



Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council 2020 Year End Report

On December 13, 2006, the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors passed Ordinance #315. The Ordinance provides operating procedures and powers for the Environmental Advisory Council. The Council advises other local government agencies, including, but not limited to, the planning commission, park and recreation boards, and elected officials, on matters dealing with protection, conservation, management, promotion and use of natural resources including air, land and water resources located within its territorial limits. The Board of Supervisors appointed seven residents to serve on the Council. The 2020 members were: Chairman Terry Kleintop, Vice-Chairperson Robin Dingle, Supervisor Jane Mellert, Robert Cornman, Bob Simpson, Bruce Rabenold and Stan Shelosky.

The Board of Supervisors approved the following appointments to the EAC at the annual reorganization meeting held on January 6, 2020 at 5:30 pm

- Terry Kleintop – 3 year term
- Bruce Rabenold – 3 year term
- Stan Shelosky – term expiring 1/1/2022
- Jane Mellert – EAC Secretary

Meetings are held at the Municipal Building on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 P.M. Additional meetings are scheduled as necessary. The meetings are open to the public.

Due to COVID – 19 (Pandemic) Regulations in place in the State of Pennsylvania, the Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council meetings were held by phone connection after March 13, 2020.

The Plainfield Township EAC met on the following dates in 2020:

January 14
February 3
March 2
April - Cancelled
May - Cancelled
June - Cancelled
July - Cancelled
August - Cancelled
September - Cancelled
October 5 – Telephone meeting
November 2 – Telephone meeting
December - Cancelled

A quorum of members was present at each meeting. Some of the meetings had interested Township residents in attendance. Minutes were prepared and adopted by the EAC for each meeting.

The EAC has the following responsibilities:

- Identify environmental problems;
- Recommend plans and programs to the appropriate agencies for the promotion and conservation of natural resources and for the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment within the area of the Municipality;
- Make recommendations as to the possible use of open land areas of this Municipality;
- Promote a community environmental program;
- Keep an index of all open areas, publicly or privately owned, including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas;
- Advise the appropriate local governmental agencies in the acquisition of property, both real and personal;
- Undertake such environmental tasks as requested by the Board of Supervisors of Plainfield Township.

During 2020 the EAC reviewed and/or were involved in the following:

- **Land preservation with Northampton County Farmland Preservation and the Local Municipal Partnership Program**
 - As per the 2019 Northampton County Farmland Preservation data, Plainfield Township now has a total of 42.5 farms preserved with a total of 3,165.67 acres.
 - In 2019 There was 1 applicant located in Plainfield Township (Matayas) with a total of 90.55 acres. The applicant has accepted the assessed valuation of the property and is moving forward with land preservation and closing took place in 2020.
 - 2020 – There were 3 applications from Plainfield Township for the 2020 program. All of the properties were ranked and are eligible. The properties will be preserved with State and County money. The following properties are in process of being preserved:
 - Jeffrey Poliskiewicz: approximately 40 acres: In process
 - Arlene Savakus Estate: approximately 90 acres (Washington/Plainfield Twps): In process
 - 2021 - As of December 30, 2020 there is no status for the 2021 applications. The application deadline is tentatively scheduled to be extended, but the time extension has not yet been approved.

The Northampton County Farmland Preservation Administration did not request Plainfield Township to consider committing a portion of the .25 percent of earned income tax funds collected for Open Space to the State of Pennsylvania matching program. Plainfield Township's committed fund balance from prior years is **\$863,325.70 with a \$0 County match balance.**

- **With funding acquired from a Lehigh Valley Greenways Grant the EAC and Board of Supervisors moved forward with the development of an Official Map.**
Official Map - Lehigh Valley Greenways Grant "Plainfield Township Official Map Adoption" project (contract no. C2P2-22-LVG-22.10)
 - The EAC conducted several reviews of the draft Official Map. After review and input from the EAC the map was forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. The Official Map was officially adopted.

➤ **Grand Central Woods**

- In 2018 Township Manager Tom Petrucci met with representatives from the Waste Management Landfill along with members from Conservation organizations in order to continue to move forward with fact finding for preservation of the property. The exploration of preserving part of Grand Central Woods continued during 2019. There was no progress made toward preservation of the property during 2020.

➤ **Northampton County Development of the Gall Farm – located on Gall Rd in Plainfield Twp.**

- In July of 2018 Northampton County set up a Steering Committee for the Gall Farm Project. The meetings continued during 2019. Terry Kleintop EAC Chairman, Don Moore EAC Member, Jane Mellert Township Supervisor and EAC Member and Tom Petrucci Township Manager participated on the Steering Committee to develop the Gall farm into a passive recreation park.
- The Gall Farm Park will connect to the existing Plainfield Township Recreation Trail. Additional parking and trail enhancements were explored as part of the project. Plainfield Township has contributed a \$15,000 match toward the trail improvements.
- Due to the 2020 pandemic restrictions the project is behind schedule.

➤ **Little Bushkill Stream** – Past sampling efforts conducted by Plainfield Township volunteers and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, during 2010 and 2011, reported elevated concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria and the Little Bushkill Creek was listed as “impaired for its designated use” (recreational use/water contact) according to the 25 PA Code Section 93.7). A study of the stream has been in process since that time utilizing Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Plus Grants.

