

Green Team Meeting

January 16, 2020

6:00 P.M.

- The meeting took place at the South Strabane Township Municipal Building (550 Washington Road)

Attendees: Bracken Burns (Supervisor), Rich Luketich (Supervisor), Laynee Zipko, Mark McCurdy, Colleen Johnson, Penny Steggles, Emily Minor, Bill Ursic, Mary Helicke, Janie Deemer, Kathy Pienkowski, and Assistant to the Township Manager Patrick Conners

Topics of Discussion

- **Green Tree Plastics (bottle cap collection)**
 - Assistant to the Township Manager Conners reported regarding a program recently conducted by students of Wylandville Elementary School of the Cannon McMillan School District. He stated that through the ABC Promise Program, students collected various plastic bottle caps ultimately sending them to Green Tree Plastics based out of Evansville Indiana. He highlighted that a park bench was created using the collected materials. He noted that there is a small fee associated with the program which is dependent on the product created. He next discussed the specifics of the ABC Promise Program, highlighting that a representative of the designated school (Trinity East Elementary) would need to apply for the program and serve as the point of contact with Green Tree Plastics. He reported that students would collect and sort the plastics caps. He next read aloud permissible and excluded plastic items. A discussion ensued regarding permitted plastic items. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners stated that he would seek greater clarity concerning permissible items. He also noted that a plastic bin could be stationed in all municipal facilities to facilitate participation from employees and residents of the Township. Mr. Luketich noted that the Township could assist the school with the associated fee for production and transportation of the plastic material.
- **Eagle Scout Community Project – Aiden McCoy**
 - Assistant to the Township Manager Conners reported that he had met with Mr. Aiden McCoy and his parents earlier in the afternoon. He highlighted that Aiden is open to any input from the Green Team and Community Officials concerning his required community participation project in effort to secure his Eagle Scout certification. He noted the discussion included Township point of entry beautification efforts (signage, plantings, etc.). A discussion regarding locations for beautification efforts ensued. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners noted the parcel of land owned by Huntington Bank along Washington Road as an ideal location for plantings and new signage. Ms. Deemer noted the associated labor requirements to maintain plantings. Mr. Burns highlighted various groups that could help establish and maintain beautification projects such as the Keep

Washington County Beautiful Chapter. Ms. Steggles noted that she maintains various flower beds planted in the Township's parks. She also highlighted that local businesses such as Stimmell's Green House may donate flowers to the Township. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners stated he would provide illustrations outlining notable locations for consideration.

- **Act 101 Update (Recycling Compliance)**

- Assistant to the Township Manager Conners discussed the Township's commercial business recycling participation program for 2018 and 2019. He noted that beginning this year, the Township has distributed informational letters in addition to the state-issued reporting forms. He highlighted the letters outlined each business's responsibility to recycle and report their overall metrics (tonnage & materials collected) to the Township. He reported that many businesses have been and are unaware of this requirement, noting the establishment of communication between businesses and the Township is essential in increasing participation rates in the Act 101 Program.
- Mr. Luketich inquired regarding consequences for businesses not participating in the program. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners stated the Act 101 Program is ambiguous in establishing penalties/fines for non-compliance, noting the responsibility ultimately falls to individual municipalities. Mr. Burns asked Assistant to the Township Manager Conners to provide copies of the Township's recycling ordinance to the Green Team during the next Meeting. Ms. Deemer inquired regarding a mailer that could be sent to residents. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners noted the Township would be distributing a newsletter by the end of the 1st Quarter this year, highlighting that a separate mailer regarding recycling would be included. A discussion regarding state-wide legislation reducing the use of single-use plastics ensued. Mr. Burns asked that Assistant to the Township Manager Conners bring a copy of House Bill 2019-20 to the next meeting.
- Assistant to the Township Manager Conners reported that Edgeworth Borough had recently conducted a recycling education forum in partnership with the Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) and Waste Management. He noted the forum could likely be brought to South Strabane Township to help address questions residents may have. Additionally, he highlighted the value in inviting the recycling hauler to speak directly to residents to help them more properly use the monthly curbside recycling program. After some discussion, Mr. Burns asked Assistant to the Township Manager Conners to invite a representative of the PRC to the next Green Team Meeting. Mr. McCurdy noted that South Strabane could invite other organizations and municipalities to a recycling education event. Mr. Burns asked Township Staff to identify potential partners to help distribute recycling awareness material.

