

QUITTAPAHILLA WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
Meeting Minutes
Annville Free Library Community Room and Remotely Via Zoom (Hybrid Meeting)
Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Present: Michael Schroeder (President), Bill Bauersfeld, Alyssa Bellucci, Bob Connell, Kent Crawford, Karen Feather, Katie Hollen (LCCD), Bill Osborne, Mary Pettice

The meeting opened at 7:01 PM

- 1. Minutes.** The minutes of the April 15, 2025 meeting were circulated electronically before the meeting and approved by consensus.

- 2. Monitoring Program**
 - A. Fieldwork updates.** Katie reported that our next round of fieldwork will be in June. She further reported in an email of May 2 that moving forward we have the following new contacts at DEP: Josh Lookenbill (mlookenbil@pa.gov), Mark Brickner (mbrickner@pa.gov), and Nate Alexander (natalexand@pa.gov).
 - B. Equipment updates.**
 - 1) Solinst Sensors.** Bob reported that he continues to preparing the sensors for field deployment at our five monitoring stations.
 - 2) ISCO auto-samplers.** Mike reported that he has secured the permission of the landowners at station Q1 in Cleona to deploy one of the auto-samplers. Bob suggested that we take a day to set up and field test our two auto-samplers at stations Q1 and K1. Bob, Katie, and Mike agreed to meet at station Q1 at 10 am on Fri June 13 to begin our field test.
 - C. Data management & Water Quality Portal updates.** Alyssa reported in an email exchange with Bob on May 7 that she had developed a series of email addresses for use with the Solinst sensors, basically so the data from each sensor can be emailed to us in a easy-to-use format. With that technical hurdle overcome, Bob reported that he expects to deploy the first Solinst sensor on Bachman Run (BM1) in the next week or two. Alyssa and Bob were thanked for their excellent work.
 - D. Biological monitoring.** Mike reported that earlier today, Tues May 20, he received an email from LVC Environmental Science major Charles Katona ('25) with the following update on his much-awaited final report on biological monitoring, titled "2019-2023 Macroinvertebrate Survey of the Quittapahilla Creek Watershed": "The time has arrived... Here is the final report. Attached is also a PDF of the poster that was presented at the Pennsylvania Academy of Sciences and LVC's inquiry, along

with a few pictures from the event. . . . I just ask that you say that I made the poster/paper/pictures if you put them on your website 😊. Thank you for all your help over the past couple of years; it has been an absolute honor to work with, volunteer with, and present for everyone.” Mike reported that he thanked Charles on behalf of the QWA, and that the report and poster are both housed on the [Studies & Documents page](#) of the QWA website.

- 3. National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Grant.** Mike offered the reminder that our first two meetings with Ryan Szuch of Grow Conservation are scheduled for 9-11 am Thursday, May 22 (remote on MS Teams) and 10:30 am-3:00 pm Thurs June 5 in the LCCD conference room. Participants are expected to include Mike, Bob, Alexis, Katie, and Kara.
- 4. “Digital Storytelling” Course at LVC.** Mike reported that on Monday, May 5, members of the QWA and the general public had the pleasure of viewing a series of videos at the Allen Theater produced by LVC students in a course on “Digital Storytelling” taught by LVC Prof Mary Pettice. The videos were very well received by those in attendance. Mike reported that Prof Pettice will provide copies of the videos and other materials, which he expects to house on our QWA website and use to promote our work.
- 5. Projects updates.** See the Watershed Action Team meeting minutes of May 1, kindly provided by Kara Lubold, below in **Appendix 1** to these minutes.
- 6. Education, outreach & special events.**
 - A. Friday, April 25, Arbor Day Celebration,** 4-6 PM, Gloninger Woods Park in Lebanon sponsored by the Lebanon County Clean Water Alliance in collaboration with local conservation partners. Mike reported that he & Karen & Katie represented the QWA at this event.
 - B. Saturday, June 14, Historic Old Annville Day** 9 AM—2 PM. Mike reported that he will be soliciting volunteers to staff the QWA table at this big community event, this year in a new location next to the LVC campus.
 - C. Possible field trips** to the City of Lebanon Authority’s (COLA’s) Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Cleona Pumping Station.
- 7. Media & website. Potential threat to the wetlands at the Quittie’s headwaters.** Mike reported on a series of developments relating to a potential threat to the wetlands at the headwaters of Quittapahilla Creek on the east side of Lebanon that also became the subject of substantial local media coverage. Copies of emails, letters, local media reports, and other materials relating to this issue are included below in **Appendix 2** to these minutes.

A. Website. Mike reported several small updates to the QWA website and some well-received QWA-related social media posts.

8. Lebanon County Stormwater Consortium updates. See **Appendix 1** to these minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Schroeder, Secretary Pro Tem

Appendix 1. Watershed Action Team, LCCD, Meeting Minutes, May 1, 2025



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Thursday, May 1, 2025, 9:00 a.m. – Minutes

Members Present: Bethany Canner, Reid Garner, Abigail Harvey, Darren Heisey, Dan Kreiser, Kara Lubold, Rocky Powell, and Maranda Smith

1. Introductions

- Reid Garner was introduced as a new member of the Action Team, representing Spring Hill Partners. Reid is the president of the company and will be working with LCCD on projects.

