

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
JANUARY 29, 2025

The special meeting of the Plainfield Township Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at the Plainfield Township Fire Hall, located at 6480 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064.

Chairman, Paul Levits, called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

**ROLL CALL:**

The following Commissioners answered roll call: Paul Levits, Terry Kleintop, Glenn Geissinger, Allen Schafer and Robin Dingle.

Also present were Administrative Assistant, Amy Kahler, Doreen Curtin, Zoning Officer, Solicitor, David Backenstoe, and Dave Crowther, Keystone Consulting Engineers.  
Not present was Township Manager, Paige Stefanelli.

**CURRENT/NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Grand Central Sanitary Landfill, Inc. and Slate Spring Farms, LLC.- Waste Management- Zoning Amendment Application- *Rezoning Request***

Chairman, Paul Levits, spoke and indicated we will proceed with Waste Management Representatives discussing and answering any questions from the Commission Members until around 9:00PM and then we will open it to the residents.

Attorney Craig Davis, spoke and reviewed information and mapping, also reviewed the timeline of events from the time that the application request was submitted.

Mr. Dave Horvath indicated that the map has been updated with more defined boundary markings.

Commissioner, Robin Dingle, asked about the 192-acre buffer and referenced the area that is all green but there is no indication of what it is. Ms. Dingle also indicated that there is no indication what the long-term commitment will be regarding the buffer area, etc.

Mr. Horvath advised that it is the way the map is laid out.

Waste Management reviewed some history behind securing the property and that the property owner wanted to get rid of the property. The homes that are currently located on the property will remain, we will not be tearing any of them down in which, they will remain as rentals.

Solicitor, Backenstoe reassured us that Waste Management is, just as anyone can inquire about property. There is nothing that Zoning can do if they would like to purchase the full number of acres. They are not required to only purchase a certain number of acres.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, questioned with the current situation and the current agreement, will this mean years down the road, Waste Management will be back before Plainfield Township, asking for rezoning of the additional acres that were obtained. He indicated when traveling down Pen Argyl Road there will be huge berms that will be created, correct, what will these look like. Will this be rock, grass, stone, concrete walls, please note this on the Site Plan. The representative of Waste Management indicated that the slope will be seeded, which is the standard, just as the current Landfill was constructed. The area will be built around the footprint.

Commissioner, Robin Dingle, specified that in reviewing the reports that were submitted for review regarding the wetlands/species etc. are from 2018 and on the current property. She indicated that with the request for a totally different parcel, new reports should have been completed and submitted with the request which should also include a health risk assessment. Ms. Dingle indicated that there seems to be a lot of updated information missing. Waste Management Representative advised they apologize, and did not realize it previously, but reports were completed on the new proposed site, this has been noted that it was an agency error and will be corrected. The representative from Waste Management advised that the outside agency, Fish & Wildlife, indicates when new reports are required, and by having a new Health Risk Assessment completed, on a property that is currently not an actual site spot, nor can we predict what the gases etc on the new property. A representative indicated that there is a renewal process for reports to be completed, and requirements and Waste Management follow those requirements and/or completes requirements as requested. Ms. Dingle advised in the health risk assessment, there is no indication of the effects that expansion could have on the wildlife, plants, or residents of the Township, or surrounding municipalities. A Waste Management representative advised that we cannot propose information for the future site. We will be running the exact same facility but on the opposite property. Waste Management will be hiring additional staff for the construction and initial transition of the proposed site if approved. Ms. Dingle advised that each Landfill is its own Landfill, and that one another is not the same. When having completed assessments the full assessment of the area and the surrounding areas need to be taken into consideration.

