

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Stormwater Authority Special Meeting Minutes

February 13th, 2025, 7PM, 3 Weller Pl, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

- a. Present: Robert Blanchfield, Matthew Gunther, Robert A. Lammi, Craig Swinsburg, George White, Ryan Cummings, Scott Kistler and Zach Trexler.
- b. Absent: Kendall M. Mitchell
- c. The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

3. Old Nazareth Road Drainage Improvement Presentation – HRG

- a. Blanchfield opened the meeting by introducing the members of the Stormwater Authority and the Engineers, HRG. Blanchfield gave a brief overview of the project in the area of Old Nazareth Road & Seip Avenue. He then gave a summary of the history of the MS4 program within Palmer Township before handing the meeting over to HRG for the detailed project presentation.
- b. George White, Assistant Vice President of HRG, began by stating that this project is the first phase of projects intended to improve drainage through the area of Meadow Ave, Seip Ave, and Old Nazareth Rd. White said the mitigation goals are to reduce the frequency and severity of the flooding, protect public safety, reduce property damage, and manage flood conditions. White gave an overview of the entire drainage basin, which is about 1,600 acres, and laid out where the drainage infrastructure currently is and where it outlets. White said that currently, there is so much pressure in the pipes when the system backs up that water will spill out of the catch basins. White detailed the impacts of the 2020 storm which was labeled as a 500-year storm. He said the plan is to start improvements to the system downstream, and work our way up, because if the end point is not sufficient, no other improvements to the system will make a difference.
- c. Ryan Cummings, Project Engineer for HRG explained how large a project this is. He said this project will include 41 new stormwater structures, 1,600 feet of plastic pipe, and 550 feet of brand-new box culvert. He stated that the box culvert will create the needed capacity to get all the water down through the system as quickly as possible. He mentioned that some side streets, like Maplecroft and Westgate, will see improvements as well. He said the project is currently out to bid, with an estimated cost of \$4 million. He said the project is expected to begin in Fall of 2025, with an estimated completion in Summer of 2026. Cummings said that the goal is to not have any permanent or overnight closures in the area while the project is ongoing. He said there will be coordination with the Post Office for mail delivery, and that some utilities will be impacted by the construction, but that if any utilities needed to be shutoff, it would only be for about 2 hours and there

would be notices given out 48 -72 hours prior to shutoff. He said that if any property damage occurs, it will be restored to its existing condition, and the same goes for any driveways that are affected. He said communications will be given out on the Township Facebook page and other outlets so that nobody is caught off guard. He said another public meeting will be held around mid-summer and that the contractor will be included.

- d. White said construction is never convenient for anybody, but this specific area has been affected by these issues since the 60's. He said we will provide contact information for any residents with issues related to the project.
- e. Blanchfield introduced Matt Gunther as a board member of the Authority and as the Director of Stormwater for the Township. He also thanked Palmer Supervisor Charles Bellis III for his support.

4. Public Comment, Other Communications

- a. Angelo Ferraro – 3021 Hermitage Avenue
 - i. Ferraro stated that any heavy rainfall will cause the 2600 block of Hermitage Avenue to flood. White said that specific area will see improvements during phase 2.
- b. Jay Medler – 7 Westgate Avenue
 - i. Asked where the box culvert starts and stops. White said it starts at the intersection of Seip and Old Nazareth. Cummings said it will come all the way to the parking lot at the Beverage Store. White said the large culvert will go all the way to the culvert underneath Route 248. He asked if the Stormwater fee will be adjusted in the future at all, and Blanchfield said it will not be going away anytime soon as we have a lot of projects to complete.
- c. Jenn Rigby – 2509 Seip Avenue
 - i. Asked if anything has been taken into consideration with children's bus routes. White said they will be in communication with the School District as well as LANTA to work out detours.
- d. Austin Barlow – 2830 Hermitage Avenue
 - i. Asked if the summer of 2026 completion is for phase 1 or for all phases. White said it is phase 1.
- e. Julie Butler – 2811 Hermitage Avenue
 - i. Asked if there will be grates on the street. White said there will be catch basins all along the streets to collect water as quickly as possible. Butler asked if curbing will be affected, and White said anywhere that curbing is affected it will be replaced. Cummings said that once construction is complete, the road will be repaved from curb to curb.
- f. Charles Bellis III – 2 Maplecroft Avenue

- i. Asked how many additional catch basins will be installed going up Old Nazareth Road. Cummings didn't have an exact number, but he thinks it's somewhere around 12-15. Bellis asked what work will be done on Maplecroft Avenue. Cummings said on Westgate we are adding 2 catch basins and a yard drain, and on Maplecroft we are adding a couple catch basins and reconfiguring how the system drains to make it more efficient. Bellis also stated that the Authority will be holding another meeting dedicated to sinkholes on March 25th.
 - g. DeFrancesca – 12 Westgate Avenue
 - i. Asked if the new box culvert will be 12 feet wide and White said that is correct. Cummings said the culvert will be under the driveway of the Beverage Store, and that the only property that will be affected is a fence that was installed that will be replaced.
 - h. Susan Ebling – 3037 Old Nazareth Road
 - i. Stated she has a right of way on her property and asked if that would be affected by the construction. Cummings stated that her property is beyond the limits of the construction.
 - i. Jason Wilder – 2501 Seip Avenue
 - i. Asked how the area will look after a days work because we rely on Old Nazareth for out business. Cummings said any road closures will be reopened every day after work is completed. Wilder asked if more than 1 entrance would be open. Cummings said you will never be down to 1 entrance/exit only. Asked if road parking will be available during the night, and Cummings said the roads should be able to be parked on during the night, and that no equipment should be left anywhere.
 - j. Colin Burke – 1415 Stones Crossing Road
 - i. Thanked HRG for coming out for this meeting. Asked if during construction there will be sinkhole analysis. Cummings said that the contractor will be informed to halt all work if anything suspicious is noticed. White said sinkholes occur more when there is unregulated flow of water, which this system is looking to eliminate. Burke asked what percentage this project will improve flooding. White said he cannot provide a number, but it will improve. He said a tropical storm that brings 5-6 inches of rain should be completely contained within this system when all phases are completed.
 - k. Cummings stated that Gunther would be reaching out to a few property owners regarding easements related to the project.
 - l. Brenda DeGerolamo, Assistant Township Manager, thanked the Authority for all the work they have done since their inception.
- 5. Next meeting: February 19th, 2025**

6. Adjournment

- a.** Lammi made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Gunther seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 7:57PM.