

QUITTAPAHILLA WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
Meeting Minutes
Virtually via Zoom
August 16, 2022

Present: Michael Schroeder, Bob Connell, Joseph Connor, Kent Crawford, Karen Feather, Bryan Hoffman, Kara Lubold, Barb Shreve, Scott Shreve, Courtney Reimann

The meeting opened at 7:01 p.m.

- 1. Welcome & Introductions.** With a several new faces in the meeting, including Kara Lubold, the new Executive Director at the Lebanon Valley Conservancy (TLVC) and Scott & Barb Shreve, the meeting opened with a warm welcome to all and a round of self-introductions.

- 2. Grant & Project Updates.**
 - A. Snitz Creek Project 18-19.** Mike reported on recent correspondence with Noel T. Mannion, Executive Vice President of Property Operations, National Realty & Development Corp., the company that manages the property on which the Lowe's store in North Cornwall Township sits. As reported in June, NRDC and the companies that own the property, GBR Lebanon Three LLC and Lebanon 10 Holdings LP, have refused to sign onto the project, and our goal is to persuade them to change their corporate minds. Mike also reported sending letters via email to Lowe's CEO Marvin Ellison (marvin.ellison@lowes.com) and to Lowe's public relations office (publicrelations@lowes.com). Both letters are reproduced in the appendix to these minutes. To date he has received no response from Lowe's, though he has received a response from Mr. Mannion at NRDC. Consensus was reached that we should bring North Cornwall Township public officials into the conversation and continue with our efforts to secure the property owner's permission to undertake this project.

 - B. Snitz Creek Project 4.** Mike reported that the QWA's proposal to PA-DEP's Growing Greener Plus Program, prepared by Rocky Powell of Clear Creeks Consulting, was successfully submitted before the June 24 deadline. The full proposal is housed on the Studies & Documents page of the QWA website.

- 3. Monitoring Program Update.** Kent reported that it has been a busy past few weeks for our restarted Monitoring Program. Last week, on Mon. Aug. 8, Kent again offered his Zoom PowerPoint presentation on Streamflow Monitoring. That presentation, along with the first version offered in November 2021, is accessible from the QWA website under the Monitoring tab, with both presentations available as YouTube videos. The November 2021 video is here: <https://youtu.be/1Xu7D7Nn4ZQ>, and the August 2022 video is here: <https://youtu.be/0h0589qi9PU>.

Then on Tues. Aug. 9 and Thurs. Aug. 11, two teams of volunteers undertook streamflow measurements in four of our six monitoring stations, replacing the batteries in the pressure transducers and extracting data from them. On Tues. Aug. 9, volunteers took measurements on the Quittie mainstem at S. Garfield St. in Cleona. On Thurs. Aug. 11, the work continued on Killinger Creek at Killinger Rd.; on Bachman Run at Louser Rd.; and on Beck Creek at Bricker Lane. The volunteers were Kent Crawford, Gary Zelinske, Howard “Willie” Bixler, Bob Connell, and Michael Schroeder.

Kent also reported an upcoming training session in the Ecology Lab (room 142) of the Neidig-Garber Science Bldg. at Lebanon Valley College starting 2 pm Friday, September 2, in collaboration with Biology Prof. Becky Urban. The training session, with PA-DEP water pollution biologist Mark Hoger, will be primarily directed at our volunteer monitoring team, but interested LVC students are also warmly invited. The session will offer an overview of a multi-parameter water-quality monitoring device that measures pH, dissolved oxygen (DO), specific conductance (SC), and temperature, and that are capable of lots more (turbidity, nitrate, chloride, and others), if the right probes are purchased. The session will include instructions on how to calibrate and deploy the instrument. The QWA and DFTU have two of these instruments on order, and are getting two more on loan from PA-DEP.

