

APPROVED SEPTEMBER 24, 2009



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

George Morley, Chairman
Brian MacEwen, Vice-Chairman

Jack Howley
R. Ted Jacquet
Susan Ricciuti

MINUTES
Thornbury Township Sewer Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 27, 2009

The Thornbury Township Sewer Committee held a public meeting on Thursday, August 27, 2009 at the Township Administration Building, 6 Township Drive, Cheyney, Pennsylvania. Chairman Morley called the meeting to order.

PRESENT: George Morley, Chairman
Brian MacEwen, Vice Chairman

Jack Howley
Ted Jacquet
Susan Ricciuti

ABSENT: 0

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC: 50

AGENDA

Chairman Morley reviewed the Agenda, as follows:

- PUBLIC COMMENT
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
 - July 23, 2009 – Regular Meeting
- OLD BUSINESS
 - Discussion of Questions Raised at Board of Supervisors Hearing
- NEW BUSINESS
 - Township Manager's Report
- NEXT MEETING – Thursday, September 24, 2009
- ADJOURNMENT

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Jacquet and seconded by Mr. MacEwen, all members voted "aye" to approve the July 23, 2009 meeting minutes, as presented. Mrs. Ricciuti abstained due to her absence.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of Questions Raised at Board of Sueprvisors Hearing:

Present: Jim McCann, P.E., Pennoni Associates, Thornbury Township Sewer Engineer

MINUTES – SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009
PAGE 2

Mr. Morley thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. The Sewer Committee will try to answer most of the questions and any unanswered questions will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. The continuation date for the sewer ordinance hearing is Sept. 15 and should include extra information. The Board is currently working on finalizing the financial costs, including interest rates. The Sewer Committee is an ad hoc committee, formed in 2004, which makes no decisions, and only provides recommendations to the Board. The sewer district began as 2 separate districts, Thornhill and Brinton Lea, and over time, Dilworthtown Rd. and Brinton Lake Rd. were added. It is now one large district.

Mr. McCann, presented the proposed layout for sewerering of the west side. Mr. McCann noted this is essentially the same color-coded plan as discussed last spring. Yellow denotes lots with public sewers. Rose denotes lots that have public sewer in the streets by developers, such as Judith La., Long La, and the south side of Elaine Dr. Green contains the Thornhill area and denotes lots to be sewerered by low-pressure sewers, such as Denise Dr., David Dr., Elaine Dr., and part of Brinton Lake Rd. Blue contains the Brinton Lea area and denotes lots to be sewerered by low-pressure sewers, such as portions of Glen Mills Rd., Stoneridge Dr., Woodridge Rd., Lake Rd., and part of Brinton Lake Rd. The Board chose low-pressure sewers, because the installation cost is 50 to 100% cheaper than gravity sewers and gravity would require numerous pumping stations in the low areas. Low-pressure sewers are designed to be installed in the shoulder of road. To install a 2-3 in. low-pressure sewer line the contractor digs a jacking pit, about 4-5 ft. wide, 8-10 ft. long, and 4-5 ft. deep, and then does directional drilling underground down the road 400-500 ft. to a receiving pit. In front of each home the contractor will provide a stub-out for the homeowner to connect to the low-pressure sewer. For homes with a low-pressure sewer, the homeowner will need to purchase a small residential sewage pump costing about \$3,500 to be installed by plumber and run a 1 ¼ in. line to tie into street line. The plumber will cost about \$6,500. The cost will vary according to the location of the homeowner's septic tank. The Township is negotiating with a pump supplier to buy about 100 pumps at a reduced price. Mr. Morley noted that bulk buying could save the homeowner up to 20% on the price of a pump. Mr. McCann felt the costs associated with pumping out the old tank and filling it in would be included in the above \$10,000.

Mr. Morley read a statement by the Board of Supervisors on their progress (see attached). Also, there will be a joint meeting between the Sewer Committee and the Board of Supervisors. We are still in an information gathering mode and the Township has hired a financial consultant to assist with obtaining the best financial arrangement.

MINUTES – SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009
PAGE 3

Mr. McCann explained that the master plan includes the entire Township, but tonight we are discussing only the western side of the Township. There is a similar plan for the eastern side, but at this time there are no plans by Township to construct public sewers outside of what was put in by developers.

Howard Cooper, 206 Dilworthtown Rd, asked why a formal vote was not taken. Mr. Morley explained that the Sewer Committee have canvassed door to door. Not everyone answered and in most cases a survey form was left for them to respond. In certain areas we received positive responses and other areas got negative responses. The only plus with a bad economy is that we can get better pricing. The Board will think hard about costs before they implement this.

Howard Cooper, 206 Dilworthtown Rd., felt the Board was pushing their agenda. Mr. Morley stated that before this is implemented we will have to know if homeowners are interested. The final cost cannot be determined until it goes out to bid. You will have to pay your fair share of the infrastructure, but you don't have to hook up immediately.

