

- A. **CALL TO ORDER:** The Environmental Advisory Council meeting of Lower Saucon Township was called to order on Tuesday, September 10, 2024 at 6:34 p.m. with Dru Germanoski, presiding.
- B. **ROLL CALL: Members:** Dru Germanoski, Jennifer Helton, Laura Ray, Chad Heimbecker, Allan Johnson, Kathy Pichel McGovern (arrived at 6:36 p.m.) & Cheyenne Reiman (arrived at 6:37 p.m.); **Associate Members:** Russell Sutton, **Staff:** Carol Schneider; **Absent Associate Members:** Winfield Clark & Janine Bohnam.
- C. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- D. **ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)** – None

II. **OPEN SPACE SUB-COMMITTEE**

1. **2024 - 01**

Dru Germanoski

Okay, there was no executive session. So, let's just move into the agenda, since we have enough voting members here to function, the first items were the two open space properties that were recently visited by the open space subcommittee. Here are summaries for everybody. I apologize that the first one, there's some multiple aerial photo images. Two of them, at least, are perfect duplicates. But I received different files at different points in time, somehow more and so the date is just presented sequentially, such that property 2024 number one, with the score sheet scored by myself, Jennifer, Russ and Kathy. Let the record show that Kathy Pichel McGovern has arrived (6:36 p.m). And pass this down, please to Kathy. Okay, so I have them ordered sequentially with our scores, and what I did differently this time compared to what I did with the first property we scored and discussed at the last meeting is note at the bottom of the score sheet, there is a space for notes, so I typed out information that substantiates our scoring above. Okay, one nice thing about this particular duplication of images is you can see better if you compare the first two aerial photos, the one that shows the property in light green, you can see the large tree canopy on the on the east side. But when you look at the at the other version of that Google Earth image, you can see the large stand of oak trees and mature vegetation. So that sort of represents some of the trees that I just discussed in the notes to say that there's a large forested area with oak trees. The main features of the property does have development potential, that the surrounding landscape is greatly developed. The linkage potential is to link with the rails to trail which runs adjacent to it. It has ag soils. The main hydrologic features is along. I want to be careful. I don't name the long road here, but along, be careful again. I believe it's reading drive. There's a spring fed perennial stream that's a cool water stream that they actually take water off of that channel and run it into a trout nursery. So, they have, in essence, it's not technically a hatchery, because they're not hatching fish there. So, I think a fish nursery would be a better description. It's Scenic. It's entirely underlain by carbonate geology. And fortuitously, Russ uses the rail to trail, and has done so at times after heavy precipitation, and has witnessed storm water being stored on that property, so it has storm water potential, storm water retention potential. So overall, it scored a 19 out of 23 we unanimously agreed that we should recommend to the EAC that we forward this to council for assessment and then to add it to the open space program. If everything follows suit, the individuals in charge of this property did express a strong interest in adding this to the open space program. It didn't strike us as they were just curious to see what might happen. They seem very interested. I think if there aren't questions, we can move this to a vote. Does anyone have questions or thoughts. Okay, all in favor for us to move this forward to Council for consideration into the open space program. Say, aye, So Carol, let the record show that it was unanimous support. I will give you copies of this, and then I'll email you. I'm sorry. It was 24 one, I guess, since there's no one here, we try to usually avoid names. It was the spring. It was the spring town sports. So, property 2024-01 one, I guess, would be the best way to describe it. I'll forward e copies of this to you tonight or tomorrow, and I'll give you copies. I'm sorry you too. Oh yes, thank you for that. I think I misspoke when I said the name of the property. We're not sure who owns that property. Thank you, Jennifer,

Allan Johnson

Where's the spring?

Dru Germanoski

The spring, there's not a spring, per se. The stream is a spring fed stream.

Allan Johnson

Is this a stream that goes through it?

Dru Germanoski

It goes through further over here, a little bit, little bit further to the east there. It's on the property, and Allan has it there, right here. I mean, Jennifer.

Allan Johnson

That's along the road.

Dru Germanoski

Those would stay. The rest of it would be the open space. There's actually two lines there.

Chad Heimbecker

Okay, that property division.

Allan Johnson

Goes down along the other side, Reading Road.

Dru Germanoski

Yeah, so usually when open space, when properties preserves open space, the portions, it's an envelope of use, it remains there. What they can't do is add new structures or change land use beyond that.

Chad Heimbecker

Okay, would there be any effort to connect us with some parking or Trailhead access to the Saucon Rail Trail?

Dru Germanoski

We never brought that up with them. I'm trying to think now, is that picture to be sensible?

Jennifer Helton

There's that bridge.

Chad Heimbecker

Is this where we gathered to do the road cleanup? Is this on?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

No it's not, it's in Bingen.

2. 2024 - 03

Dru Germanoski

Okay, so then, if you move forward in your packet there that I just distributed, the last three pages of that last three sheets are for property, 2024-03 this is kind of an interesting property because I saw it came through. You know, there was a moment in deja vu, because I knew that we had scored this property once before. And in fact, what happened was it was scored in 2017 the EAC at that juncture recommended to council that the property be included in the open space program. But then talking to the stewards of the property, they indicated that what happened was, before they get an assessment completed and so forth, covid 19 hit, and that just sort of derailed the whole process. So, we went and scored it anew, and we really had to, because number one, our score sheet changed between 2017 and now so, and we have a different EAC and a different open space subcommittee. So, in essence, I believe that certainly invalidated that old assessment record, and the property changed a bit, a little bit, so we did indeed rescore the

property. It has development potential. We didn't give it a five out of five, because it's a complex parcel, with some of it along Black River and on the Black River flood plain, which wouldn't be developable, but the majority of the property is developable, and because of its location, scenic view, the fact that one piece of adjacent property sold for a remarkably high cost, we use that as an indicator that it has great development potential. And so, we gave it a four out of five for that. There's no direct linkage. It's not an active farm. Does have ag soils. The hydrological features is Black River Runs through two borders of the property it sweeps around with the property line. It has sensitive natural features, insofar as there's the flood plain of Black River, as well as the forested riparian corridor. And in addition, one of the things that happened between 2017 and now is they're no longer simply cutting the fields to maintain sort of a cut meadow, but rather they're letting it reforest and move back to forest. It's carbonate geology entirely and scenic value. If you look at the property, you could easily imagine enjoying having a house on that property and looking out the windows or off the deck. It has storm water mitigation potential insofar as it has the flood plain of Black River, where, when it goes over bank, that water is being stored along that segment of flood plain, which reduces storm water transfer further downstream. So altogether, then we scored this a 15 out of 23 it is in an area of the township that's otherwise reasonably developed. So, it would be a bit of a somewhat of an oasis to have it remain as open space. So, the open space committee agreed that we should recommend to the EAC that we should make a recommendation to council to put this in the open space program and proceed with further property value assessment, etc. So, I open that up with for questions.

Allan Johnson

Did you notice the two bridges?

Dru Germanoski

Yeah, two bridges are there.

Allan Johnson

And the bridges are probably on the land where the easement would be. So how does that affect the township?

Dru Germanoski

I'm not sure how it affects the township. I think it I mean, with easements, we're not we don't become responsible. We don't buy those properties, so the property owners would still be responsible for maintenance. And it's an interesting property, because if I can't mention the name here, but it is something north three, there are multiple parcels involved in this whole thing. In this whole area, and there are multiple access points to it. So, it's kind of intriguing in the sense that the access road that we use connects to properties that, at the moment, are not allowed to use that access road, but they have another access road from other side. So, with development, there are two existing bridges, and there also is physically access from the other side. So, it seems that it could easily be developed with sufficient access for emergency vehicles, etc. So, it struck us as certainly developable. And also, I didn't mention on the last property the zoning was for the other property was an R 40. This was an R 80, rural and developable.

Allan Johnson

Well, those two bridges would never meet anybody's standards. Would never meet the township standards, would never meet the PA department standards.

Dru Germanoski

No, but it wouldn't. But that wouldn't prevent a developer from putting a new bridge in to provide access to private bridges. So, in other words, in and of themselves, they wouldn't negate further development of that landscape. It would just require that a developer build a new bridge, or two.

Allan Johnson

Bridges service those homes that are in that right behind the curtain. Yes, the air the Black River area.

Dru Germanoski

Again, the frontage would allow for new bridges to be constructed and provide access directly into this property.

Russell Sutton

And the sewer lines right there too.

Laura Ray

So, I had a question. I think, when this came before us a long time ago, weren't they looking for a purchase? And now it's definitely an easement, right?

Dru Germanoski

The conversations we had suggested easement.

