

Chapter 9

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Introduction

East Goshen has maintained a high level of citizen participation in programs sponsored by the Township and citizen involvement in issues of concern to the Township. More proactive communication was cited by the Township as an issue to be addressed in updating its planning policies and services to residents. This is reflected in the Goal and Objectives devoted to Communications (see Chapter 1).

GOAL: Enhance communication between the Township and its residents.

Objective 9A Utilize technology to improve communication.

Objective 9B Foster communication among the Township's Authorities, Boards and Commissions (ABC's).

Objective 9C Identify concerns, needs, and the levels of satisfaction with Township provided services.

Objective 9D Insure that each of the Township's Authorities, Boards and Commissions has a mission statement and a clear understanding of their role, responsibility and authority.

Objective 9E Create an awareness, with residents, of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 9F Foster communication with Federal, State, and County agencies, regional agencies, and other local municipalities.

Recommendations

Objective 9A Utilize technology to improve communication.

- **Recommendation 9A-1** Provide for additional information on the Township website (www.eastgoshen.org).

DISCUSSION:

East Goshen's newly launched website should be the critical on-line "bulletin board" for notifying residents and other interested persons about the activities of and within the Township. The website also affords the opportunity to provide up-to-date information on the adopted policies and regulations of the Township. In addition, the website could become the clearinghouse for a more efficient provision of services through on-line permit applications and other materials.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 9A-1-1** Maintain information, links, on-line surveys, meeting agendas and minutes, and other materials on the Township website.
- 9A-1-2** Add permit applications as well as links to Township Ordinances and the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 9B Foster communication among the Township's Authorities, Boards and Commissions (ABC's).

- **Recommendation 9B-1** Continue the liaisons between the Township's Authorities, Boards and Commissions.

DISCUSSION:

Volunteers serving on various Authorities, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) play an active role in the administration of the Township. Communication between these volunteer groups, the Township staff, and Supervisors is important. A liaison network of members from each of the Township's Authorities, Boards and Commissions, as is currently in place, provides a vital framework for providing early communication of issues, problems, and work programs for each volunteer group.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 9B-1-1** Establish a formalized in-house mailing system to allow for distribution of materials or comments from liaisons to appropriate ABCs.
- 9B-1-2** Provide all contact information on a regular basis, including regular updates of any changes, and encourage members of ABCs to provide such information promptly.

Objective 9C Identify concerns, needs, and the levels of satisfaction with Township provided services.

- **Recommendation 9C-1** Obtain residents level of satisfaction with Township administrative services and programs.

DISCUSSION:

Surveys are a simple, direct way to gauge public satisfaction with the services and programs provided by the Township. Surveys direct service users and program participants to provide input relating to specific elements of the service or program. To promote participation, the survey should be concise and direct, and enable survey participants the opportunity to provide additional comments.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 9C-1-1** Periodically survey residents on their satisfaction with Township services and programs.
- 9C-1-2** Integrate a point-of-service questionnaire on the Township website.
- 9C-1-3** Report results of Township findings.

Objective 9D Insure that each of the Township’s Authorities, Boards and Commissions has a mission statement and a clear understanding of their role, responsibility and authority.

- **Recommendation 9D-1** Review and update the mission statement for each of the Township’s Authorities, Boards and Commissions.

DISCUSSION:

The contributions of volunteers on the Township’s Authorities, Boards and Commissions is vital. So, too, is the need for these advisory bodies to be able to provide timely and valuable input to decisions by the Board of Supervisors. An active commitment to these decisions by members is enhanced when the mission and work to be done are consistent with the overall mission of the Township and consistent with dedication of the membership.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- **9D-1-1** Authorities, Boards and Commissions should review their mission statement as required.
 - **9D-1-2** Provide an annual report including activities and decisions for each of the Authorities, Boards and Commissions.
 - **9D-1-3** Authorities, Boards and Commissions shall develop by-laws to cover day-to-day operations.
- **Recommendation 9D-2** Continue an annual planning session among the Township’s Authorities, Boards, and Commissions.

DISCUSSION:

The annual planning session for the Township’s Authorities, Boards, and Commissions (ABCs) provides a well-defined and public framework for addressing concerns and local problems that are within the Township’s responsibility to address, and are contained within the mission statements of the various ABCs. The meeting is established as a public work session so that the public is able to witness the planning process of the Township’s ABCs and ask questions or clarify responses to concerns raised by other public communications and decisions by the Township.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- **9D-2-1** Conduct the annual planning meeting during January of each year.
- **9D-2-2** Post the results of the meeting on the Township website and in the next Township newsletter.

Objective 9E Create an awareness, with residents, of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Recommendation 9E-1** Create an information program emphasizing the historic past of East Goshen.

See Recommendation 5A-1 in Chapter 5.

- **Recommendation 9E-2** Create a public information program to inform residents about their role in the improvement of water quality and stormwater runoff.

DISCUSSION:

The implementation of the new Phase II requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program means that there is a new opportunity for the Township to engage its residents in the need to protect surface water and groundwater quality. This information process is a necessity as a means to encourage voluntary cooperation and compliance on the part of Township residents and business owners.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

9E-2-1 Inform residents about the importance of stormwater quality and the impacts of harmful runoff downstream.

- **Recommendation 9E-3** Promote resident awareness of environmental issues.

DISCUSSION:

Landowners, whether they own large or small properties, can benefit from learning about the importance of protecting natural resources and what they can do on an individual basis. Information on the following topics should be conveyed in the Township newsletter and web site and made available at the Township Building:

- The importance of protecting vegetation along stream banks (riparian buffers);
- Woodland preservation and management;
- Control of non-native plant species and promotion of native plant species;
- The need to preserve the integrity of unique Serpentine outcroppings;
- The environmental and legal costs of illegal dumping;
- The development of a local land trust;
- The environmental cost of unnecessary tree removal;
- Organic alternatives to chemical fertilizer;
- The importance of stormwater quality and the impacts of harmful runoff downstream; and
- The requirement for the use of stormwater management best management practices to promote the infiltration of stormwater associated with new development.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

9E-3-1 Provide a list of contacts where residents can get information on other environmental subjects and natural resource programs from Federal, State, and County agencies.

9E-3-2 Publicize community projects and success stories to create community awareness of local conservation and preservation efforts.

Objective 9F Foster communication with Federal, State, and County agencies, regional agencies, and other local municipalities.

- **Recommendation 9F-1** Maintain communication with government agencies, regional groups, and adjacent municipalities.

DISCUSSION:

Maintaining regular contacts with other government agencies at the State and County level as well as with regional agencies and neighboring Townships is an important communication tool for East Goshen. Such contacts can efficiently and effectively address service needs and coordination between East Goshen and its neighboring Townships, and ensure compliance with Federal, State, and County requirements.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 9F-1-1** Establish a point of contact with Federal, State, and County agencies.
- 9F-1-2** Continue communications with adjacent municipalities.

REFERENCES:

Community Planning Handbook – A Toolbox for Managing Change in Chester County – Volume I. Chester County Planning Commission. 1997.

Community Planning Handbook – A Toolbox for Managing Change in Chester County – Volume II. Chester County Planning Commission. 1999.

Watersheds. An Integrated Water Resources Plan for Chester County, Pennsylvania and its Watersheds, prepared by the Chester County Water Resources Authority, West Chester, Pennsylvania. 2002.

Linking Landscapes. A Plan for the Protected Open Space Network in Chester County, Pennsylvania, prepared by the Chester County Planning Commission, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 2002.

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