Henry Salmon, 30 Longview Dr. and Tammy Trainor, 14 Longview Dr. stated that about 3 years ago they were surveyed due to Blantyre going in and was told that it needed to go down their road for the builder and that we would not have to pay for it until you hook up and the Township was working this out with the builder. Now you tell me we have to pay for it. Mr. Morley stated that the Township worked out the best deal possible with the developers for Cherry Creek, Blantyre, Mill Creek, and Wawa. The Township felt that there should not be a benefit for one street over another street, so to be fair; everyone who has a chance to hook up should pay 1/162 of the infrastructure cost. Mr. Salmon stated that Mr. Seagraves told him they would take it under advisement. They are reneging on what they told us.

Valerie Kolaga, 186 Dilworthtown Rd., asked why is it the responsibility of the Township to pay for the sewer lines put in by the developers. Mr. Morley stated the developers wanted to put in their own plants and the Township thought it was better to put the sewer line in so that the neighbors could eventually tie in. Mr. McCann explained that a developer has the right to have public sewer for his property and if a sewer line is 3 blocks away the Board cannot tell him he can't run a line down the road. If the Township does not have capacity, the builder can build a treatment plant and get approval, so the developer can force the Township to put a sewer line in. If a developer runs a line down a street and for period of 10 years if any homeowners tie into that line, they are required to reimburse the Township, who in turn will reimburse the developer. In fact, no one had to go to the neighbors and ask for permission.

MINUTES – SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009
PAGE 4

Unidentified audience member – stated the Township could have waited 10 years and not have paid the developers. It sounds like a done deal.

Steve White, 29 Longview Dr., ask who from Longview wants to tie in. Mr. McCann stated that there are some people on Longview who want to tie in. Mr. White stated that his neighbor put in a new system and he has the right to tie into his neighbor's system. Mr. McCann explained that it is illegal to tie into your neighbor's system, unless it was an emergency with the understanding that when public sewers come in you would then tie into the public system. With a failing system you would have to tie into the public system. When your system fails, you will not be able to get a permit from the Township to put in another system if public sewers are available.

Curt Weaver, 451 Brinton Lake Rd., stated that he heard the total cost per home was about \$15,000. Mr. McCann stated the current estimate is less than \$15,000 per home.

Stuart Lacy, 22 David Dr. asked what is happening with the negotiations. Mr. Morley stated that the Sewer Committee was not involved in the negotiations, but those figures will be release as soon as the negotiations are finalized. Mr. Lacy wanted the Board to know that the residents are frustrated, as they don't have final costs.

Mr. MacEwen stated that there is \$1 million for the infrastructure divided by 162 homes is about \$6,100, plus \$2,860 for capacity fee for Concord Twp., plus \$5,000 or less for the developers, plus \$9,000 to \$10,000 to connect your system to the street, which totals about \$23,000 to \$24,000.

Unidentified audience member asked how long pumps last. Mr. McCann stated they last about 10 to 15 years.

Joe Costigan, 430 Brinton Lake Rd., understood the logic for reserving capacity, but why can't the Township treat infrastructure as a separate issue? Mr. Morley explained that is what is going on at the ordinance hearing. Before this can go forward the Board is discussing at the ordinance hearing whether to require every person to pay their share if the line goes past their house.

Mr. McCann explained that the agreement with Concord Twp. requires \$2,800 to be paid at the time you tie in. The Township is working on various financial options regarding the tap-in fee, perhaps to pay it over time.

Unidentified audience member asked what happens if you don't need to tie in for 15 years. Mr. McCann stated the capacity is guaranteed, but did not know how it would be paid for if the homeowner elects not to tie in.

MINUTES – SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009
PAGE 5

Pat Watson, 4 Fox Lair La., asked if Longview La. does not tie in, would it cost us more and the \$5,000 to the developer won't exist if we wait till 2019.

Pauline Leland, 3 High Point Dr., stated that she gave Cherry Creek permission to run pipes thru our property. We were asked if we wanted to participate and our street said no, and now I find out we are included.

Jack Trainor, 14 Longview Dr., stated that no one in his neighborhood wants this. Mr. Morley stated that before any of this becomes a requirement, the Township committed a deposit for the EDU units and received a \$69,000 water grant. Mr. McCann explained that the time line was only an estimate, a tool for the Board and was prepared for our water grant.

Joe Brielman, 29 Woodridge Rd., asked if there are 2 phases. Mr. McCann explained that originally there were 2 phases (Brinton Lea and Thornhill), but due to planning issues, the Township is purchasing all the capacity now.

Jon Fiorelli, 433 Brinton Lake Rd., asked if there were any contamination problems or any environmental studies done, and why some streets were not included in the plan. Mr. Morley noted that there are some failed systems, but it is more of a concern that people are running out of space or operating with partially failed systems. Mr. McCann stated that there was not much interest in the newer homes with systems built with the latest design standards. Also, from an engineering standpoint, some roads were not included, as they could be sewered by gravity.