Laura Ray

Because I think that was one of the hang ups before too was purchased.

Dru Germanoski

I'm sorry to cut you off, Laura, there was another complication, insofar as this is sort of an association that owns this property. And what has happened again in the passage from 2017 to now is the number of shareholders has contracted. So, there's fewer people that, from what we were told, were very interested in setting up the easement. So, I would think at this juncture what would happen in any case is we make our recommendation on our best assessment following the scoring and the environmental attributes of the property relative to our open space ethic. And then it's then would still go into a whole negotiation phase with the township and the landowners to discuss issues of, first of all, what the assessment would be, and then what the conditions would be. One other thing to complicate this a little is note the acreage is listed as 17.6 and I put an arrow into 19.5 and the property owners are not exactly sure what the exact acreage is, because there's conflicting information surrounding that. So, I think these would be things to be ironed out at the next phase of the assessment, and the actual discussion between the shareholders, as it were, and the township. So, we're sort of operating from that standpoint, that we would give it an environmental evaluation, follow the score sheet and make a recommendation from there, and then some of the details that normally, I think come out in that next step will run their course.

Laura Ray

Like I said, I think that was one of the things that held it up before was some of them wanted to sell and yeah, they he stated that that's where he's not interested in purchasing it outright.

Jennifer Helton

Yeah, I think they understand.

Dru Germanoski

I think that the shareholders actually own surrounding properties. And they want to keep it as open space, that seems to be their primary objectives, not to completely sell it. I suspect that, and this is, I'm just surmising this, the fact that they came back to us after a failed attempt, perhaps to sell it. They're probably looking at this more with eyes wide open, true.

Carol Schneider

Dru, I have a question or not a question, a comment. I know that the information that you gave us for 2024-02, I don't think we can move forward with the appraisal until we have an envelope distinguished of the property that they want to conserve.

Dru Germanoski

Yes.

Carol Schneider

So, what Sandy did in the past, she would come in and sit down and talk it over with the property owner to see what they wanted to conserve, okay, I mean, yeah, what they want to conserve versus what they wanted to keep. And then she would come in and talk to the zoning officer and sit with him and draw this envelope on the property, get it approved by the homeowner, and then we could move forward with the appraisal, because we need that information for the gentleman who's doing the appraisal.

Dru Germanoski

So, I would suggest, if it's okay, if we could vote on this recommendation, and then I will take the responsibility to retroact, retroactively, visit each of these three property owners ascertain where the line should be drawn and bring it into the to the acting planning officer if that's suitable. Because I think we want to continue to move forward. I don't think that. I mean, I think if we make our recommendation, is nothing but a recommendation, nothing's binding. And so, if, if the next step, if, if the township would conclude that, well, they're not, there's not enough open space here to preserve, they want to maintain development potential for a larger parcel, then that would, that would end the deal. But we can at least continue to move forward with this, rather than make this an agenda item, which, in my opinion, again, is really part of the negotiation between the township and the property owner, in much the same way that some of these other issues that used to be scorable, like availability, public access bargain sale. I mean, the reason we took them out of this of the assessment, the numerical assessment, was the individuals wouldn't know what the what the development potential would be valued at. So how could they make an assessment of whether they're willing to give a bargain sale, right? So, I would, I would view this the same way, but now, having gone through this, this way, going forward, every property will assess. We'll have that conversation at the outset. That is to say, where are we drawing the lines?

Chad Heimbecker

Can I make a couple of comments?

Dru Germanoski

Yes.

Chad Heimbecker

All right, so there's nothing in this scoring chart that reflects the size of the property. Can I make a recommendation that could be applied as a scoring point, because a larger parcel has more value in certain ways than others, okay, than something that's tiny postage stamp? So maybe that's one way to consider is when I teach my class, my passing grade for some of the coursework that I do is like 80% you know, right? That's kind of a threshold for me. So, the 2024-01 is that it's 82 and a half. So, it passes that something that's at 15 out of 23 does not so we you've mentioned this last meeting, that there's not necessarily a threshold that we go by on this, but if I personally was going to uphold a standard, I would say something should be A, B or above for me to want to say yes to this. The other side of this then is, you know, you drive past this, and it's nice to have this open space. Part of this property may be developed and part of it may be preserved. And there's maybe a way to look at it where this what is adjacent to the roadside along Friendensville Road here is preserved, but that the other property that's kind of sandwiched in other development areas could be sub parcel.

Dru Germanoski

I think, a big challenge that would require for development potential, they would have to subdivide these properties, I believe. And in this township, I really don't know. Well, I know a number of townships in this area, Lower Saucon is one that developers usually describe that as almost cost prohibitive, that subdividing parcels.

Chad Heimbecker

At a portion of it that runs with the river would make sense, you know what I mean. But maybe part of this in the back, where there's already four or five or six other houses, they're all sandwiched on top of each other.

Dru Germanoski

We were, from our standpoint that hill slope up there, what looks as a big field up here this portion of the property is the most desirable development property, and therefore the most important to preserve that as open space, rather than have it turn into at one point. What spurred this whole operation, this whole consortium of people who bought that property is condominiums were planned or proposed to go in there, and that's what directed them. So, it's that parcel that is the one that actually becomes the most important one to add to the open space program, because that's among the most developed property.

Chad Heimbecker

Potentially. If you took the portion to the east of this.

Dru Germanoski

To revisit the issue of scoring it as a percentage and 80% is required. I would say that, from my standpoint with this, I would think we would have to revisit the whole score sheet, because we went through this several years ago. But I personally, when I look at this, I still think that things should be scored somewhat differently than they are, or, I should say, valued, somewhat differently. And so, before I would be in favor of putting a threshold of 70% or 80% again, it's still an arbitrary mean in my class is 60% passing, that's a d minus. So yeah, but again, every time I go through this process, I find myself scratching my head at some of the valuation that we that we have in the score sheet, that some things I think should be worth more, right? And but I again, that's a I don't think we can or should at a regular meeting try to change any of the scoring system. I think that requires a more a more careful evaluation. When we did that the last time, we did consult with someone who does this sort of thing professionally, but think ag soil should be, should be worth more and so forth. For example.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

WeConservePA, they have a whole open space network in there. They have some webinars on creating and scoring, and, you know, it's not uniform, but it was very interesting to learn what, what is it that they're looking for, you know? So, it was worthwhile to watch, to just give you a perspective, because I'm a beginner too, so it helps you understand what is like, what is it that and how did these, how did these different categories even come about in the first place?

Chad Heimbecker

Yeah, well, I mean, I would want to say yes to every property that you put before us, right? I'd want to preserve and protect every square inch that we possibly can. But at some point, that doesn't, it's not realistic. So where do we conserve? Draw the line in some ways.

Dru Germanoski

And sometimes we have, there are places that really don't score close, like 10, that's a harder sell to argue that, and especially if development potential is low, if it's not developable, it takes care of itself. I understand your question and your perspective.

Russell Sutton

It's desirable too. I mean, you could have a small plot of property that is desirable more so that a bigger, bigger acreage that's not, that's not, you know, pretty to look at, or you want to preserve. It could be a mess on that, but you could have a small piece of property that looks nicer that you'd want to probably preserve more than the larger area. So, it's hard to do a percentage, because each one has its individual values.

Dru Germanoski

One of the interesting things missing here, for example, is, you know, banks these days, of course, require phase one investigations of properties to see what their past use was before they'll consider a loan, because in many cases, the past uses could have had significant impacts on groundwater contamination, leaky underground storage tanks, heavy metals in this landscape, slag. And so, it's kind of ironic that in many

respects, we don't have a scoring item to consider past land use and whether the land has a potential to actually be heavily contaminated and become a liability. So, this is imperfect, that is for sure.

Russell Sutton

Because you can own property and they could mine underneath it, and if you don't have the mining rights, I mean, that's another example. You wouldn't even know it's there.

Allan Johnson

Well, talking about previous uses this area in the front here, along Friendensville Road, used to be a commercial swimming pool.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yeah, he said that, yeah, he asked me if I swam in it.

Allan Johnson

When I visited it. You could still see some of the concrete that was used for foundations and stuff.

Dru Germanoski

Funny, I forgot that we were aware of that during our previous site visit. So, are we ready to vote on whether to move this forward with the recommendation of Council? All in favor? Aye. Cheyenne, did you vote for that? I don't want to put a vote in your mouth.

Cheyenne Rieman

I'm still looking at this. I'm a little confused. So, they bought it with the intention of preserving it?

Dru Germanoski

Well, not developing it, as long as they own it. They could control it. What ends up happening, of course, is and that the primary, what we call him, sort of the president?

