

Public Comment for Special Conewago Supervisors'-Re-Zoning Hearing on Wednesday, August 12, 2020

To Whom It May Concern and Supervisors:

From: Ellen Ryan 36 Franklin Drive McSherrystown, PA 17344 – Conewago Township Resident

RE: Comments:

“We must not only protect the countryside and save it from destruction; we must restore what has been destroyed and salvage the beauty and charm of our cities. (Boroughs, Townships, Hamlets) Once our natural splendor is destroyed, it can never be recaptured. And once a man can no longer walk with beauty or wonder with nature, his spirit will wither and his sustenance is wasted...” Lyndon B. Johnson (36th U.S. President

1. **None of my comments are meant to demean or criticize the hard-working staff** at the Township or the Board of Supervisors or the Planning Commission and other Board members in anyway. **The issue lies with the Governor’s Executive inconsistent and ever-changing orders that have created hardships and handicaps under extraordinary difficult circumstances.**
2. **Essentially, the restriction to the right to freely assemble is paralyzing citizen participation and access to government. This is highly discriminatory and violates due process of the citizens. This is a Constitutional Crisis that cannot be ignored. The Constitution may never be suspended even in an emergency or crisis. It is unreasonable to shut down a state for a virus that has fatally impacted 1/1000 of 1% of the Commonwealth’s almost 13 million people. Shutting down is not sustainable. It is suicidal.**
3. **While municipalities are using Zoom, teleconference calls, or Microsoft Teams, these platforms pose many issues and numerous limitations and discrimination. Distance government meetings have serious limitations.**

Continuing to conduct these meetings under these chaotic circumstances is not reasonable. They are discriminatory and everyone is entitled to equal protection under the law and due process. At this time participation is very burdensome and many are unable to participate because of other obligations. The Township website changed and many citizens could not access the site. Most citizens are trying to take care of their families and many have lost employment and as much as 60% of businesses may never open their doors again. Navigating the new Abnormal is burdensome. This is a government for the people and by the people.

I urge you to support planning, & zoning ordinances protecting and preserving all the agricultural lands in the Township. If that means reversing erroneous zoning ordinances or plans, you must be compelled to do so.

Overdevelopment and urban sprawl can damage our own lives as much as they damage our cities and countryside” Tony Hiss

“The soil is the greatest connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrect or, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care of it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we have no life.” Wendell Berry, The Unsettling of America in Culture and Agriculture.

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Additionally, according to the PA Constitution, the people have a right to clean air, pure water and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Article 1, Section 27/PA Constitution. Any and all development of Agricultural lands violates the PA Constitution.

Every elected official and every appointed one must protect and defend the US & PA Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic. Unfortunately, previous boards gave wavers to property owners to develop on rich agricultural lands. Those decisions must be revoked because the **Township has achieved its residential capacity**. Instead of land development, the Township needs to wholeheartedly **embrace land preservation for agriculture and forests**.

I respectfully ask the Board of Supervisors to pause, **reflect and study the adverse consequences that will occur if new residential subdivisions of any kind are developed**. Capacity does matter and Covid demonstrated that there were more **Covid cases in highly populated areas than in lower populated area such as Conewago**.

COVID has taught us many things and one is **local matters**. **Locally grown food** from local farms are **more critical than ever**. We learned early on that supply trucks were experiencing all kinds of challenges. So, **transporting needed supplies long distances is risky and uncertain**. Communities must have Emergency Plans and a **local food supply** needs to be part of that. Farm lands are disappearing at alarming rates and Farm land is only 2% of the land worldwide, and **PA is home to the richest soil in the world**. It is **immoral to continue to bulldoze it as Food Security remains not only a local issue, but a national security issue as well**.

The Township staff is overwhelmed now trying to adapt to the new abnormal. Please **think about the countless adverse consequences of doubling and tripling the population**. Believe me bigger is never better. Over populated **over developed communities eventually become uninhabitable**.

