

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
SPECIAL MEETING - HILLSIDE/SPRING LANE  
MINUTES - OCTOBER 30, 2000

A special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on October 30, 2000. Chairman Hackman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. noting that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss sanitary sewers, public water, stormwater, and street improvements in the Hillside/Spring Lane area.

Those present:

Board of Supervisors: Wesley Hackman, Chairman  
Frank Fazzalore, Vice Chairman  
Scott Fegley, Secretary/Treasurer  
Fred Allan, Supervisor  
Grace Godshalk, Supervisor

Sewer Authority: Fred Riechers, Chairman  
Len Franckowiak, Secretary  
George Davenport, Member

Others: Henry Hoffmeister, Sewer Administrator  
Duke Doherty, Township Engineer  
Tom Zarko, CKS Engineers  
James Badey, Pennsylvania-American Water Company

Mr. Hackman stated there was a meeting held approximately six month ago to introduce this matter although it has been discussed for approximately five years. In the spring, the sewer consultants, CKS, were asked to do a study in the area to determine the quality of the water in the wells and adequacy of the on-site septic systems. He stated the primary purpose of tonight's meeting is to bring the residents up to date on what the survey found.

Mr. Hackman stated the Board of Supervisors has been discussing the 2001 Budget and tentatively they have included \$300,000 in the Budget in the streets fund toward street improvements which would include stormwater management. They also have \$260,000 in the sewer capital fund which has been unassigned but could go toward a sewer project. He noted these funds were originally earmarked for sewerage Edgewood Village but they do not feel that project will go forward next year. He added the Township recently completed a sewer project at Robinson Place, and it took approximately two years to get the project completed.

Mr. Hackman stated the sewer engineer and Township engineer are present this evening to discuss the details of the project and estimated costs. Mr. Jim Badey of the Water Company is also present and will discuss their position with regard to installation of water mains. Mr. Hackman stated the roads, in their current condition, are difficult to maintain; and the only way to do the project right is to reconstruct the roads. He noted the main hold up has been that the Township has been unwilling to go ahead with a major street reconstruction project in this area without installing water and sewer lines since they did not want to construct a new street and then have to tear it up in the future to install water and sewer lines.

Mr. Fazzalore asked if this was an advertised meeting so that Motions could be made, and Mr. Hackman stated it was advertised.

Mr. Zarko stated they were directed by the Board of Supervisors to perform an evaluation of the on-lot sewage disposal systems in the Spring Lane/Hillside area to determine the condition of the systems. This area was previously identified as a problem area based on information provided by the Bucks County Health Department. It was recommended that public sewers be extended to this area due to malfunctions in the area, the age of the systems, and limited lot area available to make repairs to the on-lot systems.

A map of the study area was shown. Mr. Zarko stated they did well water sampling and testing and discussed the situation with available area residents. He stated a total of 51 lots are in the study area. He stated five lots have laterals and four are undeveloped parcels. This resulted in 42 lots for them to study. Mr. Zarko reviewed the parameters of the test and the rating system they developed. He stated an "A" rating (shown in green on the map) indicated a system that appears to be functioning properly. A "C" rating (shown in yellow on the map) was assigned to a system that appeared to be marginal. A system failure (shown in red on the map) was given an "F." There were seven properties (shown in blue on the map) where they were restricted from doing a full evaluation. Mr. Zarko stated 69% of the systems appeared to be functioning properly, 9% were marginal, and 23% failed. Mr. Zarko stated 31% of the systems were assigned a "C" or "F" rating which verifies the need for public sewers.

Mr. Hackman asked the likelihood that a failing system could impact a neighboring property, and Mr. Zarko stated this does present a problem especially since there is very little room on the properties in order to make repairs if necessary.

Mr. Davenport asked if they notified the property owners who were found to have marginal or failing systems that they should be drinking bottled water, and Mr. Zarko stated they have not at this point. He stated they were directed to perform the study by the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Irene Koehler asked if this plan will address the problems they are having with storm water, and Mr. Hackman stated this part of the presentation is only dealing with the sanitary sewers and water.

Mr. Steve Martino, 20 Spring Lane, stated his property has been identified as an "F," and he would like to know if he has a problem with his septic system or his well. Mr. Hackman stated they will make all the information available to the residents.

Ms. Tecla Gay, 21 Spring Lane, asked if they will be able to obtain a report tonight, and Mr. Hackman stated they can advise Mr. Zarko this evening if they would like a copy of the report.

