

## **Palmer Township, Northampton County**

### **Stormwater Authority Committee Meeting Minutes**

**September 10, 2024, 2PM, 3 Weller Pl, Upper-Level Municipal Training Room**

#### **1. Roll Call**

- a. Present: Robert Blanchfield, Robert A. Lammi, Craig Swinsburg, Kendall M. Mitchell, Matthew Gunther, David Pyle, Ryan Cummings, Luke Gibson, Scott Kistler, James Farley, Phillip Godbout, and Paige Strasko.
- b. The meeting started at 2:00PM.

#### **2. Discussion Items**

##### **a. Appeal and Credit Update**

- i. Strasko stated that she had no appeals update at this time.

##### **b. Township Staff Reports**

###### **i. Finance**

- 1. Farley stated that there was a new invoice packet for PTSA approval, at the end of September he would compile Kistler's monthly data and prepare the Township invoice for the Authority to review in October, and that he was planning to discuss the annual budget with PTSA during the October workshop meeting. Farley also explained that he, Strasko and Pyle had met previously to discuss updates for administrative budget numbers and to compare what was estimated with actuals. Blanchfield mentioned that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) would change the budget as well depending on costs for other high priority projects.
- 2. Lammi stated that he believed the budget should go to the finance committee. Strasko explained that there was a meeting to reschedule with Public Works to discuss budget needs in the next year, and Lammi should attend as well to discuss any budget questions. Blanchfield stated that Strasko would coordinate a meeting with Pyle, Lammi and Kistler for the budget.

###### **ii. Public Works**

- 1. Kistler stated that he believes he was more on the conservative side of the budget for staffing the stormwater program, that they are looking at receiving a new sweeper truck and vacuum truck in 2025 and that they will need more staff for the new equipment as well as performing maintenance duties required of the program. Kistler and PTSA members also discussed the volume of work completed in the first two quarters of the year, slowing down due to other tasks that need to be completed, timing and funding for hiring new personnel, training for new vehicles and equipment,

Public Works having a separate stormwater department, and new storage area for stormwater equipment.

**iii. Public Services**

1. Godbout stated he had nothing additional beyond the next agenda item.

**c. Fox Run Subdivision Drainage Improvements Project**

**i. Clover Hollow Resident Discussion**

1. Godbout discussed brief background of the project, escrow money the Township is holding from the construction of the development, the design HRG completed for the project and cost estimate provided by them, that this would be considered a smaller project and asked the Authority members to cover project costs that the escrow amount will not. Cummings explained his previous field view and brief history Tom Adams had shared with him at the time. Cummings also discussed that the area was originally designed for a swale, but now that homes are established it would make more sense to install a pipe for water coming from Van Buren Road, other construction issues, and that there is an existing drainage easement in the area.
2. Godbout, Cummings, and PTSA members discussed the estimated costs, amount available in escrow for this stormwater project, process for a project manual, bidding, and moving forward, and PTSA members agreed to pay for the project. Godbout stated that he would provide a memo for approval of the project at the meeting next week.

**d. HRG Project Updates**

**i. Kingwood Street Construction**

1. Cummings updated the group on the issues with construction contractor Kobalt, a meeting with the President of the company, where Kobalt workers hit rock, schedule delays, how HRG is unhappy with the work to date, the process to remove the contractor from the job, and that HRG is hoping to rectify the issues rather than starting with a different contractor. Cummings and PTSA members also discussed disqualification for future projects, following the legal process for disqualification, and that Kobalt was asking HRG staff questions about other Township projects out for bid right now.
2. Blanchfield briefly discussed issues he observed on site, that there was not a large enough crew for work that was being performed and asked how they handled the sanitary sewer repair. Cummings

and Kistler discussed how Kobalt hit the sanitary sewer lateral, that Kobalt only did a temporary repair, a permanent repair would be completed soon, updating stormwater pipe layout to move farther away from sanitary pipes, and other issues with the sanitary sewer.

3. Swinsburg asked if Kobalt is following proper construction practices and Cummings stated they informed them multiple times of OSHA violations on-site and explained the supplement he is proposing is for updating the construction observation from HRG to three-quarters or full-time for the remainder of the project.
4. Blanchfield and Mitchell asked clarifying questions about the inspection process and construction schedule, and Cummings explained typical procedures for HRG inspection and observation, and that Kobalt should provide an updated schedule by the end of the week. Cummings also stated once he has the updated schedule, he can determine how much inspection time is left in the original contract.
5. Blanchfield asked PTSA members their thoughts on increasing inspection time. Members agreed that inspection time should be increased. Swinsburg asked about using liquidated damages and Township staff discussed inspection time does not equate completion time, other ideas to move forward, and finding out the budget for inspection hours left.
6. Cummings also discussed a change order submitted by Kobalt for additional payment for rock excavation and removal, HRG's regulations for bids, and that they never pay for rock excavation or removal in pipe installation projects. Gunther and Cummings discussed the typical process on projects when unexpected rock is encountered, how to approach change orders, avoiding the same issues in the future, and other geologic testing. Cummings stated that he was hoping to have a schedule update and recommendations for the Authority members at the meeting next week. Cummings stated HRG does not need official action from the PTSA to deny the change order, and there will be a supplement for Kingwood Street to approve at the meeting next week.
7. Kistler stated that he was concerned about timing for road reconstruction, nature of the timing, long-term conditions, and that the work in any residential yards or rights-of-way needs to be completed on time.