Chairman, Paul Levits specified that nowhere does it indicate where Waste Management will be going forward in the future. Mr. Levits asked if they will be then again asking for rezoning of additional acres in the future. Mr. Levits indicated that if this rezoning request is approved it changes the future for our future generations, this will include higher environmental risks.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop specified that the Board of Supervisors received the rezoning request information and asked to move it to the Planning Commission for review and comment. Mr. Kleintop advised that we are doing our best to review all the information and make sure the correct information is reviewed and that it is the most up to date information that could be obtained for potential property. The Commissioners are not able to provide the Board of Supervisors with adequate answer if the Commissioners are not provided with the most updated information.

Commissioner, Robing Dingle, referenced Exhibit D, the employment breakdown, which is not referencing the exact drop in employment, if the rezoning is not approved. Ms. Dingle questioned what the current employment number is with adding in the new Recycling Center and

trucks. Waste Management Representative specified that the position roster reflects direct and indirect employees.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, indicated that Waste Management will still be utilizing the leachate field at the current Facility, how does Waste Management expect to continue to stay current on testing and the macro studies, which have not been fabulous. Waste Management Representative advised that the same process, if not more current in the future, will be utilized if the new potential site is approved. During the testing process, the numbers/reports have remained level, this information has been provided to the Department of Protection and will continue to be reported as required. Mr. Kleintop questioned Waste Management personnel about how they will handle the current PFAS situation and if they would still be utilizing the reverse osmosis process. Waste Management Representative advised that we monitor the current system and update when new testing equipment is verified. Ms. Robin Dingle asked for information on the current osmosis testing equipment.

Chairman, Paul Levits, indicated that comments have been made that home values have been affected. What is the current effect of PFAS being discharged into the air? This is a question for Dave Crowther, Engineer, can we have DEP investigate the air quality, truck traffic? Mr. Dave Crowther advised that he is unsure, he does know in general that the East Coast does not have great air quality.

A Waste Management Representative indicated they continue to build out the wells to prevent and reduce odors. Waste Management has partnered with Green Knight Economic Development and turns as much gas into electricity; this has been effective. Waste Management has utilized the raw data and continue to utilize different item situations to avoid making nuisances, such as water trucks to cut back on dust pollution.

Chairman, Paul Levits, asked what the area of complaints are around the landfill. Waste Management Representative specified that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is very strict in monitoring and making sure they receive the reports, the air quality reports are submitted quarterly, and we check the wells at least once a month. Commissioner, Robin Dingle, indicated that DEP follows all generalized requirements for landfills, not particular land quality, air quality, and other surroundings. Ms. Dingle directed that there are reported numerous health issues in the Valley. A Waste Management Representative said they are directed by the Department of Environmental Protection when submitting reports and the requirements when implementing items. Waste Management provided that they will continue to monitor daily and try to prevent situations such as trash blowing onto neighboring properties, noise complaints are controlled, we monitor new systems for our trucks and the beeping, but we need to utilize the best item for our surrounds along with keeping employees and staff safe.

Chairman, Paul Levits inquired about the liners and how they are constructed. There has been information released that the EPA reported that no liner is perfect, we do not want to set up our environment to be more harmful for our future generations. A Waste Management Representative advised that the current system dates to the 1950's and there seems to be no more impact or quality of the Landfill. Waste Management has noticed that after 4-5 years the cells stop producing leache and additional 4-5 years stops producing gases.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, questioned where the crossing is located on Pen Argyl Road for the proposed Landfill entrance. Has this been reviewed, approved, or voiced any concerns from the Department of Protection. Waste Management Representative advised that the information was provided and reviewed on a scoping aspect, if the rezoning is approved, Waste Management will be moving forward with a full traffic study to be able to determine the best entrance.

Commissioner, Robin Dingle, inquired if stop signs were going to be placed on the cross streets of Pen Argyl Road, was there any type of modeling completed to review any of the traffic. Waste Management Representative advised that research has been done, but again further studies will be conducted to review all situations.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, inquired if Waste Management would consider moving the scales and current equipment being utilized at the current landfill, to the new proposal to potentially assist with cutting down on truck traffic on Pen Argyl Road. Commissioner, Glenn Geissinger, asked if Waste Management knows the distance from Delabole Road to the proposed access road. A Representative from Waste Management advised that it is about 1700 feet.

