

Community Meeting Regarding Sanitary Sewer – September 28, 2016

Overview/Purpose of Meeting

Thank you for coming out to this informational and educational meeting tonight. It is great to see so many of you. It is a testament to the residents and property owners who want to know and understand what the Township is doing to address the concerns of its sanitary sewer system.

We recognize that there are new faces in the audience. It is not our intent to review old material from previous public meetings, but some historical and technical information will be referenced to set the context of the presentations on the agenda.

We also recognize that many of you had questions the night of the May 18 Board of Commissioners meeting. Others emailed them following that meeting. Tonight, we hope to respond in general by weaving answers to those questions through the various presentations.

Some background will be very familiar to some of you, but it does need to be shared with those who are not familiar with the history: The Township has an aging sanitary sewer system. It contains 120 miles of 8 inch to 33 inch diameter pipes which convey sewage to Philadelphia for treatment. Our system is over 90 years old. It is made of vitrified clay pipe and brick manholes in some areas. It is in need of repair. The Township has been under several consent orders (those being 2005 and 2010) which can be attributed to significant weather events. The Township has been working on Operation and Maintenance issues before and during the consent orders. Under the consent orders, there has been much work completed over the last 15 years mainly consisting of televising, grouting, repairing, replacement and relining within the main interceptor “a” which runs parallel to the Tookany Creek, almost the entire length of the Township. All of that work was completed in the public right-of-way or areas where we acquired access easements. To date Cheltenham has invested over \$17.9 million dollars. This includes planning, engineering and construction. We have borrowed another \$7.5 million for future work.

However, improvements to the public portion of our sewers are not the only solution. The Corrective Action Plan and our Sewer Facilities Planning document identifies the need to inspect the private laterals, and if there are defects found, we need to determine ways that those issues can be corrected. Addressing private laterals is another part of this puzzle as they make up nearly half of the sewer system. Currently the Township’s Code provides three sections that address private laterals (Chapter 215 via the International Property Maintenance Code, Chapter 238-14.1, where it defines the owner is responsible for making repairs within 30 days when certain defects are identified, and Chapter 211.2 which prohibits sump pumps, roof water and surface water into the sanitary sewer and permits Township inspection of the same).

DEP, the Township staff and the Township solicitor’s office believe that we need a comprehensive ordinance that brings all these regulations together under one ordinance to provide further clarification of responsibilities. A broader ordinance will also give the Township more oversight of the repairs for the long-term sustainability of the sewer system.

That was the intent of the draft that was introduced last spring when the Township presented it for discussion at the May 18 meeting. Yes, the language may have been rigid and it was developed from reviewing sample ordinances from other communities. However, based on the input that we heard within days following that meeting, we tabled the scheduling of a public hearing.

We are still working out a few details in the draft ordinance and are not going to address the releases of a new draft ordinance this evening. That will be the topic of a future meeting later this fall. We hope to make available a new draft for public review as early as November for presentation at a follow-up community meeting. You will hear more about that in the next steps discussion.

As far as tonight, our presentations will focus what the Township has been doing and where we need to go over the next eight years under a revised Corrective Action Plan.

Therefore, the agenda has been set up to provide you with the following:

- An overview of the sewer issues from the DEP's regulatory perspective
- A presentation on the Township's corrective action plan and upcoming infrastructure projects
- A discussion on the private sanitary sewer lateral maintenance and repair issues
- And finally, what are the next steps to look from the Township Administration and the Board of Commissioners.

For those who believe we have not addressed your questions, there will be a period at the end of this meeting for public comment.

Hopefully this has helped set the tone and context for this evening's meeting.