Jennifer Helton

The president of the association.

Dru Germanoski

President of the association. He reiterated several times that none of them are getting any younger, and so their concern becomes having this, the next generation making different decisions.

Cheyenne Rieman

I understand that. I'm just, I guess my only reservation is, is it so I'm like, I'm reading, like, the zoning with the R 80 there and see, like what it is. I guess I'm looking at it from the standpoint of, is that a prime, developable lot, from a developer standpoint, and we're spending money on compared to others, that might be better. So, it's like working within a budget, I guess is where I'm kind of hung up, right? You know? So, I'm looking at this, and I'm like, between the water that you have running through it, and what you'd have to do, lot, wise and improvements, I personally don't feel like it would be a prime site for that type of development. I don't see it getting through.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

They just sold a different property for a million some, right? One point 1,000,000.5 right? An adjacent property, somebody sold their lot, right? That's what I thought. So, I'm sure, if you would see it, I'm sure a developer would make something happen there.

Dru Germanoski

That large parcel up there in this aerial photo looks like an open field that now has some trees, is all perfectly developable. There's nothing to mitigate that. The views are strong.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

The creeks on the very bottom of...

Cheyenne Rieman

Does it have sewer yet?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yes.

Dru Germanoski

It has direct access to it.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

The creeks down by the river.

Cheyenne Rieman

I know the parcel well and I know the parcel behind it as well, like, so, I mean, I know the ground, and that's where I'm just kind of like, I don't see it being one of the prime sites that would be.

Dru Germanoski

So what? What does our vote turn out to be? Those in favor raise their hand and we can get a better count. Those are not in favor....

Cheyenne Rieman

I'll be in favor of it. It's not the worst one. I just, I guess. I just want to make sure that we aren't missing an opportunity somewhere that could be better, but until that presents itself, who knows what that would be? What you have.

Chad Heimbecker

How many other properties do we have in the queue?

Dru Germanoski

None in the queue now.

Cheyenne Rieman

And that's what I mean. Like, I'm Pennsylvania Dutch. I got to be stingy about it and make it stretch.

Dru Germanoski

The one thing that is actually interesting is, in the bigger scheme of things, is how much open space is there still available to actually preserve? I mean, it is. It's going but, and we're not at, we're nowhere near close to not having sufficient funding. This is not an either-or situation that we're in. Normally, correct me, Allan, you've been involved in this the longest. And Laura Ray, probably right the same. You were on open space, Laura, you've been on the EAC. Is it fair to say that two or three applicants a year is pretty much a reasonable number of what we've seen?

Laura Ray

Yeah, we've never been swamped any year.

Dru Germanoski

So just for perspective, I don't remember ever having more than three maybe four to look at, and some of the ones we looked at, there were reasons not to move forward with a positive recommendation. And we, in fact, several years ago, solicited large property owners directly to inform them about the open space program to encourage them to consider entering and it really didn't create an uptick.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

We discussed doing that again, because it's been, I guess, quite a while, and, you know, people change, and we were talking about reinventing that wheel, seeing if there's people in the township that would be interested, that may be unaware, maybe they're a new owner, or whatever.

Dru Germanoski

This should this could be another good opportunity for us to do that. And you're right. People change. Property owners have changed as well. That's something I think we can discuss more completely, and we're going to have, I'd like to just say that I intend to have an open space discussion more large the next meeting that want to put on the agenda? I distributed the one bit of information that shows what the referendum says, so that at the moment, technically, I think our agenda item was to discuss these two properties rather than. Open space, but it is something I think we should discuss more completely. The other thing I would encourage everyone to do, because what always happens to me, I'm sure happens to most of you, right on the eve of our meetings, there's sort of a mad scramble. You're trying to read everything on the agenda and any complimentary or background information, it's hard to get it done. So that's why I'm bringing this up looking forward, and that is in particular to look at the open space program, as described on our website. There's actually a fairly comprehensive document there that would be useful to read moving forward, I'm going to get my computer woke up again so I can get back to the agenda. Okay, new business on.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Introduction of New Members, Kathy Pichel McGovern & Chad Heimbecker

Dru Germanoski

Okay, new business on. The introduction of new members. We have new full voting members. They are Kathy McGovern and Chad Heimbecker, so welcome to and we all know you to a voting status, which is you've both been very active. And I just want to say for the record, you've been good members as Associate members, you've been good contributing members to this committee. And thank you for stepping up to the next level, and this will make it easier for us to continue to function effectively with a quorum. Everybody has busy professional lives, children, maybe caring for elderly parents. It's easy to miss a meeting for a very good, legitimate reason. So, you're stepping forward helps us tremendously.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I also want to say for the record, thank you for your kind words, Laura, because I did listen to Lower Saucon Township council meeting at 2:10 am, it was not flattering.

Laura Ray

When this one came up?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Not flattering, however, Laura was lovely. Thank you.

Laura Ray

It was a battle.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Laura was a little tired at 2am but she hung in there for us. So, Chad, you know she had, she had little sleepy eyes going on.

Chad Heimbecker

Ridiculous.

B. Associate Member Vacancy (Advertised on Township Website, Facebook and Constant Contact)

Dru Germanoski

And then that brings us, it segues us right into the next item, which is, we have two Associate Member positions available. It's they're advertised, but it would be good for us to talk to people who might have an interest or expertise that would that would benefit this committee's work and agenda and such. In such cases, people will often ask existing members of a committee, what do they do? How can I contribute? So, you can all serve as ambassadors in that regard, and you may have neighbors, friends that you are aware of, that have the particular expertise and the desirability of putting the service time into the into the township.

Russell Sutton

You know, I spoke to two people already,

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yes, saying we had no applicants?

Carol Schneider

We had one, they need to get more information back to me.

Dru Germanoski

So hopefully, I mean, it would be great if by the next meeting, we have several applications and resumes and statement of purpose and interest, and hopefully we can discuss these candidates, what had happened for most of the years of my experience on this committee. And again, I rely on Allan and then Laura Ray, who have more experience than I do, then normally, applicants files would come to this committee for review, and then we would make a recommendation to township Council, and they would deliberate, and then make the appointments. That hasn't always been the way it has gone, but for the majority years that I've been involved, that was my experience, and that was what I experienced when I expressed an interest in serving. So hopefully we will have applicants, and we can assess their interest levels and backgrounds, and hopefully we can enrich the expertise on this committee.

Chad Heimbecker

What about the student position?

Dru Germanoski

And the student position, that's, again, usually it comes from students applying. Right now, I don't think there are students on council. Are there?

Carol Schneider

It goes before Council at one of the upcoming meetings, and once it goes before Council, they will start.

Dru Germanoski

There is a person or two? Okay, we've been underrepresented sometimes, sometimes perfectly seated with respect to students there. Again, talk to your neighbors if you know of ambitious young people in the school system in particular. That's the easiest way. Or someone that is being home schooled.

C. Baseline Water Quality Data Program (KPM)

Dru Germanoski

What have you the next item is the baseline water quality data program, as I understand the sequence of events, Kathy did some snooping, right and found this through the Pennsylvania municipal leaders funding and resource guide. I thought you were the one that discovered it. It's not important in terms of our current discussion.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

That's Oh yes, yes, yes, yes.

Dru Germanoski

Because you've been in a very active Associate Member. Yes, you work your way through the PA municipal leaders funding and resource guide, because this was actually buried in there when I wanted, I had to do a word search to find it.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

And I've read it too. That's where I came up. And was like, okay.

Dru Germanoski

I thought what I would do, because of my geology and hydrogeology expertise, I looked into this, and so I'd be willing to give you an assessment of where we stand and the viability.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

So, the idea was, it was an idea because I saw it. We were discussing with Springtown and the watershed, and we hadn't done an evaluation in years, years, and like since 1990's.

Jennifer Helton

I think that was all based off their...

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Correct and that's when I saw that, because we were discussing it here and that would be nice to see where we are now and to evaluate our own water source. That was the, yes. I remember now, yes, yes, yes, and it's a grant.

