

**WILLISTOWN TOWNSHIP
RONNIE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD STORMWATER MEETING
SUGARTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 611 SUGARTOWN ROAD, MALVERN
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021, AT 7:00 PM**

The Special Meeting of the Willistown Township Board of Supervisors came to order at 7:00 pm. Supervisors William R. Shoemaker, George J. McHugh IV, and Robert T. Lange were present. Also present were Township Manager Sally Slook, Finance Director Martin McKenzie, Director of Public Works Bill Hagan, Nick Cirilli, P.E., Mike Conrad, P.E., and Solicitor Bill Christman.

Supervisor Shoemaker led a moment of silence for military personnel, first responders, and all front-line workers in the current pandemic.

Announcements – Supervisor Shoemaker announced this meeting would cover the events surrounding the flooding of the Ronnie Park neighborhood after Hurricane Ida on Wednesday, September 1, and how the Township would address it. He introduced Nick Cirilli, P.E. of Yerkes Engineering.

Presentation by Yerkes Engineering – Attached to these minutes.

Citizens' Comments

Sally Vincent, 2 Sunset Drive, expressed thanks to Yerkes and the Township for the presentation and for being sensitive to the needs of residents affected by the storm.

Derrick Ross, 18 Jacqueline Drive, believes the flooding problems in the Ronnie Park neighborhood began in the late 1970s when the kudzu and vegetation were removed from the hill. The Public Works Department installed a berm in the center of the hill to keep water to the left, but now Mr. Ross has to give up his side yard for the new swale to handle the overflow. He would like a new, larger pipe installed to control the water.

Wayne Lilly, 46 Jacqueline Drive, feels like the Township has been putting a Band-Aid and wasting money instead of fixing the stormwater problem. The Lilly's have lived at 46 Jacqueline Drive for 40 years and had no previous flooding problems until the plunge pool was built. His house and medical equipment were damaged due to the flooding. Mr. Lilly asked how much had been spent on the various stormwater mitigation projects. Supervisor Shoemaker replied the Township spent approximately \$112,000 on mitigation efforts before Hurricane Ida and another \$110,000 to make repairs after the storm. Mr. Lilly asked if the Township has the money to replace the 21" pipe with a larger one, why the project is projected to take years. Supervisor Shoemaker replied multiple permits are needed from the PADEP, State and County governments, but the Township is looking at short-term solutions in the interim. Discussion ensued.

Jeanne Finklestein, 22 Jacqueline Drive, said the berm around the storm drain washed away and ended up in the street. She said the residents have been calling the Township to complain about the stormwater for at least ten years. Discussion ensued. She also commented Derrick Ross, at 18, Jacqueline has lost half his back yard and entire side yard and asked if he will be monetarily compensated. Supervisor Shoemaker replied Mr. Ross's property is not being taken away; the plan is to restore and resod the property to the way it was originally. Discussion ensued.

Jacqueline Rosso, 42 Jacqueline Drive, commented the plunge pool and other mitigation efforts are decreasing the property values in the neighborhood. She said Supervisor Shoemaker promised to buy residents properties damaged by the storm in a previous meeting. Supervisor Shoemaker clarified he said the Township would purchase properties if necessary when building the flood control projects. FEMA, the Federal government, and insurance agencies are the entities residents need to reach out to regarding water-damaged homes. Discussion ensued.

Pat West, 40 Sunset Drive, asked about specific mitigations efforts planned on Sunset Drive. Nick Cirilli responded that everything in this neighborhood collects at one point, and additional inlets need to be installed or other yet to be determined engineering solutions. Supervisor Shoemaker added that the Township and Consultants are trying to retrofit aging infrastructure built very differently from today's standards. Discussion ensued.

Wayne Lilly, 46 Jacqueline Drive, asked if the residents attending the meeting could vote to remove the plunge pool. Supervisor Shoemaker replied the vote would need to be opened up to all residents of Ronnie Park and all taxpayers in Willistown. Discussion ensued.

Susan Rosso, 1 Roselawn Lane, commented the neighborhood residents have complained to the Township regarding stormwater issues for years. She commented she believes the Township's mitigation efforts caused the flooding from the August 18 storm and Hurricane Ida. She also commented on the flooding causing the neighborhood values to drop. Discussion ensued.

John Paul, 15 Jacqueline Drive, commented he attended several Board of Supervisors meetings. His understanding from attending those meetings is that the Township would only buy houses to complete the stormwater management project, not buy all the houses damaged by the storm. He also commented Derrick Ross, 18 Jacqueline Drive, has had flooding in his home every time it rains. And he agrees with Derrick; the flooding started when the hill was cleared of vegetation. Discussion ensued.

Kim McGuiness, 20 Rollingview Drive, requested a follow-up meeting or a meeting on Zoom so residents with young children can attend. Supervisor Shoemaker explained Zoom-only meetings are no longer allowed now that the Governor's Emergency order was rescinded. The equipment that allows the Township to hold hybrid meetings is on backorder but is expected to arrive soon.

Sarah Lange, 266 Boot Road, liked the idea of regular communications or a meeting with residents

regarding stormwater mitigation efforts and suggested they be done monthly.

Mike Conrad, 7 Willow Pond Road, stated he is a Willistown resident and works as an engineer for Yerkes. He said the Township would continue to be a priority for him and the Yerkes office. Two major August storms in less than three weeks were unprecedented. Still, Yerkes and the Township are doing as much as possible to remedy the situation in a timely fashion.

Susan Rosso, 1 Roselawn Lane, asked about election rules. Discussion ensued.

Michelle West, 25 Jacqueline Drive, commented while the current way the stormwater is being directed may be helping some residents, it is also negatively affecting others, including her property. Nick Cirilli explained the long-term solution would be to control the flow of stormwater away from all houses. The short-term solution is to keep the water in the streets with higher curb heights and add more inlets. Discussion ensued.

John Paul, 15 Jacqueline Drive, asked about connecting inlets along Jacqueline Drive and Cedar Hollow Drive. Supervisor Shoemaker explained connecting the inlets without addressing what is happening on Cedar Hollow would not be helpful. Mr. Paul also asked for further details on the \$275,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act announced at the BOS October 11 meeting and how it would be allocated to stormwater mitigation in the Township. Supervisor Shoemaker replied that approximately \$110,000 has been spent stabilizing the hill and cleaning up after Hurricane Ida in the Ronnie Park neighborhood.

Cathleen Sita, 19 Jacqueline Drive, discussed damage to her property after Hurricane Ida and is concerned about decreasing property values. She hopes the Township contacts residents, before making changes to the way stormwater is directed. Discussion ensued.

Jeanne Finklestein, 22 Jacqueline Drive, asked about the force of the water hitting the berm and if there is a way to slow it down. Nick Cirilli explained they added two additional inlets on Sunset Drive and milled the road to increase the curb face, but in the case of Hurricane Ida, there was nothing that could be done with 10 inches of rain in a few hours. Discussion ensued.

Dan Higgins, 16 Lloyd Ave, suggested a series of storm drains and 30" pipe running through a culvert, but it would need to go through residents' properties. Nick Cirilli explained that would require easements, but it is something they can evaluate. Discussion ensued.

Wayne Lilly, 46 Jacqueline Drive, asked about the voting process during Board of Supervisor Meetings. Discussion ensued.

Supervisor Shoemaker reminded residents to sign up for email updates from the Township by signing up on the Township website under "Notify Me" and "Stormwater Mitigation Updates."

Adjournment

Seeing no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Sally Slook', written over a horizontal line.

Sally Slook, Township Manager