

Connoquenessing Township's Supervisors held a special meeting on October 25, 2021 at the Connoquenessing Fire Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Terry Steinheiser at 5:30 p.m. Present were Supervisors Terry Steinheiser, Ed Rupert and Ricky Kradel. Also attending were Solicitor Andrew Menchyk, Jr., Engineer Bill Braun, Treasurer/Asst. Secretary Lee Kradel and Secretary/Asst. Treasurer Brenda Davis to take the minutes. Seventy-two people signed in on the public sign in record on file. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer.

Steinheiser opened the meeting and thanked all for coming. Steinheiser said he would like to submit a proposal to the other supervisors and engineer tonight but stated the Sewer Plan will still go through. Steinheiser said he would like to direct the sewer more through the Rt. 68 corridor and doesn't want to be invasive on residents properties if possible. Steinheiser stated he is not in favor of canceling the Act 537 Plan but willing to take another look at it if the other supervisors and engineer are in favor of that.

Rupert stated he is not in favor of canceling the Act 537 Plan. Rupert stated it has been here since 2005 and something the DEP wants the Township to do. Rupert stated the Plan can be done in sections like Rt. 68 and Winterwood where the DEP in 2008 found 25% malfunctions. Rupert said there are several Small Flow Treatment Facilities across the Township that the Township could take over and run. Rupert suggests meeting with DEP to discuss what changes/modifications can be made to the plan. Rupert would like to cover the Rt. 68 corridor and take care of the areas with malfunctioning systems. Rupert suggested taking the sewer lines down the road, if it is feasible to the engineers, so it is less evasive on property.

Kradel agreed with Rupert on mainly concentrating on the Rt. 68 corridor and is very concerned about the \$22,000,000 price tag. Kradel stated he would like to keep the Act 537 Plan but do it in small pieces over time.

Mr. Bill Braun, engineer, stated he will do whatever the board wishes but suggests the board have a meeting with DEP to get their view and voice the boards opinions. Mr. Braun stated the DEP may need the Township to amend the current Act 537 Plan or scrap it and start over.

Steinheiser stated the board is willing to take a second look to try and appease the residents and not be so evasive as long as the DEP agrees. Steinheiser stated the board has not hidden anything and the DEP told them to do this and they are here to implement the Plan. Steinheiser said if DEP allows them to add and subtract they will first concentrate on the Rt. 68 corridor. Steinheiser opened the meeting stating anyone could comment for 3 minutes but could not give their three minutes to anyone else.

COMMENT PERIOD - Three minute limit pertaining to agenda

Bill Long thanked the board for listening to the residents and agreeing to reevaluate the Plan and noted the devastation of taking 50 ft. of residents yards in the Southeastern section of Connoquenessing Township. Mr. Long stated the DEP doesn't mandate what the Township has to do and only interested in Winterwood, Rt. 68 and the Woodlands areas. Mr. Long promised the supervisors that they will have a group of residents looking over their shoulders. Steinheiser stated he valued his opinion and Rupert told Mr. Long that he did not say the DEP mandated the Act 537 Plan.

Patricia Miller, resident on Shannon Rd., stated she is opposed to the sewer plan and the residents should have a choice of what happens to their private property and home. Ms. Miller said no one needs another expense during these times.

Christine Klink thanked the board for reevaluating the Plan. Mrs. Klink stated she was not aware of Winterwood problems but told the supervisors they need to send Dave Ice, SEO to inspect. Mrs. Klink is concerned that the supervisors will start with Rt. 68 corridor which she agrees with but still do the other

parts of the Act 537 Plan down the road. Mrs. Klink wants this Act 537 Plan to be altered so this doesn't happen. Mrs. Klink stated she asked two questions at last month's supervisor meeting and they were not addressed. The first was a request to extend time on public comment and give the Sewer Authority the approval to explore alternate sewage options for the malfunctioned systems. Mrs. Klink said Dave Ice should be addressing the individual systems. Mrs. Klink stated 93.2% of surveyed homes were functioning properly and asked the board not to destroy 50 ft. of peoples property. Mrs. Klink said in 2016 & 2017 public meetings, 189 people signed a petition stating they did not want sewage and told the attendees there was another petition here tonight and asked them to please sign and state whether they are for or against this Plan. Rupert told Mrs. Klink that he is in favor of modifying but not in favor of scrapping the Plan.

Bill Klink, resident on Rieber Rd., said he is a SEO and knows many other systems that can work. Mr. Klink mentioned a resident on Prospect Rd. that is not in the area to sewer, just put in a special system and only needed less than 1/4 acre. Mr. Klink stated the Township should do the Rt. 68 corridor, Woodlands and the other areas the DEP mentioned. Mr. Klink stated he has designed and repaired many systems in the Township and systems can be fixed.