Dru Germanoski

Right. When I look into this. Let me give you a little bit more background for perspective. So, one of the key questions here is this grant is designed to establish baseline water quality data for private wells or springs, private water supply sources. So, one of the things I did was contact the Lower Saucon Water Authority to try to get a sense of where they have water service available to township residents versus where township residents are pretty much limited to their own water supply. Their website says that about 56 or 5700 township residents are supplied by them, and by and large. This isn't perfect, but I know that I was able to see a map of the water supply system, which I can't share because this translates into homeland security issues. They don't want water supply pipelines. All this I experienced a lot of my professional life, information on dams, all sorts of things that used to be readily available, just turned black. But this is a, this is a, this is a fair assessment. They provide water more or less west of Hellertown to Steel City to the north and a bit to the south, roughly to say light still. So, if you imagine the township line converging at a point to the south, you can kind of draw a line at roughly Leithsville, give or take, east, west. And so, people south of that line, east of Hellertown, north of Hellertown, excluding Steel City and some of the apple butter road corridor, for a portion of it, have access to public water, in essence, through the Lower Saucon Authority. So, everybody east of that, everybody at the extreme southern part of the township and the extreme northeast part of the township, do not have access to public water, so that would be the portion of our residents who have to have rely on private water supply. Okay, so that's who we're talking about. Of course, the municipal water supplies are tested and evaluated. Hellertown, in the middle of the sort of Lower Saucon surround envelope, has their own water supply. Furthermore, it's important to realize that, unlike sewage, if you have access to public sewage, you have to hook up. If you have access to public water, you are not required to be connected. So, some people within these envelopes of having water available through Lower Saucon Authority are not connected. So, there's also people scattered in that general region I mentioned that are restricted to or have restricted themselves to public water. At the outset, I think, in discussing this previously, I pointed out something that's really rather ignominious for Pennsylvania to claim, that we're one of three states that doesn't require. Require water testing for public water use, any private water use. So that's where we stand. Any individual can have their water tested on their own. To get back to the specifics of this grant, this requires a significant effort to write a proposal, and it requires, in fact, that it be written by a

professional licensed geologist. I am one. I could do that, but to do this in a way that I would feel that the grant would have a legitimate chance of being funded would require a lot of manpower be identified and brought it to bear to sample. One of the things that's really strange about these sorts of things are, at a glance, you might think that people would love to have their water, their private water supplies, tested, because they would want to know. To give you an example of why people were sometimes surprisingly reluctant. We can cite the Palmerton area as an example. Much of that landscape is a Superfund site from you can keep contamination from New Jersey zinc, keep it people in that area are very reluctant to have anybody sample their soil, their groundwater, because the double-edged sword of sampling is the good edge of the sword lets them know what their soil quality is and their water quality the other side of the sword might limit their property values dramatically. So, things of this sort usually are not as obviously attractive to residents because of what they might find out that might compromise their property value, might require them to do with their water supply. So, this would be a huge lift. Are the results published? I'm sorry, often when you have public monies involved, I'm not sure I would have that. And matter, imagine what would happen is they would not publish the results of any individual's property, but there would be a statistical summary number of wells were tested. These are the range of values. These are the parameters that were evaluated. This ultimately is available statewide. It was, it was the outcome of the development of Marcellus Shale development, where they there is a strong push to try to get background data, and in fact, the residents want that background data so that they can determine and ascertain whether local Marcellus development is responsible for a change in water quality. I think because it's public funded, it has to be available to the state, because ultimately, these are state funds. So even though we're outside of Marcellus natural gas development year, we would be eligible to submit a proposal. But I think the impetus of residents is much less, because unless there's impending land use change around them that they might be concerned would impact what they believe to be high water quality to begin with. There's really no motivation for people. What I think might be a more sensible approach, maybe to publicize to the township residents and have private water supply that there are opportunities for them to have their water tested and evaluated. It would be done so privately. Usually, those results get published too as broad-based summary data. For example, there is data on Northampton County right now. Through most of this testing that's readily available is through the Penn State Extension. We'll do it twice. You have to pay for your it's a modest fee. It's actually a really equivalent of a discounted fee to have your water tested. And you could choose what level of testing you want, the standard testing, which does things like pH, total dissolved solid total bacteria, E coli bacteria. And then there are higher levels of testing that the price scale goes along with it. In that case, I think we could effectuate some change in this area to get people to look into their water supply in more of a private manner by publicizing it somehow, either through our EAC website or through maybe having a blurb put in the next or one of the upcoming township newsletters. We just received the township newsletter this week, and so something I think we could discuss. I did. Reach out to Penn State Extension, Northampton, Penn State Extension, people to see if there, if there's a shorter, more direct set of links where residents can directly see what's available to them. It's, it's a, again, to use the metaphor of a double-edged sword, there's a plethora of information on the Penn State Extension. The challenge is sometimes it can be difficult to find out what's readily available to you. And cut right to the chase with what kind of testing is available. What's tested, they do a great job of describing the issues. Of describing, they have videos that explain how you might interpret data if you had your water tested. So, I would think that a sensible thing for us to consider moving forward might be to better publicize some of this and share information with township residents and see if we can at least improve the situation that way. So adverse to someone writing a grant and going after these funds. I could just say, from a personal, professional moment, I'm not I have too much research going on otherwise right now to do it myself.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Two comments. One is Penn State Extension, the Co Op is in by Gracedale. You know, I'm talking about the names escaping right now. They have, like, every four months, they do have free well water testing. I had that information available, so that's one thing you can give to the public. That's fine, just so maybe I misunderstood. I thought when Springtown came here, we were discussing more our of where Lower Saucon Townships, water is coming from, what the quality of the water

is in the volume, because we were talking about how it changes. So, I wasn't looking at this particular grant, and maybe I was again, and I apologize, I was looking at lower Saucon Townships water quality. I was looking at lower Saucon Townships availability of water because we were discussing re, reevaluating and reassessing the whole watershed. At that meeting, we were talking about it. We were, you know, so somewhere in there maybe I got my wires mixed. I wasn't talking about testing my Well, her well, and his well, and trying to get an overall picture of Lower Saucon's quad. It was more of, do we have enough? You know, where is it coming from? That because that's what we were discussing at that meeting. So, I assumed, as I was reading this, because it gets very technical, it wasn't more about a well. It was more about the water, the overall water source.

Dru Germanoski

The issue, though, is where it becomes the well issue is to try to actually assess the quality of the water you need groundwater samples. And so, the only places you can legitimately get groundwater samples are either in existing wells or program of drilling new wells for the purpose of laundering, which is very would go through \$250,000 in a blink with that. Or it's spring sources. But you, you, you have to have what we call ground truthing of water quality. You have to collect samples. There's no other way. Springs are tricky and can be misleading insofar as there are several levels of springs that exist. You might recall from my presentation previously, there are some very shallow source springs, and then there are deeper bedrock springs, with some shallow source springs, you could get very non representative water quality that's strongly influenced by biology in the in the shallow system. Just as an example, without getting into detail, I experience this reasonably often, where people come to me and say, someone is contaminating my water with petroleum. And I say, well, how do you know? Did you test it? No, but I can see the sheen that you see at when a gas, when there's a little gas built a gas station, even in a puddle. And usually when I'm told that, I know that's not petroleum at all, but there's a bacteria that metabolizes iron loosely. It's the one of the names for it is, I'm not sure if this is species or a genus is bacillus, and some people call it iron bacillus because it metabolizes iron. It's pretty common in any landscape that has iron in the minerals. And so, you see this sheen in in a wetland or a spring. And. Immediately assume it must be petroleum, but it's a simple natural metabolite of these bacteria. And so, if you sample those shallow water sometimes you will get a bad water quality reading, but it may be reflective of only a small area and even a seasonal, seasonal impact. So really, to get a true assessment of groundwater requires deeper water wells, and so that's why I jumped to the well testing, because otherwise you could model things with a lot of assumptions, but if you model things with a lot of assumptions, the value of the outcome is based on the quality of your assumptions. Now a thought might and so, stepping back further to the to the Springtown visit, that was somewhat of a motivation for this. They paid to have that; I think I should even mention the I'm pretty sure I know who the consulting firm was. It did it, but I don't think that's putting in the record again without it for sure. But they had paid a well-known groundwater consulting firm to evaluate it, and they did testing of wells and so forth, and that's a very expensive endeavor. So, we would this, it would be an interesting question to see if this type of program would pay for an assessment from an existing consulting firm that made this may be a source of funding to try to apply for that scenario at the township level. As I mentioned, I think at our last meeting, it's very difficult for me to imagine Lower Saucon Township paying for a similar study for private wells, because it would. There's not a cost benefit to the township, per se. Interestingly enough, I did talk to my friend who's on the Hellertown Water Authority to ask if they ever did a similar study. You recall I said I would do that, and I finally did. And in the time that he's been on the board, they haven't or on the authority and they must not have done any time recently, because he would have been aware of that information. Someone on the history of that board or authority would have said, oh, by the way, we did this study. DEP samples their water, for example. And he's done some assessment of spring source for those springs, but they've not undergone a similar assessment. And I think the main reason is it's very expensive. And so, what they're doing, which I think is legitimate approach, is to have DEP and do their own testing of the water coming out of the spring. And until that water passes some threshold of being unsuitable, right, they're not going to invest in it. So, I think we have a custom, and I think it's great that you dug this out that I'm not going to personally sweep off the table right now. This gives me food for thought, because down the line.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

So, the next question is, do we have enough water? We being Lower Saucon Township, Hellertown, Springtown. So, you almost wonder if you could get townships together to do this grant, which is not an EAC, you know, I saw it, and I were discussing it.

