

## Stormwater Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 • 6:30 PM • Municipal Center Rooms 220/221

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

### 2. Roll Call & Pledge of Allegiance

*MEMBERS PRESENT:* Chris Haughey, Jack Pflaumer, Russ Hartman, Joe Fitch, and Andy McAloon

*STAFF PRESENT:* Township Manager Eden Ratliff, Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla, Public Works Director Eric Gartenmayer, Finance Director Laura Hucklebridge, Township Engineer Isaac Kessler, Assistant Township Engineer Dominic Cundari, and Assistant Township Engineer Alex Swiderski

### 3. Reorganization

Mr. Hartman nominated Chris Haughey to serve as Chair of the Stormwater Advisory Committee. Mr. Pflaumer seconded the nomination. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. Haughey nominated Jack Pflaumer to serve as Vice Chair of the Stormwater Advisory Committee. Mr. Hartman seconded the nomination. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### 4. Old Business

None.

### 5. New Business

#### a. Introductions & Committee Scope

Members of the committee introduced themselves and their interest in joining the committee. Jack Pflaumer shared that he is a 25-year resident of the Township and worked for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection working on watershed management and stormwater quality.

Andy McAloon shared that he is a 40-year resident of the Township and has served for more than 25 years on the Environmental Advisory Council. He is a retired engineer from the US Department of Agriculture. Andy also served on the 2024 ad-hoc Stormwater Advisory Committee.

Chris Haughey shared that he is a 38-year resident of the Township who is a civil engineer for the Morrisville Municipal Authority. He previously worked for a private engineering firm and

currently chairs the Citizens Traffic Commission. He also has experienced some significant floods at his home in Levittown.

Russ Hartman shared that he resides in Langhorne and has personally experienced significant flooding in his neighborhood. He is a Penn State Master Watershed Steward and is experienced with riparian buffers.

Joe Fitch shared that he is a 59-year resident of the Township and is a repeat-victim of flooding at his home. Joe also served on the 2024 ad-hoc Stormwater Advisory Committee.

Messrs. Valla, Gartenmayer, Kessler, Cundari, and Swiderski all introduced themselves and their involvement with the Township, the Stormwater Advisory Committee, and the fee.

Mr. Valla provided a copy the ordinance establishing the Stormwater Advisory Committee to the members and highlighted their role, specifically in providing direct oversight of the proceeds of the Stormwater Impact Fee and to advise the Board of Supervisors on matters related to Stormwater, including future improvement projects. He also noted that the Committee serves as the second appellate body for properties seeking to appeal their Stormwater Impact Fee beyond the initial appeal to the Township Engineer.

Mr. Valla also briefly reviewed a handout outlining the structure of the Stormwater Impact Fee, noting a flat \$60 per year fee for residential properties, and a tiered fee for commercial properties based upon their impervious surface area, with a cap of \$6,000 per year.

**b. Update on Fee Collections**

Finance Director Laura Hucklebridge reported that about 40% of accounts have been paid, totaling nearly \$800,000.00, with about 7,600 accounts who have not yet paid the 2025 Stormwater Impact Fee. About \$1 million is still outstanding for 2025.

Mr. Valla advised a second round of bills will be sent out in September to anyone who has not yet paid for the year. Mr. Valla also noted that all proceeds from the Stormwater Impact Fee are managed in the Stormwater Fund, separate from other accounts of the Township.

Mr. Pflaumer asked why Berkheimer was appointed to collect the fee. Mr. Valla responded that the Township reviewed several options, including other third-party vendors, the Township Real Estate Tax Collector, and performing the service in-house. Mr. Valla shared that Berkheimer was the most cost-effective option identified and ultimately selected by the Board of Supervisors.

**c. Stormwater Impact Fee Appeals**

**i. Charles A. Belmont, TMP #22-021-010-001, 633 W Maple Avenue**

Mr. Valla reported that this property was reviewed by the Township Engineer's office and noted that the appellant, Mr. Belmont, believes the compacted gravel at his property should not be calculated as impervious surface area.

Mr. Kessler noted that he originally denied the appeal due to the Township's Zoning Ordinance defining compacted gravel as impervious surface area.

Mr. Valla also noted for the record that the adjacent parcel (625 W Maple Avenue), also owned by Mr. Belmont, was mistakenly billed as a commercial property and since rebilled as a residential property.

The Committee agreed with the determination of the Township Engineer. Mr. Haughey moved to deny the appeal for TMP #22-021-010-001, seconded by Mr. McAloon. Motion carried 5-0-0.

**ii. Pennswood Village, TMP #22-004-004-001, 1382 Langhorne-Newtown Road**

Mr. Valla reported that the Township received a letter from an attorney representing Pennswood Village, requesting an exemption from the Stormwater Impact Fee, citing advanced stormwater management facilities on the property. Mr. Valla added that later tonight, the Committee will begin discussing a credit policy which would offer fee reductions to parcels such as this one with best management practices (BMPs) in place.

