

**Plainfield Township
Environmental Advisory Council Meeting
April 2, 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.

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 – No attendees

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion – March 12, 2018 Minutes - A motion was made by Bob Simpson and seconded by Bob Cornman to approve the March 12, 2018 minutes. **Vote: 7 Yes**

OLD BUSINESS

PA DEP Growing Greener Plus Grant – Little Bushkill Creek

Tom Petrucci emailed the Stuber and Achenbach plans for our review.

- Tom Petrucci and Terry Kleintop will be meeting with Jason Smith on Monday, April 10, 2018 at 6 pm. to review the results of the source testing and progress being made on the Stuber and Achenbach plans. Additional EAC members are invited to attend.
- The water testing is complete
- The plans for both the Stuber and Achenbach farms are complete. Tom Petrucci noted Achenbach signed the paperwork. The farm work is ready to be bid after the winter is over. The EAC should review the information as per the RFP.

Northampton County Farmland Preservation and County/Municipal Partnership Program

- The Northampton County 2018 Summary of Farmland Preservation Ranking System listing was handed out to the EAC Members.
- 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 and 5 applicants with a total of 201.64 acres were ineligible.
- 1 farm of 39 acres (Kathryn Benn on Franklin Hill Rd) with land in Plainfield/Washington Township was declared ineligible due to not meeting State preservation criteria. 17 of the acres are in Plainfield and 22 acres are in Washington Township. The land ranking does meet the Municipal/County Partnership program criteria. Plainfield has EIT money to preserve Open Space but Washington Township has not implemented the program.
- Approximately 379.15 acres may be able to be preserved with the County and State money which could backlog a number of farms for the next couple of years.

- **Motion to send a letter from the EAC to the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors Regarding the Kathryn Benn farm**– A motion was made by Don Moore and seconded by Bob Cornman to send a letter to the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors requesting the Township send a letter to the Washington Township Board of Supervisors. The letter should request consideration of funding the preservation of the 22 acres located in Washington Township. The Plainfield Board would consider funding preservation of the 17 acres located in Plainfield Township utilizing EIT funds collected for Open Space preservation. The Kathryn Benn farm is located on Franklin Hill Rd. and qualifies under the County/Municipal Farmland Preservation criteria. The letter will be composed by the EAC Secretary. Prior to the vote Jane Mellert voiced her concern regarding the request. The letter to the Washington Township Board should include a copy of the Northampton County 2018 Summary of Farmland Preservation Ranking System list.

Vote: 6 yes 1 abstention Jane Mellert

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Farmland Preservation 2018 Allocation of Funds listing was handed out to the EAC Members. The match that Northampton County received was \$1.35 on the dollar. The County could have put forward additional funding for matching and would have gotten a very good return.

Warehouses – Terry Kleintop previously emailed articles regarding Lehigh and Allen Townships. The municipalities are concerned about the number of warehouses going into the Townships. Terry thought maybe there were additional property owners applying to the farmland preservation program due to the number of warehouses being built. The articles report the municipalities are taking steps in order to slow down the use of the land for warehouses.

Official Map - It was noted that a grant was applied for to implement an Official Map for Plainfield Township.

Conservation by Design Development Review

The Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors sent a letter dated March 26, 2018 to the EAC requesting that the EAC review the Conservation Development Ordinance. The Planning Commission is reviewing an application for a property located at 1105 Mill Rd. The subdivision utilizes Conservation by Design. A sketch plan was submitted and the design is a concern. The land proposed to be conserved on the parcel is split and is on both sides of Mill Road in the back of the proposed lots.

Tom Petrucci spoke to Maria Bentzoni regarding compatibility of the Conservation by Design Development criteria with farmland preservation.

Bob Cornman believes the Township needs requirements in order to accomplish the goal of preserving land and keeping open space in the municipality. It was noted that an official map would be separate and may concentrate on greenway areas. The official map will not overlap the land use (zoning).

Some of the concerns are as follows:

- Who will own and maintain the conserved open space?
- It was noted when the ordinance was developed the plan was for the conserved piece to go with a large lot.
- Will the conserved space be compatible with farming practices? Can the land be easily accessed?
- Does the Ordinance restrict landowners from selling or developing?
- Will the remaining conserved parcel be eligible for Clean and Green?
- Land conserved through the ordinance is not eligible to be preserved through the Northampton County Farmland Preservation program.

Tom Petrucci recommended looking at what we want to achieve instead of how to revise the ordinance. He will review all of the issues discussed and make recommendations for revisions.

Local Promotion of Agriculture

The EAC members discussed whether the Township could get involved with helping promote agriculture in the Township.

Some of the ideas brought up are as follows:

- Are tax incentives for farmers to transition in order to help sell their products feasible?
- Could the farmer's organization be utilized? Co-ops could be created.
- It was noted that additional accessory uses were previously put into the ordinance to allow farmers to expand on site businesses.

Pennsylvania Act 515/319 Clean and Green – Morning Call Article

The Morning Call published an article on March 18th about the Clean and Green Acres Law. A 10 month study on the current law and how it affects property owners was conducted. A follow up article was published the following week. According to the article the Township has 56% of the land/ 9000 acres in Clean and Green. The reduced tax assessment of land does provide a tax incentive for land to remain undeveloped. There is concern that landowners with smaller lots and parcels under 10 acres may be over taxed.

Future Assessed Value and Tax Income

Industrial development should be encouraged. Tom Petrucci is exploring ways for the Township to support development to generate jobs and taxes. Infrastructure is needed such as water and sewer to support Industrial Development.

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 9:39 pm. **Vote 7 Yes**

The next EAC meeting will be held on May 7, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Mellert, Secretary
Plainfield Township EAC

1st draft from April 2, 2018