2. Applications

- Beck Creek 1: \$184,700.00- deferred to 2026 CAP round

3. In-Process Projects

- Hammer Creek Estates: \$250,000 of CAP funding for construction-related expenses
- Gerald Horst bridge replacement: \$23,600 of ACAP funding for design and permitting
- Syner Rd. Phase II: \$213,950 of CAP funding for construction-related expenses
- Hess: \$10,000 of CAP funding as a non-federal match commitment for NFWF INSR grant. Started seeding, construction will start in the next couple weeks.
- Wengert Memorial Park Seeded Slope: \$27,313.92- Board approved

4. Future Projects

- Gingrich Run 1: \$204,325- Board approved
- Snitz 2: \$241,385.50- Board approved. Will start construction in April/May.

5. Partner Updates

- Clear Creeks Consulting, Rocky Powell
 - o See Appendix 1.
- Lebanon Consortium/MS4, Darren Heisey
 - o SESI completed the Horst bridge design, GP-11 permit pending.
 - o New draft MS4 permit- comments period has ended.
 - o SQ1 Phase 1: LandStudies is doing maintenance under a 2-year contract. 1st phase completed for a year. Survey has been conducted, and plantings are being monitored. May need to replant wetland plantings due to presence of geese. Fencing installed to mitigate issue.
 - o SQ1 Phase 2: Tied to bridge realignment, likely in 2026. This phase will become part of the floodplain restoration.
 - o SQ6: N Cornwall Twp has the design grant which is being held up by a property owner who is reluctant to sign the access agreement. Still waiting for landowner agreement. An extension request was submitted to DEP. Consortium & DEP may



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

investigate ways to move the grant project ahead without the landowner's agreement.

- Lions Lake Shoreline Stabilization: Construction is ongoing and most of the shoreline work has been completed, with some punch list work still to be done. Live stakings are doing well.
 - Lebanon Valley Conservancy, Abigail Harvey
 - Planning to submit another NFWF SWG application for Killinger Creek project next spring.
 - Wengert Park: Project has started and expected to be completed by June 6th with ribbon cutting event to follow.
 - Clean Water Committee continues to form
 - Next events: Tour de Lebanon Valley in June, and the golf tournament late summer.
 - Quittapahilla Watershed Association, Mike Schroeder
 - Unable to attend meeting. Submitted update via email 5/2/2025. See Appendix 2.
 - Swatara Watershed Association, Bethany Canner
 - A Consultant has been selected for the NFWF capacity-building grant for strategic planning.
 - Water Trail signage project continues to move forward.
 - Swatara Sojourn (from Jonestown to Swatara Watershed Park) will be held on May 3. An estimated 40 people signed up.
 - Ecosystem Planning & Resources, Bryan Seipp (provided via email 5/5/25)
 - HC Estates – COE permit received. PADEP provided comments. EPR met with PADEP to discuss comments and will have responses to PADEP by 5/9/2025. Heisey Farm: Survey, trench investigation, stream reach and watershed assessments are complete. Existing H&H and concept design are currently in progress.
 - Historic Schaefferstown Farm: Completed trenching and have initiated floodplain boundary design. Fisher Farm: Still waiting to hear back from SRBC. We anticipate hearing in mid-April.
 - HC Heisey Farm– Proposed floodplain boundary has been designed and provided to landowner for review. They hope to get landowner approval within a week or two.
6. Lebanon County Conservation District Update- Katie Hollen, Kara Lubold, Maranda Smith
- Barry Farm: Maranda reported 185 trees planted by 5 people, including EPR representatives
 - Maranda reported, Heidelberg township meeting is on June 11th at 6:00 pm. Hammer Creek Partnership will be in attendance to present project information
 - Kara reported that federal requirements for the CAP MEB DC map have changed due to current administration EO on DEI. The map now includes almost all of Lebanon County except for the Tulpehocken area.



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

7. Other

- CAP grant application updates continue to move forward.

8. Next Meeting

- Thursday, June 5, at 9:00 a.m.



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Appendix 1. Rocky Powell updates, Clear Creeks Consulting

May 1, 2025 Watershed Action Team Projects Update – Quittapahilla Creek Projects

Beck Creek 6

- RRG initiated work 4/7/2025
- Access roads installed, rock and wood harvested and stockpiled 4/11 – 4/25/2025
- Channel construction Phase 1, Stage 1 initiated 4/27/2025

Snitz Creek 2

- PADEP Growing Greener – DFTU Contract – Comptroller's Office for Final Signature
- LCCD-DFTU ACAP Cost Share Agreement – Executed
- LCCD-DFTU CAP Cost Share Agreement – Executed
- Cornwall Borough – Depositing \$100,000 contribution into DFTU Account
- Pre-Construction Site Walk – 4/24/2025
- ARRC Construction Contract – Pending
- ARRC Final Schedule - Pending

Bachman Run – Horst Properties

- Final Design Plans – Finalized and Sealed
- Final Design Report – Completed
- Permit Application – Completed and signed by Jeanette Henning, South Annville Township
- Permit Application Supporting Documentation – Completed
- Permit Application & Supporting Documentation – Upload to DEP ePermits website 5/1/2025
- E&S Permit Application – Submit to LCCD 5/1/2025
- Bender Lane Culvert Design – Permit Pending.