Chairman, Paul Levits, recommended that economics also must be considered when establishing the new landfill, consideration of inflation and consider increasing the amount that we are receiving in tonnage to \$2.92. Mr. Levits asked if Waste Management would consider looking at the agreement. Waste Management advised that the information would need to be reviewed by the appropriate personnel for discussion of making changes.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop questioned Waste Management if they are prepared to submit a plan along with a formal host agreement. The Waste Management Representative advised that plans are and will be completed and submitted as necessary.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA/NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

- **Matt Glennon**

Mr. Glennon said that the Board of Supervisors might be leaning towards the rezoning. There are assessments they need to recognize, and the Boards must understand the benefits, if any. Mr. Glennon indicated that they cannot approve and deny until the various issues are answered. Mr. Glennon advised that price per ton will vary, and an adjustment will take place. Can Waste Management promise that this will be the last landfill, maybe Plainfield Township should consider a trash transfer station. Mr. Glennon suggested Plainfield Township possibly renegotiate and adjust the Trust Fund levels and should be noted that the Trust Fund is limited. Assuming the life of the landfill balance will be approximately \$720,000.00 in bond interest. Plainfield Township would have approximately 14 years to figure out the depletion. Mr. Glennon provided a work sheet over the next 14 years to the Planning Commission members.

- **JR Renia**

Mr. Renia expressed the concern that Waste Management addresses the concerns of nuisances such as the smell that is lingering in our neighborhood. There are some people that are considered nose blind. Mr. Renia indicated that Waste Management puts out checks, the residents that live near the dump have had enough. What they are proposing as a buffer is far from a buffer, it will not stop the smell. The field our kids play on smell, some days our kids do not even want to play there or even go to practice. They indicated that these liners would help etc., but the more garbage the more the liners will fail. All towns have trash, but they all do not have a landfill in them. We can utilize the trust money to assist in the decrease. They are not providing solutions to assist in making major decisions. Why don't you assist your employees in finding new jobs when the landfill closes? We have a choice; we do not need to approve the landfill to expand. Toss Waste Management in the trash, it stinks, our kids and families deserve better!

**Chairman Paul Levits** advised that the Planning Commission does not have legal cloud. The Planning Commission members will make their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. There are some Board members within the audience, and I would recommend that you speak with them. Our decision is not binding.

- **James Murphy**

Mr. Murphy inquired if the same owners that own the current Landfill also own the property of the proposed site. Mr. Murphy projected that Waste Management will be here years down the road asking for rezoning to go further down Mack Road. Mr. Murphy inquired if anyone has investigated the light pollution, no one thinks about the lighting issues. A Representative of Waste Management indicated that with the landfill usually closed after hours, it does not produce a lot of lighting. Ms. Angela Murphy indicated when they sold their home they were offered way less due to the location, and please consider the impact of your children's health, has anyone looked at how it is impacting that.

- **Millie Beahn**

Ms. Beahn offered her gratitude for the excellent questions the Planning Commission Members had. She provided and read a letter that Lehigh Valley Planning Commission members published on behalf of the review of the submission from Waste Management, this reflected that they were inquiring about some of the reports, Environmental Health Assessment. Ms. Beahn voiced concern of the impact of Rezoning and adding additional Landfill would have on Plainfield Township. She also read the portion of the Ordinance Section 25, indicating that residents have the right to clean air. Ms. Beahn expressed to place the landfill somewhere else, Plainfield Township is not benefiting from it.

- **Carol Zellman**

Ms. Zellman inquired that if Waste Management is unable to contain the trash now, which I have blowing all over my yard and in my trees, what are you going to do when they expand. Ms. Zellman advised that Waste Management is currently being sued, what kind of lawsuits will happen if/and when they expand? Representative of Waste Management indicated that the litter fence is torn in spots, they maintain and repair the fence as quickly as possible. Waste

Management brings in extra crews to assist with picking up of the trash when these situations happen. Please contact our hotline number immediately, so we can help as quickly as possible, Waste Management will not enter a property without permission.

