

North Cornwall Township chair slams watershed association for threats of protest

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Members of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association and other parties involved in the Snitz Creek restoration project attended the Sept. 6 North Cornwall Township meeting to request support for the restoration of the creek behind Quentin Road.

The group has received approval from four out of five property owners for restoration of the sections designated by the association as 18 and 19.

The fifth property owner, who owns the land currently leased by the Lowe's at 1755 Quentin Road, has refused to allow for the group to make changes on their property over concerns about maintenance, according to Michael Schroeder, president of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association

However, Trout Unlimited, a group working alongside the watershed society, said that they would be taking care of the maintenance once restoration was complete.

The restoration would cost no money to the business as it is funded through grants.

The groups involved in the restoration project attended the meeting to ask that the township help convince the property owner to allow them to repair their section of the creek.

During remarks made regarding the project itself, township Chair Samuel Abram cut off Rocky Powell, president of Clear Creeks Consulting, to address Schroeder.

"These tactics should be applauded if you're Jane's Revenge, or BLM or all those kinds of radical antifa groups, but I find this morally reprehensible," Abram said, "I find these threats, unprofessional."

An information packet sent by the watershed association to the township included email exchanges between parties representing the Snitz Creek project and the property manager.

Copies of those email exchanges were provided to the Lebanon Daily News by Schroeder and acquired from the township through a Right to Know request.

"We will be launching a social media campaign directed specifically at Lowe's Home Improvement in North Cornwall Township," Schroeder wrote in an email to Noel T. Mannion of

National Realty & Development Corp., who manages the property, “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 Lowes Companies and its agents – including the NRDC – as selfish, out-of-touch, and enemies of the environment.



Without authorization from all five landowners, restoration on sections 18 and 19 of Snitz Creek are at a halt. Submitted Photos.

“We also intend to 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.”

Abram said that he, and the rest of the board, could not work with an organization that would threaten others in order to get what they desired.

“For North Cornwall Township to be associated with these kinds of tactics is something that I’m certain that more than one of our residents would find completely objectional,” Abram said. “So, I think you burned a bridge here that you’re not even aware that you’ve burned.”

Abram thanked the group for their time and moved on from the topic.

In an interview following the township meeting, Abram said that he supports the work being done on Snitz Creek, and that continued work on the watershed is important. The township was initially onboard with helping until they read through the correspondence.

“As long as I’m chair and I hold that gavel at North Cornwall Township we will not be partnering or dealing with Quittapahilla Watershed at all until these tactics have been atoned for, or Michael is removed, or there is some change because this is a reputational risk for all the stakeholders.”

Abram continued by saying that he doubts the township board would show support for anything the watershed association requests of them so long as Schroeder is at its head.

He also said that he plans to act on the subject during next month’s township meeting for a motion, but does not believe it has any support from the township at this time.



President of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association said that the most important is the work that needs be done on Snitz Creek. Submitted Photos.

Schroeder said in a follow-up interview that he stands by his methods.

“My reaction is that it was complete overreach on Mr. Abram’s part. Essentially, he’s denouncing me for threatening to exercise my First Amendment rights, which I find really ironic.”

Schroeder believes that what he sent to the property owner was simply a courtesy heads up, warning that if they weren’t willing to come to the table with them, then they would be forced to exercise their First Amendment rights.

He also said that beginning a social media campaign and protesting outside of the Lowes would be one of the group's last resorts.

“This isn’t about me, this isn’t about my feelings, this is about getting the work done on Snitz Creek,” he said, “Whatever serves that end, whatever helps us to get toward that end, is fine by me.”

The watershed association will be regrouping on this topic over the next few weeks and will likely work on reopening communications with the landowners, Schroeder said.

Working to repair the relationship between the watershed association and the township is not out of the question, Schroeder said.

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