

SCBWA board denies Toll Brothers easement request; Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan update

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Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition

State College, PA, United States

Jul 24, 2018 — SCBWA board denies Toll Brothers easement request

On Thursday, July 19, the State College Borough Water Authority Board denied Toll Brothers request for an easement which, if granted, would have allowed the developer to run a high-pressure sewage pipeline across SCBWA land purchased in 2008 for water conservation, with deed restrictions memorializing that purpose and running with the land.

6.20.08 PSU to SCBWA Deed - <http://nittanyvalley-eco.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/6.20.08-PSU-to-SCBWA-Deed.pdf>

The vote was 4-1, with Bernie Hoffnar, Bill Burgos, Rachel Brennan and Jason Grottini voting to deny the easement, Gary Petersen voting to grant the easement, Jeff Kern not voting and not abstaining, and Emory Ensore absent.

The video from the meeting is available via CNET on YouTube -

<https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/GNduNoua2rBThhw6N4PRP9OCSPf6B2ru/playlists/4841/media/367811?autostart=false&showtabssearch=true&fullscreen=false>

It was a remarkable result, and the discussion was riveting, focused on the water board's ethical obligations to protect public water.

The discussion also included the revelation that Toll Brothers attorneys threatened to file suit in federal court if the water board used its discretion as landowner to deny the easement.

Background reporting:

<https://bailiwicknews.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/5-1-18-bailiwick-news.pdf>

<https://bailiwicknews.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/5-7-18-bailiwick-news.pdf>

Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan update

In the short-, medium- and long-term, it appears that the best way for concerned citizens to protect our regional water supply and the ecosystems that depend on it for life, including the human population, is to adopt a watershed action plan that has strong enforcement components.

On July 10, the Spring Creek Watershed Commission (SCWC) kicked off the process of updating the Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan (SCWAP), which was abandoned in 2003 after Phase 1, due to funding and civic momentum shortfalls.

SCWC has created an excellent new website, including a page for coordination of the update process:

<https://www.springcreekwatershedcommission.org/update-project>

The update process is being led by Janie French, executive director of Headwaters Charitable Trust.

There were about 50-60 people at the kickoff meeting, held at Calvary Baptist Harvest Fields in Boalsburg. After an introductory presentation, the group was split into four smaller groups to begin talking about what we want our watershed community to look like in the future, and what actions could contribute to bringing about those results. Then there was a report-back.

One of the key issues identified by all four small groups was the need for watershed protection measures to be locally enforceable, to "have teeth."

Ms. French then announced that the four groups would be meeting bimonthly during July, August and early September to continue the process of reviewing the Phase 1 report and setting foundations for the drafting of Phase 2. Public, large-group meetings will then resume, probably in September and October.

Broad community engagement is important, so if you didn't go to the July 10 kickoff meeting but would like to get involved in the small group meetings, please contact SCWC Communications Coordinator Caitlin Teti at springcreekwatershedcommission@gmail.com and ask to be added to one of the small groups meeting for the next few weeks.

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