

**EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL MEETING WITH CHARTER CHASE
1580 PAOLI PIKE
January 30, 2007 – 7:00pm**

Present: Chairman Don McConathy, Carmen Battavio, Joe McDonough and Marty Shane. Vice-Chairman Thom Clapper was absent. Also present were Township Manager Rick Smith, Evan Andrews of Pennoni; Jack Yahraes, Fran Beck, Mike Steinberger, and Joe McCawley (Municipal Authority); and Jim McRee (Planning Commission).

WORKSHOP

Don called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. After welcoming the residents, he led everyone in the pledge of allegiance to the flag. He then introduced the members of the Board, Rick Smith, Evan Andrews, and the Municipal Authority. Don stated that the Board planned to address this one topic this evening, and if anyone had other issues they wished to discuss, they would need to be held over until the next meeting on February 6.

Thirty-eight households from Charter Chase were represented, based on a sign-in list.

Don gave an overview of the project and the process involved in sewerage Charter Chase.

Joe asked Evan Andrews how many opportunities the residents will be given to review the engineering plans before construction starts. Evan said there will be several opportunities for residents to provide input. Jack Yahraes suggested that residents attend Municipal Authority meetings with their concerns, since Evan attends those meetings.

A resident asked if there is an environmental mandate that this be done, forcing the Township to act. Don said that nobody is asking or requiring that this be done at this time.

A resident asked how the existing Transco pipeline will be accommodated. Evan said the crew would work around it. The resident asked if Transco will help with the costs incurred as a result of having to do so. Don said he thought it unlikely.

Evan went through the costs involved in the plan. Don followed by describing the financing that will be available through the Township. Joe pointed out that the financing available through the Township will not cover the hookup or the tapping fee.

Carmen stated that the sewer plant will have to be upgraded regardless of whether Charter Chase gets sewerage or not, and emphasized that the two events are not linked.

One of the residents noted that most of those in Charter Chase will have to pay for lateral costs for 120 to 200 ft, far above the “average” of \$3500 noted in the handout. Jack Yahraes said Pennsylvania law says if there is no sewer line within 150 feet of a resident’s property, the resident is not obligated to connect.

A resident asked if there is an assumption by the Township that the systems will be gravity fed to the street. Evan said yes. Rick added this assumes hookup from the first floor of a dwelling, not necessarily a basement. Several residents disputed this is possible in the vicinity of Morstein Road.

Don informed the residents that if the project is a go, they will have the option of deferring a connection to the sewer, but they would still be responsible for paying the carrying charge until the connection.

Don said that Rick Smith will send out a letter and a ballot within the next week or 10 days, and the Supervisors will make a decision based on the response.

Carmen noted that \$80 per foot for a lateral connection seems high to him. He estimated that to run a 150-ft lateral line, the cost would more likely be based on \$3K/day for a backhoe working for 3 days plus approximately \$600 for materials, totaling approximately \$9,600. This would assume no rock, except for manageable boulders.

Rick told the residents they could call the company they use to pump out their system and ask for an estimate of a lateral connection for their situation. Rick said that the ballot being sent out will include a copy of the map with proposed connection areas.

A resident disputed something Don said about this process being an “emotional decision” and said this is not emotional; it is a financial decision. The resident stated that the quarterly sewer fee alone (without accounting for the cost of infrastructure) will exceed his current annual cost to pump out his system. He asked the Township how they can justify that. Don responded that the Township is not mandating the sewer or suggesting that people sign up for it; the Township is merely informing the residents that the option is available if they wish to take advantage of it.

A resident had a question about the connection points shown on the display map. Evan said the points are merely proposals, and can be adjusted if needed.

A resident asked if the sewer system is sold, and the new owner wanted everyone in East Goshen to be sewered, would the new owner pay all the associated costs. Don said he thought that highly unlikely.

Marty then shared with the residents that he is an affected resident who will have to make the same decision and vote like the rest of them, and he shared how he has been analyzing his personal situation to make an informed, rational decision.

Marty thanked the Municipal Authority for all their hard work in compiling the data that has led to this point. Marty noted that the Municipal Authority is committing to provide one-half of whatever the cost will be in two to three years, and they are not locked in at covering only \$16,700 of the cost. Marty then stated that most other Townships do not give residents a choice in these matters, but East Goshen is giving its residents an opportunity to provide input.

Marty stated that the Board has not determined what percent of resident interest will be the “cutoff” for determining whether the sewers are a go or not. Marty stated the Board will try to get as many responses as possible. Someone asked what the Township will do regarding residents who fail to respond. Don and Evan stated the Township would make their decision based on the number of responses actually received.

A resident asked when the Board plans to make the decision. Don stated it would be in late spring.

A resident asked what happens if the sewers are coming in three years, but our system fails tomorrow? Marty stated they would probably want to pump the existing system more frequently to hang onto the old system until the sewer is connected.

