APPENDIX R-I-5a

RETTEW
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Ted Bogosh, West Penn/Walker Townships Sewer Committee

FROM: Ronald B. Madison, PE

CC: West Penn & Walker Townships Board of Supervisors

DATE: September 20, 2011

PROJECT NAME: Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan Update **PROJECT NO.:** 08-03486-005

SUBJECT: Informal Meeting with PA DEP Representatives

Last Friday, September 16, 2011, the Sewer Committee met with PA DEP representatives to informally discuss the current Draft Act 537 Plan Update for West Penn & Walker Townships. Persons participating included:

Ted Bogosh	Sewer Committee Chairman
Bill Verono	Sewer Committee Member
Al Martinez	West Penn Township BOS Chairman
Herb Woodring	West Penn Township Planning Commission Member
Rob Stermer	PADEP – Sewage Planning Supervisor
Scott Novatnak	PADEP – Planning Section Project Manager
Earl Fraley	PADEP – Sewage Planning Specialist
Gretchen Sterns	West Penn Township Solicitor (by phone)
Serena DiMagno	RETTEW – Director of Water & Wastewater Services
Ron Madison	RETTEW – Sr. Project Engineer

Prior to this meeting representatives from the Wells Team gave a presentation promoting Advantex System wastewater treatment products. Although their presentation was informative, it is premature in the Act 537 Plan Update process to consider the use of any one type of treatment system.

After introductions, Mr. Madison gave a brief overview of the Act 537 work that has been completed to date starting with the 2007 Ludgate plan and the follow-up work by RETTEW. The Draft Update Report format, the summary Chapter 2 proposed alternatives, and the implementation schedule were summarized. Mr. Madison then outlined the Sewer Committee's concerns (as presented on August 1, 2011); in particular, the question of affordability of the recommended alternative solution and the onerous requirements of the model on-lot sewer maintenance ordinance.

Mr. Stermer stated that his group in DEP has not performed any review of the draft plan update and that their comments are only informal and general in nature. Official technical review comments can only be given after a formally submitted Act 537 Plan has been found to be administratively complete.

A broad discussion occurred and the following points are offered in summary:

- The recommended alternative of public collection and treatment facilities for the four study areas with a total project cost of $11.5M for 306 EDUs and an estimated $104 per EDU monthly fee would be viewed by DEP as not affordable and would likely not be required to be implemented.

- Based upon recent budget discussions in Washington, a USDA Rural Utilities Services grant of 75% should not be used in planning. Although the townships may qualify based upon census data, even the 45% RUS grant may not be available due to anticipated funding cuts.

- DEP suggested that a public sewage facility alternative may not be the best alternative and the "Needs Assessment" for each study area should be revisited. If only a limited number of properties in each study area have malfunctioning sewage facilities, then perhaps a solution can be provided for an individual lot or multiple lots.

- Although the RETTEW Task Activity Report did not include review of the past Needs Assessment, DEP stated that the Ludgate chapter on Needs Assessment was not reviewed or accepted. Due to the age of the 2003 Needs Survey and the conclusion that a public facilities solution is not affordable, a new Needs Assessment should be executed to determine exactly which properties are malfunctioning.

- Upon completion of a new Needs Assessment, it may be determined that non-public sewage solutions may be the most practical approach for the Act 537 Plan Update. PennVEST and RUS have specific grant and low interest loan programs for individual property owners and the net cost to a property owner may be less than the public option.

- DEP stated that the work to date on the current plan update should be supplemented by a new review of needs assessment. As such they would be available to discuss a Task Activity Report Addendum to cover the anticipated additional tasks. In addition, they will not take action on the current submission deadline time extension request since a revised schedule will be needed.

- DEP stated that the model ordinance for on-lot sewage facility maintenance is a guidance document only. The ordinance can be modified to suit the needs of each municipality. They suggested that the Sewer Committee meet with the Sewage Enforcement Officers of each township to work out a program that provides adequate maintenance per the PA Code, is manageable for the SEO and Township staffs, and is fair to all property owners.

We suggest that the Public Hearing scheduled for September 29, 2011 continue as planned. However, the above information can be shared with the public as part of the opening description of the Draft Act 537 Plan Update. We will inform the communities that additional Needs Assessment will be necessary and encourage their participation with the survey process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions in regards to this matter.

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