

**PALMER TOWNSHIP  
ENVIRONMENTAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
September 22, 2021, 6:30 PM at Palmer Township Public Library  
Minutes**

• **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS—**

- The meeting was called to order by the vice chairman, Ginny Sciorra, at 6:30 pm.
- In attendance were, Ginny Sciorra, Nancy Nicholas, Diane Halasz, Joshua Kasenga, Ann Marie Panella, and Deanne Werkheiser.
- Doreen Shaffer was absent.
  - Guests:
    - Jamie Paetzell (Palmer Township employee),
    - Bill Hartin (Palmer Township resident),
    - Harry Graack, Jr. (Palmer Township land owner)
    - Ken Starace (Palmer Township resident and member of the Earth Stewards),
    - Tom Dittmar (Palmer Township resident and member of the Earth Stewards),
    - Rob Reese (Palmer Township resident and member of the Earth Stewards),
    - Kathy Altmann (Palmer Township resident and president of the Bushkill Stream Conservancy group)

• **GUESTS – Kathy Altmann, from The Bushkill Stream Conservancy (BSC) group**

- Deanne Werkheiser introduced Kathy Altmann, the guest speaker from The Bushkill Stream Conservancy group.
- Kathy mentioned that she has been in touch with Harry Graack and Bill Hartin about the flooding of the Schoeneck Creek.
- Kathy explained that the BSC is a strictly volunteer group with 24 board member seats. She said only 12 seats are filled at the present time so more volunteers are needed.
- The BSC is actively doing stream restoration in the Mill Race Park area. 25 structures were put in to restore the natural flow of the stream.
- These structures should help the wildlife in the stream.
- The population of micro-organisms is down, possibly due to the excess sedimentation.
- A major planting, to begin later in October, will be the next step in this process. Volunteers are needed. She mentioned the connection between the BSC and Trout Unlimited and Wildlands Conservancy groups.
- She mentioned that MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) regulations are important.

- BSC meetings are held the 4th Monday of the month outside at Braden Park at 7PM.
- BSC's email address can be found on their website.
- Kathy suggested placing brochures from the BSC in the library on the bookshelf that has other pamphlets.
- **Guest**—Rob Reese (Palmer Township resident and member of the Earth Stewards of Palmer [ESP])
  - Rob Reese stated that there is no longer an official representative to the BSC from the Palmer Board of Supervisors (BoS); Virginia Rickert had been the representative. Deanne Werkheiser will speak to Palmer Township Manager Bob Williams about assigning a new rep, since she lets him know what is going on with the BSC.
  - He mentioned the history of PennDOT moving the stream when they redid Bushkill Street.
  - He suggested that experts joining the BSC would be helpful—suggested Lafayette College and storm water experts.
- **Guest**—Ken Starace (Palmer Township resident and ESP member)
  - Ken mentioned that he represents the Palmer Township group called the Earth Stewards, which has 10 members.
  - He mentioned that ESP partners with Trout Unlimited and the D&L (Delaware & Lehigh) organization.
  - This group has provided articles for the Palmer Township newsletter.
  - This group does litter clean up and have picked up 2.5 tons of trash, mostly on roads.
  - Ken said the group is interested in 3 things—
    - MS4 regulations (Supervisor Panella stated that MS4 is being handled in Palmer Township by the engineering firm Pidcock and that she would find a Pidcock contact for Ken)
    - Recycling and Hazardous waste events—the Earth Stewards had volunteered to help with these events in the past and wanted to get them back up and running again.
    - Touring of the Mascaro waste management facilities.
  - He said he had lunch with Anita Forester (former chairperson of the ESC) and had discussed MS4. He hoped to talk with her today about how they could help.
  - He said this group is interested in the MS4 implementation. He said Easton was fined for non-compliance
  - This group is interested in keeping litter out of the waterways
  - Deanne asked if the two groups wanted to combine. The answer was no, they want to remain separate and just show up to the ESC meetings as guests. Ken stated that he would probably be ESP's liaison to the ESC.

- **Guest**—Rob Reese (Palmer Township resident and ESP member)
  - He wanted to discuss the stencils and decals for storm drains in Palmer Township. He mentioned that 15 years ago he began this stencil project while working with students at the Easton Area School District. He had worked with Tom Adams, Palmer Township's Director of Public Services.
  - There were two different stencils: drains to the Lehigh River and drains to Bushkill Creek. Several organizations received stencils for future use: Easton High School, BSC, and Palmer Township. The location of Easton High School stencils is unknown. Palmer Township did not respond when he contacted them to determine if the stencils were still in the municipal building. ESP would need Palmer to identify contact and which materials are still available. The BSC still has their stencils.
  - The ESP could do the stenciling work, but stencils and decals would need to be purchased if they cannot be found. A new stencil for drains to the Schoeneck Creek would also be needed. The ESC could request money for this stenciling/decals project via the 2022 budget.
  - He says the Palmer Township residents need to be educated so they know what happens to everything that goes into a storm drain. Kathy Altman noted that the BSC has a lot of educational materials on storm water.
  - Rob will send more information on the company that created the stencils, brushes, paint, and decals to Diane Halasz.
  - Former ESC member Madison Smith and Palmer's Recycling Coordinator, Cindy Oatis had worked on MS4 regulations and created a report with recommendations. Supervisor Panella will follow up with Bob Williams, the town manager, to get Madison's MS4 report from Cindy.
  - The Easton High School Environmental Club had been active with the ESP, but a new contact is needed because the previous one graduated.
  - He also discussed sustainability and the mowing being done in the township.
  - The ESC will make MS4 regulations the focus of the October meeting. Palmer Township employees to be invited are: Township Manager Bob Williams, and Director of Public Services Tom Adams.
  
