

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 21, 2024 AT 7:00PM

A Regular Meeting of the Smithfield Township Environment Advisory Council was held on May 21, 2024, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

Present are Councilors Pat Owens, Brett Cartwright, Mitch Bowyer, Ken LeSure, and Eric White, Planning Commissioner James Munet, Township Sewage Enforcement Officer Scott Brown, and Conservation & Recreation Director Alex Jackson. [Supervisor Michael Albert is not present].

Also present are Tarah Vecchio-Freeman, Marguerite Vecchio, JoAnn Norris, Kristine Karol, and Jean Turn.

- 1. Chair Pat Owens calls the meeting to order at 7:00PM.**
- 2. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.**
- 3. Minutes:**

- a. Regular Meeting - April 16, 2024.**

Councilor Bowyer motions to approve the minutes, Councilor Cartwright seconds. Vote: all in favor; minutes accepted.

- 4. Old Business:**

- a. Presentation: Brief Overview and Q&A with Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO), Scott Brown (Hanover Engineering)**

Scott Brown explained that Chapter 72.41 of the Pennsylvania Code details SEO powers and duties. Applicants for certain permits need sewage testing, including probe and tapping tests. If these tests pass, a formal percolation test follows, and the results go to the system designer.

Chapter 73 of the PA Code covers technical guidelines for sewage system design. SEOs can permit systems up to 10,000 gallons per day (GPD) for on-lot systems, with several inspections during construction. For subdivisions and land development plans with on-lot sewage proposing over 800 GPD, SEOs oversee all testing to ensure site suitability.

During on-site investigations, SEOs look for soil limiting zones, particularly seasonal high water tables. SEOs investigate, issue citations, and enforce corrections on sewage complaints. Scott Brown addressed various questions from Council members and the public about isolation distances, new sewage technologies, and the approval process for well distance variances. He also explained the procedure for handling complaints, and that the Township had less than 10 complaints in 2023, with no court cases.

Scott Brown discussed new technologies in sewage treatment and the impact of sewage on groundwater, and explained that Act 537 requires amendments for proposals over 800 GPD or more than two Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs). These amendments, necessary for subdivisions or land developments, must be reviewed by the Planning Commission (PC), the Board of Supervisors (BOS), and the Monroe County Planning Commission (MCPC). The MCPC provides recommendations but cannot reject the plan. The amendments outline where public sewer and private on-lot sewage are located and initiate the permitting process by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Regarding soil treatment, Scott Brown noted that while soil can reduce nitrogen levels, a certain amount of nitrogen that will enter the groundwater. Elevated nitrogen levels may require a groundwater study during the Act 537 planning process to prevent adverse impacts on adjacent properties. On-lot systems are ineffective at filtering PFAS. Further public comments were addressed, including the process for obtaining and reapplying for sewage permits, and the role of public notice in the permitting process. Scott Brown concluded by highlighting resources for public education on sewage systems and the importance of proper sewage management practices.

b. Discuss: Update on Request for Technical Assistance by MCPC – Official Map.

Alex Jackson presented the updated Environmentally Sensitive Areas map from the MCPC. The Council requested the inclusion of road names, conserved land, and 10-acre parcels.

c. Discuss: Request for Natural Lands Trust Presentation.

Natural Lands is confirmed for a presentation on June 18th.

5. New Business:

a. Public Comment Procedure

Pat Owens introduced the public comment procedure. The Council decided that public comments will be taken throughout the agenda.

b. Minutes Review Procedure

After discussion, Pat Owens expressed her preference for longer, more detailed minutes.

c. Discuss: Zoning Amendment – Wetlands.

The Council discussed the amendment process, public comments, potential impacts, and the importance of impacts to the wetlands margin areas. Kristine Karol asked about the validity challenge portion of the document, which was clarified by Alex Jackson.

Councilor White motions that the Council complete research on the width of the wetland margin area and the impact percentage allowed, Councilor Owens seconds. Vote: Councilors Pat Owens, Brett Cartwright, Mitch Bowyer, Ken LeSure, and Eric White in favor; Councilor James

Munet abstains: motion carries. Pat Owens will draft a letter to the BOS that details the Council's recommendation.

d. Discuss: Smithfield Sewer Authority Treatment Plant Tour.

Alex Jackson discussed the Smithfield Sewer Authority, a public agency that holds its meetings at 1:00PM on the second Monday of each month. A discussion followed regarding a tour of the wastewater treatment plant.

6. Public Comments:

Kristine Karol requested that street and road names be included on the Environmentally Sensitive Areas map and asked for the exact location of the Smithfield Sewer Authority treatment plant; Alex Jackson clarified he does not have the exact address.

7. Adjournment: There being no other business before the Council, Councilor Munet motions to adjourn, Councilor Cartwright seconds. Vote: all in favor; meeting adjourned at 8:22PM.

Minutes recorded by Alex Jackson

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Heilakka, Township Secretary