

APPROVED OCTOBER 23, 2008



THORNBURY TOWNSHIP
DELAWARE COUNTY
Sewer Committee
6 Township Drive
Cheyney, PA 19319-1020
www.thornbury.org

Brian MacEwen, Chairman
George Morley, Vice-Chairman

Jack Howley
R. Ted Jacquet
Susan Ricciuti

MINUTES
Thornbury Township Sewer Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 25, 2008

The Thornbury Township Sewer Committee held a public meeting on Thursday, September 25, 2008 at the Township Administration Building, 6 Township Drive, Cheyney, Pennsylvania. Chairman MacEwen called the meeting to order.

PRESENT: Brian MacEwen, Chairman Ted Jacquet
George Morley, Vice-Chairman Jack Howley
Susan Ricciuti

ABSENT: 0

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC: 15

AGENDA

Chairman MacEwen reviewed the Agenda, which included:

- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes – August 28, 2008
- Old Business/New Business
 - West Side Sewer Project
 - Township Manager's Report
- Next Meeting – October 23, 2008
- Adjournment

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Howley, seconded by Mr. Morley, all members present voted "aye" to approve the minutes from the August 28, 2008 meeting, as corrected.

A discussion ensued regarding the number of EDUs reserved. Mr. Morley explained that the planning module allows 61 units to connect because they are along the existing lines and an additional 101 existing family residents will be added, for a total of 162. Mr. Kelly (Supervisor) stated that the Concord Sewer Authority asked the Township to project and reserve the number of EDUs needed and the Board reserved 161 EDUs. We do not have a complete built out scenario.

Mr. MacEwen explained to the audience that the Sewer Committee was an advisory committee to the Board of Supervisors and reviews sewer issues. Developers (Blantyre, Mill Creek and Wawa) made infrastructure improvements that ultimately benefit the Township. We are looking at trying to find the most cost effective, fair, and well design system that existing residents can tie into. Also, Pennoni, the Township's Sewer Engineer, will give overview and the options they investigated. Afterwards, the public may comment.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

West Side Sewer Project

Present: Jim McCann, Pennoni Associates
J.P. Kelly, Supervisor

Mr. McCann stated that the Township has been working on sewerage neighborhoods in western portion to include the Brinton Lea and Thornhill areas. Both areas were combined into a single sewer district. After receiving comments from the residents and recommendations from the Sewer Committee the Board entered into an agreement with Concord Twp. Sewer Auth. to accept the additional flows from 161 units in Thornbury Twp. Thornbury prepared an application for DEP stating that Thornbury will sewer these areas with low pressure sewers. The planning module will go to DEP once it is signed by the Delaware County Planning Commission, the Township's Planning Commission, and by Concord Twp. Sewer Auth. DEP will review the application and once approved, plans will be finalized and they go back to DEP for approval to construct the sewers. Approvals are expected by late spring. Sewers will be constructed for all of the homes in the proposed sewer district, as the Township agreed to purchase sewer capacity for all of those homes. The project will cost about \$1.8 million to construct the sewers. Other issues to discuss are: (1) how the \$1.8 million will be financed; (2) obtaining right-of-ways for the construction along state highways; and (3) whether the Township should investigate requests for hybrid systems (gravity in lieu of low pressure system for pocket areas). It would cost about \$5,000 more per home to put in gravity rather than low pressure. The cost will vary due to the home's location. Mr. McCann recommended that the Committee goes to Board in next few weeks asking for authorization to proceed with the design of sewer system. Currently about 90% of the Brinton Lea sewer design has been completed, but no design has been done for the Thornhill area yet. Once the planning module is approved then the Township may proceed with the issues of prevailing wage and stream crossings. Per Mr. Howley's question, Mr. Kelly stated \$1.8 million covered the costs to construct the sewer lines, reimburse the developers, and engineering. Low pressure sewers are planned for all 161 homes and \$1.8 million divided by 161 homes equals about \$11,200 per home for these capital improvements. This does not include the connection. Low pressure was the most cost effective way