- **Kelly Grim**

Ms. Grim thanked the Planning Commission for their assistance and being thorough. Ms. Grim expressed her decision to reside in Plainfield Township, and this was due to the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Grim's opinion is, say no thank you to rezoning and expanding the Landfill. Ms. Grim expressed that our committees are missing pertinent information due to not having an Economic Development Committee to review all aspects of submissions. Ms. Grim advised that we have done our part and participated in hosting a landfill and Plainfield Township can now move forward and say No, which is sometimes the correct answer.

- **Jane Mellert**

Ms. Mellert reviewed the list of documents that she was submitting to the Planning Commission. Ms. Mellert indicated that all the information that is being provided by Waste Management for their current request has been previously used for their original submission in 2020. Ms. Mellert provided a map to view the current landfills located in Pennsylvania. Ms. Mellert reviewed the information within the letter that she had provided. When residents purchase land near what they thought was Farm & Forest District, and now it has been made a district to hold a Landfill, how would that make you feel. Ms. Mellert suggested that you review the information thoroughly, and take your time, as I uncover more information, Ms. Mellert will provide the information to the Township.

- **Tom Colic**

Mr. Colic questioned if Waste Management will be running the excess gas pipes under Pen Argyl to accommodate the new proposed landfill. A Representative of Waste Management, indicated that all of that information will be submitted during the Land Development stages as Zoning Request has to be approved first. Mr. Colic advised the members of the Planning Commission that when agreed to have the Landfill taxes would not be raised, but they have been, so Plainfield Township can vote no to the rezoning. Mr. Colic expressed his concerns and provided Petition pages for reference.

- **Ty Scott**

Mr. Scott expressed that there are no harsh feelings and that this is a job for them, but Plainfield Township has a Solid Waste Zoning District already. Mr. Scott advised that the rezoning should only be within that district. A Waste Management Representative advised that the current district zoned Solid Waste is developed and no longer available to be expanded. Mr. Scott said that the next meeting should take place at the Landfill itself.

- **Cheryl Paulus**

Ms. Cheryl Paulus expressed how she has lived her whole life on Delabole Road and never had heard of Slate Spring Farms. She will be living right across the street from the proposed landfill and how close this will come to her. She also wanted it to note that there was a massacre on the hill, this is not memorialized.

- **Gail Weber**

Ms. Weber indicated that she currently resides in the lower part of Plainfield Township. She inquired if anyone lived near the landfill, as the current landfill has grown and has really damaged the view of the mountains. Ms. Weber advised that the residents of Plainfield Township have tolerated the landfill for this long, but they no longer want it. Ms. Weber advised that she stopped going to Pen Argyl due to the traffic. Ms. Weber indicated that in North Carolina, the liners of a landfill have failed and now for so many miles surrounding that landfill, all those residents now have cancer. Ms. Weber advised that she has had issues with soot trapped inside the fans that are in her home, this is due to the pollution in the air. Ms. Weber said she had known someone that wanted to purchase a home in Plainfield Township but decided elsewhere due to the potential proposal of expanding the landfill. Ms. Gail Weber voiced that there have been studies that her physician has advised of cancer clusters within the area.

- **Arnold Zellman**

Mr. Zellman questioned the Board if the landfill is approved to expand, would it be possible for Mr. Chrin to purchase adjacent property?

- **Justin Huratiak**

Mr. Huratiak voiced how he has been a part of the Plan Slate Belt Committee over the past 4 years to assist in hindering the placement of a new dump. Unfortunately, Plainfield Township backed out. Mr. Huratiak advised that from a zoning and planning perspective, this looks like it could be considered spot zoning. Mr. Huratiak expressed that the dump does stink even though Waste Management is trying to maintain it.