Snitz Creek 3

- 319 – \$457,727.00 (DEP Pre-Selected sent to USEPA – Approval Fall 2025)
- GG – \$313,552.00 (6/22/2025 Application, Approval Winter 2025/Spring 2026)
- Cost – \$771,279.00 (Original Construction Cost \$645,228.00 Adjusted 9.16% or \$59,105.00 to \$704,333.00 due to Project Delay)
- Construction Fall 2026

Killinger Creek



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

- NFWF Grant Application submitted 11/5/2024 for Phase 1 Construction and Phase 2 Design and Permitting.
- NFWF: Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) Infrastructure Grant not approved
- Debriefing Meeting with NFWF staff April 18, 2025
- Apply for NFWF: Small Watersheds Grant Spring 2026 – Phase 1 Construction only

Snitz Creek 4

- Preliminary Stream Design - In Progress
- Preliminary Plans for SWM Pond – Complete
- Scheduling Landowners Meetings – May – June 2025



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Appendix 2.

QWA Monthly Update for the LCCD Watershed Action Team, Michael Schroeder, QWA President, Thurs May 1, 2025

1. Monitoring program continues – last streamflow & water sampling fieldwork April 14 & 21, next in June.
2. Solinst sensors for five monitoring stations received thanks to grant from Cleona Borough Authority – being prepped now for field deployment.
3. Sites identified for testing & deploying the two ISCO auto-samplers: one at Q1 on the Quittie mainstem in Cleona, and the other at K1 at Killinger Creek & Killinger Rd.
4. NFWF Small Watershed Planning and Technical Assistance Grant for capacity-building: remote kickoff meeting with Ryan Szuch of Grow Conservation 9-11 am Thurs May 22, and in-person strategizing meeting 10:30 am—3:00 pm Thurs June 5 in the LCCD conference room.
5. Wetlands at Quittie's headwaters: QWA organized letter-writing to county commissioners & media campaign on potential sale & development of parcel that includes wetland at Quittie's headwaters; Doc Fritchey Trout Unlimited also submitted a letter. For the Leb Daily News, see <https://www.ldnews.com/story/news/local/2025/04/21/wetlands-future-after-s-lebanon-parcel-sale-has-residents-concerned/83091630007/> For LebTown, see <https://lebtown.com/2025/04/21/conservationists-address-commissioners-on-county-sale-of-wetlands-to-developer/>
6. Education & Outreach:
 - a. LVC Digital Communications course "Watershed Stories" video screening of class projects focused on work of QWA at the Allen Theater, 3-5 pm Mon May 5. General public invited.
 - b. QWA, LCCD, and DFTU will be clustered together at Historic Old Annville Day Sat June 14.
7. Next QWA meeting Tues May 20

Appendix 2. Media reports & other materials on a potential threat to the wetlands at the headwaters of Quittapahilla Creek

On April 9, Mike sent out the following email to folks on the QWA mailing list:

Fellow Watershed Protectors,

I want to alert you to a terrible decision recently made by the Lebanon County commissioners to sell 17 acres on the east side of Lebanon to an Altoona-based developer, including six acres that are part of the headwaters of Quittapahilla Creek. Looks like a new Sheetz is part of the development plan.

Here is the story in LebTown:

<https://lebtown.com/2025/04/07/commissioners-tentatively-agree-to-sell-s-lebanon-twp-parcel-to-developer>

The relevant paragraphs:

"An Altoona-based developer has entered into an agreement with Lebanon County Commissioners to potentially purchase 17 acres of county-owned land in South Lebanon Township.

"The plan to purchase the acreage was approved by a 2-1 vote at the April 3 commission meeting. Jo Ellen Litz was the lone no vote, citing the sale of a portion of wetland on the property as the reason for her decision to oppose the proposal. . . .

"Litz said that while she voted to support the original 3.71-acre purchase, she opposes this action because a portion of the property are wetlands that include the headwaters of the Quitaphillia Creek, which later merges with Swatara Creek. County administrator Jamie Wolgemuth told LebTown on Friday that six of the 17 acres encompasses the wetland.

"Commission chairman Mike Kuhn and commissioner Bob Phillips both iterated that Thaler would be required to follow laws pertaining to wetlands, with Kuhn noting that a number of commercial golf clubs have wetlands on their properties and have been bound by the same laws when developing those parcels.

"It was also noted that the existing wetland has been considered as part of the \$2 million sales agreement."

Developing that parcel would likely have pronounced negative ripple effects on the entire watershed, increasing the likelihood of flooding and working directly against the DEP's goal of reducing the quantity of water flowing downstream.

I suggest the QWA sends a strongly worded letter to the county commissioners expressing our strong opposition to this land deal. Please be in touch if you would like to help, or if you have another idea -- or, if you disagree and think my reaction here is overblown.

Thanks,

Mike

Michael Schroeder
QWA President, <https://www.quittiecreek.org/>

Responses were strongly in favor of drafting a strongly worded letter to the county commissioners expressing our opposition to the sale. Mike then drafted the following letter and submitted it electronically to the county commissioners:

Lebanon County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Robert J. Phillips
Commissioner Michael J. Kuhn
Commissioner Jo Ellen Litz
Room 207, Municipal Building
400 South 8th Street
Lebanon, PA 17042-6794

April 14, 2025

Dear Commissioners Kuhn, Litz, and Phillips,



I write on behalf of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association to express our deep concerns about your provisional approval of the sale of a 17-acre parcel in South Lebanon Township to Altoona-based real estate developer Bruce Thaler of BT Lebanon County LLC, as reported in LebTown on April 7 (<https://lebtown.com/2025/04/07/commissioners-tentatively-agree-to-sell-s-lebanon-twp-parcel-to-developer/>)

According to the article, “County administrator Jamie Wolgemuth told LebTown on Friday that six of the 17 acres encompasses the wetland” that forms the headwaters of Quittapahilla Creek.

