

**Plainfield Township  
Environmental Advisory Council Meeting  
March 12, 2018**

The Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council meeting was held on Monday, March 12, 2018, at 7:00 pm at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building, 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064. (The regularly scheduled monthly meeting was to be held on March 5, 2018 but was rescheduled due to inclement weather.)

Those in attendance were:

Terry Kleintop, EAC Chairman	Robert Cornman – EAC Vice Chairman
Robin Dingle – EAC Member	Don Moore – EAC Member
Bruce Rabenold – EAC Member	Robert Simpson – EAC Member
Jane Mellert, EAC Secretary and Member	Tom Petrucci – Plainfield Twp. Manager

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

The pledge of allegiance was performed.

**Also in attendance** – Charlie Schmehl, Vice President of Urban Research and Development Corporation, Wanda Gruber, and Darby and Cheryl Burwell.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Motion – February 5, 2018 Minutes** - A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Don Moore to approve the February 5, 2018 minutes. **Vote: 7 Yes**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Mini-Grant Appalachian Trail Conservancy Assessment and Evaluation of Plainfield Township’s SALDO and Zoning Ordinances** - \$17,500 Grant, Plainfield Township Matching Funds \$3,500.00. On June 14, 2017 the Board of Supervisors awarded the Professional Services Contract to URDC in the bid award amount of \$16,900. Charlie Schmehl, Vice President of URDC was present at the meeting to review the 5<sup>th</sup> draft of the revised zoning regulations dated March 5, 2018.

There is a June 30, 2018 deadline for the work to be completed under the grant. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission must see the final wording of the Ordinance Amendment 30 days prior to adoption.

Charlie Schmehl reviewed information from the meeting with Service Forester John Nissen. The following documents were handed out by Charlie Schmehl for review:

- Revised Draft dated 3/5/2018 of the Zoning Amendment
- Plainfield Township - Appalachian Trail Conservation Overlay Districts 2018 Map

The DBH (tree diameter breast height) was changed from 6 inches to 8 inches.

Terry Kleintop wants to save what we have of native species in our area and allow the species to regenerate over the years. Native species need to be protected due to so many being taken out. Hickory should be protected as well as many other species (see page 8) compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act. Bats also need to be protected. Sometimes a survey is conducted when

endangered species are involved. Some species need to be surveyed at different times of the years, such as, owls, song birds, bats, etc. It was noted that this may be difficult to enforce if the Township does not have the State to back up the municipality.

PAGE 8 - I (3) – Charlie Schmehl noted what materials shall be submitted to the Zoning Officer for compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act.

- Applications for over 25 acres need a State permit. It was questioned at what point the State conducts a review. Robin noted there are different kinds of Northern Owls that can be in various trees so unless a survey is done then it may not be known that the owls would be disturbed. For a development project the requirements have to be met and surveys are conducted. The EAC discussed including tighter regulations. If State mapping notes that endangered species may be in the area then a survey would be triggered. The State would regulate. The EAC can make a recommendation regarding protection of endangered species, bats, owls, eagles, etc. Robin Dingle would like to protect all species of trees and endangered animals and include the protection in the Township regulations. Charlie Schmehl noted the protection occurs at the State level when 25 acres are more are impacted.
- It is recommended that a PNDI review be done of the area and be submitted prior to approval of a timber harvesting plan. The PNDI stands for Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory. The PNDI will provide an Environmental Review for special concern species and resources listed under Endangered. Species. A PNDI Search can be part of the submission whenever a timber harvesting plan is required. There are certain times of the year that are better for timber harvesting in order to help protect endangered species.
- A flow chart could be developed in order to aide people that are required to do a PNDI search. The PNDI search should be good for two years and the clearance letter will have a definite time frame for use.

It was noted that some timber harvest consultants have professional certifications while others are not certified.

Bob Simpson suggested the requirements should include a DBH of 10 inches instead of 8 inches Terry Kleintop noted if a tree is 8 inches or less you can cut any tree you want. On a parcel under an acre you can take out any tree you want.

Resident Darby Burwell lives on Church Road. Mr. Burwell noted that some residents moving in do not want a large lot to mow, would prefer maybe a ¼ acre, other residents want a large rolling lawn. He has a large tree near a pond and requested to know if the regulations would restrict trimming the tree. It was noted that the regulations allow for tree trimming, and taking care of dying and diseased trees. Additional allowances are under #4 Tree Cutting and Timber Harvesting Exemptions. Mr. Burwell noted he would agree to the 10 inch DBH rule.

**Motion – 10 inch DBH** - A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Bob Simpson to change the 8 inch DBH requirement to 10 inch DBH. **Vote: Yes - Jane Mellert, Bob Cornman, Bob Simpson** **Vote: No – Don Moore, Terry Kleintop, Bruce Rabenold, Robin Dingle.**  
**Total 3 Yes and 4 No The 8 inch DBH will remain in the Timber Harvesting regulations.**

Page 3-5.F CS – Language was added for 25 foot setbacks from natural springs and vernal pools. The setback requirement will be revised to dripline. It was noted that dripline is included in the definitions.

Page 4-K. This section will be revised from applicant proves to applicant submits a plan that demonstrates.

Page 5 – O. The word average will be added before height of no more than four feet. This is in the Penn State version and it appears to be for aesthetic reasons.

