yerger said conservations easements take a while to be put in place as there's a lot to be considered. There's a lot of thought that has to go into this.

Mrs. Yerger said she wants to make the public aware we are still an ongoing process and we are still involved. She drafted a brief letter and had a friend go over it to make sure she didn't say anything out of line. She is looking for feedback. They want to put it in the newsletter. Mr. McCormick thought it was an excellent piece. He has comments on the piece Mrs. Yerger wrote which he will give to her later. The piece he proposed in the letter he wrote, they would like to just put the township phone number on it and ask residents to call the township for more information. Mr. Beardsley had a change in the second paragraph (**could not hear the change**). Mr. McCormick marked up the FAQ and will email it to Mrs. Yerger. Laura Ray said she will put this on the website.

Mrs. Yerger said at the last Council meeting, a motion was made to employ Heritage Conservancy as our Open Space consultants to work with the Open Space Committee. Laura Baird will be the person you will be working with. Please feel to call her. She's done a lot of property preservation and she's very good. You can also work with Jeff Marshall. The initial contacts will still be Tom McCormick, Allan Johnson and Ted Beardsley. Any suggestions you have, get them to the Open Space Committee.

VII. NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Maxfield and Mrs. Yerger will not be able to attend the September 4 EAC meeting so they'd like to change it to September 11, 2007 if that is agreeable. EAC members will check and let Sandy Yerger know if that date is good. She said it can be the week after if that's better. She will send them an email to remind them so she can let Leslie know. EAC would like to ask Terry Clemons to attend the September meeting.

Mrs. Yerger said we need to make a final decision on the appraisals and where you want that in the process. If you look at Tom's process procedures, where does that fit in. We need to make an official recommendation and have that done for September. Who is going to pay, when are they going to pay, are you asking for money up front, etc. Review your minutes and bring it back to the September meeting.

Northampton County District Conservation workshop on September 8, 2007 from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, storm water flooding, a lot of issues we are going to be dealing with. It's free, just call and let Leslie know if you will attend.

Electronic Recycling – dates will be October 6 or 13, times will be 9 AM to noon – Ted Beardsley will confirm with the recycling place. Laura will put this on the website.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: Mr. Beardsley moved to adjourn. The time was 9:10 PM.
SECOND BY: Mr. Johnson
ROLL CALL: All in Favor: Yes
Opposed: None