We strongly urge you to reconsider this provisional agreement. We are confident that you know that the large wetland on Lebanon’s east side, part of which forms the 7-acre Quittapahilla Educational Wetland Preserve, acts as a giant sponge during high rain events and is an essential part of the entire Quittapahilla watershed. Developing on or adjacent to that critically important wetland by adding buildings, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces would result in a substantially greater likelihood of severe flooding downstream and have deleterious consequences for property owners and the general public.

We are aware, as the LebTown article reports, that “Commission chairman Mike Kuhn and commissioner Bob Phillips both iterated that Thaler would be required to follow laws pertaining to wetlands, with Kuhn noting that a number of commercial golf clubs have wetlands on their properties and have been bound by the same laws when developing those parcels.”

We submit that just because an action is technically legal does not make it right, appropriate, or wise. We also submit that there is a huge difference between a small wetland along a tributary on a golf course and the large, at least seven-acre wetland that forms the headwaters of the waterway that flows directly through Lebanon City and the most densely populated part of Lebanon County. Many people still remember the massively destructive floods of 1972 from Hurricane Agnes and 2011 from Tropical Storm Lee. In this era of intensifying climate change and growing frequency of high rain events, it is inevitable that in coming years, Lebanon County will experience floods of equal or greater severity. By allowing this parcel to be developed, you would be putting all property owners downstream at heightened risk of a major flood and property destruction.

We strongly encourage you to reconsider what we consider to be an extremely ill-advised decision to sell this property to a developer. We are heartened that the deal is considered “provisional” and “potential,” which means that you still have the option of pulling out. We urge you to do so.

Respectfully,

Michael Schroeder
President, Quittapahilla Watershed Association
189 School House Lane
Annville, PA 17003

<https://www.quittiecreek.org/>

Mike then contacted representatives of affiliated organizations to alert them to this issue; to let them know that he planned to attend the county commissioners meeting on April 17 to express the QWA's strong opposition to the land deal and to urge them to reconsider; and to ask them to consider writing their own letters and also attending the same public meeting for the same reason.

In response, letters to the commissioners urging them to reconsider the sale were sent by Stephan Vegoe, longtime member of Doc Fritchey Trout Unlimited; Kent Crawford, longtime member of both DFTU and the QWA; and Rich DiStanislao, DFTU President. A copy of Rich's letter is pasted below:



Lebanon County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Robert J. Phillips
Commissioner Michael J. Kuhn
Commissioner Jo Ellen Litz
Room 207, Municipal Building
400 South 8th Street
Lebanon, PA 17042-6794

April 12, 2025

Dear Commissioners Kuhn, Litz, and Phillips,

On behalf of the Doc Fritchey chapter of Trout Unlimited, I wish to submit to you that our organization is very concerned regarding your consideration and provisional approval permitting the land development of a 17 acre parcel of land in South Lebanon Township by the Altoona-based real estate developer Bruce Thaler of BT Lebanon County LLC, as described in the LebTown article on April 7, 2025, <https://lebtown.com/2025/04/07/commissioners-tentatively-agree-to-sell-s-lebanon-twp-parcel-to-developer/>

According to the article, "County administrator Jamie Wolgemuth told LebTown on Friday that six of the 17 acres encompasses the wetland" that forms the headwaters of Quittapahilla Creek.

Over the past several years, our organization has made considerable investment in the development of the watershed of the Quittapahilla Creek, seeking to improve the entire area for conservation and recreation. The headwaters of Quittapahilla Creek, where the proposed land development would take place, controls the runoff and flow of all areas downstream. The development of hard, non-permeable surfaces (buildings and in-roads, parking lots, etc.) along these wetland areas will increase the likelihood of flooding and erosion along the entire length of the watershed, threatening business owners, downstream landowners and other developed project areas. This type of flooding has been witnessed in the past, and recent improvements have been made with careful consideration to help prevent these potentially destructive events. Given the work already done and the reasons for it, this proposed project is not a sound investment.

Certainly, we would expect that any developer would be required to follow the accepted laws for wetland development, but the crux of the issue is that this type of real estate development is not an appropriate action for the wetlands to begin with. Construction of

roads, buildings and parking areas that would see heavy vehicle traffic cannot compare with the development of a pastoral setting (like a golf course) in a wetland area. We urge you to please reconsider selling this property for this type of development. We hope that after further discussion and insights, your final decision will be to halt the selling of the property for this venture.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. DiStanislao

President, Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited

On April 23, the Lebanon Daily News ran a front-page story on the issue (in the print copy of the newspaper, with the same language published online on April 21):

Residents voice concerns about Quittie wetlands future in S. Lebanon Twp. parcel sale

**Matthew Toth, Lebanon Daily News
April 21, 2025**

Residents raised concerns about Lebanon County Commissioners' recent sale of county-owned land in South Lebanon Township, which includes a portion of wetlands for the Quittaphilla Creek.

During the commissioners' meeting April 17, several residents voiced concerns the impact of selling the wetlands could have in the Lebanon County community. Commissioners recently approved an agreement of sale of 17 acres near the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Driver License Center at 900 E. Old Cumberland St.

Michael Schroeder, president of the Quittaphilla Watershed Association, on Thursday said the organization strongly urged commissioners to reconsider the provisional agreement.

"We are greatly concerned about the environmental impact of development on this site, mainly because the wetland in question forms the headwater of Quittaphilla Creek and acts as a giant sponge during high rain events," he said to commissioners. "It's crucial to the health of the Quittie's ecosystem and minimizing the odds of destructive flooding and property damage downstream."