Mr. Steve Ponetti, 2005 Quarry Road, stated it appears there were only two parcels with a problem with the sewers; and Mr. Zarko stated a contamination of a well is also indicative of a sewer problem. Mr. Hackman stated it is difficult to determine if the contamination is due to your own lot or a neighboring lot. Mrs. Godshalk asked if it is possible that these problems were only temporary problems, and the septic systems only needed to be cleaned out. She stated possibly they only need to install public water in order to correct the problems.



Mr. Hackman stated generally there are more problems in the springtime than in the fall. He stated if the system is failing it is usually a recurring problem. Mr. Franckowiak stated they did put the test off until the end of the spring/early summer and then did a re-inspection the end of August when it was dry. He stated if a septic system is not being maintained and there is a chronic problem it will impact the leeching field and clog up the field so that nothing can be done to restore it.

Ms. Helen Richardson, 19 Hillside Lane, asked if there is a specific percentage they look at to indicate whether public systems are needed to be brought in. Mr. Zarko stated they look into the age of the system and the area within which they can make repairs.

Mr. Gary Pajer, 17 Spring Lane, stated ten years ago he did have a failed system, and he installed an ultraviolet treatment system. Mr. Zarko stated if the technician was advised of this, they did not test the system since they would not get an accurate reading. Ms. Richardson stated she has one of these systems and the technician did not ask her. Mr. Pajer stated he advised the technician that he had such a system.

Mr. Zarko showed a concept plan of the sewer system lay out. He stated they would have two networks of sewers, one to accommodate the properties along Quarry Road and one on Hillside extending through an easement area and connecting to an existing system on Lindenhurst Road. The remaining would be an independent network to connect to the Core Creek Interceptor. Twelve on-site easements and one off-site easement would be required to implement the project.

Mr. Hackman asked if they could do the road improvements without installing sewers at the Quarry Road properties; and Mr. Zarko stated while they could, one of the most severely impacted systems was on Quarry Road. He stated Quarry Road would be approximately 25% of the overall cost.

Mr. Zarko stated they have developed preliminary budget numbers which were determined to be a total project cost of \$481,440. For the purpose of determining the assessment, that number would be divided among the forty-two property owners benefiting from the project. Connection fees and plumber's costs would also have to be paid as well as the cost of abandoning the existing on-lot system. Costs other than the assessment portion are estimated to be approximately \$7,000.

Ms. Koehler asked if the vacant lots were included in the calculations; and Mr. Zarko stated they were not at this time, but the Board of Supervisors will determine if they should be included. Mr. Hackman stated if they are buildable lots, they would be included.

Mr. Fazzalore stated the Township has in the past allocated money from the Sewer Fund to help off-set the costs. Ms. Koehler stated she was told that the Township paid 100% of the costs at Scammel's Corner. The Board advised that this was incorrect. Mr. Fegley stated he feels the Township should do for this project whatever they did at Robinson Place.

Mr. Doherty stated the roads in the subdivision were built in the late 1950's/early 1960's and are below current Township standards. He stated they are only eighteen feet wide and are creating maintenance problems. They propose to curb the entire subdivision and pave to a width of 26'. They will have storm drainage and inlets with pipe from 18" to 24" with the large pipe at the end of Spring Lane where the water courses to get to Core Creek.

The total cost of the roadway portion of the project is \$435,000. Mr. Doherty stated there was also discussion on the stabilization of the channel that goes through the back yards, but he understands right-of-way would have to be given. For this portion of the project, they propose to have a 3' deep, 10' wide gabion-lined channel to stabilize. This would cost \$200,000. This would result in a total cost to the Township of \$635,000.

Mr. Hackman asked if they could channel the water from Quarry Road into the new storm sewer and reduce the flow through the back yards. Mr. Doherty stated they have put a restrictor plate in the detention basin to restrict the flow. Mr. Doherty stated they would have to increase the pipe size if they were to add anything additional. Mr. Hackman asked that Mr. Doherty look into this further.

Mrs. Godshalk stated she feels the curbing should be extended for the rest of Quarry Road. Mr. Coyne stated they will be looking at the rest of Quarry Road down to the Bridge where there is a bend. They were given permission to discuss the matter with the Gray Nuns. The existing curb does intercept a great majority of the water. He stated there is also a school in the area and a number of developments. He stated the curb acts as a buffer. Mr. Coyne stated he feels there is sufficient room without impacting the trees. Mr. Doherty stated everything will be done within the 50 foot right-of-way with the exception of some driveway connections.

