

[by Smita Bharti · 2,240 supporters](#)

[Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors: Deny Toll Brothers development plan](#)

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Petition update

Joint Ferguson Township/SCBWA Work Session Scheduled for July 7



Smita Bharti
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Jun 28, 2015 — I received confirmation from SCBWA Director John Lichman on June 25 that the joint work session between the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and the State College Borough Water Authority Board – to discuss the proposed Penn State/Toll Brothers high-density luxury student housing development in the Zone 2 water recharge area for the Harter and Thomas drinking water wells – will be on Tuesday, July 7 at 6 p.m. at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building, 3147 Research Drive.

Pam Steckler first heard the info – mentioned at the end of a nearly four-hour meeting – during her review of the C-Net video of the June 15, 2015 Ferguson supervisors' meeting.

Pam reported:

"On Friday, June 5, Toll Brothers submitted a revised Final PRD Plan for the Cottages to Ferguson Township. The plan was distributed to township agencies for review on June 8, with a deadline for comments of July 6.

The Final PRD Plan is expected to go to the Ferguson Township Planning Commission (for a vote) July 13.

The Ferguson Township/SCBWA joint work session is scheduled for July 7 at 6 p.m. at the Ferguson Township municipal building. That is the day AFTER the comment period ends."

Laura Dininni is working on getting an electronic copy of the latest PRD plan; it will be posted at Steady State College as soon as we have it.

I think a couple of activists are working with an attorney to prepare a lawsuit. I will update you when I have more info about that.

* * *

“...A sinkhole represents a direct conduit in to the aquifer which in turn could have direct adverse impacts on regional drinking water quality if significant volumes of surface runoff are channeled into a sinkhole.

Based on the recent site walkover with the project engineers on October 23, 2014, and the site inspection by PaDEP personnel (Kipp Starks, December 3, 2013) there are sinkholes in proximity to the project and therefore they do represent a risk.

It is acknowledged that the current use of the land for farming also could allow fertilizers, pesticides, or excessively turbid runoff to reach Slab Cabin Run, however this historic land use does not significantly increase the potential for sinkholes to form on this tract.

The significant grading, landscape alteration, increase in impervious surfaces, and channeling of stormwater involved with this project does increase the risk of sinkhole formation and therefore does increase the potential to degrade ground water quality.”

* * *

There are now 2,062 signatures on the Change.org petition.

Although the outcome of the Ferguson Township supervisors vote later this summer can't be known in advance, the fact remains that no local organization other than the Sierra Club has yet made a public statement acknowledging the threat of the Penn State/Toll Brothers plan in itself, or even as a precedent for rampant high-density development across the Slab Cabin Run watershed between Whitehall Road and Route 45.

This is absurd.

For the September issue of Voices of Central PA (for which I'm the incoming editor-in-chief), I'd like to run two packages.

One will be a collection of petitioner reflections on the peculiar non-response of the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and State College Borough Water Authority Board – and other organizations like ClearWater Conservancy, Penn State Sustainability Institute and Spring Creek Watershed Commission – to the overwhelming public demand for drinking water well protection.

Please write up to 250 words on how you - as petitioners - think and feel (both are important) about the experience of being utterly ignored and marginalized by these public entities while fighting to protect our shared drinking water sources.

Send your reflections to editor@voicesweb.org no later than August 7.

The second package will be responses to Peter Buckland's recent proposal that civil society activists prepare “10-, 25-, 50-, & 100-year visions” for the Centre Region.

For example, in my 10-year vision, by 2025, the State College area is an urban core supporting Penn State educating roughly 25,000 to 30,000 students, a majority of them studying sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry, primary and secondary education, nursing and basic engineering.

That urban core is surrounded by a perimeter of working sustainable farms – a majority less than 25 acres in size, operated by young families practicing organic, no-till cultivation and earning a decent living from sale of their crops to the State College area and to markets in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Please write up alternative visions – on any of those four timescales – and send them to me at Voices (editor@voicesweb.org) by August 7.

* * *

Here’s a list of most of the public meetings in the Centre Region that will take place in July:

<https://steadystatecollege.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/july-2015-public-meetings-calendar1.pdf>

Other water threats are brewing, including development in the Zone 2 wellhead protection area for SCBWA wells in the Grays Woods area in Halfmoon Township, and related sewer treatment planning discussions.

Readers interested in volunteering to help our community keep tabs on “our” government can sign up to attend one meeting per month or watch one meeting per month on C-Net and report out on key issues on an ongoing, contextualized, document-supported basis, through Steady State College and through Voices.

Please contact me (editor@voicesweb.org) to sign up to monitor a committee. We need roughly 30 people each working two to three hours per month for good coverage.

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2,240 supporters
260 needed to reach 2,500