Residents raised concerns about Lebanon County Commissioners recent sale of 17 acres of county-owned land in South Lebanon Township, which includes a portion of wetlands for the Quittapahilla Creek. Matthew Toth.

Richard DiStanislao, president of Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited, said that any development along the headwaters of Quittapahilla Creek will increase the flow that is going downstream.

"To increase the flow and potential for stormwater damage by developing the headwaters is going to do unknown damage, but we have not seen any study," he said.

In a 2-1 vote April 3, commissioners approved a potential agreement of sale to potentially sell 17 acres of county land with Bruce Thaler, owner of Aspen Hill Partners and the principal of BT Management Group. Commissioner Jo Ellen Litz voted against the agreement, citing concerns about the wetlands.

The initial sales agreement includes a payment of \$25,000 in the first year, with an additional payment the second year to consider purchasing the land. Officials said the property total will cost \$2 million.

"If at the end of two years Mr. Thaler has not completed his due diligence, requirements from PennDOT, requirements from the state, etc., then he will come back negotiate with the county," county solicitor Matt Bugli said.

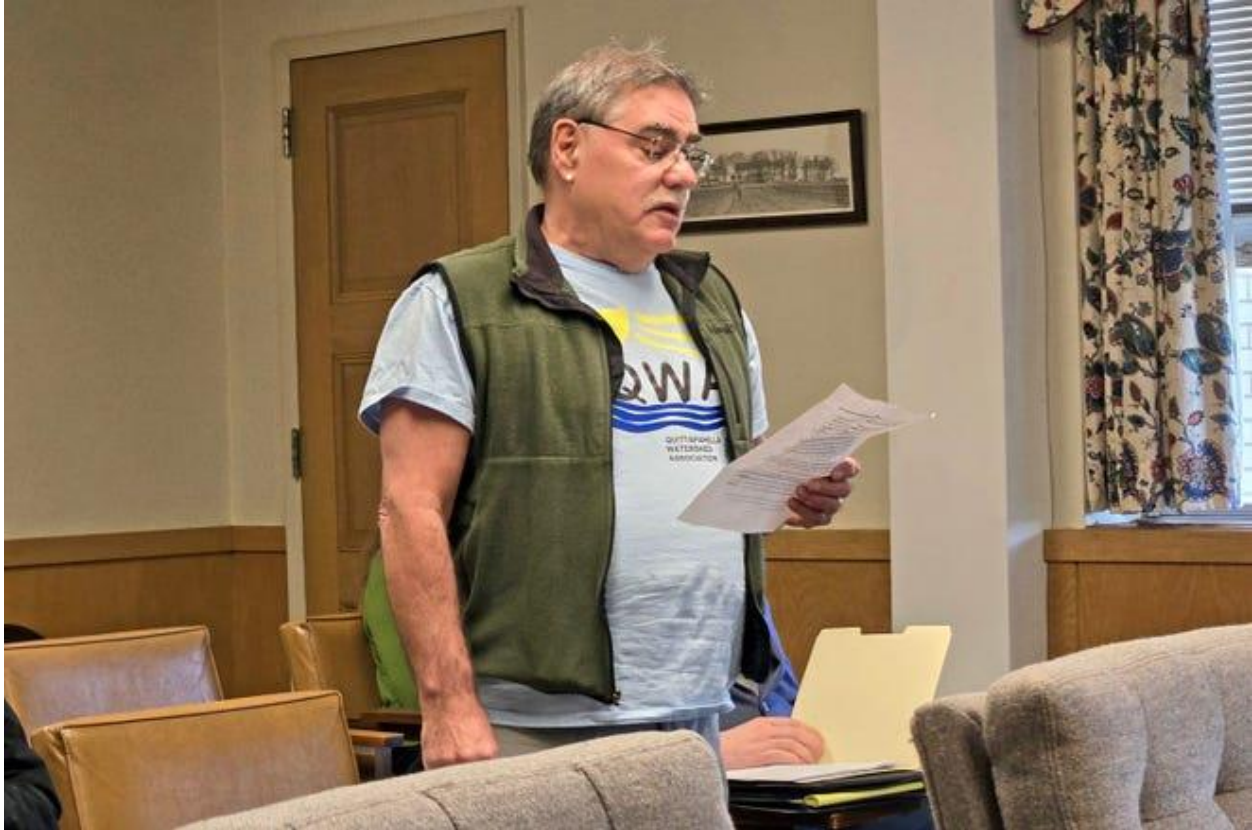
In December 2022, commissioners sold more than four acres of commercial land at 860 E. Old Cumberland St. to Aspen Hill Partners for \$770,000. This property, which developers started negotiating for in 2016, would connect with the 17 acres Thaler is looking to purchase.

While there has been no official announcement what the property will be used for once the sale has been finalized, the Altoona-based company has developed several Sheetz stores in the Lebanon County area.

During the meeting Thursday, Quittapahilla Watershed Association asked commissioners to delay any final sale of the 17 acres, which include the wetlands, until the environmental impact of any future development can be researched, investigated and be made public. The organization's requests also included to be part of meetings for sale of the property, and that the developer submit detailed plans to the county that include stormwater management.

Schroeder said any development in this "environmentally sensitive and critically important" wetland must be done with utmost care.

"We urge you to consider the question 'Does Lebanon County really need another Sheetz?'" he said. "How many Sheetz, how many Rutter's can you squeeze into one county?"