- **Guest**—Harry Graack, Jr. (Palmer Township land owner)
  - He stated that he has a background in engineering.
  - He mentioned that the herbicides and pesticides used on his farm go into the Schoeneck Creek when there is flooding on his land.
  - He mentioned the storm water overflow from the Northampton Crossing shopping center is sending a huge amount of water from the parking lot into the creek.
  - He mentioned that his soil is flowing into the creek when it floods.
  - He stated that there is an increase in water from developed areas when their retention ponds overflow during rainstorms. The ProLogic facility overflowed for 1.5 days.

- He had contacted the Northampton County Conservation District; they are limited in what they can do to look into the flooding situation on the Schoeneck Creek. The DEP is not looking into it either. Harry Graack stated that he would like to bring the Schoeneck back to a reasonable streambed.
- He followed up on the Hercules Cement plant from the August meeting and they do pump their quarry water into the Bushkill Creek.
- He stated that the Nazareth sewer plant discharges treated wastewater into the Schoeneck Creek. He doesn't know if MS4 regulations will address that.
- He would like Palmer Township to recognize that this is their problem. He needs their engineering staff to look into it. He wants the right agencies to be involved, like the DEP. We would need to pass along to the Northampton County Conservation District the name of who we thought the offender was so they could get the DEP involved.
- Rob Reese commented that upstream development affects downstream. Municipal reps to the BSC help.
- Harry Graack stated that Palmer Township should set a good example.
- Kathy Altman commented that Bushkill and Plainfield Township and Moore are very focused on stream and outflows.
- He mentioned that the water in the Schoeneck Creek smells of sewage sometimes. Bill Hartin could smell the sewage from his property; it started about seven years ago. He hasn't seen anyone test for sewage at the bridge over the Schoeneck Creek on Van Buren Road for the last 20 years.
- A small discussion of testing water for sewage ensued. Testing for sewage requires specialized education. Kathy Altmann stated that testing was moved further downstream where the Schoeneck flows into the Bushkill.
- He mentioned that the Bushkill Creek is tested, but not for pathogens. He is unsure if the Schoeneck Creek is tested, but the Nazareth Sewer Plant should be testing it.
- He mentioned that all the organizations need to work together to preserve the waterways.

#### • **APPROVAL OF August 25, 2021 MEETING MINUTES —**

- Motion by Werkheiser
- Second by Nicholas

#### • **Old Business**

- Halasz mentioned the need for an ESC budget. It was suggested the group asks for \$2500 for 2022. This should be written up and sent to Supervisor Panella, who will give it to the township manager. The following are included in the 2022 budget:

- electric mower for a raffle during Community Days in Palmer - \$500
- Events and education—\$500
- Stencils and decals for the storm drains
- Kasenga suggested the township invest in a commercial electric mower (estimated cost of \$33,000). Supervisor Panella suggested that he write up the details of this proposal and send them to Scott Kistler. This money could come from grants such as DEP 902/904 or from LSA (Local Share Account). LSA grants are a community fund required under the Gaming Act.
- Meeting revision to the 3rd Wednesday instead of the fourth Wednesday was discussed. Werkheiser says she has a new job, so there may be no need for a change but she is not sure yet what her 2022 work schedule will be. A decision will be made at the October ESC meeting.
- We reviewed the web images created by Halasz for the department page on the Palmer Township. The compass with the Earth in the center was selected.
- We reviewed the sample heading designs Halasz presented for the Green Guide on the Palmer Township website. We selected the first one, a simple leaf design.
- Halasz will contact Brenda DeGerolamo about website updates.

#### • **Old Business**

- We reviewed a list of upcoming community events, especially the 10/12/21 Municipal Stormwater Workshop to be held at Villanova University. Having someone attend this would be very timely, considering the discussions on MS4 regulations. No one knew if there was enough money left in our 2021 budget to cover the \$50 fee. Kasenga expressed some interest in attending.

#### • **Supervisor's report – Panella**

- No report
- She did say she invited the Earth Stewards to this meeting.

#### • **Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn was made by Halasz and seconded by Werkheiser. Motion was approved by all present and the meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.

#### • **Next meeting—October 27th, 6:30 pm in the Palmer Library**