Someone asked the Board to provide information on how many systems have failed in Charter Chase. Evan stated that 36 out of 98 have failed since the early 1990s.

Someone asked what the cost will be to fill in a septic tank. Evan estimated a cost of \$500 to \$700 to pump and then fill in a tank.

A resident asked if sand mounds will need to be removed. Rick said the Township does not require their removal. The resident asked how much it would cost to remove a sand mound. No one had that information on hand.

A resident asked if the ballot has been drafted yet. Don said not yet. The resident said he would like the information in the ballot to reflect that an “average” lateral connection fee of \$3500 seems very low for Charter Chase based on information discussed this evening.

A resident asked how much it would cost to remove a cesspool. Rick said it would cost around \$500 to \$700.

A resident stated he had just paid \$15K for a new septic system, and wanted to know why the Township had not notified residents that sewerage in the near future was a possibility. Marty said that a couple of years ago the Township sent out notices soliciting input from residents about their interest level in sewerage their neighborhood. The resident asked what his options were now. Marty told him he could choose to vote “NO” on the ballot, or if the Board decides to proceed with sewerage, he could defer his hookup until he sells. Don told the resident he could have come to the Township and spoken with the Township Manager, the Board, or the Municipal Authority to discuss his options before putting in the new system.

A resident asked if realtors will be required to disclose about the sewer situation to prospective buyers. Don said no. The resident asked if the buyer would be required to make the disclosure. Marty said he is not sure if the buyer must make the disclosure. Don said it would be common courtesy for the buyer to do so, however.

A resident asked why the meeting information was not posted to the Township website. Don said the website is still under construction.

A resident asked if the Charter Chase clubhouse would be sewerred. Rick said the residents could opt to retain the on-lot system there.

A resident asked if two houses that are very close can share a connection. Rick said it would be possible, but a maintenance agreement would be required.

A resident asked the Board if they plan to make their decision on a 50/50, majority rules basis. Don said the Board has not determined what cutoff percent they will use to make their decision. Several residents became upset at this and asked why the Board would not go with a simple majority. One resident said it sounds like there will be no rules for the Board, and therefore they will be making a capricious decision. Marty stated the Board is planning to consider the residents' comments and feedback when making the decision.

One resident said that if the Board is going to mandate sewer connections, the Township should cover the entire cost.

Marty said the Township could set up sewer districts for the Township, but instead has opted to put the cost over the entire rate base.

Joe stated that the Board is not going to make a decision until they have all the data, and that includes the ballot results. Don said the residents do have a good point, however. Joe said that when the Board reviews the data to make its determination, it will be a public meeting and residents are welcome to attend.

A resident asked what the average life of a septic system is. Don said it largely depends on how well the system is maintained, and a well-maintained system can last a long time.

A resident asked the Board what rationale they have for not using a majority-rules basis for their decision. Don said the Board must consider the impact of adding 100 users to the Ridley Creek plant.

A resident observed that if the Township sells the sewer system, it will be better for the Township if Charter Chase is sewerred. He added that an outside entity would not necessarily keep rates at \$114 per quarter. Don said the Board would try to have the buyer (in the event of a sale) keep rates the same for at least one year.

Marty said that in the end, the Board has to make a decision they can justify, and one they can live with.

A resident asked how far along the engineering work for the plant upgrade is. Marty said the municipal authority and Pennoni are still working on that.

A resident reiterated that Morstein Road is an upslope, and questioned the success of using a gravity system there. Evan said they believe it can work.

A resident asked if anyone in Charter Chase will be located more than 150 feet from the line. Don said the system would be designed so that everyone would be within 150 feet. The resident asked if that meant no one would be eligible for the 150-ft rule. Don said yes.

A resident asked if this will be the last opportunity for Charter Chase residents to connect to the sewer system. Don said yes, for the foreseeable future. Marty said if the Township opts for a system upgrade that does not take into account volume that would be generated from Charter Chase, that means there would be no place for the extra volume to go in the event Charter Chase residents want to connect later on.

A resident asked that if an outside entity purchases the sewer system, can that body mandate sewer connections? Rick said his understanding is that an outside body could not do so without the blessing of the Board of Supervisors.

A resident said he believes that the Board's decision must be based on the good of the whole community, and added that he thinks the Board does a very good job working for the community as a whole, for example in the case of the wonderful Township park. This gentleman encouraged residents to think of the group, and not just themselves, when casting their ballots. The resident then told the Board he thought they erred in asking for a "vote" from the residents, when in fact they are only asking for data.

A resident stated he would like the Municipal Authority to assume more of the financial responsibility for the connections, and he would like the extra cost passed along to other ratepayers in the Township.

Don thanked the residents for coming out and providing feedback.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Meddings
Recording Secretary