Mr. Bob Goodwin, 15 Hillside, stated he is concerned because there is a natural water way and the curbs will not solve this problem. Mr. Doherty stated there will be a 1 1/2" lip at the driveway and the water should stay in the gutter. He stated if they have another "Hurricane Floyd," it will go down the driveway. Ms. Koehler stated the curbs will channel the water into the driveway. Mr. Hackman stated it will channel it into the inlets. Mr. Goodwin stated he is concerned with the impact on his trees, and Mr. Doherty stated it should not impact the trees.

Mr. Hackman asked why they picked 26' for the road width, and Mr. Doherty stated the narrowest they have ever gone in Lower Makefield with curbs is 30'. Ms. Koehler asked if they could not cut the cost if they went to 24' with curbs. Mr. Doherty stated he did not feel this width would be practical. Ms. Koehler stated she is concerned with the impact on the trees. Mr. Doherty stated he has all the trees marked on the plan and none of them are being touched. Ms. Gay asked if it will be done equally on either side of the center of the road, and Mr. Doherty stated it will.

Ms. Gay asked about the location of the sanitary sewers, and Mr. Hackman stated normally the sanitary sewer line goes down the center of the road and the storm sewers are on the sides of the road. Ms. Gay stated it appears that they could be charged \$15,000 to \$22,000 per homeowner for installation of sanitary sewers and this is not solving the problem of storm water. She stated the basin on Quarry Road is not collecting water and there has never been any water in that basin. She stated the stream in their rear yards is still the storm sewer system and they must correct the basin across the street on Lindenhurst Road. She feels there should be restrictors on this since this is the one that is flooding the neighborhood. Mr. Hackman stated if there was a large storm and a restrictor was put in they would have a bigger problem. Ms. Gay stated she is currently getting flooded. She stated she would like to see that water channeled into the storm sewer line that is being discussed. Mr. Hackman stated they have shown a line item of \$200,000 to stabilize the channel in the rear yards. Ms. Gay stated she does not want any water going into the channel in the rear yard.



Mrs. Godshalk stated there was a proposal that would stop the water from going into the channel in the rear yards but it would have cost \$1 million. Mr. Hackman stated they are trying to keep as much water as possible out of the rear yards and take it through the storm pipes down to Core Creek.

Mr. Pajer stated during some storms he saw no water going from Quarry Road to Hillside Road and it was not going onto the properties. He stated if they were getting any water it would have had to start from the properties themselves. He stated he had three times the volume of water at his property than there was on the Kratz property, and he therefore feels the water is coming from the properties themselves. He noted the channel on the property to rear of his property is almost at capacity at the current time and they are now going to add even more water. Mr. Hackman stated he feels they will have to extend this beyond to the creek. Mr. Doherty stated they will need to acquire right-of-way in order to do this.

Mr. Jim Badey of the Water Company stated the PUC has a program that is designed for existing homes where the Water Company will finance a portion of the main extension to get public water and fire protection to homes that have problems with their on-site wells. The formula they use to determine how much money the Water Company should pay toward this is based on a number of factors. This year the formula indicates that the Water Company will pay \$5655 toward a main extension for a home that is willing to connect to public water. Mr. Badey noted locations where public water is already available. He stated if they get approximately twelve homeowners willing to tie into the system, they would pay to install the lines. The homeowners would have to run the line from the property line into the house and disconnect the well.

Mrs. Godshalk asked if they would be able to keep their wells for gardening purposes, and Mr. Badey stated there are specific rules in this regard and the wells could not connect into the house.

Mr. Coyne stated that providing water for fire protection would give the homeowners a break on their fire insurance.

Mr. Hackman stated he feels it would have been advisable to have had a real estate attorney or home inspector present to discuss the problems involved in selling a home that has a system that is failing. He stated he understands that if you have a system that is not in good working order, the banks will not loan the buyer money. Mr. Hackman stated the lots are not large; and if they wanted to fix a failing system, they may not have sufficient room to do so. He stated he feels public sewer and water will make the homes more valuable when they try to sell them. He stated the Township is willing to spend approximately \$800,000 toward improvements in this area.

Mr. Fazzalore moved and Mr. Fegley seconded to authorize the Sewer Authority to proceed with sewerage of Hillside, Spring Lane, and Quarry Road and that the Township contribute at the same ratio that they contributed at Robinson Place.

