

Petition update

April 19, 2018 SCBWA Meeting - Partial Transcript

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Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition

State College, PA, United States

May 2, 2018 — At the regular meeting of the State College Borough Water Authority on April 19, 2018, the authority board discussed two topics of particular relevance to community efforts to protect public water supplies at the Harter and Thomas wells and Slab Cabin Run – the focus of a grassroots citizen campaign that is now entering its fourth year.

One of the topics was the proposed Whitehall Road Regional Park, and the other was a proposed easement the water authority may grant to Toll Brothers to install a pipe across deed-restricted SCBWA land to convey sewage from a Penn State student housing development and the park to the University Area Joint (Sewer) Authority treatment plant off Shiloh Road.

Following is a transcription of two sections of the meeting video produced by C-Net.

The first section starts just after a presentation by Centre Region Parks and Recreation Director Pam Salokangas about the proposed Whitehall Road Regional Park, running from roughly minute 46 to minute 60. The second section runs from roughly 1:12 to 1:53. [Editorial notes in brackets.]...

...Gary Petersen, SCBWA Board Member

And Cory, if for some reason we had some type of a failure at that site, how do you folks handle that and how quickly is the response?

Cory Miller, UAJA Director

Depends on how fast somebody calls us and lets us know that it's happening. We do have notification at the pump station, so if we see a drastic change in pressure coming out that's going through the SCADA [Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition] system, through the, it's just like your water pumps, so if we see a drastic change in pressure we know something's wrong out there.

So somebody would get out there. It's about a 20-minute drive from the plant, for somebody to get out there.

Keep in mind the wet well also has capacity in it. There's storage capacity in the wet well that we have required and actually oversized, so that there's enough capacity in there so that we have time to deal with these things. So if the force main breaks, we can shut off the force main, shut off the pumps, and fill it into the wet well and simply truck the sewage out of there while we're working on the force main.

So there should not be a significantly long period of time where you would have sewage going into the ground and into the aquifer. We should be able to detect that pretty quickly, meaning, within an hour or two after it starts. That's how quick we should be able to fix it meaning stop it, stop the flow, then go out and assess what broke. Did the pipe split? Did a joint fail? Did somebody hit the pipe?

Gary Petersen

So from your experience, with these kinds of failures, you can respond pretty quickly. Has there been any long-term damage, or any damages from past failures? Or is it something we're overreacting to?

Cory Miller

So, force mains, in the engineering world there's no such thing as 100% foolproof. There's always a risk. So a good example of the risk in what happens is our Scott Road pump station. So it's another long force main coming up from Pine Grove Mills. That force main has broken. It failed at a joint and it failed at another spot where it wasn't a joint. So we had two opp—, two times where that pump station failed.

It was diagnosed relatively quickly. The first time it took a little bit longer because it was in the middle of a snowstorm and we couldn't find the spot. We knew something was going on but we couldn't find it. It took a little bit longer but during that period of time we were hauling the sewage up the hill. So we had pump trucks hauling it up there.

The second time we noticed it fairly quickly because again, we noticed it on the SCADA system, that the pressure at the pumps was way out of whack. Why was it out of whack? The only reason it can be out of whack is because something stuck in the line or the line broke. So we found it and fixed it.

Those — that line also happens to be within your Zone 2 wellhead contribution area.

Jeff Kern, SCBWA Board Chair

Right. Exactly.

Cory Miller

And that is not the type of pipe that — it is the PVC pipe. So that's why we think it's better with the HDPE pipe. If we had that one to do all over again we would be putting in HDPE pipe...

See 5.1.18 Bailiwick News (PDF) for more transcription of the meeting:

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