- **Record Keeping and Data Collection**

- Mr. Burns highlighted the numerous clean up events that the Green Team and other individuals have conducted over the recent months. He thanked everyone for their efforts and noted that a record keeping system should be implemented to track which roads have been cleaned and how much debris was collected. A discussion ensued concerning how records could be accumulated. Assistant to the Township Manager Connors asked that all individuals collecting debris relay the pertinent information to him after cleanup occurs.
- Mr. Luketich implored the Green Team to establish annual cleanup events each month. After some discussion, Assistant to the Township Manager Connors asked members to submit a handful of amicable dates for the month of February within the Team's Group Me forum. Ms. Deemer inquired regarding the County's Community Service program. Assistant to the Township Manager Connors reported that the Township's application remains with the County. He noted that due to the high demand of the program throughout the County, establishing a routine event is difficult. Ms. Minor inquired regarding commercial responsibility for picking up nearby litter and debris. Mr. Burns stated the Township should consider the establishment of legislation mandating that commercial property owners remove any refuse from their properties and nearby rights-of-way. He noted the Township's Code Enforcement Officers could assist in this matter. Ms. Deemer asked that a Township Code Enforcement Officer attend an upcoming Green Team meeting.

- **MS4 Education and Creek Cleanup Efforts**

- Assistant to the Township Manager Connors discussed the Township's mandate concerning public education and public participation regarding the topic of stormwater through the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program. He highlighted that he attended a recent training which discussed the topic of stream bank restoration and cleanup. He reported the Green Team could conduct a stream cleanup event, noting that an organization such as a local scout troop may be an ideal partner for the project. Mr. Burns stated the Green Team could clean all streams within the Township if provided with a map. He asked Assistant to the Township Manager Connors to acquire a map of streams and waterways within the Township. Assistant to the Township Manager Connors highlighted that such a feature currently exists on the Township's webpage. He noted the GIS based map was created by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and contains visual data for all identified water ways throughout the Commonwealth.

- **Range Resources Forest Management Program Update**

- Assistant to the Township Manager Connors reported that representatives of Range Resources Appalachia, LLC have been in communication with Township Staff regarding a future forestry management project. He read aloud the following email:
 - "Range Resources is finalizing plans for a pilot forest management project in South Strabane Township. Range has retained a forestry consultant to

develop a state-compliant Forest Management Plan, focusing on a portion of the former Munce parcel owned by Range. This initial effort will include the planting of several acres of hardwood tree saplings and the planned, deliberate maintenance of existing adjacent forested areas. These efforts will ultimately lead to the creation of new forest acreage and a healthier existing forest stand. Residents may see work in the area as early as February, as early steps in the process will include flagging and fencing installation. The fencing, as prescribed by Range's forestry consultant, is critical to the success of the project, as browsing by hungry deer can be the difference between success and failure of the young saplings. Though it will need be kept in place for the first several years of the project, the fencing is technically temporary, and may be removed in the future. Range intends to inform the general public of the purpose and intention of the project through the use of signage near the intersection of Davis School Road and Meadows View Road. There may also be opportunity for collaboration with special interest groups during a couple phases of the project." Assistant to the Township Manager Connors noted that representatives of Range Resources will be meeting with Township Staff on January 21st to provide greater detail concerning the project.

- New Ideas, Current Events, and Final Thoughts

- Ms. Helicke discussed her concerns regarding open burning within the Township. She highlighted that her neighborhood experiences routine burnings that fill the air with soot and ash. Mr. Ursic noted the Township permits open burning on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Ms. Zipko noted the Township only permits the burning of certain items, highlighting that residents cannot burn trash. Assistant to the Township Manager Connors reported that the Township is prohibited from pursuing various performance grants through Pennsylvania's Act 101 Program because open burning is permitted in the Township. Ms. Zipko inquired if restricting burning to the Agricultural Zoning District would allow the Township to apply for the aforementioned grant. Assistant to the Township Manager Connors reported the state maintains a strict no-burning standard for the grant's consideration. Mr. Luketich noted the political difficulty of implementing a no-burning ban within the Township noting the prevalence and necessity of agricultural burning.
- Ms. Deemer read aloud a prepared two-page statement regarding ideas and concerns that she has noted since the last meeting. Her highlights included the following:
 - Establishment of a Green Team "To Do List".
 - Planting bamboo trees harvested from Florida around Community Park to reduce noise associated with the interstate highway system.
 - Have Public Works pickup litter along Township roads.

- Send Code Enforcement Officers out to cite commercial property owners for unkept property and litter.
- Send Green Team representative to legislative grant forum.
- Create and distribute t-shirts for Green Team members who collect trash along Township roads. Establish benchmarking goals to incentivize the awarding of t-shirts.
- Establish relationship with local scout troops.
- Bring back litterbug character with the use of a skit and or play to encourage sustainable practices amongst the youth.
- Collect aluminum cans and cash them in for a “Green Team fund”
- Ms. Deemer also noted that she would be meeting with officials of the Trinity East Elementary School to inquire regarding their recycling program and gauge interest in the ABC Promise Program.

Adjournment: 7:20 p.m.