

STORMWATER ISSUES and MORE... [[More, below](#)]

Ann L. Rappoport, Ph.D.

**Cheltenham Township Commissioner
from Ward 4**



Hi,

Even as we hope, and work for, a healthy and upbeat new year, we continue to face many challenges carrying over from past years. I'm not on cruise control or glide, and of course, you wouldn't expect me to be!

You know, I try not to repeat here all the information readily available on our Township website or on social media. But if you ever feel you're missing important items or categories, just contact me and of course I'll provide additional updates.

PUBLIC MEETING – STORMWATER/POLLUTION MANAGEMENT & DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL FEES

Please mark your calendars for our first major public meeting dedicated exclusively to the topic of developing our **Stormwater Management Plan and Possible Financing Structures- WEDNESDAY NIGHT, JANUARY 27, 7:00 -9:00 pm. PRE-REGISTER to get the ZOOM LINK:** <https://www.cheltenhamtownship.org/newsview.aspx?nid=6234> Although I've reported on some of this previously, I'll recap the background briefly.

- Stormwater and flooding have long been serious problems in Cheltenham, exacerbated by increased development and lack of adequate remediation north and upstream of us, and an aged infrastructure here, in addition to climate drama.
- The Township is also responsible for upholding State and Federal requirements for pollutant discharges through stormwater and runoff into streams and rivers. (MS4 program, etc.)
- To date, most of our stormwater – and pollutant – management has been conducted by the Township through our routine operating budget, primarily sourced from property taxes.
- That revenue stream falls short of our ability to best manage the current needs and is projected to be very inadequate as we look to future climate, infrastructure, and regulatory stressors.
- In communities across the country – and across PA – best practices are moving toward the establishing of Stormwater Utilities, and Stormwater Management Rate Structures.
- We've been considering this for several years now, and our recent PFM Strategic Management Study of our Township operations has also recommended this action.
- Almost 2 years ago, the Township sent out RFPs for engineering/consulting companies to work with Cheltenham on analyzing our stormwater and pollutant management needs (capital projects, as well as operations & maintenance); how to best plan financing those investments; and help us determine an effective and equitable rate structure for funding requirements. Selecting from about 7 companies in the final rounds – including evaluating lengthy written proposals and interviews - we selected Arcadis.
- Over the past several months, Arcadis and Township Staff have been collecting and analyzing data, specific to Cheltenham. They've also met with Commissioners, and with a stakeholder Stormwater Advisory Committee comprising a number of representatives from the public for input.

That brings us to the PUBLIC MEETING on the 27th. Please try to attend, so that you'll understand what this is all about and where this is likely headed. You don't want to be surprised to learn about how fees might be developed that are associated with this initiative. More background, for instance:

- Stormwater fees are considered to help compensate for impervious surface areas contributing to storm/pollutant runoff.
- Property discharges of stormwater/pollution runoff are roughly measured in terms of a basic unit called an ERU- Equivalent Residential Unit, and large properties, in terms of multiple ERUs.
- Unlike property taxes(that will still continue to subsidize a portion of stormwater/pollutant management), the stormwater management fees can be assessed on **property tax-exempt** properties as well. This serves to spread the responsibility for management costs better and more fairly to all those properties actually feeding into the problem.
- There are a variety of different ways to structure rates and credit systems (credits potentially possible for significant stormwater management facilities or other pre-determined mitigation efforts onsite).

Everyone in the Township is impacted by stormwater and water pollution, so please become more informed about how the Township plans to address the many related issues. There will be opportunities to ask questions and make comments in the months after such informational meetings as that on the 27th.

GLENSIDE LIBRARY UPDATE

Most of you are aware that the **Glenside Library has been closed for a number of weeks**, due to a problem with its heating system. I have been updated that we've been waiting for a vital part, and that is expected to arrive soon. The expectation is that the part will be installed promptly after it arrives, and hopefully Glenside Library activity will be restored (to whatever COVID activity level is appropriate). We all regret the delay and look forward to the services we have missed (even though we appreciate that our other libraries are trying to fill in).

CITIZEN COMMITTEES IMPROVE CHELTENHAM

Every year, dozens and dozens of volunteers commit their time, expertise, creativity and hard work to projects that enhance our community. From our Substance Abuse & Mental Health to our Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board, our Twinning Committee to our Economic Development Task Force, Shade Tree and Human Relations Committees, Environmental Advisory Council, Parks and Library Friends and Board, Boards of Historical & Architectural Review and Traffic Calming Committee, to mention only a few. Volunteers fight our fires and volunteers diligently attend our public meetings. These dedicated people are tremendous assets and strengthen our municipality, and we all owe them gratitude.

I am pleased that our **Historical Commission** has interest in taking on a **project to develop criteria and procedures for establishing a system of Cheltenham Township Historical Markers.** Such local designation has multiple benefits, including recognition of numerous exciting sites and names that might not yet have undergone the more cumbersome application for *national* historic registration or that might not qualify nationally on technicalities. The many, diverse historic assets span architecture, race, sport, literature, arts and science and other fields; together, these and our already-designated National Historic Register properties, may serve to **help brand Cheltenham as a distinctive destination**, with positive commercial ripples and enhanced property values.

As always, I welcome and appreciate your comments. I'm listening. You can get in touch by sending me **email: ann4cheltenham@gmail.com**

Thanks and be well,

Ann

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