Joe Brielman, 29 Woodridge Rd., asked if a lot cannot perc, isn't the Township under an obligation to provide the infrastructure. Mr. McCann noted that he knew of homes in other townships in which the system failed and the homes were condemned by the State. Mr. Brielman asked if anyone on the Sewer Committee is affected by this plan. Mrs. Ricciuti stated that her home was. Mrs. Ricciuti noted that not everyone's system will fail at the same time and there will never be a good time for public sewers and it is the most logical and low cost way to sewer the entire area.

Unidentified audience member – asked about her 3 tanks and sand mound. Mr. McCann stated that there is no requirement to move the sand mound, but the tanks must be pumped out and filled in.

Curt Weaver, 451 Brinton Lake Rd., asked about (1) gravity versus a low-pressure system; (2) what is visible when they are putting the lines in the street; (3) questioned the tap-in fee; (4) how many homes have failed systems; and (5) the survey was misleading because it only asked if you were interested in public

MINUTES – SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009
PAGE 6

sewers and it did not include the costs. Mr. McCann explained that most of the homes on Longview Dr. can tie in by gravity, but are some on north side that sit so low that can't use gravity. Nothing is visible in the area where they do the underground directional drilling. The tap-in fee has not been decided yet. Mr. Morley stated that the Sewer Committee did not ask each homeowner if their system had failed, and a lot of people did not return the survey. We know of at least 3 to 4 systems that are failing in Brinton Lea, but some homes had upgrades, and some systems have not failed because the children have moved out. You won't know if your system is okay until you sell your home and try to get it certified. The Township worked with the developers to see if they could anti-up to see if these lines would be available. This may not turn out the way the Township hoped, but the Township is giving people an option. It costs a lot, but replacement systems are also expensive. If it is not helpful to enough people, perhaps the areas could be pared back to only pockets of areas that really need it.

Unidentified audience member - Will a topographic map be required. Mr. McCann stated only an 8 ½ x 11" sketch, with some dimensions is needed.

Mrs. Magargee, 7 Elaine Dr., stated that her friend talked to a Board member who said that if you do not tap-in immediately capacity is not guaranteed, so when retirees want to sell, there won't be capacity. Mr. Morley stated that people who have deposits get first dibs, but we do not know how many years those EDU units will remain available.

Mr. Nickle, 22 Woodridge Rd., stated that he heard from a Board member that no one will be forced to tie in and now you say if you don't tie in right away then capacity may not be available in the future. Mr. Morley explained that as long as we're paid up for the EDU units and have not violated the agreement, Concord is obligated to use the EDU unit for your property, but an extended contract may need to be negotiated with Concord Township.

Unidentified audience member asked that the agreement with Concord and the ordinance be put on the Township's web site. Mr. Morley stated he would ask.

Unidentified audience member asked what happens to those who run the risk of waiting. Mr. Morley stated that if there is enough need, Concord will have to add another module to accommodate those homes.

Unidentified audience member asked what the Board members get paid. Mr. Morley thought it was \$2,500/year, but it may have risen over the years.

MINUTES – SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009
PAGE 7

Unidentified audience member asked about the quarterly sewer charges. Mr. McCann thought it was about \$155/quarter. Every home in the Township pays the same sewer fee, whether the east or west side.

Unidentified audience member asked about the cost to run the pump. Mr. McCann stated the electric is minimal, only 1-2 minutes/day. Mr. Morley stated the material states that it equals the electric used by 1-40 watt light bulb on 24 hours/day. It also depends how many people are in the family.

Unidentified audience member asked if EDUs could be lost and the Township reimburses us if you don't tie in after 5 years. Mr. Morley stated the more people who tie in, the more successful the project is, but as long as EDU units are paid up, and you can tie in.

Bob Ricciuti, 6 Woodridge Rd. stated if your home has a dedicated EDU unit, and for some reason Concord has to scale back, then you are at risk of losing it. Mr. McCann stated that if you buy an EDU unit, it cannot be taken away. Mr. Ricciuti noted that the ordinance says there is no obligation to hold it, but the risk is minimal.

Joe Brielman, 29 Woodridge Rd. asked where the ordinance was advertised. Mr. Morley stated it was advertised in the Garnet Valley Press. Mr. Morley agreed to ask the Township to put the ordinance and the agreement on the web.

Unidentified audience member asked about a maintenance contract for the grinder pumps. Mr. Morley stated that the Board is working on a contractor to provide the pumps, but the Township is not at the point where a decision has been made as to how to handle the maintenance issue.

Mr. Howley noted that the Sewer Committee will be meeting with the Board in the near future.

Mr. Morley thanked everyone for attending and their comments.

NEW BUSINESS

Township Manager's Report: Mr. Morley briefly highlighted the Township Manager's Report.

NEXT MEETING – Thurs., Sept. 24, 2009

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Jacquet, seconded by Mr. Howley, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

**MINUTES – SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009
PAGE 8**

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	Jacqui Guenther, Assistant Manager