Dru Germanoski

You would end up, though, with to be able to spread out to other townships. The watershed boundaries are going to dictate whether they're interested. So, the minute you go further south of the drainage divides between us and the southern townships and authorities that they're not going to be interested because they're out. And the way this township is situated, we're pretty much in the Lower Saucon watershed. And so, it's going to be hard to find allies, I would just say, to assuage concerns, or do we have enough water for the current land use distribution, the data suggests that we do.

Allan Johnson

How about future developments?

Dru Germanoski

That's why we have the open space program.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Right? It all kind of ties together.

Allan Johnson

Right? You know, we can't take all the land. I mean, there's going to be developer just like these people that want to build this thing across the street. Fortunately, it's public water supply. But I'm sure there's developers looking around to see what they can build out there where we live. So, you know, that's the thing they keep building without doing any research about how much water is in the ground. As part of the discussion that we had with Springtown, I looked up the recent study that they did, that Springfield Township did, and in there, they have a wellhead...

Dru Germanoski

Protection area?

Allan Johnson

Wellhead Protection ordinance, which goes into effect like for any property where you have more than three homes. I guess it's not for an individual property. It's very extensive. You should look it up, and we should have something like that in our township too.

Dru Germanoski

I mean, one thing I would say, just again, to generally assuage fears that the two-acre lot size minimum helps us substantially, because that that generally is designed to offset concerns of significant impervious cover. Lawns often generate more runoff than people imagine. Good dense lawns do offset some of the groundwater recharge and water seeping the ground, but it's still an order of magnitude greater than impervious surface and pavement and so forth. So, I would just say, from my years living here and my knowledge of this landscape, I'm not worrying about, will we have sufficient water? Water quality isn't always an ongoing issue, and the only thing that gives me pause is this most recent push in this region to put warehouses in the warehouses are by definition impervious rooftops and the paved parking areas around them are paved and the access roads are paved, and that generates impervious surfaces. That would be an area where, I think, if we're trying to manage water resources, that would be the first place to look. Fortunately, again, our main water recharge areas are these reading prong upland landscapes. The only real threat we have to impervious surface of upland landscapes is the obvious one. It's converting a forested mountain to the north end of the landscape to let two landfills, which have, by definition, impervious liners at the base and impervious covers on top. That's the biggest single threat we have in this township. Unfortunately,

as well, we don't have control over the landscape of at the core of our low lands in the Bethlehem area, which used to be in coke works, where we have a proliferation of landfills and any other of our lowland carbonate, the range, which are also recharge areas, warehouses are a major threat to water recharge.

Russell Sutton

Where the coke work was, that's all warehouses. That's wall-to-wall warehouses. And it's all paved, yes, so there's, it's all impervious there.

Dru Germanoski

And a lot of that was already, in essence, somewhat impervious. Were they dumped more slag. As soon as that mineralogical precipitation happens, when that slag cools and evolves, that generally becomes impervious too. So maybe a conversation for us to put on an agenda at a future time is a question of land use and warehouse development is a direct threat to groundwater recharge and groundwater resource management.

Russell Sutton

Well, I know the Lower Saucon Water Authority, they purchased their water from Bethlehem because we get analysis from it all Steel City is Bethlehem water.

Dru Germanoski

Right. Yeah, the authority gets their water or Lower Saucon Authority gets their water from them, which is mostly Pocono source water. And I think they have some agreement with Hellertown Water Authority to augment it.

Jennifer Helton

Can I add something to new business next time I meant to I sent Cathy a note about, did we have a budget? She came back and said, it'd be great if we worked on a budget and there was a small budget that's put under conservation. But I think that would be a great thing to work on so that we can propose it.

Dru Germanoski

So, you're suggesting that we look into this for another meeting.

Jennifer Helton

I don't want to go into realize it wasn't there.

Dru Germanoski

Yes, because there are opportunities to attend education, to meetings, to already existing consortiums or environmental agencies.

Jennifer Helton

They have supplies, dues, community events, contribution and minor equipment that go on to this budget. So, I could just ask that it be added. We can do a budget, and we'll know.

Laura Ray

Budget season coming up.

Jennifer Helton

Yeah, so we could add that.

Russell Sutton

We have another hearing this priority in Northampton County Court for the environmental easement for the dump. So, it's not it's nine o'clock courtroom 10 Northampton County again, and that's for Bethlehem Township and for the DNL to be parties.

Dru Germanoski

There was a good attendance at that last hearing. So hopefully people attend, if they can, I intend to be there as a show of support. And it's also educational.

Russell Sutton

Well, I went through Bethlehem Township and made them people aware that mountain can go away, and what they're looking at and what can happen there, and how it will impact their lives. So, I'm hopefully I'm getting them to attend. So, it's not just this township problem. It's a multiple township problem all along Lehigh there, right? So not just our problem, it's their problem as well.

Dru Germanoski

And like many of these things, people are unaware. Generally, we're unaware of so many things. And I think that's a prime example. When they hear landfill expansion, they just think of the footprint as it stands and move a little bit more up Applebutter a little bit to the south and or to the west, and don't realize what this really involved. So okay, we have no developer items. There's no public comment. So that brings us to updates and reports. We'll work our way through them, step by step. We have some great stuff to discuss here and to just make ourselves aware of we'll begin Allan with Climate Action Plan update from you.

IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS - NONE

V. PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

VI. UPDATES/REPORTS

A. Climate Action Plan Update (AJ)

Allan Johnson

Well, like I told you last week, the Climate Action Plan has not started yet. What's going on right now is the act 167, storm water management plan. So, I attended the second meeting, which was on August the 15th, and they finally got around to publishing their presentation. I just got it yesterday. I sent it to everybody in an email. Did you get it?

Chad Heimbecker

Yes.

Allan Johnson

So, everybody can read through this themselves. There's just a couple of things that I wanted to mention, land use and land cover changes in Lehigh County and Northampton County are a big thing because there's been a lot of development that's going on, and all the development increases the impervious coverage areas, and the impervious coverage areas increase the amount of stormwater runoff. I've underlined a couple of things here just to read them to recap, one of the purposes is to create a consistent, up to date stormwater ordinance, which is pretty much the same for the whole Lehigh County and Northampton County area. Everybody will be expected to include that in their local ordinances, and Part of that will be to update the hydraulic analysis to reevaluate the runoff control standards. They talked a lot about that at the meeting, but I didn't understand it, because I couldn't hear the speaker. They're kind of like in a data acquiring phase right now. They have a lot of different ways that they're going to acquire data of existing land use and vegetation cover and streams, and one of the ways that they plan to acquire data is to have each township fill out a survey of some kind or another. Laura, did you see whether or not Lower Saucon got the survey from them yet?

Laura Ray

It doesn't ring a bell.

Allan Johnson

I'd like to know what it is when you get it. Okay, county responsibilities, where. The county's responsibility is to consult with the municipalities through the watershed plan advisory committee. So, a watershed plan advisory committee is going to be created by the counties, and we'll see what that's going to be all about when they reveal it. The municipal responsibility, that's where we come in. Participate in the planned development. Review the draft plan and provide comments, adopt the necessary ordinances to control stormwater runoff after the plan is approved by DEP and implement the plan through enforcement of new stormwater ordinance. That's a lot of stuff that townships are going to have to do. They're also investigating water quality levels, and if I remember from one of the plans that are on the website that includes, you know, just actual chemicals. So that'll be interesting to see how they're going to do that, and what they come up with. So, an interesting thing is that detention basins control the rate of storm water, you know, runoff into the streams, but not the volume, because eventually the basins are emptied and you get the full volume of the storm. Increased volume can cause increased flows downstream in the watershed. See, they're worrying about the whole watershed.

Russell Sutton

So, when you're speaking about retention basins, I know in my development township put the retention basins in, but I don't maintain so I actually had to rent a piece of equipment to clean down because they refused to clean out. So over time with this sort of silk, and it's not functional. So, I actually had to rent a machine cleaned out, so the Township doesn't clean out. Which they should. They put it in.

Allan Johnson

I don't know, from what I remember. It's, it's the responsibility of the person who owns the property that the detention basin is on to maintain the detention basin.

