

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Stormwater Authority Committee Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2024, 2:00PM, 3, Weller Pl, Upper-Level Municipal Conference Room

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Robert A. Lammi, Robert Blanchfield, Craig Swinsburg, Kendall M. Mitchell, David Pyle, Ryan Cummings, George White, Luke Gibson, Scott Kistler, Jamie Paetzell, Paige Strasko, and Shawn Casey.
- b. Absent: Ann Marie Panella, James Farley and Philip Godbout.
- c. The meeting was called to order at 2:00PM.

2. Discussion Items

a. Geotech Master Services Proposal

- i. Casey was present to discuss the Geotech Master Services Proposal with the PTSA, introduced himself and gave a brief background of his history with Palmer and Bethlehem Township's and his general knowledge of the area.
- ii. Blanchfield asked clarifying questions about Casey working for the Authority at the direction of HRG, and White confirmed. Blanchfield and White also discussed the invoicing process, where the Authority would be billed directly for Casey's work.
- iii. Blanchfield asked Strasko to add the item to the upcoming meeting agenda for approval.

b. March 4 Board of Supervisor's Summary

- i. Blanchfield discussed the March 4th Board of Supervisor's meeting where Strasko gave an executive summary of the Palmer Township's recent work on stormwater including the Stormwater Advisory Committee meetings, public meetings held regarding the fee, MS4 requirements, and public meetings held for community-based projects. Blanchfield asked Strasko to add to his summary. Strasko stated that there were two women in attendance who spoke up about the fees and had productive questions that she and James Farley answered.
- ii. Blanchfield went through most of the questions asked by the public individually for discussion with the PTSA members, HRG, and the solicitor including waiving permit fees for stormwater work in residential areas, more specific information about reducing the impervious area on their property, percentage of administrative costs compared to actual construction, if the PTSA meeting time would be changed in the future to accommodate more resident attendance, why are these fees being assessed now and not previously, and are new developments responsible for stormwater?
- iii. PTSA members discussed the questions and the answers that were given. Blanchfield also discussed a phone call with resident Tim Fischer

regarding the HOA community called Glenmoor and the Highlands of Glenmoor. PTSA members discussed HOAs, private roads, and how those fees were assessed.

- iv. PTSA, HRG, and Township staff also discussed the GIS database used for billing, fixes and issues with some of the data, and not including any public impervious in assessments such as sidewalk.
- v. Casey explained that most of the soil in the Township is not conducive to infiltration due to high amounts of clay. PTSA members and HRG also discussed having an educational presentation at the beginning of the next meeting on March 20th to answer questions, as well as staying consistent with the current zoning ordinance.

c. PTSA Bylaws

- i. Blanchfield summarized comments and questions that Lammi had communicated over email with Stinnett and Gibson and stated that the suggested changes have already been made.
- ii. No other PTSA members had any comments on the Bylaws. Blanchfield asked Strasko to add it to the upcoming meeting agenda for approval.

d. HRG Project Updates

i. GIS Updates

1. White discussed the process of mapping the rest of the Township for a GIS layer, including what material storm pipes are, a condition assessment to understand and prioritize what may need to be replaced first, and the mapping layer that was created to show all of the current projects that HRG is working on for the Authority.
2. White and Cummings also discussed that during design phases they put out a PA one call as an attempt to coordinate all utilities, and how gas utilities usually do not share their GIS data of pipeline locations. White estimates that there will be 2,500 features to map for stormwater, that the Township will have access to the information on GIS immediately, and that GIS will set the foundation for projects moving forward.
3. Cummings also discussed the mapping requirements for MS4 and updating information to stay compliant with the MS4 permit.
4. Casey asked about mapping the deep-well injection sites on the UPS site, and HRG briefly discussed a sinkhole database layer on GIS as well in order to track sinkhole concerns and remediation.

ii. Bayard Street Update

1. White summarized the existing issues in the area of Bayard Street including the grading of the land, a detention basin draining into the street, a bubbler inlet on Nicole Place, water flowing over the border to Bethlehem Township, and the apparent disappearance of water flow into a sinkhole under Freemansburg Avenue.

2. White estimates about 3,200 linear feet of flow or pipe that would need to be installed. HRG staff, Township staff, and PTSA members discussed preliminary designs, grant possibilities for the project, the preliminary findings of the study show that the problem is larger than just Bayard Street, the prioritization level of the project, length of time needed for solutions, and what the Authority should do moving forward. White suggested meeting with Bethlehem Township to discuss the project further, and PTSA members discussed the need for the Capital Improvement Plan to understand the big picture.

iii. Kingwood Street Construction Bid

1. Cummings summarized that the bid was advertised and went live last Friday at 12:30PM, the due date for bids is April 8th. Cummings also discussed that the Township sent out the original ad, the Authority will be awarding or approving the bidder next month at the April meeting, and that six or seven different contractors have downloaded the bid package already.
2. Cummings also explained and answered PTSA questions regarding a review letter from HRG to recommend the lowest qualified bidder and utilizing property owner notifications moving forward with construction.

iv. PRP Presentation

1. Cummings prepared a presentation to summarize and discuss recommended projects to meet the Township's MS4 Pollutant Reduction Plan (PRP) requirements. Cummings discussed the requirement to reduce ten percent of total sediment in the Lehigh River and Schoeneck Creek watersheds totaling 194,763 pounds of sediment per year.
2. Cummings gave his presentation that showed images of the proposed project locations, summarizing communication with DEP for Palmer and other municipalities he has worked with, starting with the Hobson Street detention basin due to its large size and impact potential to sediment reduction, and providing more detail for each project.
3. PTSA members, Township staff, and HRG discussed project items such as tree replacement, construction time, impacts for each project, technical questions about assessing fees, completing public relations work for various projects, the possibility for green infrastructure, and other opportunities for credit.
4. In the Schoeneck Creek watershed Strasko and Cummings briefly discussed the Watershed Restoration and Protection Program grant and the planting plan needed for the project to calculate sediment reduction to receive PRP credit. Strasko also asked about the

possibility of creek restoration in other areas of the Schoeneck Creek.

5. Casey mentioned work that was completed by Prologis last year to realign the Schoeneck Creek, and that with different PRP credit ideas or projects, DEP may need to sign off before PRP credit can be submitted.
6. Cummings closed and summarized the timeline moving forward; if PTSA members were in agreement about the PRP recommendations, they would accept at the March meeting, approve a project assignment at the April meeting, and design work would begin to submit plans for PENNVEST funding in about February of 2025.

v. Draft Capital Improvement Plan

1. Pyle briefly summarized and discussed with PTSA members about the two phases of the Capital Improvement Plan, the first phase is estimated at \$126,900, the document will be critical for long-term planning, how it will provide a funding timeline, and could allow for larger scale utility planning with the water authority, electric and gas utilities.
2. Lammi discussed his research into other stormwater utility fees across the country and shares that there are only 35 municipalities that have a higher fee. PTSA members and HRG discussed why other municipalities fees are lower, how it could be a combination of they do not have the same flooding issues and are not accurately assessing the situation. Casey and HRG also discussed the Karst geology of the area that makes stormwater difficult and unpredictable in some cases, how the fee was determined from the budget, and that all members should be prepared for more conversation in the future.

e. Section 219 Funding Update

- i. Strasko provided a brief update on the Section 219 Funding by stating that there was a meeting scheduled for the upcoming Thursday (March 14) with the other municipalities at 10AM to discuss project possibilities, possible requirements, matching funds, and the other municipalities bandwidth for projects under this funding.

3. Public Comment

- a. There was no public present to comment.

4. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 4:46PM.