

Aquetong Spring Advisory Committee

April 29, 2019 – 7:00 PM

Solebury Township Hall

**MINUTES**

- I. Call to Order
  - a. Frank Nassetta called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
  - b. The following committee members were in attendance: Dan Dupont, Darcy Fair, Barry Fetterolf, Frank Nassetta and Board of Supervisors liaison John S Francis. Also in attendance were Kevin Campbell, Nancy Stock-Allen, and Barbara Sietchick on behalf of the Township's Parks and Recreation Board. Additional guests included Pat Bacon of Deer Park, Curt Genner of C. Robert Wynn Associates, Mark Gallagher of Princeton Hydro, and Chris Mikolajczyk of Princeton Hydro.
- II. Princeton Hydro (PH) Presentation: Aquetong Spring Restoration Update
  - a. Frank N. commented on the Township's efforts to have the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) designate the stream's existing use .
    - i. The stream's water use is currently defined as High Quality (HQ)
    - ii. Frank N. asked PH what it would take to be ranked as an Exceptional Value (EV) to provide additional protection to the stream. PH explained that once the stream restoration projects are completed, more things will be in place to help the Township attain EV status.
    - iii. Attendees questioned if a higher rating would limit future proposed uses of the park. PH and the Township Engineer do not anticipate a negative impact and explained a change of status might impact parking and construction rather than park activities.
  - b. Aquetong Creek Water Quality Study (2018)
    - i. Due to the current HQ status of the stream, the Township's focus is to maintain and continue to improve the stream's quality
    - ii. PH has completed the following:
      - 1. Delineation of wetlands
      - 2. US Army Corps Review / Jurisdictional determination
      - 3. Hydrologic Analysis of Route 202 Tributary

- a. Projects focused on hydrology will be incorporated with the Transportation Alternatives (TA) trail construction since the Township is currently focused on expediting stream restoration
- 4. Reassessment of Route 202 Tributary
- 5. Further assessment of reach below the dam breach.
- c. Aquetong Park Reforestation (2019)
  - i. PH has completed the following:
    - 1. Field Investigation (Ongoing)
    - 2. Restoration Design (Ongoing)
    - 3. Invasive Species Management (Ongoing)
    - 4. Bid Package Preparation (Ongoing)
  - ii. Maps were presented showing draft reforestation plans
  - iii. Barry F. asked if bushes would be included with the reforestation. PH explained that some bushes are planned for closer to the creek but will require caging to protect them from deer. They are focused on choosing vegetation which will have the most positive impact on the quality of the stream water including the reduction of temperature
- d. Aquetong Creek Restoration
  - i. PH has completed the following:
    - 1. Field Investigation / Survey
    - 2. Restoration Design (Ongoing)
    - 3. Permitting (Ongoing)
    - 4. Stormwater Design Support (Ongoing)
    - 5. Bid Package Preparation (Ongoing)
  - ii. PH explained that one of the stream's biggest obstacles is the high quantity of Headcuts. Headcuts are small, natural waterfalls created from abrupt vertical drops in the channel bed's elevation. Headcuts cause significant bank erosion and increase stream velocity, which negatively impacts the stream's water quality. They shared some proposed solutions to this problem including channel pattern modification devices (such as toe wood bank stabilizations) as well as constructed riffles and grade control structures.

- iii. PH reiterated that although the stream quality is very good, many of the things in their proposal will make the water quality even better.
- iv. Committee members questioned if these structures would decay or look unnatural. PH shared pictures demonstrating the natural appearance of these devices. They also explained that by the time these devices deteriorate, the stream will have already matured and will no longer require them.
- v. Barry F. shared the discovery of another possible water source near the artificial stock pens, and asked if there was any thought put into removing these artificial structures. PH and the Township Engineer explained that they've only been tasked with addressing parts of the stream which are unstable. John F. went on to say that although we have not considered this yet, there's no reason this could not be looked into as part of a future project or grant.
- vi. PH presented examples of other stream restoration projects with before and after pictures taken a year apart. They've historically worked with entities (such as townships) to manage these projects for up to five years after beginning work
- vii. Kevin C. of the Parks and Recreation Board questioned why sediment was not addressed prior to releasing fish into the stream. Frank N. explained that the Township was offered these fish at no cost. The Township was granted permission to take these fish from a local river where they had existed for a very long time and were natives. In regards to the risk of losing fish due to stream restoration efforts, the majority of the trout population resides in the top third of the stream near the spring. Most of PH's engineering efforts will be implemented in the bottom two thirds of the stream.

III. Township Engineer (C. Robert Wynn Associates) Presentation: Aquetong Spring Park Update

- a. Curt G. shared that the Township is building up the TA trail work in conjunction with stream restoration. They are currently focused on the safety component of the trails, followed by obtaining the necessary environmental clearances.
- b. Curt G. shared an estimated timeline based on the amount of work needed to move forward:
  - i. Township will submit Stormwater management plans to DEP by the end of 2019
  - ii. Township should receive necessary permits to start work by March 2020
  - iii. Stream Restoration construction will be executed in the Spring of 2020

- iv. Township will achieve design and document approval by August 2020
  - v. Trail construction will start by Spring 2021.
- c. Curt G. assured members of the committee that the public will continue to have access to the park as work is being done.
- d. Maps of the proposed trails and parking lot were presented.
- e. Barbara S. of the Parks and Recreation Board questioned if the house could either be used or taken down, and questioned if resources were being wasted on unused Township buildings. Darcy F. explained that the house is covered in mold and requires substantial renovation. Electric is being spent to keep the house minimally heated to prevent the property from accumulating more damage. There was discussion concerning the future use of the house, although it was stated that it will be at least two years before the house can be used for anything due to the lack of parking. Future possible uses for the house will be discussed at a later date.
- f. There were concerns raised about the expiration of grants related to the park. The Township Engineer assured members that all of the grant money obtained is still available. One grant is set to expire at the end of 2019, but the Township is working with DCNR to obtain a deadline extension.
- g. Kevin C. of the Parks and Recreation Board questioned what surveys and studies have been done for this park, and was concerned with the amount of money taxpayers have paid for this park. Board members communicated that if the man-made dam was not removed, it would have cost the Township a significantly larger amount of money to maintain it. John F. agreed with Kevin that this information should be readily available and will follow up with the Township Manager to obtain this information. He also communicated that our next step is to find out what Solebury residents want to do with the park.

IV. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.