Dru Germanoski

But that, again, is one of those rather poorly publicized realities. Yeah, we once had as an aside, one of our most interesting open space application was from an individual on Granite Hill who had a flood water retention pond parcel on their property, they wanted us to consider preserving it as open space, so a way to offset the cost, perhaps, of paying for a piece of equipment to maintain it right.

Allan Johnson

One of the things they did at the meeting was they asked us to submit, gave us a piece of paper to write it down on what problem areas we could remember in our in our township. So, I submitted the intersection of Easton Road and Lower Saucon Road, because I know that floods all the time. And I submitted Hellertown Water Street and Main Street intersection, because I know they have a lot of flooding problems down there. And I submitted the Applebutter Road area behind the treatment plan where that tight curve is, yep, that floods there. Those are the three things that I could think of. So that's the kind of information they're looking for.

Russell Sutton

Also, Saucon Creek crosses the highway the main road there that floods out too sometimes, since they raised the bridge, it's not much, not as bad of a problem as it used to be, because at some point you couldn't get through here that used to flood, really bad.

Allan Johnson

And they mentioned in this handout possible ordinance changes. One of them is a green infrastructure standard. And I think what they mean by that is they're going to try to use green infrastructure on properties, on properties that somebody wants to develop, to retain the storm water on the property. I think that's going to be the main, the main way that they want to do it, the preferred way. And if the developer can demonstrate that that's impossible, then I think they'll allow them to go to the type of

a thing where they dig like a French drain in the ground, and they drain the storm water into it. Which makes me want to ask you the question, what do you think about that way of getting rid of storm water, as far as the soaking into the ground?

Dru Germanoski

And it's a design. It's like everything. It's complex in this respect, if you have non carbonate terrain, usually that's a reasonable thing to do. And if your water is coming in in reasonable quality, where's it? Where is it being collected? Okay, where it becomes tricky is when you're in carbonate rocks, and when you start feeding water into the subsurface, and you don't know what the subsurface dissolution channels look like in the rock, these can floodwater retention ponds often trigger sinkholes in carbonate landscapes often and so it can be dicey to because then You're doing something, you're pushing something the subsurface, relatively blindly, unless you do intensive geophysics and drilling to see what the quality of bedrock is, you might be generating sinkholes. Quick example, if you remember concept science is exploding up by the airport industrial area some years ago that when the fire suppression system came in, and then they went and tried to suppress the fire that flood water retention pond right next to it had a remarkable sinkhole with a throat right into a cave system. So, you have to be careful in carbon its why carbonates are sensitive environmentally. Okay.

Allan Johnson

One more possible ordinance change that I wanted to mention, which I don't know exactly why they put this in here, but they must have a reason for it. Solar arrays to help manage stormwater, and, of course, the riparian buffer standards probably going to be changed. In this small detention infiltration, bio retention standards will be changed. Yeah, that's it.

Chad Heimbecker

Can I ask something that? Oh, maybe it's okay. So, educate me a little bit here we talk about the ordinances, maybe looking at them, when they get, they're going to get revised. There's What's the timeline?

Allan Johnson

This whole program will probably take two years.

Chad Heimbecker

So, we talk about the development in this township with regards to warehouses, impervious services, and where are we at this point right now, where I guess, what happens to that water? Right?

Dru Germanoski

In a site-by-site basis, usually with development, they use the existing stormwater management regulations as their limits and guidelines.

Chad Heimbecker

From 91 or right, as we discovered.

Dru Germanoski

They will, then, when the engineers develop the plan for the site, they'll follow the best standard practices, best practices regulations, and develop the site plan within that context, and generally speaking, as long as they're meeting the standards of the stormwater management regulations that goes forward.

Allan Johnson

The thing is, they're going to change those standards because the existing ones haven't been doing a good job. So that's what this is all about. This plan study.

Chad Heimbecker

What other like you were saying, what other solutions that and technologies exist out there, rather than just a retention pond, is there some other collection device that you can meter the flow out at a slower rate?

Dru Germanoski

Those are the sorts of things that the hydrologist engineers will evaluate.

Allan Johnson

And one of the things that they're really going to push is, is vegetation on the site. So, if somebody buys, you know, like, say, five acres of land, they want to put up a big building, and they find out that they won't be able to put up as big a building as they want to, because they got to use two acres to plant rain gardens, to keep the water on their land. So, it's going to restrain, I think, the size of the developments that can go on the existing properties. It's just the ideas that I get from reading the latest stormwater plan that's been developed. It is the Monocacy Creek watershed stormwater plan that has all the latest explanations in it.

Chad Heimbecker

Okay. On the solar end of things, I've seen some new technologies with solar going over agricultural fields and canals, where it helps the water be retained instead of evaporating off farmlands, right? So, it was interesting new technologies and ways to use that solar surface in different environments where you wouldn't get compounding benefits from it.

Allan Johnson

It can decrease the evaporation. That would be good, right?

Dru Germanoski

Okay, so moving on.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Hang on, there is a member of the community that texted me, and we have to go back a step or two. She wants it on the record that there are six wells in Steel City, and she wants to make sure that we're aware that there are still wells and Steel City, it's not all Bethlehem water.

Russell Sutton

I have my own well yet, and most people, everybody in there, has their own wells.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Well, you must have a neighbor, because she just texted me and she wants me to put it on the minutes. Do you pay for your own water?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

No, I don't.

Chad Heimbecker

Do you pay for your own water? Do you do that annually? Regularly?

Russell Sutton

It's every three months.

Chad Heimbecker

Oh, okay, right here.

Russell Sutton

Lower Saucon Authority,

Chad Heimbecker

Okay, you take a water sample over?

Russell Sutton

It's Bethlehem water. So, when they do their analysis, I look at that basically Bethel water. But my Well, I had tested my water, my water was okay, decontaminated, but my wells down 360 feet too.

Chad Heimbecker

Okay. But just to clarify this program that this grant that we could apply for potentially would cover for individual residents. Yes, it pays for individual residents that have their wells tested.

Dru Germanoski

It has to be part of what this has to be, there has to be a research plan put into place. You can't simply write a simple grant and say; we would like you to pay for residents to have their water sample. And then you're trying to establish a baseline. You would have to establish a set of protocols for why you want to sample the wells you want to sample. It would be a standard research proposal that you'd have to submit as I read this.

Chad Heimbecker

With the impact of the landfill and the surrounding....

Dru Germanoski

That can be part of your impetus, but your sampling pattern, your sampling protocols and where you want to sample would have to be couched within the existence of the landfill.

Chad Heimbecker

But this isn't just to say, like as a resident, I can apply and get a no.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

It's much more comprehensive than that.

Russell Sutton

Before I built up there, I asked the township, was there a chance of city water coming up to Steel City? And they said, No. Two years later, after I spent 10 grand for holding ground, they were going to tap my cap, my well. And I said, No way. I said the same thing. They told us; I just built a house there. How long is the landfill going to be up there? Four to five years. They said that to me in 1983 everybody's moved up there, built a house that said the same thing in the township.

Chad Heimbecker

Do you have a reverse osmosis or anything?

Russell Sutton

No, no, I just have filters on it.

Chad Heimbecker

Okay, there was, there was a member of the community here, maybe three, three meetings ago. He talked about having it.

Russell Sutton

Some people out there have water treatment systems.

Dru Germanoski

That's all, yeah, costs. if you have a private well or a spring, it's it is your responsibility to treat your water to meet your home standard. That's what I believe is crazy from the state, lack of regulation.

Okay, so moving on through other updates and reports. This brings us to tire recycling. Kathy, you can give us update on that.

B. Tire Recycling Program September 14, 2024 (KPM)

Kathy Pichel McGovern

We are having a tire recycling program on Saturday from nine to 12. I need help. God bless Carol and Cathy and Kathy from Hellertown. Oh, my God, they've been lovely. I just hope it's successful.

Dru Germanoski

Thank you for setting that all up.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Thank you.

Chad Heimbecker

I want to be there. Unfortunately, I'm having an 11-year old's birthday sleepover party the night before.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Girl or boy?

Chad Heimbecker

Boy, I'm not I don't know if I can commit to being there.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I would appreciate if you can come. I understand if you cannot come, you might need, like, a couple shots of espresso, espresso. Nine to 12. I'm going to be there at eight.

Chad Heimbecker

Do you think you have enough help?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I think so. I don't know. We'll see. Did you catch that?

C. Volunteer Sign-up Sheet Fall Clean Earth Recycling on September 28, 2024 (CH)

Dru Germanoski

Two weeks later, September 28th we have the fall clean up, earth, recycling. So, Chad, that brings you needs help as a point person.

Chad Heimbecker

I think we're okay. My son's soccer game got moved from that day, so I'm completely open. I have no conflicts. I'll be there the whole time.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yeah, because I don't remember what I put down.

Chad Heimbecker

Everybody, I think we have plenty. We're good. Put it in your calendar.

Dru Germanoski

I'm out of town that weekend, and I'm tied up with college business this Saturday.

D. Bethlehem Landfill Fall Clean Up for Residents on October 5, 2024

Dru Germanoski

Bethlehem landfill, fall cleanup coupons for residents on October 5, 2024

E. WeConservePA - EAC Fall Gathering Saturday, October 5, 2024, \$75.00 fee (JH)

Dru Germanoski

Jennifer, you raised the issue of, if we have a budget, I think in connection with the WeConservePA event. Is that true?

Jennifer Helton

Well, my point for bringing up the budget, I mean, real quickly was why not be members? I mean, we get a lot, but if there's a membership and we budget for it, then that was part of the best discussion. But the EAC, normally we do around right? And you submit in the past for this fall conference. How do you want us to do it this year? To cover it?

Carol Schneider

I thought that you were going to bring it up last month.

Jennifer Helton

It wasn't open. We did bring it up.

Carol Schneider

It was brought up to Laura, so that she could bring it up to Council to approve the fees.

Laura Ray

They didn't have it open for registration. So, we didn't even know any of the numbers.

Carol Schneider

I thought I had \$75 written on the last agenda, I did call to confirm.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

By the way, while you're talking about that, for we, were not members, I know. So, if we can be members, then you would get a discounted and then you would have accessibility to other things, right? I asked, and they said, no, Lower Saucon Township, EAC, is not a member, right?

Chad Heimbecker

Is this the remote or on site? One again, on site and have the information on anything last time? No, they hadn't opened it. So, registration is what in three days.

Jennifer Helton

They want to close it by the 13th.

Laura Ray

No, that's just early registration.

Dru Germanoski

Jennifer, maybe, I don't know if Carol's picking you up on the microphone there either.

Chad Heimbecker

October 5.

Jennifer Helton

It's October 5. That's the date of the event, yeah, and it's at Temple, Temple campus. And so, it's \$75 if we do it by Friday, \$95 after that per person.

Dru Germanoski

Looking forward, what does membership cost? Do you know?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yeah, I don't on the top my head.

Jennifer Helton

I don't, I looked it up.

Chad Heimbecker

10/5 is the landfill.

Jennifer Helton

We're not doing anything with that.

Chad Heimbecker

We're not attending.

Jennifer Helton

That's just an information.

Chad Heimbecker

I have a game at 10:45 so I won't be able to make this anyway.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I'm at a wedding New York, but I would like if we, if we could be a member, I that would be because there's a lot of other information in there.

Jennifer Helton

Laura, do you plan on going?

Chad Heimbecker

I would do remote.

Russell Sutton

I would do remote too.

Laura Ray

Yeah, I don't know that they offer that.

Jennifer Helton

They do some, but not this, not this.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Are you looking to go?

Laura Ray

I might like to go. Yes, I think they don't have to be somewhere else.

Dru Germanoski

Wait, I'm the only one going to the field conference of Pennsylvania geologists that weekend?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

You are. You could take my place and go to a wedding, and I'll go to the geologist conference.

Chad Heimbecker

Anybody want to go to soccer game?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I'm good.

Dru Germanoski

So, what we should think about too, then, is whether we should, going forward, look into trying to fund EAC to belong to WeConservePA right? If there's programming and information that would benefit our functioning, then that would seem like a sensible thing to do.

Jennifer Helton

So back to this. Is there two of us that want to go?

Laura Ray

That's all, that's all I hear.

Jennifer Helton

So, what do we need to do? I mean, there is budget dollars in there.

Dru Germanoski

If there are budget dollars, we should be able to request that directly from the township manager, right? Or does that go through Council?

Carol Schneider

It has to be voted on by council. I did have this on the August 13 agenda with the \$75 fee and then I guess it was tabled this month. Last year, I think what we did was, Laura brought it up to council. They approved it for \$75 which was or whatever the fee was, the discounted fee, they approved the discounted fee, and anything after that, you paid for it, and then we reimburse.

Jennifer Helton

I don't, I don't remember it being a reimbursement. I'm pretty sure I went and you all paid for it, you took the names, you submitted it, and it got, well, okay.

Carol Schneider

There are different segments that you have to fill out yourself.

Jennifer Helton

I'm just saying, what happened last year.

Carol Schneider

Okay.

Jennifer Helton

Yeah, because I didn't get reimbursed. I didn't pay.

Dru Germanoski

Pose the appropriate step here, if people are interested in going that we make a motion that township provide funding to township council to provide funding for one or more members to attend.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

And we have the monies in our budget.

Jennifer Helton

Well, the budget that's there under conservation.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yeah, so even though we have an allocated EAC budget, it's not EAC....

Jennifer Helton

Not EAC, It says conservation.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Oh, is that the hang up?

Carol Schneider

Don't forget that the Electronics Recycling is \$5,500. And if that wasn't budgeted for that will be coming out. And then you have the tire recycling. That's another item that is coming out.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I thought it was an EAC, I apologize.

Cheyenne Rieman

Why aren't we soliciting sponsorships for that stuff locally?

Jennifer Helton

So can we get the budget for us to work on next time, what we've paid out last year and this year, just so we know when we submit.

Carol Schneider

I can see if Cathy can do that.

Jennifer Helton

Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

Dru Germanoski

You had a question? Cheyenne?

Cheyenne Rieman

Why don't we try to solicit sponsorships for some of those things to offset costs?

Dru Germanoski

Things such as tire recycling?

Cheyenne Rieman

Yeah, like local businesses, if they're interested in, you know, sponsoring the event.

Dru Germanoski

I think we probably haven't done it because it's been hard enough for us just to get it scheduled on short notice. But if, on the other hand, we're looking forward to say next year's agenda or next year's now that we're functioning as a more aggressive EAC now, I think we have a better sense of what sorts of things we will try to sponsor and given time, then perhaps we could try to solicit support. That would be my sense of it. But I think the reason we have it is has just been that it's been difficult enough just to plan these things.

F. Determine Date for Fall Adopt-A-Road Cleanup (KPM) - Tabled until October

Dru Germanoski

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of things we will try to sponsor and given time, then perhaps we could try to solicit support. That would be my sense of it. But I think the reason we have it is has just been that it's been difficult enough just to plan these things. Okay, so then that brings us to Fall Adopt a road cleanup.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yeah, we're going to postpone that talk to October.

Dru Germanoski

Okay, that usually happens later. We don't do it this time of year, we're dead.

G. Plastic Bag Ban

Dru Germanoski

Okay, that usually happens later. We don't do it this time of year, we're dead. And then that brings us to plastic bag ban. You did notice I again this issue of last-minute things, put together a list of links to provide information on a potential plastic bag ban. My Laura is going to take the lead here in a moment. But I would just say one thing that reading through the literature. Two things, one, watching one of our Lower Saucon Township meetings makes clear to me that if we want to try to promulgate a plastic bag ban, it behooves us, for all reasons, to be thorough in our evaluation. The it was a it was brought up at the New York Times, article was brought up at the township meeting that was represented as an example of how California's plastic bag ban was complete failure. But in reality. If you read that article and then dig into the literature, the preponderance of data and evidence that I read indicate that plastic bag Single use, plastic bag bans can be very effective, the devil was in the details that to do it effectively, one has to be a group, a city, a township, a state, has to be very careful in developing their plan. The biggest failure of the California plastic single use plastic bag ban was to replace them with so called multi use plastic bags, which were just slightly more muscular single use plastic bags that were available for 10 cents each, which people then just threw out. That's not a failure of a plastic single use plastic bag ban, that's a failure of a single use plastic bag ban that was not well thought out and designed to have people use reusable bags over and over and over again, as opposed to 10 or 20 cent bags.

Jennifer Helton

And if I could add I want to be sure that when we bring up a topic, it's for research. I felt that the EAC was looking into it, we're exploring it, and for the record, it was not something that we were proposing to go forward to council or anything. And I think we should feel comfortable about having these discussions and knowing that we shouldn't feel uncomfortable about doing the research, finding the evidence and having the facts to support it before we go forward. So, I just like to make sure that's on the record.

Dru Germanoski

Yeah, and in this case, I think this is really important that we do a little more research on this. And so, I'll leave it there, because Laura Ray, I may already have said things you wanted to cover, but I just think we should be comprehensive and careful.