He noted that the purpose of the appeal process is to determine if the Stormwater Impact Fee ordinance was properly applied. He added that the Committee could choose to act on the appeal now or table it until a credit policy is established.

Mr. Haughey moved to deny the appeal for TMP #22-004-004-001, seconded by Mr. Pflaumer. Motion carried 5-0-0.

**iii. Julie Stocker, TMP #22-021-045, 931 Langhorne-Yardley Road**

Mr. Valla shared that this is a large residential property adjacent to Styer Orchards. Mr. Valla added that the resident believes she should be exempt due to having a lake on the property.

Township Manager Eden Ratliff added that he spoke with Ms. Stocker earlier in the week and concurred with Mr. Valla's overview, adding that he questioned the property owner's maintenance history of the lake, to which none was reported. He noted that Ms. Stocker wished to participate tonight but was unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Valla shared that similar to Pennswood Village, the Committee may wish to table a decision until a credit policy is established.

Several Committee members expressed concern over granting any kind of credit or exemption for a lake that has not been maintained and with no known benefit to stormwater management.

Mr. Haughey moved to deny the appeal for TMP #22-021-045, seconded by Mr. Hartman. Motion carried 5-0-0.

**d. Discussion of Stormwater Impact Fee Credit Policy**

Mr. Valla shared that by law, the Township is required to have a credit policy in place to provide property owners with an opportunity to pay a lesser fee in exchange for having or obtaining a stormwater management feature at their property and/or performing some kind of activity that furthers the Township's efforts to managing stormwater. He noted that per the Township's ordinance, a credit policy is to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors via resolution. He noted that the Board is looking to this Committee to recommend a credit policy to be adopted, ideally by the Board's November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Valla shared a sample policy from the Warminster Municipal Authority, the only other entity in Bucks County presently assessing a Stormwater Impact Fee. He also provided a draft policy prepared by staff for the Committee to review and begin discussion. He noted that on this draft, most of the attention is on commercial properties who have larger fees and who are more likely to have best management practices (BMPs) in place. He added that there is an Education Credit proposed for residential properties, as well as two rebate programs for rain barrels and tree planting. He noted that once the Committee has advised on a draft credit policy, staff and the Township Engineer would analyze the projected financial impact.

Mr. Fitch noted, and others agreed, that a poorly maintained basin does little, if anything, to manage stormwater. The Committee expressed interest in providing higher credits to properties with BMPs that were being actively managed and maintained. Mr. Pflaumer also noted the advantages of a naturalized basin as opposed to a basin with grass and the different rates of infiltration they have.

Mr. Haughey questioned the administrative practicality of an Education Credit for residential properties. Mr. Valla noted that administering the program is possible to accomplish but noted the administrative cost of doing so would further compound the hard cost of providing a credit to those property owners.

Mr. Pflaumer questioned how many properties would be eligible for a Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) credit.

Mr. Valla thanked the Committee for their feedback and said staff and the Township Engineer will review the Committee's comments and provide more information for further discussion at the next meeting.

**e. Future Meeting Schedule**

The Commission agreed to schedule two more meetings on Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, both at 6 PM. Mr. Valla advised both meetings would be held in the Public Hall, and that the Committee should plan to consider a regular meeting schedule come 2026.

**6. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items Only)**

Therese Martin, Commons at Middletown, expressed upset that her Homeowners Association (HOA) received a Stormwater Impact Fee bill for \$6,000 in addition to the individual property owners receiving bills. Mr. Valla noted that the Township Engineer is currently reviewing an appeal from the Commons at Middletown. He noted that per the ordinance, a commercial fee applies to all developed properties that are not defined as an individual residence, adding that the fee was applied correctly to the property. He added that the Committee may want to consider this question as part of the credit policy discussion.

Aleisha Smith, Harris Avenue, noted silt coming from US-1 Business onto her property. She expressed concern for the lack of maintenance and reported previous conversation with Mr. Gartenmayer. Mr. Gartenmayer noted that the area in question belongs to PennDOT and that it is their responsibility to maintain. Mr. Valla noted that the Township can assist in raising this issue to Senator Farry or Representative Hogan for further advocacy with PennDOT.

Bob Feather, Highland Park Way, expressed concern for the lack of public comment throughout the meeting and expressed concern about wanting a maintenance plan in place. Mr. Valla replied that he will work with the Committee moving forward to engage for public comment during each agenda item. He also noted that reviewing maintenance will be a future topic for the Committee's discussion.

Tim Stanford, Richardson Avenue, inquired about stormwater issues near his home. Mr. Kessler noted a planned improvement project scheduled for 2026 along a part of Richardson Avenue.

**7. Adjournment**

Mr. Haughey moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 PM, seconded by Mr. McAloon.  
Motion carried 5-0-0.