Charlie did not see anything in the latest information from Ann Hutchinson that needed to be included in the draft ordinance. The forestry provisions provided are not as good as the provisions we have in the draft. It was noted that John Nissen was against selective cutting. Under this draft a property owner can clear cut to put in a Christmas tree farm or to regenerate and for several other reasons.

The draft needs to go to the Township Planning Commission, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, (LVPC), Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors, and Brooks Mountcastle to forward to the park service.

Bob Cornman suggested Charlie make the changes and send the revised draft to the LVPC. The LVPC has thirty days to review. The LVPC review letter will be reviewed by the EAC and then the zoning amendments will be sent for review at the April, 2018 Planning Commission meeting. This item will not be placed on a planning commission agenda with the Synagro review.

Charlie Schmehl will make the changes and then it should be sent to the Plainfield Township Planning Commission and the LVPC prior to being forwarded for final adoption.

**Motion – Zoning Amendment Review** - A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Don Moore to send the revised latest version of the Zoning Amendment to the LVPC and the Plainfield Township Planning Commission for review. **Vote: 7 Yes**

**Tom Petrucci noted he will also send the Zoning Amendment to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Brooks Mountcastle.**

#### **Northampton County Farmland Preservation and County/Municipal Partnership Program**

- There were 19 applications for the 2018 Northampton County Farmland Preservation Program
- 16 of the applications were totally new
- 14 applicants with a total of 884.19 acres were declared eligible
- 1 farm from Plainfield Township was declared ineligible due to not meeting State criteria.
- Approximately 379.15 acres may be able to be preserved with the County and State money

After the Tuesday night Northampton County Farmland Preservation Board meeting we will know how much money was matched by the state. Due to the limited amount of total funding, it appears that the County won't be able to get to farm #5 on the list of eligible farms.

A farm with land on the border of Plainfield Township and Washington Township is on the ineligible list. The farm has 39 acres with 17+ in Plainfield Township. Washington Township does not collect EIT money for preservation. The land belongs to Kathryn Benn. It is the first farm over the hill on Miller Road. The farm is one of the five that are ineligible. The soils only made 49% and by our standards that is fine. Don Moore may attend the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Board meeting on Tuesday night.

#### **Conservation by Design Development**

The Planning Commission is reviewing an application for a property located at 1105 Mill Rd and utilizes Conservation by Design.

It was noted that Conservation by Design development criteria is currently under review. Recommendations will be made for revisions.

### **PA DEP Growing Greener Plus Grant – Little Bushkill Creek**

- We are waiting for results for the source tracking from Jason Smith.
- The plans for both the Stuber and Achenbach farms are near completion. Tom Petrucci noted that he has the information on the work to be done on the Stuber and Achenbach properties. The farm work is ready to be bid after the winter is over. The EAC should review the information as per the RFP.
- Tom Petrucci asked if a grant extension may be necessary. The grant needs to be closed out by the end of 2018.
- Robin Dingle noted Plainfield Township should have the draft report from Hanover and get as much done as possible. Then if an extension is necessary the preliminary draft could be submitted to the DEP for review and request for a time extension.
- The Borough of Wind Gap is applying for a grant to replace the terra cotta pipe on the lower section of Roosevelt Street. Any pipe replaced should help the little Bushkill. The Bushkill Stream Conservancy and Plainfield Township sent letters of support for the Wind Gap grant application.

### **Pennsylvania Clean and Green Law Act 515 and 319**

The Morning Call will publish an article on March 18<sup>th</sup> about the Clean and Green Acres Law. The Morning Call conducted a 10 month study on the current law and how it affects property owners.

### **Spotted Lanternfly**

A quarantine of the spotted lanternfly now covers thirteen (13) counties in Pennsylvania. Northampton, Lehigh, Bucks, Berks Lancaster etc. Residents should report the flies immediately to Northampton County. Bob Simpson thought he saw them on his property last year.

### **Update on Dairy Farms in Pennsylvania**

Jane Mellert spoke about the state of dairy farming in the State of Pennsylvania and Plainfield Township. Approximately 140 farms in Western PA were given a deadline by the dairy (many with Dean Foods) that the milk will no longer be picked up and they should find another dairy. Unfortunately most farms are not able to find another outlet to sell the milk and most are not set up to bottle and sell direct. The price paid to the dairy farmers for a hundred weight of milk dropped to around \$10. This is not a sustainable amount in order to survive in the industry. Many farmers are selling off their herds and this is bringing the price down for the animals on the market.

The EAC members discussed options for farmers including local co-ops, organic farms, selling to the schools, etc. There is not an easy or quick solution. Terry Kleintop noted that legislators need to push policies forward to drive the economy

### **Plainfield Township Earned Income Tax Collection for Open Space Discussion**

- Tom Petrucci noted the Board of Supervisors approved applying for a grant for an official map.
- A survey of the Township should be conducted when considering the purchase of additional properties, such as, ponds, and additional recreation facilities.
- The 2004 Joint Comprehensive Plan and Open Space Plan both have information that can be utilized. The Joint Comprehensive Plan promotes farming.

**NEW BUSINESS** - None

**PUBLIC COMMENT** -None

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion - Meeting Adjournment** – A motion was made by Bob Cornman and seconded by Bob Simpson to adjourn the meeting at 9:57 pm. **Vote 7 Yes**

The next EAC meeting will be held on April 2, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Mellert, Secretary  
Plainfield Township EAC

1<sup>st</sup> draft from March 12, 2018

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