

**TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2010**

The regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Lower Makefield Township Municipal Building on Wednesday, March 10, 2010. Chairman Rick Ewing called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

**Environmental Advisory
Council:**

Jim Bray, Member (absent)
Laura Brandt, Member
Alan Dresser, Member
Rick Ewing, Chairman
Geoff Goll, Member
Lisa Grayson-Zygmunt, alternate (absent)
Joseph Sundeen, Vice-Chairman

Others:

Pete Stainthorpe, Supervisor Liaison
Jim Majewski, Township Engineer

PA TRANSIT EXPANSION COALITION PRESENTATION

Mr. Jon Scott introduced himself and Mr. John Frey and talked about the PA-TEC mission. They are proposing the restoration of the Newtown rail line and its connection to the SEPTA Center City and West Trenton lines. They did a study showing the line would be viable in Newtown. The train line would reduce the number of cars on the road and they anticipate 1500 new riders who are walkers to the station and 1500 riders that drive to the station. Mr. Scott stated they have bi-partisan political support for the project. The project is estimated at \$100 million to \$300 million dollars and they feel the project could be funded through the Septa capital budget.

Mr. Scott stated reopening the Newtown line would create jobs. Mr. Goll asked if there are any challenges with acquisition of land to build the missing parts of the line. Mr. Scott said that SEPTA has the right-of-way for the entire line. Mr. Goll asked if they thought the estimate was accurate and Mr. Scott said they based their estimate on the West Chester line expansion.

Mr. Sundeen asked if the train crossings might be a problem and explained the problems the Township encountered to create quiet zones. Mr. Scott said there would be 15 crossings and if the proper gates are installed, safety measure horns could be minimal. Mr. Stainthorpe asked what kind of political support are they looking for. Mr. Scott stated they have received support from political figures and municipalities who have agreed to pass resolutions supporting the Newtown line. They are looking for a resolution from Lower Makefield Township similar to the resolution Newtown and Cheltenham passed supporting a further study for the proposed train station.

A gentleman in the audience noted that Septa has not shown any interest in resurrecting this line now and asked when do you think they will reconsider. Mr. Scott stated that SEPTA said they don't plan to reinstate the line for 30 years. He believes the Newtown line is located in an area of high

growth and could support the need for the line. If SEPTA receives enough pressure from the public and politicians they will reinstate the line. Mr. Scott and Mr. Frey showed that the Newtown area supports 140,000 cars per day on its roads.

Mr. Rich Mendes, Warminster EAC said a study was done for the R-2 line and the TMA contributed \$60,000 towards that study. He asked if PA-TEC has the funds for a feasibility study. Mr. Scott said he has asked qualifying agencies if they would fund the study and he is also looking at earmarks.

Mr. Stainthorpe asked if a cross county line is still being considered. Mr. Scott said it is still on the Septa map but would not be very popular.

A gentleman in the audience noted that the last presentation by PA-TEC was not well attended with only 60 people. He said it doesn't seem like they have a lot of support for this project. He asked if it would make more sense to build a park & ride in Newtown to connect to other stations. Mr. Scott said that they have received overwhelming support for the project and the number of attendees at any given meeting is not an accurate barometer for support.

A woman in the audience commented that this rail line would bring even more viability to the Newtown area and would give people options of employment in Center City they may not have considered before.

Mr. Barry asked if we know how many people commute to Center City from Yardley.

Mr. Majewski asked Mr. Scott if he knows the cost of the feasibility study. Mr. Scott said he does not know but has asked for \$750,000. Mr. Majewski asked how many parking spaces would be needed and is the land available for the spaces. Mr. Scott said he does not see a problem with parking. Mr. Majewski asked questions about safety of the bridges for the proposed line and electrifying the line.

Mr. Ewing thanked the group for their presentation and asked the Council if they would support a resolution. Mr. Stainthorpe suggested the EAC make a presentation to the Board of Supervisors with the PA-TEC members to ask for a resolution.

MATRIX BUFFER VIOLATION

Mr. Goll stated that Matrix cleared a significant buffer along Oxford Valley Road and other areas of the site. He drafted a letter to the Supervisors about the violation. He stated this is a violation of the Township buffer ordinance. On behalf of the EAC, he is requesting a resolution from the Supervisors for this violation with four recommendations including a stop work order. Mr. Ewing asked if a stop work order is common in these cases. Mr. Majewski stated a stop order was issued last year to Matrix on this property.

Mr. Goll asked Mr. Majewski for an update on the property. Mr. Majewski said the tree buffer was to be preserved on Big Oak Road north but not on the south entrance. Since we found out about the

tree clearing a total of 50 trees were cleared. Mr. Goll said he is suspect of Matrix clearing more trees since he walked the site before they started construction. Mr. Majewski explained the Township would require a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees to be planted in the cleared buffer area.

Mr. Dresser moved to send Mr. Goll's letter with the changes discussed at this meeting to the Board of Supervisors for approval. Mr. Sundeen seconded and the motion unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 2010 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Goll moved, Mr. Sundeen seconded and the January meeting minutes were unanimously approved with changes.

BUCKS BEAUTIFUL

Mrs. Brandt said she applied for and received another Bucks Beautiful grant for \$100 and the Township will match \$100 to continue the native plantings outside the Township Building.

TREE PLANTINGS

Mrs. Brandt stated the Township would now be receiving trees for the Girls' softball fields on Oxford Valley Road for free because of the PennVest grant she applied for. The Township will receive 24 bare root trees and is looking for volunteers to plant the trees on April 10th. She will need to document the tree planting, take pictures and write a report for the grant.

CELL PHONE RECYCLING

Mrs. Brandt stated she has collected 6 cell phones so far.

RECYCLING EDUCATION

Mrs. Brandt stated that Edgewood Elementary School is having a recycled art show and the EAC will have a table at the art show.

LAND USE REVIEWS

Ferry & Big Oak Road – Mr. Goll stated this is an open space parcel and the EAC received a request from Mr. Fedorchak to walk the site. The owner would be willing to sell the 7-acre parcel of land to the Township. Mr. Goll stated when Mr. Bray returns from his trip they will look at the property.

Zubaida – Mr. Goll said he just received revised plans and he will review them.

Edgewood Crossing – No report.

Mr. Dresser asked how long can developers ask for extensions. He noted the Gatherings have been sitting idle for over 2 years. Mr. Stainthorpe said the Township does not have any time limits on extensions.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Mrs. Brandt asked for an update on new members. Mr. Ewing said he does not have an update.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14th at 7:30 pm in the Township Building.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rick Ewing, Chairman