

**BELLEFONTE BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION  
REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING  
January 25, 2016**

**Call to Order**

- Ms. Dainty called the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission meeting to order on Monday, January 25, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

**Reorganization of Planning Commission for 2016 –**

Office of Chairman  
Office of Vice-Chairman

Mr. Clark made a motion to keep the same officers as before, which were Bob Dannaker, Chair; and Kevin Clark, Vice-Chair. Ms. Dickman seconded the motion. Ms. Dainty stated that the secretary was usually staff. A voice vote was unanimous.

**Meeting turned over to the Chair** – Robert Dannaker

**Present:** B. Dannaker, K. Clark, C. Dickman, J. Mills, D. Gallo,

**Excused:**

**Staff:** Vana Dainty

**Guests:** Chuck Thompson, PE, NEA;

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**Approval of the Minutes**

- Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of November 23, 2015. Ms. Dickman seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as presented.

**Land Development Activities**

- None

**Planning and Zoning Issues**

Bellefonte Borough Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Review – Mr. Thompson was at the NVJPC meeting on Thursday to discuss this same project, which is the wastewater treatment plant. NEA has been the consultant for the WWTP for approximately ten years. He personally worked on the last upgrade to the facility with the Chesapeake Bay requirements in 2007-2008.

Mr. Thompson gave a presentation on an Act 537 Study that is being done at the WWTP for several reasons. The study is at the plant itself and not service areas. The Executive Summary details the facility. Some key parts of the plant were pointed out. The flow goes in and then goes to a pretreatment building where it is pumped, screened and pumped out of the EQ Basins where the flow is equalized both organically and hydraulically and then returns back and is pumped over to the activated sludge units, which are basically the heart and soul of the treatment process. In 2007 a lot of upgrades were done because of the Chesapeake Bay requirements. A key point is that nothing was addressed with the AS units and the RBC's. They have been in place since 1990. They are wearing out.

Now we are in 2016 and looking at what is wrong with the facility. The RBC's are called rotating biological contactors. All the pieces and parts wear out. They are heavy with pieces and parts. The most critical part that is the problem with RBC's is the shafts that hold the media begin to wear and then all the weight on the shafts starts to wear the shafts down to nothing. The shafts then break and the media falls out of the RBC. That is what really precipitated the project. The cost to replace the 21 RBC

units would cost approximately \$3 million with new units that would last another 25-30 years. The Executive Summary goes into a little detail about some feasibility work that was done on the RBC units. Essentially what they looked at was replacing the equivalent capacity of those RBC's with some type of upgrade. Since 2013 they have been looking at different options. While this was going on with the facility a new prison was built with 2,000 more inmates, laundry facility, loads have gone up substantially. What happened was they went from just replacing the RBC's with some equivalent treatment with the DEP to what they need to do to upgrade the activated sludge system too.

The intermediate clarifiers are undersized. DEP gives you a ceiling that they can handle and the WWTP is over that load. Timing is critical when you look at projects. You have to upgrade the facility before it gets to be too significant of a job. If the WWTP exceeds permit then there are violations.

NEA is trying to make the improvements and replace the RBC's and upgrade the system with one process that will rectify the situation with the activated sludge units. There are two processes that were explored to do that. One is called Biomagnetic Activated Sludge Enhancement, which would double the biology. You add a very fine magnet type powder to the water around the outside. The bugs like it. It helps them in terms of growth. Once the flow goes to the intermediate clarifier and the air is turned off to that it is like metal in the water and it doesn't want to float. Once it hits the center it drops and you end up with clear water coming out of the system and the rest of the way through. The other option is adding another activated sludge unit. This was submitted to the state. They are very specific about the scope. They want to know what are the two principal things that can be done to deal with this situation. The Biomagnetic Enhancement is expensive. For this system it would be approximately \$3.8 million. The comparative cost is \$4.5 million to add an extra tank.

Page 11 provides the cost and detail comparison of each option. A benefit of the Biomag is there more biology and more masks in it to put up with the sludge. The other benefit is that it is easy to install. To install the new activated sludge unit would involve a significant amount of digging on what is the flood plain. The desire is to keep it simple and effective.

Mr. Clark stated the magnetite is not proprietary material because you can buy it from any supplier. A big issue with the current system is the chemicals have to be bought from one company.

One of the things with the odor issue is all the sludge that comes out from the intermediate clarifier drops to the bottom and gets pumped into temporary holding tanks. With wastewater there are two processes. There is water going through the system and out and then there is sludge. NEA is recommending the system that would get rid of the odor.