Chairman, Paul Levits, reviewed the options that are before the Commissioners for a vote.

**ACTION: Motion was made by Glenn Geissinger and seconded by Terry Kleintop to table the review of Waste Management Rezoning request. *Prior to the vote, Chairman, Paul Levits, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public.* Motion approved. Vote 5-0.**

2. **Discussion on the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance establishing regulations for Solar Energy Systems and amending SALDO to provide Land Development Review when a principal Solar Energy production facility is proposed.**

Chairman, Paul Levits, inquired about the Ordinance for review indicating he is unsure of the purpose and would request, if this is correct, I would suggest recommending that Section 8 paragraph 4b portion be exempt.

Solicitor David Backenstoe expressed that this Ordinance would be applied to Commercial/Principal Use, not for residential use. Mr. Backenstoe reviewed Section 6 of the proposed Ordinance indicating that this portion references that solar systems can be permitted for use in any district, but owner would need to follow regulations of the Ordinance, and Township regulations. Mr. Backenstoe expressed that the Township does not currently have an Ordinance to regulate permitting solar use for commercial/principal use. Chairman, Paul Levits, advised that currently there are solar panels on the commercial building in Wind Gap. Would this now be a permitted use.

Mr. David Backenstoe advised that this is permitted, as long as the permitting process was followed. He indicated that the use is for the purpose of themselves and not for selling. He indicated that the business is not utilizing the power and selling it back for use elsewhere. Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, inquired if Plainfield Township would want businesses to start to utilize solar power.

Resident, Mrs. Stoudt, inquired what is the purpose of the Ordinance exactly?

Mr. Backenstoe, advised guidance regarding the regulations, and reviewed the adequate points of the Ordinance. Anyone or any business would still need to follow all regulations for obtaining the use of solar power, but this ordinance is particular for commercial use. With this ordinance we also include an agreement, post security, and a review every 5 years. Mr. Backenstoe advised that anyone applying for commercial use of Solar panels would need to follow the Ordinance along with Zoning regulations. This Ordinance was before the Board of Supervisors for review, and recommendation to be reviewed and commented upon for Planning Commission. He has provided some of the comments from the Board of Supervisors, which was to increase the kilowatts from 18 to maybe 28 and would possibly increase the buffer from the property lines.

Commissioner, Robin Dingle, advised that it seems like we are targeting the Farm & Forest district. Ms. Dingle could possibly see parties purchasing numerous properties adjacent to each other to be able to build out their solar array. Resident, Jonathan Itterly, asked if the solar panel array would be considered impervious coverage, when this Ordinance is in place, could this supersede the County of Northampton's policy on preserved Farmland.

Zoning Officer, Doreen Curtin advised that there are regulations in place under the Farm & Forest district for impervious coverage. She also advised that they would be able to file for a Special Exemption, this would need to be scheduled before the Board of Supervisor for approval or denial. Resident, Mr. Stoudt, expressed that he agrees with implementing regulations but to also keeps in mind that solar panels might be the new way to efficiently have clean energy efficiently.



**3. Discussion on the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance exempting Plainfield Township from the requirement of the Zoning Ordinance when undertaking a Municipal Function.**

Solicitor Backenstoe, advised that other Townships exempt themselves from requiring Zoning permits, this does not mean that the Township will not need to follow Building permitting requirements, nor zoning regulations. Approving this Ordinance would just allow the Township to not have to file Zoning permits for required reviews.

Commissioner, Terry Kleintop, asked if this would present or create any issues. Mr. Backenstoe advised that this would not exempt the Township from following SALDO requirements. He indicated that this will be sent to Lehigh Valley Planning Commission for review and comment and then present for advertising and final approval.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Having no further business to come before the Planning Commission, a motion was made by Allen Schafer and seconded by Glenn Geissinger to adjourn the meeting at 10:13PM. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Kahler  
Planning Commission Secretary  
Plainfield Township