Growth never pays for itself. The only **beneficiaries are the builders and developers** who usually leave the area for less densely populated communities. **Smart Growth really means URBAN SPRAWL**. "*Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.*" Edward Abbey

Do you want this area to experience **the adverse realities** that go along with urban life such as: more **crime, higher taxes to pay for emergency services, police, bigger municipal township buildings, more schools, more buses, more road maintenance, sewer and storm water management issues, water and air pollution and so much more?**

Developers never stop developing and they are always requesting zoning changes and wavers. Just look at **Baltimore, Washington D.C. NY, Philadelphia, Detroit, Miami, Atlanta**, these regions **once looked like scenic Conewago and Adams County**. In addition, **Developers often do not correct errors**. Countless complaints continue against local builders for not paving roads and for not turning over roads to the local municipalities.

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Developers never conduct sufficient traffic, environmental studies, sink hole, air and water quality studies and Townships and Boroughs often fail to request them. Developers and Builders often build on lands prone to sink holes, wetlands and in flood zones and they usually never disclose this to the potential property owners. Essentially, county comprehensive master plans **which are only a guide** may be the enemy of the municipalities in a county.

Local, out of town, foreign investors and developers *never fully pay for their developments* and the **taxpayers are hijacked** and forced to pay for the costs of growth including roads, parks, schools, police, fire, rescue, hospitals, and developer's failure to provide parking spaces, and lack of planning for water and sewer capacities. Water and Air Quality and Public Health are never considered.

Senior Citizens and many other property owners lose their homes every year because of school property tax and township tax hikes. Profit is usually the investors and developers only motive.

Citizens must remind the elected Board of Supervisors that the buck stops with you and you have the power and the authority to reverse zoning that adversely impacts and overwhelms the community.

Elected Supervisors have the **moral authority to protect the community from adverse consequences of poor land use and zoning decisions.**

PA has been under emergency orders since March and now the Big Ten have postponed their football season, kids still will not attend in-person school five days a week. Parents have to adjust, work from home and teach their kids. Municipalities and school districts are overwhelmed trying to conduct business under these conditions. This is not normal.

So, now every land owner wants to bulldoze and develop at neck breaking speeds by taking advantage of the citizens very limited rights to peacefully assemble. Distance and remote government have limitations and it severely limits citizens due process. Under normal circumstances, not all property owners may attend township meetings, now, it is more burdensome. And the change in the Township's website from ending in .org. to .us remains an issue.

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Developers and land owners need to have a Plan B. Land is the golden goose. Grow crops, plant trees, renovate and restore existing vacant and blighted properties. **This is not the time to expand. Up to 60% of businesses may never open because of the COVID shutdowns. Municipalities and school districts will face extraordinary revenue shortfalls. The Market may crash. Many people are unemployed and many are not receiving the unemployment benefits promised.**

How you vote will have lasting impact on the future of this community. Capacity matters more now than ever.

WHAT HAPPENED?

The Attorney for Racehorse asks what happened? He states that one Supervisor has a political agenda and asked, Why the change? Everything has changed. **There was a change of leadership in the Township after the matter was appealed to the Adams County Court of Common Pleas in March 2020. The Court appointed two new supervisors based on the citizen petitions submitted to the court.** The matter is rather complex and way to lengthy to discuss here.

After zoning changes appeared to be rushed through on the properties being discussed in August 2019, citizens felt betrayed. Township residents in Conewago showed up at the meetings before the zoning change and after the change because **they adamantly opposed the zoning changes of large tracts of farm lands from rural agriculture to residential.**

They voted for change in the November 2019 General Election because they want to preserve the rural areas and historic sites in the Township. **They found two candidates who ran as Write –In Candidates because the citizens wanted to unseat the two supervisors who had been appointed by the board in January 2019.**

Many residents understand that large developments will **destroy** the character of the rural area, **overwhelm** existing infrastructure, **create hazards**, and most importantly will **raise** the school property **taxes**, county taxes and the Township's Taxes and water and sewer **fees**.