Ms. Dickman, when looking at the comparison charts, feels the Biomag is a better system for controlling the different chemicals in the water. In 2007-2008 the upgrades have improved the stream quality and the fish population in Spring Creek. She assumes this would do the same. If a different system is done the DEP permit would need to be amended. NEA would obtain water quality and then get a Water Quality Management Permit.

Mr. Dannaker asked if NEA looked at their options from the constructability view point, such as what can go wrong when trying to upgrade one tank and then the other one? He feels in some cases it may be better to do the higher cost to be able to do the construction better and won't get fined for pollution, which should be factored in to it.

Mr. Thompson said they have to submit a phasing plan to the state that is convincing to them that what they are doing during construction will not be an impact to the water quality. They will detail that. It will be on paper.

Two years ago Bellefonte sold a huge amount of water for fracking. Now it is typically 50,000 gallons a month. That money goes into the General Account so will not be available for this project. The funding for this would be shared with Bellefonte and SBWJA. There would also be funding from Penn VEST or private financing because the interest rates are very low. The Authority prefers private financing. They like the lower costs with another tank.

The timeline presented is the Authority's timeline. They would like to have permits in the fall to begin construction. When the project begins it won't be completed for 1 ½ - 2 years.

NEA would like comments from the Planning Commission on the study. After comments are received there will be an updated report and that will go out for public comment and then out to the state for their comments. It will also go to SBWJA and the County. Dallas noted the huge issue with Spring Township will be the odor issue. Mr. Clark stated when the prison came online it changed things because they have a stronger sewage flow.

Possible Zoning Amendments: Centre Crest – there is a letter on the table. This is information for right now. They went to Council and Council sent them to the Planning Commission. They want to amend the zoning to where they can have the lot become part of the same as the nursing home, which is R4, multi-family. They are asking to add nursing and convalescent homes as part of the R4 zoning, which is not at this time. The Planning Commission needs to think about this very hard and needs to decide if they would like this to happen. Dallas Gallo recommended that they apply for a variance, which wouldn't require the zoning to be changed and they would have to specify what they will use it for.

D. Gallo made a motion that instead of changing the zoning it is recommended that Centre Crest apply for a variance with the Zoning Hearing Board. C. Dickman seconded the motion. The Planning Commission went to Ms. Dainty's office to look at the zoning map on the wall. A voice vote was unanimous.

### **Old Business**

- None.

**(Tape turned here)**

### **New Business**

- Looking at the Innovation Zone for Central Business District – BellKey is getting ready to start an entrepreneurial center in Bellefonte. Some of the things that might be in that may be different than what is specified. They are looking to have an overlay. Most of the things in the entrepreneurial center are doable in the Center Business District. They are trying to create a little more excitement to get some buzz going. They are also looking at what they are doing and how they are doing. She doesn't want to discuss it too much right now. She wanted to provide copies of it to review, write notes, and have discussion every month until everyone is comfortable with it.

D. Gallo said when he was reading it he kept thinking if you are going to try to increase the uses in a specific zone then it will affect all of those. Mr. Dannaker recommends they use the old Weis store or build a parking garage. Ms. Dainty said there is a building for sale that would be Bellefonte size and is close to all the amenities and would increase the foot traffic in the downtown. D. Gallo stated it is in the zoning that you do not have to provide all your parking spaces...you have to provide CATA service. C. Dickman stated with the new idea there are several areas that could be utilized for parking and have a shuttle to the downtown area. With some of the newer businesses and the development at the Garman is installing a number of bike racks. Maintaining the integrity as a town and also to grow and meet the needs of some services is what BellKey is striving to do. They are working on having better signage.

- C. Dickman asked the Planning Commission if they would like to make a motion to the Borough to join the APA. The Borough would pay \$100.00 for their Planning Commission to join the APA and then it would be \$50.00 per member. It is a professional designation stating the Planning Commission is serious about what they do and also gives access to a lot of free online workshops and trainings that are held within Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Planning Chapter is very active. They do stuff all the time and it would involve a large discount or free or some of their things. They hold very relevant things to what the Borough is currently facing. The formal website is [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org). At the very top is a membership tab that you would go to under Commissioners, which is what PC members would be considered. If you Google Pennsylvania Chapter APA their website will come up. They have a Facebook page that lists all their trainings throughout the state and what they cover.

PC members should check out the website and it will be discussed at the next meeting.

### **Information Items**

- None.

## **Adjournment**

- Having no further business Mr. Clark made a motion to adjourn the January 25, 2016 meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission at 6:15 PM. Ms. Dickman seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.