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An Update On Our Wastewater Management Plan By Morris Township Engineering Department

In our Summer 2004 newsletter, we outlined the Township's frustration with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) handling of the Wastewater Management Plan (WMP). The following history continues from the last date of the previous newsletter.

On June 6, 2004, the Township submitted all documents requested by NJDEP at our meeting on April 1, 2004. This included six copies of the storm water management, stream buffer and endangered species ordinances, a copy of the Randolph Township and Morris Plains sanitary sewer agreements, and six copies of the depletive water analysis. Later that month, the NJDEP misplaced a portion of the submitted material and requested additional copies. Within days, the information was resubmitted, but due to NJDEP employee turnover, it was returned to the Township stamped "as person unknown." The Township retained the materials to a NJDEP person whose name was more recognizable.

On July 30, 2004, after a year and a half of delay, the State finally wrote to adjoining municipalities, Randolph Township and Morris Plains, requesting a meeting with officials to discuss the required ordinance adoptions. The State is responsible for coordinating the adoption of the above mentioned ordinances due to the fact that the Township does not have jurisdiction over other municipalities within our sewer service area. The meeting has been scheduled for November 30, 2004.

The Great Swamp Watershed Association filed a second lawsuit against the Township Planning Board related to the preliminary approval of the Saint Mary's Abbey Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). Again, the judge in the case decided in favor of the Township.

On October 3, 2004 the Township sent a letter to NJDEP requesting the status of their review and adoption of our WMP and an accelerated date for November 30th meeting. To date, no response to this request has been received. Four days later, the Township received a WMP review letter from NJDEP requesting additional information, including materials previously submitted. The letter also requested five new sets of the WMP with the requested changes even though NJDEP clearly stated that it had not completed its review of the June 6, 2004 submission.

On November 2, 2004, the Township responded to the October 7th NJDEP review letter, submitting the additional and duplicative information requested. The Township also stated its concern about spending taxpayer dollars to resubmit five new sets of the WMP, when NJDEP has not sent the Township all of its comments or moved for public notice and adoption of the WMP. About a week later, the Township learned of more NJDEP employee turnover affecting the adoption of our WMP. Ken Klipstein, former Chief Northern Planning Bureau NJDEP, has been reassigned and Terry Pilawaki will now handle our WMP review.

The Township is now patiently awaiting acknowledgement from NJDEP that our WMP is ready for adoption. All the information regarding the WMP is available to you in the Township's Engineering Department. Our staff is available to answer any questions you may have regarding your Wastewater Management Plan.