Citizens used the ballot box to remove Supervisors who were deaf to their demands to preservation of agricultural lands in the township. The citizens **made their voices heard** by voting against the incumbent appointees in the Primary Election in May 2019, and a second time in the November 2019 General Election by voting for **their Write-in Choices**. The incumbent appointees lost the WRITE IN Count to the other two Write in Candidates who received more votes. **Why? Citizens went to the polls, filled out the ballot, wrote in their Write in Candidates because they wanted a change in the status quo.** Through the **ballot box** and some **intervention from the Court of Common Peas**, the Township has **new leadership**. Why were citizens supporting the candidates to run as write ins?

Why did citizens want to change the status quo?

The Citizens wanted to protect the township from endless, overdevelopment, unsustainable growth and eventual urban sprawl. **Citizens wanted the write-in candidates to explore a moratorium on building.** Citizens want more input into the laws that impact their communities and they want the state to have more transparency and Citizens want to exercise their Right to Know what is happening in Harrisburg and Adams County. Furthermore, **citizens want bold leaders who will lobby state legislators to change egregious laws that favor developers over communities and citizens.** Citizens do not want Harrisburg and Adams County deciding Conewago's fate.

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- **They wanted the write-in candidates to reverse the zoning change that took place last year.**
- **The Supervisor who won the Write-in votes and was eventually appointed by the Court of Common Pleas who is accused of having an agenda is trying to full fill the requests and will of the people.**
- Citizens also had the perception that the Township Manager had been given too much authority with little or no oversight from the Board of Supervisors.
- When the Township Manager was present at many meetings, the Supervisors rarely asked any questions and rarely tabled any agenda items and voted on most everything without any discussions. The Manger promoted lowering impact fees to attract more development. Citizens want the Supervisors to raise the fees to protect the Township from unsustainable overdevelopment, higher taxes, and urban sprawl.
- Citizens wanted more transparency
- Citizens wanted all documents associated with agenda items posted on the Township websites
- Citizens want all meeting video taped and archived on the Township Website
- **Citizens want Public Notices to be more inclusive and to go beyond the letter of the law.**
- Citizens want Public Notices to be posted on the Website, Facebook and inserts in the Merchandiser to reach citizens who do not use internet or have the comfort skill to do use computers and other hand held devices.
- **Citizens want the Township to use multiple methods to reach the citizens about the work of the Township**
- Citizens want the Township to adopt emerging technologies to improve transparency and efficiency, such as Diligent and Swagit, Reminder Apps, Phone Reach system messaging to send text messages and phone calls to the community when an emergency or important meeting is scheduled.
- Citizens want the Township to allocate for the emerging technologies in the upcoming budget
- Citizens want the preliminary, proposed budget posted online for citizen review and input
- Citizens want the budget to include charts, graphs, and narratives about expenditures
- Citizens do not want to see miscellaneous used to identify anything in a budget
- **The citizens wanted more accountability from the elected Board of Supervisors.**
- **Citizens want every elected official to represent their constituents, not the out of town developers, builders, county and state bureaucrats and companies who make deals behind closed doors and ignore the wishes of the residents of the community.**
- **Citizens want the elected officials to notice the erroneous land use development and zoning decisions made by nearby Hanover and the citizens do not want the Supervisors to make the same mistakes that are now blight and dying and vacant properties. Citizens want the Supervisors to remember that the failing North Hanover Mall was once pristine, rich farmland. Now it is almost empty.**

“Whenever we make changes in our surroundings, we can too easily shortchange ourselves, by cutting ourselves off from some of the sights and sounds, the shapes or textures, or other information from a place that have helped mold our understanding and are now necessary for us to thrive.”

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Citizens want Supervisors to consider Black Swan events that impact communities.

What is a Black Swan?

