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Route 381 residents seek public water in Wharton Township

By Josh Krysak, Herald-Standard
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WHARTON TWP. - After area residents requested the township's assistance in obtaining public water last month, the township supervisors Monday again heard public comments about public water from concerned residents.

Last month, Bud and Barb Eicher asked the supervisors to look into extending the current water project from the end of Hawes Road along Route 40 east to Route 381, where, they said, residents are in desperate need of water.

Monday, the Eichers again asked the township to explore options to bring water to residents along Route 381.

"We need water," Bud Eicher said. "Everybody is having a problem along Route 381."

Barb Eicher reiterated her husband's statements.

"We didn't want to sit back and do nothing while the water was coming all the way to Hawes Road," she said.

The Eichers told the board last month that they had met the National Pike Water Authority's feasibility requirements by getting a petition signed by at least 12 people, or 12 tap-ins, along the one-mile stretch that is without any public water supply.

This month the Eichers also had the chairman of the water authority, Richard Dennis, speak to the board about possible funding for the extension.

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Dennis told the board that the current phase of the water authority's project should be completed in the fall of 2003 with more than 16 miles of water line being installed.

Dennis said that the first phase of the project ends at Hawes Road and that bringing water past that point is going to be hard because, at this point, any additional phases of the project are speculative.

"There are a lot of problems with supplying water to Route 381," Dennis said.

He said that due to the length that an extension would have to travel along Route 40, it would make an extension more difficult to fund and install.

Dennis did note, however, that funding for such an extension could be available for the township through the Penn-Step program in which the Department of Environmental Protection provides grant money on a self-help basis.

Dennis said that the program provided \$14,000 to help fund an extension to the water line in Henry Clay Township.

Dennis also noted that the extension could be installed through volunteer labor, something that would cut costs by 30 to 70 percent.

Dennis told the supervisors that funding could also be available through the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority.

He told the township that Stewart Township recently received a \$500,000 grant from the authority for a water extension project.

"If we had that much money here for the National Pike Water Authority, we could put all these extensions in," Dennis said.

Dennis also told the township that currently the water authority is too busy with its current project to take any action for the Route 381 extension.

The supervisors agreed that the water issue is one that needs addressed, but said that with the current project stopping at Hawes road, about one-half mile south of Route 381, the township would have a hard time finding funding for an extension that has nothing to extend from. The supervisors said they would continue to explore the options for the public water extension.

The supervisors also conducted the following business:

- Approved a road occupancy permit for Nemaocolin Woodlands to install a driveway accessing Smith School Road and to put a water line across the road.
- Accepted the resignation of part-time police officer Chuck David.
- Held executive session to discuss the status of the tax assessment appeal by Nemaocolin Woodlands and to answer interrogatories regarding the petition to vacate Wyamps Gap Road. The supervisors also discussed in executive session an identifiable complaint about noise from fireworks and an identifiable complaint about a sewage violation in Deer Lake.

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