Laura Ray

Yeah. So, this, really, I see this as being we need to have, like, a separate little subgroup to work on this, because we don't all want to sit here and talk for two hours on plastic bags. So, I think a subgroup to do some research. I'd like to figure out who wants to be involved. So as long as we don't have a quorum, we can go ahead. I have a zoom call set up for whoever wants to be involved in this group with Feran Savitz from Penn Environment for September 24 which is, I just lost it, I think it's a Tuesday.

Dru Germanoski

Sorry, Laura, could you repeat that?

Laura Ray

September 24 Yeah, it's a Tuesday night. So, in two weeks, going to do a zoom call in the evening with Feran Savitz from Penn Environment, and he's worked with a bunch of municipalities on doing these bands, mostly in southeastern Pennsylvania, tons of information, so I can share the links that he provided and lots of facts and figures, but I when I talked to him, I said, we really kind of need some guidance on how do you How do you start doing where do you start? How to do it in a logical manner, how to get your community on board, how to discuss with businesses. So, it's not something you just ram through in, you know, the next meeting, where you have it on the agenda and we're think we're making a ban. It doesn't work like that. It's a long process to make sure you do it right and make sure people are on board with it. So, if I can have the names of who wants to be involved in this little subgroup, I can make sure you get the link and join. Russ?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I want to but man, I'm spread so thin. I am spread so thin, but I'd like to at least learn September 24 I'm sorry. Excuse me. Jennifer, 24.

Jennifer Helton

Were we able to solicit in on the Zoom and then just for FYI Laura, or does that make it a commit quorum?

Laura Ray

I know that's where they have to be careful, guys. So, it's like, if you're interested in working on this, moving forward down the road, definitely attend. And I'm gonna, you know, invite the people that have reached out to me from general public that are interested. And also, with our cohort in Hellertown Borough, because they're interested in the same thing.

Dru Germanoski

For two weeks from now, I would like to participate in that.

Laura Ray

Ok.

Dru Germanoski

I'm sorry, I can't hear you... Okay, you want to comment on that? Yeah, yeah. Chad wants to comment. We met with that, you know, Lauren House from Allentown, EAC convened that meeting a couple of weeks ago.

Laura Ray

I mean, I'm not going into any detail about plastic bags. No, I'm not going into any detail about it. Like I said, it's really should be work from for a subgroup on the side, because it's going to take time and a lot of research and discussions, etc.

Chad Heimbecker

I don't want to cut over you.

Allan Johnson

Are you going to report any of your discussions to the general group?

Laura Ray

Yeah, we can come back with a summary, you know, whenever we're starting getting somewhere.

Jennifer Helton

Yeah, and I think it's just a point subgroup updates, and maybe that's what we get with what you're doing. Allan, is summary, quick summary.

Dru Germanoski

I think we're okay to establish a subgroup to do research on something and then come back and to collaborate with others. That's just, that's fact finding and research. I think we're fine.

Chad Heimbecker

Okay. Allentown EAC visited us a few months ago. Their intern was here, Lauren and we were invited to be involved with a discussion group that they had at Northampton Community College a week or two ago. Basically, what they are looking for is an information Warehouse portal, a communication portal, or a blog, a forum or some sort of platform to host all of the regional environmental committees to have a talk, a chat board, messaging board to put up ordinances and other information to Share events that are going on like a calendar. So, it was a fact-finding conversation to figure out what everybody's scope would be. In the requirements of the software tool, they presented three different options. A couple of them are free with some limited functionality. Some require some monthly maintenance. We could we can serve. Pa was brought up at one point as well. We can serve, if you it's something, I don't want to get the numbers completely, totally wrong, but in the ballpark of a few \$100 or like something, like a percentage of your budget goes towards your membership to be a part of we can serve PA. But when you they do this, they can set up a sub site on their website that allows you to have a bulletin board where you can post information to as well. So, they sent out Allentown sent out a survey and summary of notes. I can distribute that email that I got to the group. Okay, I'll make sure everybody gets that. So go through, we'll have a summary of what the meeting notes were. And then again, if there's any suggestions on the technology or the platform on how we would move forward.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I hope, I hope it gets I hope it gets momentum. It's a great idea.

Chad Heimbecker

You put these kind of again, like we've had here, and, you know, in other events, you put people who are motivated in the room together, and stuff gets done, right, right, right? And so, there was good energy in the discussion. Lots of people were involved. I would say there was probably between the online. And what I saw in the room was probably about 30, or, you know, three dozen people were there.

Dru Germanoski

Russ participated and that was good to see.

Chad Heimbecker

There was a few of us. You were there, right?

Jennifer Helton

I was there, yeah, after I got the right link,

Kathy Pichel McGovern

You're welcome. Yeah, it's exciting.

Chad Heimbecker

I asked some questions. I do it and website development myself, so I'm kind of proficient with some of these tools and platforms they were using. And I tried to give them some advice on which ways to go and what you know, but we'll see where they go.

Allan Johnson

Yeah, that was my take off from the meeting was that I had no experience with any of those platforms. It sounded to me like it was going to be a real learning curve for me to learn how to use those.

Kathy Pichel McGovern
They're more user friendly.

Allan Johnson
I know that I'm an old guy.

Kathy Pichel McGovern
So am I.

Allan Johnson
Everybody else has probably use these things that work.

Kathy Pichel McGovern
No, no, they're not as they're not as cumbersome as you might think. They're more user friendly than they used to be.

Chad Heimbecker
But ultimately, it would be a question of each environmental committee in the area electing a representative who would be the person who has access to this system and to post things to it as well. I think it wasn't just going to be open. They have to have limited you know, you pay per user for some of these things. But it's interesting, you know, for all of us to be in this area, Lehigh Valley, to be more open and increase dialog.

VII.

OLD/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

A. Review and Approval of August 13, 2024 Minutes

Dru Germanoski

Okay, that brings us to reliving August 13, the review of the minutes from August 13. So did I did I follow the same procedure I did last time I went through the minutes and sent Carol a page of corrections or suggested changes to things that I spoke to. And so that's great. We can move forward with the minutes. Normally, what we've always done in the past is everybody would well, hopefully everybody would read through the minutes and take notes and then make suggestions to Carol. What has happened this year is we have been more active as a committee. Therefore, our minutes have turned into hours, and so trying to find an efficient way to go through the minutes effectively, again, I suggest that the minutes now are presented a little bit easier to work with by attributing statements to individuals. So, I think the most efficient way to do this now and going forward, as if everyone takes it upon themselves to look at what they said. And then we collectively can look at the aspect of minutes that may involve people that aren't here, such as when we have a visitor or something like that. And then we can rely on our collective memories to try to make sure things are recorded accurately. So, as I said, I went through all of my comments, and Carol has them. And so, with that, I open the floor to anybody making comments. Or I know Alan at the last meeting, you turned in written comments. So however, we can read proceed effectively if you've done that again. That's great, but I opened the floor to corrections or changes.

Allan Johnson

Yeah, that's what I did again. I'll give these to Carol, okay, unless you want to hear them, there's eight pages.

Dru Germanoski

Being facetious when I said we were going to relive this.

Chad Heimbecker

I read the minutes and I have no comment,

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Same.

Jennifer Helton

Same.

Dru Germanoski

Okay, so I'm going to make a motion that we will accept the minutes as corrected by Allan's written comments, my written comments, and anybody else who had suggestions for Carol. Is that good? All in favor? Aye. Okay, that brings us to adjournment. Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Laura Ray

Before we adjourn, just make sure I will be putting this on the next council agenda to request funding, or I will put this on the next council agenda to request funding for the EAC conference. We're not under how many people, but it's not too many.

Jennifer Helton

So, at this point, it's two.

Dru Germanoski

It's probably best to just suggest two at this moment, because then that's a viewer, that's a smaller...

Laura Ray

So actually, the meeting before, whenever we had requested money to do a postcard mailing while we never did that. So, you know what I mean? Like, they did make a big fuss about it, but we never...

Kathy Pichel McGovern

A big fuss.

Laura Ray

Because of the timing, was really hard for us to try to put together a postcard to do for the recycling's that were all coming up real quick.

Dru Germanoski

Yes, I think we've agreed to have you put that on the agenda. That's everyone's nodding in the affirmative. Okay, so that motion to adjourn from Chad. Do we have a second?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

I second.

Dru Germanoski

All in favor. Aye.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: Chad moved for adjournment. The time was 8:17 p.m.

SECOND BY: Kathy, 7-0

Next EAC Meeting: October 8, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.