A black swan is an unpredictable event that is beyond what is normally expected of a situation and has potentially severe consequences. Black swan events are characterized by their extreme rarity, their severe impact, and the widespread insistence they were obvious in hindsight. **COVID -19 is the Black Swan of 2020. A market crash could be another one.**

- A black swan is an extremely rare event with severe consequences. It cannot be predicted beforehand, though some claim it should be predictable after the fact.
- Black swan events can cause catastrophic damage to an economy, and because they cannot be predicted, can only be prepared for by building robust systems

Life in Overcrowded, overdeveloped areas is very difficult during emergencies - This is a sample of what happened last week in Nassau County, Long Island New York. This is a very expensive area to live. **Close to a half-a-million people have been impacted and have not had power for over a week and full power has not been restored as of today, August 12th.** No phones, no AC. Residents often have to move, even though, homes are paid off because of rising school property taxes. Here are a few posts from Social Media. The car crash is common on LI parkways. Upper Brookville is part of the Gold Coast and this is a very pricey place to live. Homes are millions of dollars. Everyone is affected. This was a very rich county. Now, there are homeless people sleeping in Train stations and hang out in the public libraries during the winter months. A popular agenda item in many HOA Home Owner's Association is the car break-ins at the Train Station, robberies, an day time burglaries in the subdivisions and town homes near the train stations. These are not slum neighborhoods. High Density brings crime to everyone.

State police say the four people in the Ford were taken to the hospital with one having serious injuries. They say everyone is expected to survive.



Canon Lane in Upper Brookville has down power lines and tree blocking in 2 houses. These 2 houses have NO emergency vehicle access. That means if we have an emergency no Ambulance, Fire Truck or Police can reach us!! No work has started. #PSEG cant even tell me whether or not they have even accessed these life safety conditions we have here yet.



A Shining Beacon of Hope! Thank you Michigan lineman for doing what PSEG couldn't.



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UPDATE: Thank you for your patience as we continue working as safely and quickly as possible to restore power. Due to the extended power outage, we have opened seven customer outreach centers, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. (or while supplies last), providing customers with free water and ice.

- * Patchogue - 460 E Main St
- * Brentwood - 1650 Islip Ave
- * Greenlawn - 288 Pulaski Rd ... See More



Monday, August 10, 2020 NW Baltimore Gas Line Explosion

Facebook Comments from an over develop, highly densely populated area on PSEG Power Company's Facebook page.

People have been without power for over a week and today is August 12th 2020. **See how it feels to live in a place that has permitted unsustainable growth. Capacity matters. Total Chaos occurs when a Black Swan event, such as a Tropical storm where the winds take out the power lines.** Predictable, yes. Prepared for, no. Profit only matters. **Accountability matters** and citizens must demand it from those we elect. This is what uninhabitable looks like, but it can get worse. No looting reported so far. No drive by shootings, No home invasions. In Florida, that does happen when the power goes out. In rural places, citizens defend the community with their shotguns and such. But, in NY, people think guns are not necessary. Maybe, they will now.

Just got my power back this morning. Absolutely disgraceful. We should not forgive and forget this atrocity when we get power back. This will not change for the next storm. This weekend I will be writing letters to all our people in legislation. PSEG needs to be removed and replaced immediately.

Changing companies won't help
They need to bury the wires
I spoke to my neighborhood council and they told me they can not bury the wires because it's too expensive.
They have to bury the wires we don't care how much it costs
They have to modernize
We pay high taxes and electric bills
Many of us work from home
Our livelihood is dependent on having a consistent and continuous source of power.

Ellen Briggs not a company that's publicly traded and cares more about profits and shareholders than the people they are supposed to service. PSEG replaced National Grid because NG response to Sandy was appalling. PSEG is the same. I am not accepting mediocre (actually worse) for such a critical utility - not for the rates we pay. I am sure there is a company that's ready and waiting that can do better. We need to demand it.