Michael Schroeder, president of the Quittaphilla Watershed Association, told commissioners on April 17 that residents were concerned about the environmental impacts development on the Quittie wetlands could have in Lebanon County. Matthew Toth

Speaking with the Lebanon Daily News before the April 17 meeting, Bugli said that Thaler and his companies would have to adhere to the same environmental regulations regarding the wetlands that the county would have to follow.

"The wetlands and the Quittie would go through his property, however to the extent that he would want to have any development ... he would have to comply with DEP, EPA and local ordinance regulations," he said.

No official action about the sale was taken during the commissioners' meeting April 17, but Chairman Michael Kuhn told residents that the board shared their concerns about the future of the Quittaphilla Creek and the wetlands.

The next regular meeting for the Lebanon County Commissioners is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. May 1.

Images of the print version of front-page LDN article appear below:

... morning showpieces that allow you to enjoy the outdoors in the comfort of your own home! *Hurry - offer expires 3/31/2025.

Lebanon Daily News

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025 | LDNEWS.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Residents worried for Quittie wetlands future



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MATTHEW TOTH/LEBANON DAILY NEWS

County-owned land in South Lebanon Township sold

Matthew Toth Lebanon Daily News | USA TODAY NETWORK - PENNSYLVANIA

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Michael Schroeder
president of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association

See WETLANDS, Page 2A

Cardinal's final farewells

Thao Nguyen
USA TODAY

Pope Francis, 88, died at 10 a.m. local time in the Vatican. The pope's death was announced by the Vatican on Saturday. Francis, 88, died of natural causes, the Vatican said. He had been suffering from a long illness. His death was the first of a pope since the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005. The pope's death was announced by the Vatican on Saturday. Francis, 88, died of natural causes, the Vatican said. He had been suffering from a long illness. His death was the first of a pope since the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005.

Wetlands

Continued from Page 1A

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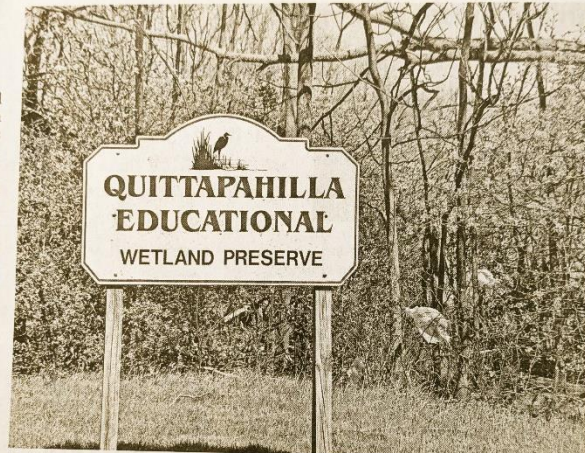
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"The wetlands and the Quittie would go through his property, however to the extent that he would want to have any development ... he would have to comply with DEP, EPA and local ordinance regulations," he said.

No official action about the sale was taken during the commissioners' meeting April 17, but Chairman Michael Kuhn told residents that the board shared their concerns about the future of the Quittaphilla Creek and the wetlands.

The next regular meeting for the Lebanon County Commissioners is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. May 1.

Matthew Toth is a reporter for the Lebanon Daily News. Reach him at mtoth@ldnews.com or on X at @DAMattToth.

In addition, LebTown published an article, "Conservationists address commissioners on county sale of wetlands to developer" by reporter Chris Coyle on April 21, 2025, updated May 4, at <https://lebtown.com/2025/04/21/conservationists-address-commissioners-on-county-sale-of-wetlands-to-developer/>

The story is available free online and includes this image and caption:



This map shows in the blue area the 17 acres of county-owned land that is tentatively being sold to an Altoona-based real estate developer. The developer had previously purchased the 3.71-acre parcel at the corner of East Walnut and East Cumberland streets. (James Mentzer)

In addition, the following documents from 2016-2017 with useful background information on this still-unfolding story were provided to the QWA by staff in the county commissioners office:

Lebanon County-owned land sold for \$700K

June 3, 2016 at 11:03 AM

An Altoona development company has agreed to pay Lebanon County \$700,000 for a 4.25-acre parcel in South Lebanon Township, but hasn't revealed any plans for it.

According to a sale agreement, BT Management LLC will buy the county-owned land at East Walnut Street (Route 422) and Metro Drive.

The company also will have a nine-month period of due diligence to investigate development possibilities and obtain building permits.

Related Stories

Stats show region is dominant logistics hub Logistics firm DRT adding trailers DEP extends comment period for permits related to Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline

Lebanon County Chief Clerk Jamie Wolgemuth said a company representative at Thursday's meeting of the Lebanon County commissioners did not disclose what the land might be used for. The property is in a busy business district across from a Home Depot, a Wells Fargo Bank branch, a Burger King and a Pizza Hut.

The property is part of a 13-acre parcel owned by the county, but the developer will pay to subdivide the 4.25 acres it purchased, Wolgemuth said.


A portion of the remaining county land houses a wetlands that is part of the headwaters of the Quittapahilla Creek. At the urging of Commissioner Jo Ellen Litz, Wolgemuth said the developer committed \$8,000 on top of the sale price to conserve the wetlands from future development.

The agreement also includes a \$5,000 deposit paid to the county for the nine-month due diligence period. Half would be refundable if the developer decides not to develop anything. There are four three-month extensions available if the due diligence takes longer.

The county has leased the land to a nearby farm for decades, Wolgemuth said, and the deed on the land goes back to the early 1800s.

Wolgemuth said there hasn't been any determination on what the county might do with the money.

