

**** NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, November 2, 2021 6:00 pm Township Hall ****

Special Meeting: Tuscarora Twp. Sewer Sub Committee

October 5, 2021 6:30 pm

Call To Order: 6:30 pm

Roll Call: Robert Kramer (Committee Chairman), Janet Vance (Committee Secretary), and Mike Ridley

Agenda:

UPDATE: Earmark Applications to US Senate and House of Representatives

UPDATE: USDA Applications

Equalization tank at sewer plant

Draft join letters to 26 owners

Phase 3

Discussion: Petition processes and requirements/Special Assessment district(s)

Community Q&A

Schedule next meeting

More Citizen Comments

Motion to accept/amend the minutes of September 4, 2021 meeting

Motion made by Chairman Kramer to accept as written, Mike Ridley seconded, Motion passed
Agenda was amended to add report of the visit from Senator Peter's aide, Kelly Lively. Motion passed, and will be included during the update concerning Earmark Applications to the US Senate and House.

UPDATE: Earmark Applications to US Senate and House of Representatives

The earmark applications are now waiting on the Budget Reconciliation process and, basically, are on hold. Senator Peter's aide, Kelly Lively, visited the sewer district to survey the potential project area first hand. She was greeted with a lovely fall day and a very informative pontoon boat ride down the Indian River. The district's need for sewers became evident, and we are hopeful for the Senator's support. The requested Earmark would cover approximately 50-55% of the costs for Phase 1 (North of Mack Ave.) if the earmark package was agreed upon. Special Thanks go out to Bob and Patti Murdock (owners of Howe's Marina) for the pontoon boat tour and Vickie Losh for her support with hosting Ms. Lively.

UPDATE: USDA Applications

Chairman Kramer reported the district rated higher than expected by the USDA rating guidelines, according to the Engineer, Aaron Nordman. Mr. Nordman said the township should be receiving an eligibility letter by the end of October. That is good news! The USDA grant of \$2.8m should cover approximately 45% if we should receive it, but if not; we are in good standing to wait until the next round.

Equalization tank at sewer plant

The Township received \$305,000 for Covid relief funds, and even though there are restrictions yet to be determined on how to spend the funds, one thing that is allowed is infrastructure improvements, particularly sewer and waste water enhancements. It has been an ongoing request of Mead & Hunt (the management company employed to manage the sewer system) to upgrade the holding ability of the plant to protect the capacity from occasional surges. The Engineer has also recommended a 25,000 gallon "surge tank" to be installed at the approximate cost of \$50,000. This would not only protect the plant from capacity surges with the current district, but would also be helpful if future districts were added. This would be in addition to any expansion of the sewer plant included with the costs of the potential districts. It was reported the surge tank would be helpful in the summer, during high volume periods, but also in the winter when the plant goes through the cleaning process, and sections have to be shut down.

Chairman Kramer made a motion to recommend the purchase of a surge tank, using Covid Funds, to the Township Board. Ridley seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Draft join letter to 26 owners

Out of 214 properties in the districts, about 26 property owners may be eligible to join multiple parcels into one single lot. If the property owner chooses to take advantage of this opportunity, it would save being assessed for each individual parcel. The properties have to be contiguous (touching) or directly across the street from each other. Kramer presented a draft letter to send to those 26 property owners explaining the process and the advantages of joining the parcels. He made a motion to recommend the letter to the Township Board, and seconded by Vance. Vance amended the letter to include contact information of the Township Assessor. Motion Passed.

Phase 3:

Bob Murdock reported that the area which includes Nabanois Street, Howe's Marina District, and the boat launch, etc. may want to be included in the sewer expansion. If they obtained the necessary 50% + of the required signatures, the Township Board would need to agree to accept the petitions, and there would be required Public Notices and Public Hearings in order to proceed. If approved, they would probably be referred to as "Phase 3".

Discussion – Petition Processes and requirements

It was explained this is a "Citizen Driven Project", and the Township is only facilitating the financial opportunities needed for the project. All petitions will be distributed by a citizen committee. Examples of acceptable petitions are available.

- 1- Each property owner will receive a petition that will explain the information and the costs
- 2- The property owner may choose YES and then will be REQUIRED to return the petition
- 3- If the property owner chooses NO, they may or may not return the petition. All unreturned petitions are counted as a NO.
- 4- The petitions to proceed with the project (YES) will have to be more than 50% of the districts land mass. That will be determined by each property's size, and the sum total of the area of the YES petitions.
- 5- If the petitions reach the required 50% +, the petitions will be delivered to the Township Board for corroboration of signatures and to verify the total of the "YES" land mass.
- 6- The Township Board will vote to accept or deny the petitions. If the petitions are accepted, the Board will seek construction estimates, which would be referred to as "going out for bid".
- 7- If the total cost of the construction bids exceed the estimated costs by 10% or more, the districts will have to be re-petitioned.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be prior to the Regular Township Board Meeting, November 2, 2021. The time was moved to 6:00 pm to allow more time for discussion and public comment.

Citizen Comments:

- Q: How are the REU's assigned when there are additional bathrooms or living spaces, for example, above a garage?
A: Each home will receive 1 REU. If the living space is used as additional guest or office space, and is not rented out as an independent living space, it would most likely be included with the 1 REU. If there is a question of the actual usage, the Township assessor will make the assessment determination.
- Q: Do we have 2 Districts and if so, will they be joined?
A: We hope to have 1 District with 2 Phases. The USDA recommended we split the District up to provide maximum opportunities for available funding. Our Financial Advisor and Bond Counsel will make the final determination on if or how we would accomplish this.
- Q: Does the sewer plant need to be expanded and would this be possible?

A: Yes. When the original Commercial District was established, the plant was constructed to only serve that area (by law), however, the plant is a “module” design, and was built to accommodate additional “pods” or “components” when additional districts were added. Each district will be assessed the costs of the necessary expansion.

- Q: What is the difference between “Grant” money and “Earmark” money?

A: The Grant money will be issued by the USDA/ Rural Development Agency. We hope to get approximately 45% of the entire costs of Phase 2 (South of Mack Ave.) if successful. Earmark money comes directly from the Federal Legislative Budget, and these earmarks have to be requested by our representatives and senators, and go through a lengthy appropriations process. If we are successful, we are hoping for an earmark that will cover 50-55% of the entire costs of Phase 1 (North of Mack Ave.), because Phase 1 will be the more expensive district. Neither the Grants nor Earmarks would have to be paid back. In addition, the USDA/RD will be providing low interest loans for the balance of the costs, and the loan will be stretched over a 40 year time span.

- Q: The Committee that is spearheading the initiative (CHIRP) conveyed the need for more Block Captains in an effort to contact neighbors, providing information and gathering contact information. They want to make sure EVERYONE is aware of the project and the details.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Vance, Township Board Trustee
Sewer Sub-Committee Secretary