- 4. Proposal for 2.7 Acre Parcel along Quittie in N. Cornwall Twp.** Scott and Barb Shreve of Lebanon offered a presentation on an envisioned “Community Bicycle Cooperative and Nature Park Proposal” for the 2.7-acre property along the Quittapahilla mainstem downstream of the Hazel Dike, approximately 0.1 miles from the future Rail-Trail at 22nd St. & Chestnut St. in North Cornwall Township. The presentation included discussion of a “shipping container workshop,” a “sketch plan introduction” to the property including a pavilion, community garden, an ADA-compliant trail and walking path, a bicycle cooperative, and more. The Shreves are working with the Lebanon Valley Bicycle Coalition, Lebanon Valley Rails to Trails, and other local and national organizations in developing their proposal. Sample programming would include youth bike safety training, disabled veteran biking, used bicycle collections, and more. The Shreves were thanked for their excellent and compelling presentation. The Shreves plan to present this proposal to the North Cornwall Township Planning Commission at their August 31 meeting.
- 5. Lebanon County Stormwater Consortium Update.** Bryan reported that the bidding process will open next month for the Quittapahilla Creek Floodplain Restoration Project, extending from the end of the Hazel Dike to the 22nd Street Bridge in North Cornwall Township. Looking ahead, Bryan reported that next slated for design is the Quittapahilla mainstem section from Dairy Road to Mill St. in Cleona, with the segment from the 22nd St. bridge to Dairy Road probably poised to be the last section to be designed, with construction on the latter section likely to begin ca. 2025-26, though that is just a guesstimate. Bryan emphasized the complexity of the design process, with lots of moving parts – including now the proposed Community Bicycle Cooperative & Nature Park for the 2.7-acre property purchased by the Shreves.
- 6. Public Presentations & \$100 Donation.** Mike reported that he offered a presentation to the Palmyra Rotary Club on the QWA’s history and ongoing work, and that the QWA received a

\$100 donation from the Club. He further reported that on Friday, August 12, he discussed the QWA's ongoing work on Laura LeBeau's morning show on WLBR Radio.

- 7. Countywide Action Plan (CAP).** Mike reported that Mary Kate Gallagher is no longer with the Lebanon County Conservation District (LCCD) and that they are poised to hire a new CAP coordinator. He also reported that longtime QWA ally Stephanie Harmon has left her job at the LCCD to take a position with East Hanover Township in Dauphin County.
- 8. Volunteer Workday.** Mike reported that there will be a volunteer workday in Quittie Creek Nature Park from 9:00 am to 12 noon Saturday, August 27, with an expected 30 incoming students at Lebanon Valley College expected to lend a hand from 10 am to 12 noon. Tasks will include spreading mulch, pruning back encroaching brush on the upper trails, and digging out several clusters of the invasive multiflora rose along the main trail next to the creek and replacing them with sandbar willows.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Schroeder, Secretary Pro Tem

Appendix. Letter from QWA President Michael Schroeder to Lowe's CEO Marvin Ellison:

Subject: We have a problem with your Lowe's Store on Quentin Rd in Lebanon Co PA

Sent: 11:55 AM, Wed. Aug. 10

To: Marvin Ellison
CEO & President
Lowe's Companies Inc.
via electronic delivery: <marvin.ellison@lowes.com>

Dear Mr. Ellison,

My name is Michael Schroeder, I live in Annville, PA, and I am President of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association, at <http://www.quittiecreek.org>

This letter is regarding your store at 1755 Quentin Road, Lebanon, PA, 17042.

Right behind the Lowe's store on Quentin Road flows Snitz Creek, a tributary of Quittapahilla Creek, which flows into the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay.

We want to prevent erosion & restore this section of Snitz Creek, but the company that manages your property in Lebanon Co PA is saying NO.

We are therefore in a conflict with the company that manages the property of your store on Quentin Road in Lebanon County, PA. Hence this letter, to kindly let you know that we are going to protest and make a big stink about this issue until we get this issue resolved satisfactorily.

This section of Snitz Creek is marked by severe erosion and its banks are badly in need of restoration. You can view photographs on our website.

So our longtime Project Manager Rocky Powell of Clear Creeks Consulting LLC developed a detailed plan to remediate the problem.

