

Notes from the Supervisor's Forum held on Thursday, June 7th, 2007 at Saginaw Township Hall 10:00 a.m. in the Board Meeting Room

Sponsored by Timothy Braun, Supervisor, Saginaw Charter Township

10:04 Tim Braun welcomed everyone. Tim Braun requested we, township officials, contact our State Representatives to address HB 4780 that will allow Counties to handle assessing, elections and tax collections for townships. If these duties are eliminated from townships, what will be left for townships to do? Township officials need to contact our legislators to assure this does not happen. This issue will be discussed later with Tom Frazier, MTA legislative liaison who handles environmental issues and can also address HB 4780.

Tim Braun introduced John Musser, Greg Chochran and Jeff Martin from Dow Chemical. Jeff Martin has replaced Garret Geer as the Dow Community Relations Leader.

Greg Chochran spoke about Dow contamination that has occurred previous, way back in the 1900's, particularly 1930 when it was discovered there were dioxins, furans and other contaminants he did not mention. Chochran stated these contaminants have been in this area for decades and they do not just disappear and go away. He also stated that the Tri-County Rivers have reached equilibrium, the sun can get rid of these contaminants; however it takes a period of time. Chochran stated he has been hired to handle Dow Chemical's liability issues and he knows how to manage remedial issues. He met with Dow Chemical CEO and stated CEO wants this issue resolved as soon as possible. Chochran stated Dow Chemical will continue to fight for what is right; they need to use science, ecology and continue to consider environmental concerns of local communities. MDEQ tells Dow they need to comply with the license and the law or Dow can be shut down. MDEQ has the authority to close Dow's doors. Chochran stated if Dow cannot meet the license agreement with MDEQ, then Dow may have to move to Texas.

Chochran diverted the issue temporarily and introduced himself as being hired by Dow Chemical from Texas 1 year ago. He wants to complete all regulatory issues. He thinks Michigan's MDEQ is an excellent group to work with on all issues; however their regulations are a little steep.

Chochran stated the University of Michigan study seems to be very complete and needs to be used for dioxin cleanup in the Tri-County Area. He stated Dioxin is a molecule and we need to understand it is necessary to use science to study all facts. The University of Michigan study needs to take precedence; it is better science than all other years.

Musser, Dow Chemical, stated there have been many tests done on animals and people. There were many variations on the study results of those living in this area. The effect on people's blood was very minimal.

Pat Bradt asked about the food chain. Musser again stated there was not much effect.

Chochran again stated he came from Texas and in Texas they, meaning I guess their quality control people, work with businesses to make progress, not to have license agreements that businesses cannot meet. He stated we should look up ASTAR on the internet, a case about "In Hanes", something about CDC. Pat asked specifics and he said to go on line and look it up. There was not time at this meeting to go into detail. Chochran stated the U. of M. study showed the older we are the more contaminants in the human body.

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Study showed Saginaw is only 28% different than Jackson County, .09% due to soil, in his opinion very small, stated no contamination from dust. Pat asked where the contamination comes from. No specific answer; however once again the food chain was brought up with very little comment. (In my opinion, no one seems to care that hunters put tainted animal meat on their tables.)

Tim Ader, Thomas Township wants to move on. Stated township officials have heard all this before. Wants to know what the next step will be and what township official's role will be. The whole situation is depleted the entire area.

Tim Braun said what can we do to settle this issue and where does Dow come in?

Chochran stated the studies must be used to resolve this issue. MDEQ needs to use the studies in the license agreement. Dow has looked and will look further into the studies. They want to use the data that is in the study.

Tim Braun stated MDEQ does not want to use the study. It is not complete.

Musser, Dow Chemical, stated Dow has a vision as follows:

1. to protect human health.
2. to protect the habitat.
3. to promote the community.

Musser asked what is in the community's best interest. (Did not ask which community.)

Question from audience: What does Dow want?

Chochran: Do we want to dig up the Tittabawassee? Answer: No. Dow wants to use the Gara Brandt Data to determine Tittabawassee tree damage and erosion. What to do about all this, he is not sure at this time.

Paul Vasold made an off the table comment about the Titt. River being cleaned up. Where would the stuff go? Zilwaukee Township.

Tim Braun: Dow should give the MDEQ a proposal to cleanup and handle the above three items under Dow's vision given by Musser.

Chochran stated there is a plan on the table with MDEQ to resolve legal issues; however did not have available for review or comment from audience.

