

**EAST LAMPETER
SEWER AUTHORITY
2250 Old Philadelphia Pike
Lancaster, PA 17602
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**Minutes of SPECIAL Meeting
July 12th 2023**

The East Lampeter Sewer Authority met on Wednesday, July 12th, 2023 at 5:00PM at the Township Building 2250 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA. 17602 for a Special Meeting.

The meeting is also being conducted virtually utilizing Zoom, which is a cloud-based platform for remote video and audio conferencing. The meeting is being recorded.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Mr. Rick Robinson.

Members Present: Mr. Rick Robinson, Mr. Todd Stumpf, Mr. Vinod Patel, Mr. Brent Stoltzfus

Members Present via Zoom: None

Members Absent: Mr. Fred Clark,

Present were: Mr. Matt Cichy, HRG; Mr. Ralph Hutchison, Twp. Manager; Ms. Tara Hitchens, Assistant Twp. Manager and Mr. Charlie Thomas, Public Works Director

Present via Zoom: None

Guest were:

Dave & Denise Bolton – 187 Strasburg Pike
Amber & David Hogan – 145 Strasburg Pike
Harry Nissly – 141 Strasburg Pike
Rodney Lingo – 140 Strasburg Pike
Mike Thornton – 147 Strasburg Pike
Sandra Rodriguez – 136 Strasburg Pike
Linda & John Meshey – 150 Strasburg Pike
Blayde & Emily Eberly – 169 Strasburg Pike

The Special Meeting was to discuss the possible Sewer Line Extension on Strasburg Pike.

Mr. Matt Cichy, the Authority Engineer with HRG, gave a presentation. He stated that it came to the attention of the East Lampeter Sewer Authority that an on-lot sewer system along Strasburg Pike had failed. There is not a solution available to replace the resident's on-lot system except to connect to a public system. The resident reached out to the East Lampeter Sewer Authority to see if there was an option for a system extension on Strasburg Pike. Mr. Cichy and HRG created a conceptual design for an extension. A sanitary system was installed on a part of Strasburg Pike during a PennDOT Bridge Project. The proposed extension would

start at the end of that system and continue along Strasburg Pike. Ideally the engineers would like to take advantage of gravity when they design their systems. If an area's topography does not allow this flow, pumps are used to expel the water. The Authority called this meeting in order to get feedback from the residents to see what they think of this idea and to see if anyone else is having any issues with their systems. There will be costs involved with this extension not only for the Township but also for the landowners. There would be the cost of piping and tapping fees on the owner's property as well as quarterly sewer fees and electricity if a pump is required. Mr. Hutchison added that anything that can contaminate the groundwater or could affect wells would be the landowner's responsibility so that is another reason to consider the extension.

The estimated total cost for the extension is \$1.5 – \$1.7 million. East Lampeter Township does have a mandatory sewer connection ordinance. The ordinance states if sanitary sewer services becomes available in front of your property and the primary structure is within 150' from the system, you are required to connect to that system within a certain time period. If the structure is outside of 150', it is optional to connect to the system. Mr. Hutchison made the residents aware of the perceived timeline of the project. There would be design and engineering. Permitting would be required from PennDOT because Strasburg Pike is a state road. The average timeline for this project would be 12-18 months. There is also a time element involved with bidding, hiring a contractor and construction which would be another 6-12 months. So, there is a potential of 2.5 years before anyone would be required to connect. The East Lampeter Sewer Authority is also applying for grant funding to cover their portion of the project through County ARPA Funds which may help reduce the costs. Another cost associated with the project is an assessment charge for each linear foot of property. The Township's portion would be the system itself and lines extending from the system to the Right of Way in front of each property. The extension of that line to the house would be the responsibility of the homeowner. Mr. Cichy stated that there are programs that can help with homeowner costs through Pennvest. If the property does require a grinder pump, the Township maintains the grinder pump, with up to four dwellings, for the property. Mr. Hutchison asked for feedback from the residents and if anyone has sanitary sewer needs in a basement because the level of service that is going out to the road may not be low enough to assure a basement facility with a gravity system. Most of the residents raised their hands showing that they did have sewer needs in their basements.