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to provide sewers. Mr. Howley noted that according to a cost comparison, over a 20 year period, there is an additional \$14,000 cost to the home owner for a low pressure system. Mr. Kelly stated that it is time to act and that low pressure was the most economical way to sewer these areas. Mr. Morley stated that surveys were conducted at homes on State roads and there were not many people who wanted to hook up. If only the following roads were sewered: Stone Ridge, Woodridge, Lake, Denise, David, and Elaine, then could the few homes from the State roads connect through an easement? This could reduce the cost considerable because a lot of the cost is for the State road permits. Also, could pockets of gravity be considered, and if so, how would they work with the design?

Mrs. Ricciuti stated that many homes were not built for gravity sewers and that low pressure has the lowest infrastructure cost. However, after the design is established, then a determination should be made as to which legs can be reasonably served by gravity. Then have Pennoni look at those reasonable areas and provide a cost comparison to the residents.

Mr. Kelly stated that a gravity system is impossible for everyone, but a choice in upgrading your system may be possible for some residents, if public right-of-ways can be utilized and the residents are willing to bear the costs.

Mr. MacEwen stated the Board is currently working on financing the plan to spread the costs and get the lowest possible interest rate. The Board wants to service the debt over as many years as possible. Home owners will have an option to pay up front or in quarterly installments.

Unknown woman from the audience asked how a home would qualify for gravity. Mr. McCann stated that it would be part of the final design. Mr. Kelly stated that until engineering is done, it may be difficult to place a line in a stormwater or utility easement. The easement may need to be increased, and there may be trees, wetlands, and obstacles of that nature that need to be addressed as well.

Mr. Lacey, 22 David Dr., stated that difference in cost is \$5,000 between gravity and low pressure. The hook up cost for gravity is \$4,000 and low pressure is \$9,500. Therefore gravity is \$500 cheaper with no maintenance cost. Mr. McCann explained that only about 20% of homes could be sewered by gravity due to topography and low pressure has the lowest initial cost. For the first 10 years the costs are lower for low pressure. The break even point is approximately 15 years and at 20 years gravity ends up being lower in cost. The unknown man recommended a sewer tax if everyone is to get sewers. Mr. MacEwen noted that the Township will not be sewerage everyone. Mr. McCann

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stated that every 10 years Thornbury must update Act 537 (sewer plan) and once approved, it must be implemented.

Unknown woman from the audience suggested a study be done and put it in a recommendation to the Board. Mr. MacEwen concurred. Mr. Morley questioned if the residents should obtain their own engineer or should Pennoni do it, and if Pennoni does it, how many residents will pay Pennoni the extra money?

Joseph Briemann, (unknown address), stated that engineering and legal costs are miniscule compared to the \$1.8 million. The Board must do what is best for the residents on the whole.

Mr. Lacey suggested a 2-tiered system, so if you want a gravity system, you pay an extra \$5,000, and less for low pressure. Mr. McCann stated that under the tapping fee regulation, all the costs must be divided by the number of homes. In order for people to pay a different amount, you would have to create a different sewer district. Mr. Morley felt that an answer from a lawyer was warranted.

Mr. Morley felt that if the sewer line was brought up the storm drain across Elaine Dr., what prevents people from David Dr. from connecting to it? Where do we draw the line? Also, how do you know people will pay for it. You will not know the cost until you get the design, and you cannot do the design until you know the number of homes?

Mr. Lacey felt the Township was going with the cheapest initial cost but long-term most expensive system, rather than look at a 20 year overview. Mr. Morley stated that there needs to be a firm number of people willing to pay the extra for gravity.

Harriet Lacey, 22 David Dr., stated that Pennoni must do the engineering. Residents should not have to bring in another company if they want to go with a gravity system.