John Stokes, Brandywine resident, stated the Plan is to abandon the current Brandywine system that was approved by the supervisors and DEP and the residents who live there have already paid to be part of this system and would be a financial problem and taking without justification. Mr. Stokes said their current system has not had any violations since installed. Mr. Stokes thanked the board for listening to the resident concerns.

Joe Huth, a resident of Brandywine, said Brandywine has 4 developments and 247 individual units and already has sewage system that is piped to each residence and operated by a licensed professional. Mr. Huth stated the residents currently pay \$33.00/mo. for sewage which includes all costs and still has profit and the Township plan will increase the fee to \$80.00 (almost 3 times). In addition, the Plan will cost each resident a possible tap in fee of \$3,800 which is like double billing the resident. Mr. Huth stated over 60 residents are widows and on a fixed income. Mr. Huth also said there are procedures in the PA Code Title 25 chapter 71.21 that the Township can take to correct sewage. Mr. Huth said Brandywine works fine and doesn't need picked up in the Rt. 68 corridor project.

Carol Christner, is the owner of the old Treesdale Farm and stated her concerns with the land destruction of her property. Ms. Christner stated there are old rows of timber stands and wetlands there that the DEP would not allow to be disturbed. Mrs. Christner stated she discussed this with our Sewer Engineer but didn't get a response. Mrs. Christner suggested using several alternatives to cover the sewer on Rt. 68. Mrs. Christner stated that Brandywine can handle a flow of 38,530 gallons/day and only uses 18,000 gallons/day which is only working at 46.72% of their capacity and Shannon Mills can handle a flow of 19,115 gallons/day but only uses 2,000 gallons/day - 10-1/2%.

Diana Edwards, lives adjacent to Brandywine and bought property 4 years ago and connected to Brandywine and were told we might have to connect to Connoquenessing Township sewer but only by the system connecting, there was never any mention of being charged a new connection fee or the land devastation it would cause. Mrs. Edwards said she discussed this with a Sewer Authority member and he stated your property isn't worth anything anyway. Mrs. Edwards said it is very valuable to her husband and kids and hopefully grandkids someday. Mrs. Edwards said many can't afford this and asked the Township to make major changes to this project.

REQUEST TO BE HEARD - three minute limit

Bill Long said only a small percentage of systems are not working and said the supervisors should get after these issues because they were voted in to protect the residents health and welfare. Mr. Long stated

the supervisors need to enforce to get malfunctioned systems repaired and if the resident doesn't correct put a lien against their property. Bill Long also stated there is a holding tank ordinance that needs to be used if the system can't be repaired. Mr. Long feels what really set residents off was the engineer. Mr. Long stated they came through and said we are taking 50 ft. of your property which includes trees. Mr. Long stated this would destroy the private rural areas and knows there are other ways to solve the sewage issues. Mr. Long said he is not sure about the engineering company the Township has.

Mark Williams asked the board to use the Township ordinances to take care of the failing systems outside the Rt. 68 corridor and scale down this project to something that works for everyone.

Kay Double seconded what Bill Long and Mark Williams said. Secondly she said she got 25 signatures from Double Rd. residents stating they don't want public sewer and the cost of getting rid of their old systems. Ms. Double stated a resident on Double Rd. is planning a housing development and they want sewage but asked the public if they want sewage. Many yelled, "no". Ms. Double thanked the board for having the meeting and all the residents attending and letting their voices be heard.

Mark Scott - passed stating his views had already been addressed

Attorney Pat Casey - on the agenda but did not attend

Laura Mason thanked the board for their update and wanted to speak on 4 areas:

1. Road costs - Ms. Mason stated the proposed plant on Welsh Rd. will need the road brought up to a 10 ton limit. Ms. Mason stated this cost alone will be roughly \$2,000,000 for the 1.8 mile road,
2. Mrs. Mason is not pleased with Senate Engineering's experience with doing sewer projects,
3. Mrs. Mason stated the DEP wants Rt. 68, Winterwood and Woodlands taken care of and stated Woodlands is not even on the plan. Mrs. Mason asked the supervisors to fix the systems which would be a lot lower cost. Mrs. Mason mentioned a new system put in on Moose Rd. 4 years ago that cost \$20,000 and they sure don't need or want public sewage.
4. Mrs. Mason stated the need and Return on Investment (ROI) is not here for this project.

Christine Klink stated she agreed with all the comments and thanked the board again for reviewing the Plan. Mrs. Klink reemphasized that the DEP will allow changes to the current Plan. Mrs. Klink stated she was unaware that Winterwood had problems and would like to know if they were tested and the results. Mrs. Klink noted that there are systems out there to correct the sewer problems and the supervisors need to address the individual malfunctioned systems. Mrs. Klink stated it is the supervisors and SEO's obligation to enforce owners of malfunctioned systems to correct them and to protect the residents environment. Mrs. Klink said petitions were signed back in 2016 & 2017 and residents didn't want this and the majority are still objecting to it. Mrs. Klink closed by asking the Supervisors to give the Sewer Authority the authority to look at alternate avenues.