A few weeks ago, in June 2022, we were poised to submit our application for a Growing Greener Grant from PA-DEP when we learned that Lowe's was refusing to sign onto the project, because the lawyers of the property management company in New York City, National Realty & Development Corp., objected to some of the language in the landowner agreement.

So yesterday I sat down and drafted the following letter to Mr. Noel T. Mannion, Executive Vice President of Property Operations National Realty & Development Corp., 225 Liberty Street, 31st Floor, New York, NY 10281-1008. I sent it this morning.

I'm pasting it below, just to let you know our position and what we are planning. I'm hoping to preempt a struggle on this issue, because honestly, Mr. Ellison, I have a lot of other things on my plate and I'd much rather that Lowe's just agree to have the work done on Snitz Creek and be done with it.

That's all we want. To do the needed work on Snitz Creek. To have the property owners and Lowe's agree to the landowner agreement that all the other landowners agreed to.

Anyway, here's my letter to Mr. Mannion in NYC.

Noel T. Mannion
Executive Vice President of Property Operations
National Realty & Development Corp.
225 Liberty Street, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10281-1008

Via electronic delivery: <noel.mannion@nrhc.com>

August 10, 2022

Dear Mr. Mannion,

I write wearing my hat as President of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania to express to you, first, our organization's profound dismay at your corporation's refusal to agree to sign the access authorization, letter of commitment, and landowner-grantee agreement required for a PA-DEP Growing Greener Plus grant for stream restoration work on Snitz Creek, a tributary of Quittapahilla Creek, in the section behind Lowe's Home Improvement in North Cornwall Township, 1755 Quentin Road, Lebanon, PA, 17042—a project we designate as "Snitz Creek Project 18-19".

We have worked with hundreds of landowners over the past decades in our efforts to improve the water quality in the Quittapahilla watershed and the Chesapeake Bay. On only a handful of occasions have landowners refused to collaborate with us in these efforts. The Snitz Creek Project 18-19 has five property owners associated with it. Your corporation, representing Lowe's, was the only one of these landowners who refused to agree to the project.

But the main purpose of this letter is to advise you, the National Realty & Development Corporation, and by extension, Lowe's Companies, Inc., that, in response to your refusal, we are poised to launch a multi-tiered media and publicity campaign against the Lowe's store in North Cornwall Township intended to persuade your corporation to change its position and agree to the above-mentioned authorizations. We have spoken with PA State Senator Chris Gebhard about our concerns, who has expressed his support for our efforts. We have also been in conversation with local officials in North Cornwall Township and the other landowners along this section of Snitz Creek, all of whom would very much like to see this project move forward.

We will be launching a social media campaign directed specifically at Lowe's Home Improvement in North Cornwall Township, framing the company as standing in lone opposition to a project that will benefit local property owners, the health of our local waterways, and the Chesapeake Bay – in essence, portraying Lowe's Companies and its agents – including the NRDC – as selfish, out-of-touch, and enemies of the environment.

We will also engage in direct action protests in public spaces adjacent to Lowe's, with protest signs and press releases to the media spotlighting Lowe's refusal to support this much-needed project. We intend to continue voicing our dismay at this refusal for as long as it takes – for years if need be. We have been doing this work for a quarter-century, we have an excellent reputation in the community, and we are prepared for a long struggle.

We are reluctant to undertake these steps, but we feel that your corporation's refusal to sign onto this project leaves us no choice.

The bottom line is that Snitz Creek is in very bad shape in the section behind Lowe's, the work needs to be done, and we feel that your corporation is being unreasonable and selfish in its refusal to have this much-needed work accomplished.

Our purpose in writing this letter, then, is two-fold: (a) to express our dismay at your refusal to support this project, and (b) to let you know that we will pursue every legal avenue open to us in the effort to persuade your corporation to change its corporate mind.

Sincerely,

Mike

Michael Schroeder
President, Quittapahilla Watershed Association
Website: www.quittiecreek.org

Thank you for your attention, and I would appreciate the courtesy of a response.

Regards,

Michael Schroeder
Annville, PA