Mr. Howley asked what the procedure would be to sewer the pockets. Mr. McCann stated that the residents must first be polled and told it would cost around \$5,000 more for gravity. Then a separate sewer district must be created for these pockets. Mr. McCann felt the solicitor should investigate this possibility. Also, someone would have to go to the homes who want gravity to investigate if they could go with gravity by determining the elevation of the lateral coming out of the homes. Also, easements must be sought. Mr. Howley stated he has people willing to grant an easement for the gravity system.

Mr. Ye, 14 Woodridge Rd., The Township did their best to get the least expensive way to supply public sewers to the public.

Mr. Brielmann suggested the Township move forward on Brinton Lea and continue to work on Thornhill.

Mr. McCann stated that there would be no additional time involved to redesign the pockets who want gravity, as the Township will be waiting for stream/wetland approval, and approval from DEP and PennDOT. There is time between now and March to do the redesign work. In March, the final documents are planned to go out for bid.

Mr. MacEwen stated that assuming the Board gave the OK to proceed, Mr. Howley would then supply information from his neighbors to Pennoni.

Motion: On a motion by Mr. Morley, seconded by Mr. Jacquet, all members voted “aye” to recommend to the Board of Supervisors the following:

1. Have Pennoni investigate the feasibility of designing, constructing, and determining the incremental cost for possible "pockets of gravity sewers" where public easements or r/w's could be used that would result in a hybrid (i.e., low pressure and gravity) system in Brinton Lea and Thornhill; and
2. have the solicitor investigate if the existing stormwater easement in Thornhill is a general utility easement or is it specific to only stormwater (i.e., between the Howley/Connley, Frazier/Snyder, and Malloy/Conchisiani properties); and
3. have the solicitor investigate if different tapping fee amounts could be established for gravity and low pressure customers (without setting up a separate sewer district as concern was raised by Jim McCann that PA tapping fee law may not allow differentiation of tapping fees between neighboring homes if one is on gravity and one is on low pressure); and
4. since the Brinton Lea area bid documents are approximately 85-90% done, recommend the Township proceed with two separate timetables for the construction of Brinton Lea and Thornhill areas. Allow Brinton Lea to proceed with permitting where it could be advertised for bids in early 2009, while concurrently proceeding with the design work on the Thornhill area (LP or hybrid); and if the Thornhill design and permitting is completed such that it can be bid with the Brinton Lea project in the spring of 2009, then consider bidding the project as one large contract.

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Note: Ted Jacquet moved to amend the above motion, Mrs. Ricciuti seconded the amendment, all members voted “aye”, to include that the three State roads where public sewers are proposed (i.e., Dilworthtown, Glen Mills, and Brinton Lake) **NOT** be excluded from the project. (It was discussed at a previous meeting that these roads would be excluded from the project.)

Mr. McCann asked to be informed immediately if any areas are to be deleted from the sewer project, as it may affect the needed permits.

Mrs. Ricciuti and Mr. Morley performed surveys on the State roads and there was very little interest. If people do not want it then what are the ramifications. Mr. McCann stated that the Township will sewer the properties and the Board will purchase sewer capacity from Concord. Mr. Morley felt the costs could be reduced by those on State roads connecting through an interior road easement. Mr. McCann stated that the EDUs could not be reassigned. Once DEP approved it, the Township has a legal obligation to provide the sewer capacity to those homes shown on the plan.

Per Mr. Howley’s question, Mr. McCann stated it would cost the residents between \$1 and \$80,000 for the easement.

Mr. Brielmann felt the burden is outweighed by the benefits.

Township Manager’s Report – No report this month.

NEXT MEETING – October 23, 2008

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Jacquet, seconded by Mr. Morley, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Zitarelli
Sewer Committee Secretary

cc: Sewer Committee Members	Ted McCandless, Code Administrator
Board of Supervisors	Lloyd Noll, Township Sewer Engineer
James McCann, PE, Township Sewer Engineer	Robert P. Anderman, Esq.
Jeffrey Seagraves, Township Manager	Suzanne Howat
Elizabeth Geoghegan, Subdivision Coordinator	