We need to file a class action lawsuit against this company. Who is interested in joining?

7 Days still waiting ... ice and water 6 days too late. And if I didn't search the page I never would have known. PSEG you SUCK big time. I'll pay the bill on 8/12 @ 11:30 ... no 8/13 @ 10:15 ... no 8/14 by 12:00 ... maybe 8/15 by 9:00 pm , remember these dates are only estimates.

🙄 Are we expecting anymore wind? We are not worried about hurricanes anymore with PSEG's, we have to be worried about wind gusts. Your Powerlines are about to go down on Bagatelle. All of the overgrown brush and dead trees underneath, did you and the town of Huntington figure out who is responsible for clearing it yet? Or do we have to wait for another storm to put all of Long Island in the dark? Useless waste of our tax dollars. Power back finally yesterday thanks to ALL OUT OF STATE CREWS, kind, respectful, hard working men. God Bless them.

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PSEG just had a crew here from south. They were fantastic. Too bad they could not do their jobs because YOU dropped the ball!!! First no record of a ticket that I and my neighbors have been calling in for days. Then not being able to ground the wire so crews could safely work on the lines. Hazardous conditions still remain behind my home. You are disgraceful and your franchise should be revoked in NYS!

I am tired of being told by representatives with your company that we are having power restored that night and it doesn't happen. I have been hearing this since Friday night. In addition, a representative told me last night that it's "only" day 7 and that I clearly don't understand what an estimate is. An estimate is not 5-6 days later after the first time being told I was supposed to get power. This is ridiculous. Especially when we are told that it's an easy fix and we had 2 crews on our street who fixed 2/3rds of our street but not the rest

Lynnet Urive, New Mill Road, Mark Urive, Larkspur, Kingfisher, Thrush, Mallard Drive in Smithtown.
You had survey workers checking backyards on Friday. Downed wires, snapped lines, trees down. Notes made and work orders supposedly prepared. PSEG employee back today to do a survey. Told him PSEG did that on Friday and he responded there are no notes in the system stating that.
Out of state workers come into neighborhood and sit on the side of the road waiting for a PSEG rep to arrive and give them instructions. Homeowners approach workers asking questions. They feel terrible and have no answers because PSEG not on scene. Workers leave and stage in a parking lot away from houses because they feel terrible and embarrassed to continuing to be the bearer of bad news.
Two man crew from Kansas dispatched to home on New Mill Road this morning to fix wire. That was it. They were assigned one job in the neighborhood with over 200+ outages. They finished and left. Call to your service number to check on status. Told only 36 homes were out in the area. Yeah, you were only off by about 200.
What kind of incompetent organization are you running?
EPIC FAILURE!!!

My daughter has been out since Tuesday afternoon. Three children, 6 yr, 4 yr and 5 months. Every day the restoration time gets changed. Her home is uninhabitable. She had to leave LI to go to her sisters. Totally inexcusable and unacceptable people are forced to leave their homes due to incompetency.

Still out in North Syosset. DM's are unanswered, map shows crews working here....but I see with my own eyes that they in fact are not! The elderly, young children, and the sickly in my development are suffering. Get it back on!

Please tell me how an estimated restoration tike gets pushed back ONE FULL WEEK... Initial estimate was 8/5, current estimate as of this morning was pushed to tomorrow 8/12 at 3:15pm. There are down wires and not a single crew has come to assess despite being told "dispatched", "enroute" and "on location" Saturday when they completed our entire area. Are we allowed to do "an estimated bill payment" and pay you on whatever day we so choose without penalty? Because that's essentially what you've been doing with restoration times.

What about the \$500 in food I lost cause you guy's can't handle a band that came from a storm centered in Connecticut if Long Island were to ever get A direct hit from a hurricane that is a category 1,or 3 and it sits on Long Island for 24hours Long Island would be destroyed

Why isn't Cuomo doing anything?
Oh, that's right, he only cares about NYC.