- **PA DEP Growing Greener Plus Grant** - Watershed Management
 - Hanover Engineering was awarded the contract to continue the study in 2016. Jason Smith, PWS at Hanover Engineering met with EAC members and Township Manager Tom Petrucci during 2017, 2018 and 2019 to review progress being made on continued stream testing and restoration measures on land adjacent to the stream.
 - The PA DEP approved a Growing Greener grant time extension until December 31, 2019
 - The final plan was presented to the Board of Supervisors on June 10, 2019.
 - Restoration measures were completed on the Stuber and Achenbach farms during 2019.
 - West Branch – Portions of the stream were delisted in the 2018 Integrated Report (PA DEP 2018)
 - East Branch – Three tributaries and one (1) segment of the East Branch were sampled and the segments remain impaired for recreational purposes. The tributaries include Delabole Road, Heimer Road Spring and Benders Church Road.
 - The Township Manager compiled a draft Little Bushkill Creek Watershed Management Plan for 2021.

➤ **Little Bushkill Creek Watershed Management Plan - 2021 Proposed Action Plan**

- The draft Little Bushkill Creek Watershed Management Plan 2021 was prepared by Township Manager Tom Petrucci and dated September 24, 2020 and revised after review by the EAC on October 5, 2020.
- The Board of Supervisors reviewed the draft On lot Sewage Management Ordinance which was prepared along with the Act 537 Plan. Manager Tom Petrucci lead the review of the contents of the document which included the following:

- **ACT 537 Plan – The plan update is in progress.** The first draft of the ACT 537 Plan was reviewed by the Board of Supervisors in October of 2020. The Plainfield Township Planning Commission and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission must review the draft plan prior to it going to the Board of Supervisors for adoption. The EAC reviewed sections of the plan.
- **A draft sample On lot Sewage Management Program Ordinance which is currently under review as part of the Act 537 Plan update was reviewed.** The Supervisors reviewed the draft during the 10/14/2020 Board of Supervisors meeting along with the Act 537 Plan. The Ordinance is in the process of being revised by Entech Engineering consultant Mary Beth Peters. The revised draft was reviewed by the EAC.
- **Open Space Program** – The EAC members will review the Plainfield Township Open Space Program pages 38- 41 in order to discuss the Earned Income Tax funding and the possibility of spending money along the stream and trail to improve the stream corridor.
- **Plainfield Township should consider revisions that would improve current ordinance requirements for the protection and restoration of riparian buffers.** Communication with Wind Gap Borough Officials and the Board should be started to discuss what measures the Borough could take to participate in the restoration and protection of riparian buffers.
- **Plainfield Township should work closely with the Northampton County Conservation District, United States Department of Agriculture, to ensure that farms within the Township are meeting manure management plans, Nutrient Management Plans and/or Conservation Plans and implement the plans to protect local wetlands and waters.** The Northampton County Farmland Preservation Office could be utilized since the office conducts annual inspections on preserved farms. Public meetings with Ag Educators should be held and grants should be applied for which could help farmers make corrections. The program should be implemented when and where possible.

In February of 2020, the EAC met with Sharon Pletchan (District Manager at the NCCD) and Jim Clauser (Agricultural Conservation Specialist). Sharon and Jim provided an overview of what the Northampton County Conservation District does. Sharon explained the initial compliance with ACT 319/515 Clean and Green regulations.

- **Little Bushkill Stream Monitoring** – It was noted that stream sampling has not been done since 2016 which creates a data gap. The areas for de-listing are now small areas. It is not known whether the small reaches would meet the PA Dep requirements for delisting. It was noted that corrective action along the stream would be necessary and it will take a while for the action to have impact. It will take three (3) to five (5) years for the benefits of the corrective action to have an effect. In March of 2020 the Board of Supervisors requested a scaled back stream sampling plan. The Board would like to review information in order to consider funding for long term repairs and restoration measures.
- **Sewage Enforcement** – The 2018 Little Bushkill Creek Watershed Management Plan recommended moving forward with authorizing the Sewage Enforcement Officer to identify problem areas. The updated ACT 537 Plan and On lot Sewage Management Program Ordinance should help with identifying problem areas.

- **MS4 Requirements are ongoing. The Township Engineer Ott Consulting has been utilized for mapping. Wetland Scientist Jason Smith could be consulted to work with the Township Engineer to meet the requirements.**
 - **MS4 Educational Materials** - The Township continues to update its educational materials for stormwater/MS4 on a regular and ongoing basis. This is a MS4 Program requirement. The EAC can assist in developing materials for publication.
 - **Best Management Practices** - An evaluation of stormwater management needs should be conducted within Plainfield Township and Wind Gap.
- **Quarries**
- Tom Petrucci discussed applying for a \$10,000 Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape Mini Grant due March 6, 2020. If successful the grant has a \$10,000 Township match requirement and the money would be utilized to hire a consultant to develop an Ordinance for clean fill. The EAC needs to identify some of the requirements we want built into the Ordinance. It would be good to have an assessment of the recharge of the aquifer to the quarries. The following points were noted.
 - Monroe County has a one page document on their website titled Clean Fill Requirements from the Monroe County Conservation District.
 - Pennsylvania standards are not as stringent as neighboring states, such as, New York and New Jersey.
 - Nothing in the law notes that a Township is pre-empted. Clean fill regulations can be addressed in a Zoning Ordinance.
 - A member of the EAC mapped out some of the quarries known in Plainfield Township. It was noted that there are different priorities for the quarries, clean fill, and inclusion on the Official Map.
- **Regional EAC meetings** are held by the EAC members from Bushkill, Lower Mount Bethel, Plainfield, Moore and Upper Mount Bethel Townships. Due to COVID – 19 restrictions meetings were delayed.
- **The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission** located at 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310, Allentown, PA 18109 hosts meetings that are attended by members of the EAC's in the Lehigh Valley. Due to COVID – 19 restrictions the LVPC held virtual meetings in 2020.

Report prepared by Jane Mellert, EAC Secretary