Carol Christner said she questioned the Sewer Engineer fairly hard for details on the Pump Station to be placed on her property. Mrs. Christner asked about the wetlands, the pump, is there going to be a backup pump, size of the station and got no response. Mrs. Christner then sees the new map and they are going the whole length of her property on Moose Rd. around Rt. 68 and across the road to the Rader farm and this is not going to generate any income. Mrs. Christner told the supervisors that they need to instruct the Sewer Authority to give more details, digging depths, inverts on the manholes and investigate what affects this will do to residents properties.

Steinheiser told the public that the Sewer Plans and Maps have been at the Township and available for review.

John Stokes - no comment - spoke previously under "comment period"

Joe Huth stated the 2020 census states there are 4,541 residents in 2,080 households so if every household was included in paying the \$3,800 tap in (which is not the case) that would come to \$7,904,000 - so he asked where the \$22,000,000 is coming from. Mr. Huth said the math doesn't work.

Angela Fleegeer stated she doesn't feel the board has been clear and transparent and others in the room feel the same. Mrs. Fleegeer said she has two addresses in Connoquenessing Township and neither one was sent the November 11, 2020 letter which stated Senate Engineering would be surveying her property for final sewer design and asking for permission and cooperation. Mrs. Fleegeer stated she never gave anyone permission or cooperation. Mrs. Fleegeer stated the property is posted "Private Property". Mrs. Fleegeer stated her mother-in-law approached a surveyor for Senate Engineering on the property and asked him to vacate. Mrs. Fleegeer stated he said he was just doing his job and did not leave and continued. Mrs. Fleegeer said that is a problem for her and has retained legal representation. Mrs. Fleegeer stated the public voted the supervisors into office to act in the best interest for them. Mrs. Fleegeer asked Ed Rupert what he meant by "for now" in reference to Rt. 68 corridor and Winterwood, is this going to be reevaluated in 1 month or 10 years. Mrs. Fleegeer said the public needs better answers.

Ken Dambaugh asked the board how many malfunctions are throughout the Township. Rupert stated the whole Township has not been tested. Rupert stated the Township would have to send the SEO to test all properties in Township and the Township is not going to pay for this. Mr. Dambaugh asked why the board is not meeting with SEO and have him enforce the malfunctioned systems. Mr. Dambaugh said the supervisors should be aware of the percentages of malfunctioned systems. Secondly, Mr. Dambaugh asked the supervisors how far off Rt. 68 they are going if they change course. Kradel stated a meeting needs held with the DEP to see what they allow before that decision can be made. Mr. Dambaugh asked if the board will stop Senate Engineering from spending money. Rupert stated he thinks that will be discussed later. Mr. Dambaugh would like a report from Dave Ice, SEO, on what's going on in our Township. Rupert stated there are malfunctions in Winterwood, White Oak Dr. and Doctor Ln. and that is one reason the Act 537 Plan was done.

Dave Dreher asked if there are better ways to keep the residents informed. Mr. Dreher noted 68 comments were made on the sewer plan but they have to wait until November 1, 2021 (over 28 days) for a response. Mr. Dreher stated he has been told by local legislators and senators that the Sunshine Act is there to protect the residents not the Township. Mr. Dreher said the residents just want more information on plant size and wants the Township to remain rural.

Estle Harp was on the agenda but did not attend.

Larry Sumansky is opposed to the sewer project but his main concern was about a couple members on the Sewer board. Mr. Sumansky is concerned about their ability, capability and interest. Mr. Sumansky stated the minutes are not clear as to what all was said at the Sewer Authority meeting and mentioned what he had said about Brendan Linton's bike riding was not disclosed. Kradel stated Brendan Linton has not displayed anything wrong toward the board and Kradel has attended every meeting. Kradel stated he has done a good job on the board and his private life is not his concern. The other supervisors agreed. Mr. Sumansky just asked that the Sewer Authority board be transparent and get the residents information.

NEW BUSINESS

Steinheiser motioned to request a meeting with DEP to discuss the Act 537 Plan to discuss alternatives within the Plan including phased implementation of the Plan and possible modifications to the Plan. Kradel seconded. Roll call, yes.

Kay Double yelled out and asked if the public would attend. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated, "no" it would be between the supervisors and Tomisa Kiskadden at the DEP.

Steinheiser told the residents that he has attended several meetings in the past with DEP and requested them to be recorded but they refused, so that tells you what kind of representation you are getting from the State.

Brian Cossitor, 119 Maple Dr., asked if notices can be sent out to the residents involved when there is an answer from the DEP because he never got the first letter from November 2020. The board didn't respond.

Steinheiser motioned to recommend that the Sewer Authority pause on the implementation of the Act 537 Plan pending the outcome of the supervisors discussions with DEP concerning the Plan. Kradel seconded. Roll call, yes.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Rupert motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Kradel seconded. Roll call, yes.