

ACT 537 SEWAGE FACILITIES PLAN UPDATE GENERAL INFORMATION & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Mark Your Calendars!

For more information please attend a **Public Informational Meeting on June 17, 2019 at 7:00 PM** at the **Kempton Fire Company Social Hall**

JOSH RABERT, CHAIRPERSON
 CHARLES VOLK, VICE CHAIRPERSON
 CHRIS SCHUCKER, SUPERVISOR
 ATTORNEY JAMES DAVIS, SOLICITOR
 ALFRED BENESCH & COMPANY, ENGINEER

Introduction

This newsletter is designed to introduce you to the sewage facilities study that Albany Township is undertaking, and will be followed up with additional communication during the planning project. The project at hand is a multi-year study. The Township has no pre-conceived recommendations for this study. We ask all residents to review this information and stay informed throughout the planning process.

General Information

As a result of a mandate from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Albany Township is required to develop and draft an Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan to identify and document sewage disposal needs in the Township. This mandate, delivered Spring of 2018, was the direct result of an anonymous complaint called into DEP regarding the lack of a current Act 537 Plan in the township, and in particular, for the village of Kempton. Albany Township was required to attend a “pre-planning consultation” at the Reading DEP office in April 2018 and was subsequently required to submit a Plan Development Implementation Schedule and commitment for performing the Plan.

Although DEP’s initial focus appears to be on the village centers of Kempton and Stony Run, DEP requirements dictate that the study be township-wide, even though the rural areas of the township are not experiencing widespread sewage disposal issues. An

initial “Sewage Needs Documentation Survey” is to be performed that requests public participation in a Well and On-Lot Septic System Survey. Ultimately, results of the Sewage Needs Study will be incorporated into the Act 537 Plan document and will be used to justify and recommend the implementation of public sewage disposal programs and/or structural improvements, in order to protect the public health and the waters of the Commonwealth.

Project Funding

The planning project is being funded through the Township general fund. Local and state grant money is being sought by the Supervisors as a means to offset township costs.

Project Status

As indicated above, a Sewage Needs Documentation Survey will be performed initially by the Township’s project consultant (Alfred Benesch & Company), which will contain information on the status of on-lot septic systems and private wells in the Township. The results of this Well and On-Lot Septic System Survey are voluntary and will NOT be used by our Sewage Enforcement Officer for enforcement purposes. DEP requires a 15% participation rate for adequate representative sampling across the township, with a higher 25% participation rate required in the village centers of Kempton and Stony Run, due to higher housing density and from the opinion(s) apparently conveyed in the anonymous complaint call into DEP.

You will receive in the mail correspondence requesting your participation in the Well and On-Lot Septic System Survey. If you participate, a sample of your well water will be drawn by a representative of the township and sent to a local laboratory for bacterial and nitrate analysis, and a few general questions will be asked about the operation of your on-lot septic system. You will be provided free laboratory results of your well water to keep for your records.

The Needs Documentation Study will be incorporated into the Plan, which will include general information such as demographic, physical/geological, and economic data on the Township. Alternatives to address documented sewage disposal deficiencies will be developed and evaluated, which will likely include a mix of non-structural programs, such as a septage management plan (e.g., periodic septic tank pumping program), and structural improvements such as community sewer facilities. Economic considerations regarding affordability are required to be evaluated in the Plan as well.

Opportunity for public comment will be available throughout the development of the Plan, and community outreach in the form of newsletters and formal public presentations and Q&A sessions are anticipated. Once the Plan is adopted by the Township (with public comment documentation), the Plan is to be submitted to DEP for evaluation and approval. This submission is anticipated to occur roughly 2 years from now. Following DEP approval, an implementation schedule contained in the Plan must be followed. Our consultant has not developed that schedule yet, as work on the Plan has only recently commenced.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will a new township-wide public sewage collection system and sewage treatment plant be recommended to be constructed by the proposed sewage facilities plan?

No. The majority of the township does not have a high incidence of malfunctioning on-lot septic systems, and in general lots are large enough to support replacement systems if malfunctions do occur. Furthermore, that concept would be cost-prohibitive.

Is construction of a public sewage system the only option for the village centers of Kempton and Stony Run, if these areas are determined to have a high documented occurrence of malfunctioning septic systems and/or polluted wells?

No. DEP allows for septage management programs to be considered as a non-structural alternative. There are also other less costly alternatives to conventional public sewage treatment plants, such as community on-lot disposal systems, that will be evaluated as a viable option.

If construction of a public sewage system in an area of the township is recommended by the Plan, when would this occur and who will pay for it?

DEP will enforce an implementation schedule for the recommendations of the approved Plan. Design and permitting of a structural alternative would take approximately two years. The costs would be amortized over 20-30 years, depending on the source of the borrowed funds, and be paid by the sewer system customers. Grant funds would be pursued in this scenario to offset customer costs.

If a public sewage system is ultimately constructed to serve my area, who must connect to the sewer system?

In this scenario, the Township would adopt an ordinance that requires all houses within the public sewer service area to connect to the sewer system. Mandatory connection ordinances are typical throughout the Commonwealth.

Who should I contact if I have any other questions?

Township officials and/or the Consulting Engineer will be able to answer any questions you may have. Please contact one of these representatives with questions.

Visit our Website for More Info

As this project progresses we will provide further information and periodic updates on the Albany Township Website at:

<http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Muni/Albany/Pages/Sewage.aspx>