Lebanon County agrees to \$700K commercial land sale

 John Latimer, johnlatimer@ldnews.com 5:13 p.m. EDT June 2, 2016

Aspen Hills Partners approached the county with offer for the 4.5 acre parcel in South Lebanon Township



Buy Photo

(Photo: John Latimer, Lebanon Daily News) **Buy Photo**

Story Highlights

- Aspen Hill Partners is paying \$700,000 to purchase 4.5 acres of county-owned land
- The land is near East Walnut and East Cumberland streets, near the PennDOT Drivers Center
- The land will be developed into a commercial property, although who will occupy it was not announced
- The deal is contingent on Aspen Hills getting the proper permitting approved

"The offer is in excess of the appraised value of the property, that really is to compensate for these sorts of things. That was our intention, anyway," he said. "Normally, we have the seller pay for largely all of the broker's commission."

"We are offering more than the assessed value of the land. We did that to cover certain costs like this."

The high traffic in the area, which is along Route 422 near several other commercial properties, attracted the company, Mandel said.



An Altoona real estate development company is purchasing this 4.5-acre parcel of land at the corner of East Cumberland and East Walnut streets, which can be seen in the rear. (Photo: John Latimer, Lebanon Daily News)

"There is likely to be significant offsite attention paid because it is a congested area and because it sits on a corner with some, let's say, unusual traffic patterns," he said. "That's actually part of what attracted us to this property: the opportunity to redevelop it."

The project will be a commercial development, said Mandel, but he could not provide further details on what would open their until the deal was finalized. The company has developed many commercial sites, he said, including Sheetz and Five Guys at Route 72 and Rocherty Road in North Cornwall Township.



Lebanon County Commissioners

Room 207, Municipal Building • 400 South Eighth Street • Lebanon, Pennsylvania 17042-6794
Phone: 717-228-4427 • Fax: 717-274-8094 • Website: www.lebcounty.org

Robert J. Phillips
William E. Ames
Jo Ellen Litz
County Commissioners

Jamie A. Wolgemuth
Chief Clerk/County Administrator
David R. Warner, Jr.
County Solicitor

May 18, 2017

Mark Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Mr. Smith,

We are writing to you in support of a real estate development project in Lebanon County. Legislative analysis on this project may have already reached your office.

If not, let us briefly outline. Aspen Hill Partners, LLC has recently agreed terms with the County of Lebanon to redevelop county-owned vacant land at the corner of E Walnut St and E Old Cumberland St (together Rt 422). As part of this project, the developer is working with PennDOT and the Department of General Services (DGS) to acquire the adjacent property, which is owned by the Commonwealth and occupied by a Driver License Center.

This plan has been designed in consultation with DGS and is supported by the Bureau of Driver Licensing. We understand that the conveyance of the Commonwealth property is currently making its way through the legislative process, and is currently sitting with a number of departments, including yours. We are hoping for it to be before the Governor for signature by the end of the current legislative session (late June 2017). PennDOT and DGS have already signed off on making this a priority and are waiting for the requisite approvals and signatures from Treasury and others.

The Commissioners of Lebanon County would like you and Governor Wolf to know that we are in full support of this project as it will lead to many long-term benefits for Lebanon County, South Lebanon Township, and the local community.

Here we highlight the most prominent benefit areas:

- 1) *Improving the safety and convenience of access to the site and intersections off-site*
The proposed development incorporates significant on and off-site improvements to access and intersections. The Driver License Center property, being directly in front of one of these intersections, is a key element of improving the off-site access and traffic situation. When completed, access to the development, which will include the new and improved Driver License Center, will be simpler, safer, and more convenient for customers.

Additionally, this would contribute to improvements to both the signalized intersection on Rt 422 (E Old Cumberland St) and the un-signalized intersection where Rt 422 splits (E Walnut St). This area has been identified by Lebanon County and PennDOT as a high priority for safety improvements, and they are interested in addressing these improvements as part of this development.

Mark Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor
May 18, 2017
Page 2

2) *Increasing the tax base*

The proposed development will convert up to 10 acres of county and Commonwealth property to commercially taxable property. The County and the Township welcomes this tax revenue. In addition, there is demand for commercial services in this area and the developer has several high-quality tenants already lined up for this project.

3) *Improving and upgrading the Driver License Center*

This project could also be a catalyst for improving the Driver License Center. It could:

- Be bigger and provide for more capacity
- Include more parking
- Be upgraded to a CDL Skills A center
- Not require any relocation
- Continue operations during construction

4) *Creating new jobs*

Including the upgraded driver's center, there will be at least four new businesses in this development, which we expect will create approximately 100 new long term jobs including several management positions. The construction of this development will also create dozens of temporary construction, engineering, and design jobs that could last 1-2 years.

5) *Assisting the County in protecting the wetlands near the project*

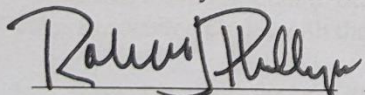
The developer has agreed to contribute financially to a conservation easement over nearby county-owned wetlands in the Quittapahilla Creek watershed.

In summary, we would like to join the other sponsors of this project in expressing our support. We would kindly request that you and Governor Wolf act as quickly as possible on this legislation when it reaches your office.

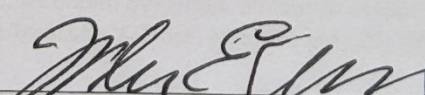
We stand ready to assist you in seeing this through to a successful conclusion.