## **ii. 25<sup>th</sup> Street Update**

1. Cummings discussed additional services needed for the project including subsurface utility exploration (SUE) to locate all utilities in the small project area. Blanchfield asked clarifying questions and Cummings explained that it would be the same SUE process that took place for Old Nazareth Road, that the contractor would start right away after approval, HRG's pricing for SUE and utility relocation, as well as approval for the 25<sup>th</sup> Street Project Assignment Supplement. Cummings and PTSA members also discussed PennDOT's comments regarding the constructability of the project design, the weight of the previously proposed box culvert, equipment needed for installation, issues with overhead utilities, and a change in materials to correct construction issues. PTSA members had a general concurrence with project changes and Cummings discussed the small capacity increase for the system with the change. PTSA members and Township staff asked clarifying questions regarding PennDOT's comments, increases in traffic in the area, and if the proposed material change will support vehicles at the residential driveway apron. Cummings stated changes should alleviate the comments from PennDOT, and that the material for the box culvert will support vehicle crossings at the driveway.

## **iii. Old Nazareth Road Update**

1. Cummings summarized that PENNVEST has accepted the Authority's application, now they are in the waiting period. Pyle answered PTSA member questions regarding timing and review procedure by stating that they should hear back around mid-October, and HRG will most likely update the Authority on the PENNVEST application in November.

## **iv. Meadow Avenue Drainage Swale- Agreement Letter**

1. Cummings stated that HRG had a meeting with the property owner West of Meadow Avenue, that the owner wants to invoice the Authority for administrative costs to add them to the existing NPDES permit, and timing for permit updates.
2. Gibson discussed a review letter of the agreement between the Authority and the property owner that would update the existing NPDES permit, that the solicitor's office is working on identifying areas to push back on costs and suggested having conditional approval of the agreement at the September Authority meeting next week.

**v. Schoeneck Creek Update**

1. Cummings described the updated project assignment to include bank pin monitoring to potentially double or increase maximum Pollutant Reduction Plan (PRP) credits for the stream restoration project. PTSA members asked clarifying questions about what bank pin monitoring entails, and the cost. Cummings explained that pins are hammered into the creek bank, monitored over a six-month period and any erosion is documented for inclusion in the MS4 PRP credit.
2. Blanchfield asked Strasko if the project seemed worthwhile. Strasko stated that if the monitoring can increase PRP credit and reduce the need for additional projects, it seemed worthwhile to her.

**vi. Wedgewood Update**

1. Cummings summarized activity up to date including additional issues with survey areas, PA One Call Issues, the need for SUE location, and the draft project assignment for SUE and additional surveying on Wedgewood Drive.

**vii. Hobson Street Detention Basin Update**

1. Cummings explained that HRG is moving forward with their conceptual study and initial modeling to reduce stormwater flow and discussed the large drainage area, and HRG's desire to use flow monitoring for six-months. Blanchfield asked clarifying questions about flow monitoring and how to get the most PRP credit available. Gunther asked clarifying questions about timing and equipment for the monitoring.
2. Cummings explained the flow monitoring if approved would be installed in mid-October and left in place until early spring for monitoring. PTSA members discussed types of rainfall and storms that may be documented, purchasing their own monitors for future projects and the feasibility of purchasing the needed equipment, and Cummings explained that the proposed monitoring would be the same process used for the Meadow Avenue Drainage Study. PTSA members also discussed the cost of monitors, following up with Kistler regarding monitors he plans to purchase for sanitary sewer monitoring, and that they agree with the project assignment.

**viii. Capital Improvement Plan Update/Framework and Inventory/Condition Assessment**

1. Cummings and Pyle discussed and asked for concurrence on the approach for the CIP project categories including PRP projects,

Public Works Stormwater Projects, Drainage Improvement Projects, and Infrastructure Replacement Projects. Cummings explained that there would be more information for the Infrastructure Replacement Projects once a condition assessment of the system has been completed. PTSA members asked clarifying questions and Cummings explained HRG's process and development of tools and cameras to assess stormwater pipes from inlets to quickly understand what type of pipe is installed, the condition its in, and how many connections there are and what direction pipes are going, as well as GPS locating inlets and stormwater features throughout the Township. Cummings also explained that HRG has a camera that fits into inlet grates to take 360-degree photos for these assessments and that this process also confirms stormwater assets in the Township.

2. Swinsburg had to leave the meeting, and Pyle explained that the drainage improvement project list identified projects from the top list of 80 for the next ten years including current projects that have already been started such as the three phases of Meadow Avenue improvements. Pyle also stated that HRG staff are working on budget and costs for those projects over the next ten years. Pyle and Cummings also discussed a color-coded map of the storm system that could be uploaded to GIS for Township staff to quickly see and assess where stormwater pipes are, replacements and upgrades need to occur in the system. Pyle also discussed how projects affect the budget, utility fee rate, and timeline for required and non-required projects.
3. Gibson stated that the West Chester Case was being argued in court tomorrow, and he would be attending. Gibson also stated that he would report on any findings or discussions at the Authority meeting next week.

### **3. Public Comment**

- a. There were no members of the public present to comment.

### **4. Adjournment**

- a. The meeting ended at 3:56PM.