Mr. Hackman stated the sewer portion is only part of the entire project. Mrs. Godshalk stated she feels the residents should have the opportunity to discuss this matter amongst themselves before the Board makes a decision. Mr. Fazzalore stated since there are failing systems in the area, he feels they should address this matter now since there are health problems. Mr. Fegley stated this is a health, safety, and welfare issue.

Mrs. Godshalk stated she feels the residents need to make the ultimate decision. She is not certain that the failing systems are not due to neglect. Mr. Fegley stated they had these similar discussions when they discussed sewerage of Robinson Place. He stated they can make the same options available that they did at Robinson Place such as requirements with regard to time of connection and financing. He stated since they made the decision to proceed at Robinson Place, he understands this project has proceeded very well. Mr. Fegley stated if there is effluent on the surface, this is being washed into the creek; and this will result in a community problem.

Mr. Allan stated he is concerned about the financial impact on the homeowners since it could cost approximately \$15,000 for each homeowner. Mr. Fazzalore stated they addressed this in the past and would make similar arrangements in this situation as well. Mr. Allan stated he is a Realtor and a failing system will impact the value of their property at some point. He stated you do have to disclose these types of problems in the Agreement of Sale.

Mr. Hackman stated if a homeowner has a failing system, he feels they would be required to hook up immediately but if the system is not failing, it could be taken under advisement whether they would be required to hook up at this time or have it hooked up at the time the property is sold. He stated the cost to the homeowner would be only the sewer main assessment portion if they decide not to hook up at this time.

Mr. Hoffmeister stated Lower Makefield Township is the only municipality in the area that offers any help to the residents with regard to sanitary sewers. He stated in Middletown Township they assessed their residents \$25,000 which did not include the tap-in or connection fees.

Mr. Fazzalore stated the Township currently has the money to help with this project but may not have the funds to do so in the future if it is not approved now. Mrs. Godshalk stated the Sewer Fund is well funded. She stated she feels the residents should be given the opportunity to consider this matter and then come back to the Board of Supervisors before a final decision is made.

Ms. Sherry Lee, Hillside Lane, stated the current Motion is to address sanitary sewers and is not addressing the stormwater problem. Mr. Fazzalore stated the Township engineer has indicated how they will address the stormwater problems. Ms. Lee stated they have not seen any of these facts. Mr. Fegley stated they have presented the plans as to how the system will be designed.

Ms. Donna Marchino, 20 Spring Lane, asked if they could not run gas down the road as well. Mr. Hackman stated this has not been discussed but if there is interest in doing this, now would be the time to look into this matter.

Mr. Pajer stated he does have a weak septic system and a contaminated well, and he would encourage the Township to move forward with some speed.

Mr. Jeff Bloomenthal asked if they are going to proceed according to majority rule. Mr. Hackman stated if there are problems with failing systems, he feels the Township needs to address it at the current time.



Ms. Rogary, 7 Spring Lane, asked about costs for public water once you connect to the system. Mr. Badey noted the average cost per year in Lower Makefield is \$448 a year.

Ms. Sandy, 7 Hillside Lane, asked how they will get access to their homes during construction of the project, and Mr. Hackman stated they must be provided access to their homes.

Ms. Koehler asked who will decide which of the vacant lots are buildable. Mr. Hackman stated the Township engineer will look into this. Ms. Koehler asked if they will raise the road higher than their properties. Mr. Hackman stated he feels the final grade will be the same as it is now, and Mr. Doherty stated it will actually be somewhat lower.

Mr. Davenport stated there are seven properties that they know are failing but there were also seven properties they were not permitted to inspect which may mean there are actually more than seven which are failing.

Ms. Gay stated she is still concerned about the flooding problem. She stated she does feel public water and sewer are necessary but this will not help the value of her property if it continues to flood. She asked if there are plans available for review of the proposed stormwater improvements, and Mr. Doherty stated they do have plans drawn. Mr. Fegley stated Mr. Hackman has also asked that those plans be reviewed to see if they can extend certain portions to collect more water.

Mr. Goodwin asked if the Board would consider amending the motion to include the stormwater matter being a priority. Mr. Fegley stated they are asking the Township engineer to go back and review the stormwater portion. Mr. Hackman noted that at Robinson Place there were a number of meetings held with the residents.

Mrs. Godshalk asked for a show of hands of anyone adamantly opposed to moving forward with the sanitary sewers, and only one person raised her hand.

Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, Mr. Fazzalore moved, Mr. Fegley seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Scott Fegley, Secretary

