

Longswamp Township

Environmental Advisory Council

Meeting Notes: 21 July 2008

Present:

EAC Members

Diana Erney

Dale Fandl

Katherine Harms

Mike Sacks

Judy Sechler

Cathi Kratzer, Planning Commission Rep

Also Present:

Darree Siecher

Maryann Lantz, Township Supervisor

Steve Wyka, Township Supervisor

Larry Lloyd, Berks County Conservancy

Call to Order: 7:05 PM

Chair's Comments:

Mike mentioned that he had received an email before the last meeting advising him that the developer's representative would not be in attendance, but he inadvertently overlooked it. He did speak to Wendy Manley about greening some of the project--they are considering using some types of recycled materials, conserving water, etc. She's thinking about incorporating some green techniques into the development. The EAC agreed that they would be willing to provide any advice she needs and we invite her to attend a future meeting for further details.

Approval of Minutes from the June Meeting: Approved, no changes.

Amendments to Agenda: none

Discussion Items:

1) Topic: SPEAKER Darree Siecher-Local Sludge Issues

Key Points of Discussion:

Ms. Siecher gave an overview of sludge (aka Biosolids) and paunch (slaughterhouse waste) and how it's being used in agriculture. She outlined some of the environmental and human health risks.

There are different grades of sludge, some of which can be sold as fertilizer. The sludge is not just human waste; it also contains various chemical waste including industrial waste. The sludge is a byproduct of processing the waste. Most of what is being applied locally is being hauled from big cities like Philadelphia and applied to local farm fields. Many illnesses have been associated with its use and

one local boy died after driving his SUV on fields where sludge had been recently applied.

Ms. Siecher feels that in addition to the impacts upon the community, the sludge is a risk for the farmers too, because it can make their land so toxic over time that their land can become unusable. It's very attractive to farmers who are looking to reduce input costs because the haulers make it available for free.

If a property owner lives next to a farm where sludge is being applied, that property owner must list it on their seller's disclosure if they decide to sell their property.

The application of sludge is sanctioned by the state of Pennsylvania under the ACRE law. The EAC expressed interest in issuing a statement in support of East Brunswick township—they're being sued by the PA Attorney General for refusing to allow sludge in their township. Diana Erney suggested that the issue be brought up at the PA EAC conference to see if EACs across the state might be interested in banding together to put pressure on the state legislature. There have been two deaths associated with sludge applications and both of them were in Berks County.

Recommendations: ACRE law needs to be revamped so that the section that says that sludge is a fertilizer is removed. Don Siegfried said that the supervisors must consider ACRE carefully whenever enacting legislation. We also need to find ways to inform farmers about risks associated with applying sludge.

Action:

To be decided upon further discussion

2) Topic: Lehigh Valley Solid Waste Facility Visit

Key Points of Discussion: The next meeting will be held at the facility pending Tim's availability. The group plans to meet at the township building at about 5:30 and head over to the site.

Action: Diana will follow up with Tim and also invite the township supervisors and also Scott Miller (610-641-0686). Also the Scott Leh from the EAC in Hereford and anyone else from their group who's interested in attending.

Adjourned 9:15 PM

Next Meeting: August 18, 2008 7:00