Musser stated Dow wants this resolved by 2010.

Bobby, Trustee Saginaw Township, stated township officials need to use their political clout to move legislators and Lansing, specifically the Governor.

Bobby, Trustee Saginaw Township, need to use part of the U of M study. Should Dow move to Texas? If this decision is made by Dow, townships need to go to Ken Horn and other legislators, including the Governor.

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Musser asked: What is important to this community? (Again not specifying which community.) Pat asked which communities were involved. Musser stated Chochran's group has been hired by Dow Chemical to find out from Bay, Saginaw and Midland Counties what it is they want. Could put a Regional Management Group together with representatives from all communities, especially those being intimidated. (My comment: Been here, done this, doesn't work because no matter what the communities say, they want to do what they want and never listen to us anyway.)

Tim Braun asked Jeff Martin is he could help Dow. (Jeff did not answer, Bobby interrupted.)

Bobby said it is not necessary to label the Tittabawassee as "Love Canal". It is necessary to have the MDEQ come up with something acceptable to all parties.

Jeff Martin stated the Governor is community oriented. (bull "s" – my opinion)

Chochran said MDEQ asks what the "public" wants. Who is the public?

Bobby made some sort of statement about Lone Tree Council and that this group needs to stop interrupting the process. Again she believes the Tittabawassee and the entire area is not contaminated. Has lived there for years and no problem.

Jeff Martin stated it is necessary for the Chamber of Commerce, Vision 2020 and everyone to work together on this issue. (again only Saginaw County.)

Paul Vasold, Tittabawassee Twp. Stated Ken Horn needs to endorse the "bill". (Not sure what he was talking about here.) Stated Dr. Gerabrandt can recognize dioxin in the blood stream.

Bobby: This is a two-prong effect: what Dow wants to do with the River (assuming the Tittabawassee) and Lift the "facility" designation off Parks, to do this we need to go through the Chamber of Commerce and our legislators.

Musser stated we need to get the MDEQ to play with the science.

Tim Braun asked what the audience thought should be sent to Veronica regarding the upcoming meetings to give her "heads up" on what the township officials wanted.

Ron Lee stated something about Lone Tree Council stepping up and taking money from the Chamber of Commerce that could have been used for other purposes. (not sure on this one, however have email from Lee)

Tim Braun asked if we wanted the Chamber to represent us or do we want ourselves. We need to take our ideas collectively to Veronica Horn. Put all things together that is on the table. Pat asked if this included Zilwaukee Township? Braun requested Kischnick, Tittabawassee Township to put something together for townships, other than Zilwaukee Twp. Suggested to Pat and Dave Bradt to do something for their own township because our situation was different than others.

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Chochran stated townships need to target possible solutions and identify problems.

Musser stated it is necessary to get all townships together in an effort to continue forward on this issue. Need Tri-County operation to deal with this issue. Position ourselves collectively.

This part of the meeting was over. Tim Braun excused Dow Officials and went to the next agenda item.

Pat Bradt followed the Dow officials into the hall:

When Martin was asked how and why he has this position at Dow Chemical, he did not answer. Musser stated that Dow only hires the "best".(This was a question asked after the meeting with Dow officials, off the record during the meeting.)

Pat asked Musser about using the facility in Zilwaukee for Dow Chemical and whether they were going to purchase DMDF from Saginaw County. He gave me his card and said anytime I would like to talk to him about this situation, I was welcome to call him. He did not answer my question.

Dow Officials left. Pat returned to meeting.

Tom Frazier, MTA legislative liaison spoke about HB 4780 which would strip townships of election duties, tax collections and assessing. Stated if these duties are taken from townships, there will be nothing important for us to do which would give reason to eliminate townships and go to regional government.

Specific strategies outlined by Frazier:

1. Contact legislators regarding HB 4780, State Reps. and Senators.
2. Talk to County officials:
 - A. Tell them we do not want to give these responsibilities to them; however it has been stated they don't want them anyway. Too costly because township officials work "cheap", sometimes "free".
 - B. Request County Officials contact legislators as stated above.
 - C. Request County Board of Commissioners send something to legislators as stated above and also the Michigan Township Association.
 - D. Use the strong groups, such as Michigan Township Association and the Saginaw County Township Association.

Meeting was adjourned by Tim Braun approximately 11:45 a.m.

Submitted respectfully,

Patricia Bradt, clerk
Township of Zilwaukee