One resident stated that his septic system is fairly new and if they are now forced to connect to the Township's system, there would be a monetary loss. He also stated that he is on a fixed income with social security so that any added cost would be a problem.

Another resident asked when the Authority became aware of the system failure. Ms. Hitchens answered it was February of 2023. The resident expressed frustration for not being made aware sooner as well as stating she feels being forced to connect to public sewer is unfair because of one system failure. She has owned her home for 13 years and has never had a problem with her septic system. She would like to have the option to connect, not be mandated to.

A resident asked why the existing system stopped where it did during the bridge construction project and did not continue down Strasburg Pike at that time to where the proposed system would be built. Mr. Hutchison answered that was the limit of PennDOT's construction project

related to the bridge. The Township was able to partner with PennDOT's construction project to build a sewer system to the point where it ends with consideration for the future extension of the system when needed.

A resident asked why the ordinance specifies 150'. Mr. Hutchison answered that the ordinance was created a long time ago so he was not sure of the answer. She expressed that it should be looked at. She also asked what the owners of the failed septic system are currently doing for their sewer needs. Mr. Cichy answered that they are using a holding tank which is a costly and only a temporary solution. The resident suggested that the septic systems on each property should be monitored / regulated by the Township to ensure that they are being properly maintained to avoid future failures.

Another resident stated that their home is being remodeled and they are adding bathrooms. Their system is not failing but they are about to put in a new, bigger system in a few weeks. They do not want to spend the money if they will have to connect to the public system in 2.5 years. Mr. Hutchison stated that the Authority has not made any decisions about going ahead with this extension. It may be in 2.5 years or 10 years or never. He cannot be certain.

A resident asked how the ordinance can be changed to not require home owners to connect to the system but give residents the option if wanted. He stated it was a matter of dignity and homeowners should not be forced to do anything. Mr. Cichy explained that the Sewer Authority must follow any Township Ordinance. Only a decision by the Board of Supervisors could change an ordinance. Mr. Hutchison told the resident that he would convey the message to the Board if the project goes forward. He also invited the residents to go to the Board of Supervisor's meetings at any time to express concerns.

Another resident asked what the homeowner's cost would be if they had to connect to the public system. Mr. Hutchison answered that the cost of connection is \$2,650 plus plumber costs to connect to the system. He could not give an estimate on how much the entire cost to the homeowner would be. Mr. Cichy stated that the cost varied with each property. It would be at the homeowner's expense to also empty the septic tank and fill it with sand or stone per DEP requirements after they have connected to the public system.

A resident asked about future meetings with the public and when the Authority is going to vote on a decision. Mr. Stumpf answered that there are no future meetings planned. The Authority wanted to get the input of the residents. He stated it was clear that residents were strongly against the extension and that there is no decision timeline at this point. They will take the residence's concerns into consideration. They will discuss this further at their next meeting on August 9th. He invited anyone to attend any of their meetings which take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 4pm to listen and/or give their input. Mr. Hutchison added that the Township is going to apply for the grant at the end of August for the project. That decision will also play into the Authority's decision. Mr. Patel asked if everyone attending the meeting, by a show of hands, has a system that is not having problems and is working. Everyone raised their hands.

Many of the residents re-expressed that they do not want the extension to be built. They are willing to help the family whose system failed. They stated their systems are working well and they do not want the added expense. Another resident asked if they will get a letter in the mail after the decision has been made. The Authority answered yes. Mr. Robinson stated that he thinks it was important for the residents to come today to share their thoughts and feelings with the Authority because it helps them take that input into their decision-making process. He stated that they appreciate them taking the time today to come out and share with. He thanked them for attending.

Respectfully submitted,

Vinod P. Patel
Secretary