

The stated meeting of the Infrastructure Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 via webinar with Chairman Commissioner Rothman presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners Chairman ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, ZAPPONE, THOMPSON
Excused: Commissioner BOWMAN

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Director of Engineering Services CLARK
Township Engineer LEE
Director of Wastewater Treatment Plant WRIGLEY

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Rothman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to approve the minutes from the Infrastructure Committee Meeting of October 6, 2022.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Update and review of Final Draft Stormwater Management Plan:

Ms. Allison Lee, Township Engineer, provided a presentation noting that Tasks 1 & 2 of the study have been completed, and we are at the stage where we are reviewing the draft final Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan. Flood prone areas are the Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center and Keswick. Recommendation for the HVSC is green stormwater infrastructure and for the Keswick area is green stormwater infrastructure and regional stormwater management. GSI options include stormwater tree trenches, stormwater trees, stormwater planters, stormwater bump-outs, rain gardens, and vegetated swales.

Regulatory mandates will continue to be more stringent, and Abington Township is in compliance with regulatory mandates and that evaluation is based on basic level of service, and there will be increased costs to achieve higher levels of service.

Keswick Flood Prone Area – combination of street GSI and regional stormwater management – total project estimated cost for planning/design/permitting - \$3,969,000 or \$264,600 per year over 15 years. Total estimated project cost for construction - \$31,749,000 or 3,969,000 per year over 15 years.

HVSC Flood Prone Area – upstream street GSI - total project estimated cost for planning/design/permitting - \$721,695 or \$48,113 per year over 15 years. Total estimated project cost for construction - \$5,760,000 or \$384,670 per year over 15 years.

DEP's 2022 Stormwater Model Ordinance provides a GSI (green stormwater infrastructure) option for the Township to adopt, and if adopted, the Township's Stormwater Ordinance would need to be updated to include green stormwater infrastructure as a BMP (best management practice). The GSI will mostly be in the public right-of-way, and how it would be managed, inspected, and maintained will need to be considered. Ideal situation would be to have developers install GSI as part of their land development project.

Primary funding mechanisms – general fund appropriations, grant opportunities, tax increment, and financing stormwater service fees (stormwater utility fees).

Manager Manfredi said tonight's presentation is an overview of the final draft report that will be submitted in its entirety for review by the committee who would then provide recommendations on how to proceed in tying it into the comprehensive plan, ARPA and/or capital funding going forward.

Ms. Allison Lee added that when the study is finalized it can be used to pursue grant opportunities for planning purposes.

Mr. Clark clarified that figures contained in Wood's report are today's rates for bidding out projects. Is that correct?

Ms. Allison Lee replied that is correct.

Mr. Clark continued that the Township has undertaken doing all the work in-house, so those numbers do not truly reflect costs of the project. Also, over the past few years, adjustments have been made behind the HVSC to alleviate issues, so any future work should be presented as the true costs to the Township.

Ms. Allison Lee replied that Wood's report was based on the work being outsourced with construction at prevailing wage, although there are cost savings to doing projects in-house.

Commissioner Rothman agreed that we are always looking for ways to stretch tax dollars while not overburdening Township resources and how that will be addressed will be considered by the committee as well as the full Board of Commissioners.

Manager Manfredi requested that the committee consider the green stormwater infrastructure component as well as ordinance amendments including a stormwater project list from this study. Also, to be reviewed will be the MS4 and the QWIP (Quality of Water Improvement Program).

Mr. George Wrigley, Director of Wastewater Treatment Program, explained that progress has been made with the QWIP where multiple municipalities are working with DEP and EPA to come up with a plan, and for Abington that would be the Sandy Run Creek.

Commissioner Rothman said flooding has been a huge ongoing issue at the HVSC for a very long time. Many residents have been impacted with some having disastrous situations any time there is heavy rain, and as their commissioner, he has been working towards addressing this safety issue, so he is a proponent of green infrastructure and hopes the committee would be in favor of it as well.

Commissioner Zappone commented that his ward was hit twice with major flooding damage in 1996 and 2001, so he definitely supports Commissioner Rothman in taking care of his residents, and he is in favor of green stormwater infrastructure.

Commissioner Rothman asked for any public comment.

Lance Weatherly, resident, Meetinghouse Road, referring to the draft plan, noted there is a heading that needs to be updated in Section 264. Green stormwater infrastructure is another tool that many communities use as it has shown to be more cost effective, and he urged the committee to include it and hopes the final draft plan has more details.

He also urged the Board of Commissioners to consider implementing a stormwater fee or an Authority to develop a reliable funding source as drainage is an ongoing issue, and he thanked the committee's focus on improving stormwater management.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary