

## **Question 2: What's your take on storm water/drainage taxes?**

Lower Paxton residents have enjoyed growth and low taxes, and now we must confront problems associated with rapid expansion without adequate infrastructure.

The Township - with the support of citizens - issued a bond to begin issuing bonds in 2009 to replace an aging sewage infrastructure, and SWAN secured a grant to fund a land use and traffic study of Routes 39 and 743 coordinated by the Tri County Planning Regional Commission. We have adapted and conformed to DEP consent orders, and now we face stormwater challenges that have been brewing

Stormwater issues have been caused by rapid growth, poor planning, and past growth models which were accepted as Standard Operating Practices throughout Pennsylvania.

In Lower Paxton, we are now paying the price for shaving steep slopes, creating gobs of impervious surfaces, and developing wetlands and backfiring marshes, and streams. Check out the Paxton Creek after a heavy rain. Wildwood Lake has become a silt pond.

The problem is that the price of regulation usually gets handed down to the consumer and hostage taxpayer - after the fact - through higher taxes, higher housing costs or fees.

I've been a proponent of smart land use planning for a few decades. My consulting business is built on these principals. I think we are moving in the right direction with the current paradigm of the Township, developers and citizens working to shape future development. And, it's not too late to comment on the proposed, revised Comprehensive Plan for Lower Paxton Township.

Smart development and sustainability go hand in hand. Both are also good for property values and the tax base. Many developers support smart growth, and make more money selling homes with environmental attributes.

For example, SWAN worked with developers, Lower Paxton Township and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission to implement protections on the

Paxton Creek at no cost to home owners or tax payers. When I worked with East Hanover Township as a consultant we worked with Penn National and Hollywood Casino to address stormwater issues in 2010.

The complex reclaims their wastewater and reuses it. An advanced wastewater treatment plant filters phosphorus and reduces nutrients prior discharging to a stream. Water is also used on the turf and track during racing season. These capabilities enable Penn National to reuse their wastewater during dry periods in the summer when track watering is at its peak. Penn National was one of the first facilities to install reuse technology.

Here is an example of how private industry partnered with local, state and federal governmental agencies to proactively - at a t no cost to taxpayers - combat stormwater issues.

This is the model I've been striving to implement over my career.

We can't dwell on the past. We need to learn form our mistakes.

One of the core reasons we formed SWAN over 12 years ago was to create a new paradigm where government, developers, and the community worked together to achieve a common goal. All three stake holders need to continue to work together to create and implement best practices.

The stormwater fees need to be discussed with the community. I urge all residents to attend public hearings. Among the questions we should ask: Is LP going to form a Stormwater Authority? Who will be on the Authority? Who determines the fees? When will the fees lapse? How will this impact future development? Will there be a hardship fund created for low-income, senior citizens and veterans? Can we issue a bond - like we did for sewer upgrades?