Sincerely,

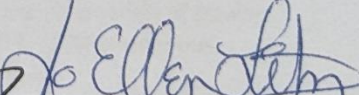
Lebanon County Commissioners



Robert J. Phillips
Chairman



William E. Ames
Vice Chairman



Jo Ellen Litz
Secretary

pc: Senator Mike Folmer
Representative Russ Diamond
Representative Frank Ryan
Representative Susan Helm
Julie Cheyney, Lebanon County Planning Director
David Warner, County Solicitor

Thursday, June 2, 2016 9:30 a.m.

The regular meeting of the County Commissioners was held today, all members present. Comm. Phillips participated via telephone. Comm. Ames, presiding.

The meeting opened with Observance of a Moment of Silence and the Pledge to the Flag.

The Commissioners asked for public comment. LTC Dale Waltman, Directorate of Personnel and Community Activities at Fort Indiantown Gap (FIG), National Guard Training Center, Annville, PA, presented an update of training, activities and events taking place at FITG. Colonel Waltman also stated that FIG will close ten (10) roads providing access to the base. Gates at the roads will be installed to increase security. The closures are a part of the 2012 access control plan and the 2015 Joint Land Use Study.

It was moved by Comm. Litz, seconded by Comm. Phillips to approve the minutes from the workshop held May 18th and the May 19th, 2016 meeting. Vote unanimous.

Sallie Neuin, Lebanon County Treasurer, met with the Commissioners to present the weekly Treasurer's report for consideration.

It was moved by Comm. Litz, seconded by Comm. Phillips to approve the Treasurer's report as read with expenditures in the amount of \$2,143,875.36. The gross payroll of May 26, 2016 was in the amount of \$981,500.59. Vote unanimous.

Treasurer Neuin announced that during the week of June 6th, Dog Wardens will canvass homes throughout the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's region jurisdiction of Lebanon County, to ensure all dog owners have current licenses and rabies vaccinations for their dogs.

Jamie Wolgemuth, Chief Clerk/County Administrator, presented the weekly personnel transactions and conference/seminar requests for consideration.

It was moved by Comm. Litz, seconded by Comm. Phillips to accept the resignation of Amiee Bean, Telecommunicator with Emergency Management Agency, effective June 4, 2016. Vote unanimous.

It was moved by Comm. Litz, seconded by Comm. Phillips to accept the resignation of Dawnn Klopp, Accounting Clerk C with the Treasurer's Office, effective May 25, 2016. Vote unanimous.

It was moved by Comm. Litz, seconded by Comm. Phillips to accept the resignation of Tiffany Sheetz, Correctional Officer (ft) with the Correctional Facility, effective May 16, 2016. Vote unanimous.

It was moved by Comm. Litz, seconded by Comm. Phillips to accept the resignation of Matthew Leshner, Correctional Officer (pt) with the Correctional Facility, effective June 10, 2016. Vote unanimous.

John Wilson, Director of Lebanon County Emergency Management Agency, met with the Commissioners to present the FY 2016 Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) federal funding grant application request for consideration.

It was moved by Comm. Litz, seconded by Comm. Phillips to approve the submission of the federal funding grant application request for the FY 2016 Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program for Emergency Management Agency (EMA) in the project cost amount of \$56,300 (75% federal, \$42,225 – Local \$14,075). The PDM funds are designed to reduce the risk to individuals and property from natural hazards, while also reducing reliance on Federal funding from future disasters. This PDM program strengthens National Preparedness and Resilience and supports the national preparedness goal of mitigation.

Justin Mandel, Director of Development at Aspen Hill Partners LLC Representative of Aspen Hill Partners, B T Group LLP, 116 Union Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602, Real Estate Agents and Managers, met with the Commissioners to present a proposal to purchase county owned property. The sale of the land is contingent on the company obtaining the proper permitting. The company will put in trust \$5,000 that will secure nine months of time to get the necessary building and land-development approvals.

It was moved by Comm. Phillips, seconded by Comm. Litz to enter into an Agreement of Sale by and between the County of Lebanon and BT Management, LLC, Altoona, PA, for the purchase of a 4.5 acre county-owned certain parcel or tract of land located at the corner of Old Cumberland Street, E. Walnut Street, and Metro Drive in South Lebanon Township. The aggregate purchase price for the property shall be \$700,000.00. BT Management will also pay up to \$8,000 of the County's expense for the subdivision of the parcel from an adjacent wetlands area, pay for the engineering and deed work associated with making that a separate parcel in preparation for a conservation easement. Vote unanimous.

Jamie Wolgemuth, Chief Clerk/County Administrator along with Jay Wenger, Managing Director of Susquehanna Group Advisors, Financial Advisor for Lebanon County, met with the Commissioners to present a recommendation for pension funding proposals.

It was moved by Comm. Phillips, seconded by Comm. Ames to authorize Jay Wenger of Susquehanna Group Advisors to proceed, with the process of seeking Request for Proposals from area banks for terms of a loan to fund the Pension Fund deficit of approximately \$24,000,000. The County has the right to reject any and all offers and to award the bid in the best interest of the County of Lebanon. Comm. Phillips and Comm. Ames voted "Aye". Comm. Litz voted "Nay". Motion carried.

Commissioner Litz read a statement concerning Pension Obligation Bonds and how that they post a serious risk and is a lousy public policy. She also read warning from Moody's a credit rating firm, and a quote from a Richard Dreyfuss concerning the risk involved.

Jamie Wolgemuth, Chief Clerk/County Administrator, presented the following items for consideration.