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South Buffalo Township Planning Commission approves natural gas pipeline

Matter will now go before the township board of supervisors for final approval

BY NICK VERCILLA
STAFF REPORTER

The South Buffalo Township Planning Commission on Thursday approved a petition from Mountain Gathering LLC to place a Trilogy Energy natural gas gathering pipeline in the municipality.

The pipeline would be approximately 2.9 miles in length and 10 inches in diameter, according to Tony Kiballa, operations manager of Mountain Gathering, LLC, who attended yesterday's meeting.

"This project (would be) very similar to four projects that were approved in 2012," said Brendan Lucas, an attorney for Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC, which represents Mountain Gathering.

Added Lucas: "They have been going well with no issues."

The planning commission also heard from Justin W. Stewart, E.I.T, a project specialist for Gannett Fleming, the engineering firm in charge of the project.

New planning commission officers approved

Before Mountain Gathering presented the pipeline, the planning commission approved a chairman, vice chairman, and secretary.

Jennifer Christy was appointed chairman, Heidi Powell was appointed vice chairman, and Carol DeAngelis was appointed secretary.

Planning commission solicitor Tyler Heller said the titles can be switched between the members in future meetings.

Details on pipeline presented to public

Kiballa said approximately 11 properties on Freeport and Horseshoe roads, and one property on Striker Road, in the township, will be in the pipeline track.

Lucas said the owners of the properties have all signed agreements with Mountain Gathering before the meeting.

Representatives of the project will next present the project to the township's board of supervisors at 6 p.m. May 21, at the township municipal building at 384 Iron Bridge Road, an hour before their regular monthly meeting.

With their approval, the planning commission asked the representatives to have information on how far the gas line would have to be from residents' houses.

Commission members also asked for specifics regarding the state and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) regulations the company will have to follow.

This information will be gathered by the representatives and presented during the supervisors' meeting.

Kiballa said the expected start time of the construction would be in September or October, and it would take approximately three months to complete.

He said the pipeline would be operational in the first quarter of 2019.

Kiballa also said after the pipeline is built and the wells are X-rayed and mapped, the pipeline will be hydro-tested before it is operational.

Lucas said the well pads will be on the Smock property in the township, as well as on a former golf course in Freeport Borough, depending on approval of the borough's zoning hearing board, which held a meeting Thursday as well.

Lucas also said residents in the pipeline path will be notified when construction will begin, and that engineers will mark and repair the roads in accordance with township ordinances.

Kiballa also said Mountain Gathering/Gannett Fleming will abide by all state standards and regulations, as well as all regulations by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

Planning commission approves workshop meetings

After the presentation, the commission approved a motion to have a public zoning workshop meeting the second Wednesday of every month, beginning June 13.

This was based on a recommendation by township board of supervisors Chairman Joe Charlton, who was in attendance.

"The planning commission will be examining and reviewing zoning ordinances," Charlton said. "The plan is to modernize and update the township, make it user-friendly."

Charlton said the supervisors will also be looking to hire an assistant planning commission secretary to help take notes during meetings.

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